

DEPARTMENT OF MOLECULAR AND CELLULAR BIOLOGY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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Biocomplexity Faculty Search Committee
c/o Prof. Rob de Ruyter van Steveninck
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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing about Patrick Burgon who has applied for a position in your Department. I have a high opinion of Burgon.

Patrick Burgon was in the laboratory of Ernie Peralta from 1996 to 1999. Peralta and I had adjoining laboratories in the Fairchild Biochemistry Building until he moved to the Biological Laboratories in 1997; our groups remained in close contact and we had joint laboratory meetings. Patrick Burgon was also one of the head teaching fellows in the course on biochemistry and cell biology (BS 11) that I taught in the spring of 1999 and 2000. After the death of Peralta in 1999, Burgon went to the laboratory of Eva Neer to continue work on the RGS protein; however, Neer died in 2000 so he moved to the Seidman laboratory.

Burgon was interested in the properties of RGS proteins, specifically of RGS10. He made several interesting observations. RGS10 can be phosphorylated by protein kinase A at serine 168. This phosphorylation attenuates the RGS10 activity at the plasma membrane that controls the G protein-dependent activation of the inwardly rectifying potassium channel GIRK 1/4. Apparently phosphorylation is associated with translocation of RGS10 from the cytoplasm to the nucleus. This work was an important step in the elucidation of the biological properties of this representative of the RGS family of proteins. The translocation result was a new finding of great potential significance. These results were published in the Journal of Biological Chemistry in 2001. In the Seidman laboratory, Burgon is studying the molecular basis of the transition from hyperplastic to hypertrophic myocardial growth that takes place at birth.

Burgon is bright, he thinks, he is interested in the big picture. He is an excellent experimentalist and has tackled difficult problems with success. He did a great job as head teaching fellow, keeping the course on schedule, the students calm, and giving the lectures on signal transduction.

I have an excellent opinion of Patrick Burgon and recommend him highly for a position in your Department.

Sincerely yours,

Guido Guidotti
Guido Guidotti

Higgins Professor of Biochemistry