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January 19, 2004

Rob de Ruyter van Steveninck,  
Chair, Biocomplexity Search Committee  
Department of Physics  
Indiana University  
Swain West 165  
Bloomington, IN 47405-7105

Dear Professor, de Ruyter van Steveninck:

I am writing on behalf of Dr. Byung-Il Kim who has recently applied at your institution. I'm afraid that I don't have a close working knowledge of Dr. Kim's technical efforts here at Sandia. I was involved early on in helping him set up his experiments with the Interfacial Force Microscope, which I developed here at Sandia. With respect to that effort, I probably spent less time with Kim than any of the other people that have learned the technique. In short, Kim is very good with instrumentation. I also know that he works very hard and takes copious quantities of data. His two weaknesses, in my experience, involve the language (he is not as fluent as other Korean post docs that I have had) and he appears not to be as good at interpreting data and taking the program to the next level. However, these impressions are second hand. Much better opinions of his overall qualifications can be had from Dr. B. C. Bunker (his advisor here at Sandia) or Professor Tom Picraux, at Arizona State University. The latter worked closely with Kim on a joint project. I would strongly suggest that you contact them (if you haven't already).

Sorry I couldn't be of more help, but if you need more detailed information, feel free to call me directly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'J. E. Houston'.

J. E. Houston