

Department of Bacteriology
University of Cambridge Boston,
MA 01237

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

It is my pleasure to recommend Dr. Stephen Hoffmann for the position of Assistant Professor in your department. Stephen completed his Ph.D. in my lab and is one of the most outstanding researchers to emerge from my lab. I recommend him to you highly. In my lab Dr. Hoffmann cloned and characterized the *gliD* gene from *Cytophaga johnsoniae*. He made the intriguing discovery that the GliD protein is required for gliding behavior in *Cytophaga* and its human homologue is associated with a highly metastatic form of breast cancer. This observation suggests that there may be common features in bacterial gliding motility and mobility of human tumor cells.

Dr. Hoffmann initiated a highly productive collaboration with Professor David Whitely that led to the crystallization and high resolution structure of the GliD protein. Dr. Hoffmann brought that work to fruition in a PNAS paper, on which he is the senior author. In addition to the PNAS paper, Dr. Hoffmann published three other papers from his thesis, which attest to his hard work, biological insight, and outstanding writing skills.

Dr. Hoffmann proved himself an outstanding researcher and valued colleague. Dr. Hoffmann continued to produce original research as a postdoc in Jim Wooley's lab working on *Bacillus subtilis* development. Once again, Dr. Hoffmann discovered a gene that is found in both prokaryotes and eukaryotes, this time in a search for sporulation genes in *B. subtilis*. He identified a new sporulation gene, designated *spoW*, which has a mammalian homologue that appears to be associated with lymphocyte differentiation and maturation. Although that work is not yet published, it has a bright future. The project was technically challenging, but Dr.

Hoffmann has surmounted all of the obstacles and a genetic and biochemical analysis of the *spoW* allele and its product will be ready for publication soon. Given Dr. Hoffmann's past record in publishing research, I have no doubt that this work will be published in a top-tier journal. Dr. Hoffmann proved himself to be a capable mentor and teacher. He has supervised three undergraduate researchers. He is clearly able to transmit his passion and talent for research to young scientists. Similarly, his classroom teaching was met with rave reviews.

Dr. Hoffmann is one of my few colleagues to whom I will entrust my class when I travel. Dr. Hoffmann was also a terrific citizen and a leader in my lab. He handled responsibility well, was resourceful, and took initiative to maintain equipment and ensure that safety standards were met. He took on many of the responsibilities of a faculty member and excelled in everything he did. In short, I give Stephen my highest recommendation. He is one of my finest colleagues—an outstanding researcher and talented teacher. He has demonstrated an uncanny ability to unmask genes that play parallel roles in bacteria and mammals, and I expect him to be one of the leading researchers in his field.

He would be a good catch for any department and I urge you to consider his candidacy seriously.

Sincerely,

Theodore Corvallis
Distinguished University Professor