



National Institutes of Health  
National Institute on Aging  
Gerontology Research Center  
5600 Nathan Shock Drive  
Baltimore, Maryland 21224

December 30, 2003

Biocomplexity Faculty Search Committee  
c/o Prof. Rob de Ruyter van Steveninck  
Biocomplexity Institute  
Swain Hall West 117  
Bloomington, IN 47405-7105

Dear Search Committee Members:

It is a pleasure to provide my most enthusiastic recommendation to Dr. Vincent VanBuren for Assistant Professor position in your institute. Vince received a Ph.D. in Dr. Lynne Cassimeris's laboratory at Lehigh University. His major was Molecular Biology, but his Ph.D. work was a pure computational modeling of dynamics of microtubules. Immediately after completing his Ph.D. in February 2002, he joined my laboratory as a postdoctoral fellow (IRTA).

Vince is an outstanding young scientist who has extensive knowledge and experiences in bioinformatics and computational biology. He is highly intelligent, motivated, and intellectually mature. Although he has been a postdoc only for two years, I strongly believe that he is ready to take independent bioinformatics position in any institution. He has a rare combination of real expertise and talents for both molecular biology and computer science. As a graduate student in molecular biology program, he learned the molecular biology in depth. He also mastered the concepts and practical application of computer modeling and programming, such as MATLAB and Perl. As a Bioinformatics expert in our laboratory, he learns to write extensive programs in Perl script and HTML with minimum help from professional programmers.

Vince can work effectively alone or as a part of the team. When he was a graduate student, he worked on the computer simulation in the laboratory where everybody else was doing experiments. I understand that he worked alone but very effectively as evidenced by his publication in PNAS. In my laboratory, he worked as a member of informatics team consisting of two professional programmers and one Staff Scientist specialized in computer science and math/statistics. As a team, they have been engaging in the analysis and data mining of a large number of mouse cDNA sequences. Vince has made a significant contribution to our efforts, which earned him the first-authored paper published in Genome Research. Vince has also been working on developing a web-based tool to design oligonucleotide probe in a massive scale. Although many tools and software are available for small-scale primer design, only Vince's program can design and test tens of thousands of oligonucleotides optimized for specific hybridizations.

Vince is an excellent speaker and writer. Vince is a wonderful colleague, and without any doubt, would make a superb addition to your institution.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Minoru S. H. Ko".

Minoru S. H. Ko, M.D./Ph.D.  
Senior Investigator & Head  
Developmental Genomics & Aging Section