



University of Pittsburgh

Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences
Department of Psychology

3131 Sennott Square
210 South Bouquet Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15260
412-624-4500
Fax: 412-624-4428
www.psychology.pitt.edu

David Sheinberg, Ph.D.
Search Committee Chair
Department of Neuroscience
Brown University
Providence, RI

April 30, 2012

Dear Dr. Sheinberg:

I am writing this letter on behalf of Dr. Patryk Laurent to support his application for the position of Assistant Professor that is being advertised by your department. I have known Patryk since he first became a graduate student in the Center for Neuroscience at the University of Pittsburgh (CNUP) approximately 8 years ago. Patryk initially completed a 3-month rotation in my lab (all CNUP students are required to complete three such rotations during their first year), but then decided that he wanted to work under my guidance. During his time in my lab, Patryk became an absolutely indispensable member of my group and worked closely with me on a number of different projects. That being said, I feel that I am well qualified to write this letter on Patryk's behalf and to say exactly why he would be ideally suited for the position of Assistant Professor.

To begin with, Patryk is an extremely intelligent, capable, and motivated scientist. One only has to take a quick look at his CV—and in particular what he has already accomplished during his short career—to come to this conclusion. It is especially noteworthy that he has already published a sole author article in *Neural Networks* (one of the premier modeling journals) and has co-authored several articles in such journals as *Psychological Review* and *Vision Research*. His post-doctoral work at The John Hopkins University with Dr. Steve Yantis is continuing in this vein and will make a significant contribution to our understanding of how reinforcement is involved in the learning of behaviors involving the coordination of perception, cognition, and motor control. As Patryk's research statement indicates, this work uses both behavioral experiments and brain imaging (fMRI) in conjunction with computational modeling to address his hypotheses. What may only be implicit in his statement, however, is the degree to which his research spans levels of analysis (e.g., behavior and its neural underpinnings), content domains (e.g., the role of the basal ganglia in reinforcement learning, how this role might vary across different response modalities, etc.), and methodologies (e.g., eye tracking and fMRI). This breadth highlights one of Patryk's true strength: His capacity as a "big thinker" to quickly understand and master complex issues. Of all of the students that I have worked with in my ten years at the University of Pittsburgh, Patryk is one of the very brightest and best. I expect him to go very far.

I also think that Patryk will be an excellent teacher. Although he has never taught his own course, I have seen him give guest lectures in two courses that I teach (*Cognitive Psychology* and *Research Methods*) and both of those lectures were excellent. He has an amazing ability to explain very complex concepts and procedures in a manner that makes them accessible to his audience. This ability is in keeping with his exceptional communicative abilities more generally. For example, I have seen him give several talks at conferences, and I have heard him talk about his research on different occasions to both my lab and to other groups on campus (e.g., the LRDC); in all of these instances Patryk has proven to be an effective communicator, often giving much better talks than people many years his senior.

Finally, it is important for me to mention that Patryk is also an extremely generous and very decent person. During the last 8 years I have had the opportunity to get to know both him and his family (whom I visited in Poland a few years ago after a conference in Germany) and to understand why he is such a great guy—"an apple doesn't fall far from the tree." Patryk has demonstrated time and again his willingness to help others, and as a result was both extremely well liked and respected among the other graduate students. This was especially true in my lab, where both the undergraduate and graduate students looked up to Patryk as a mentor and role model. Adding to this is the fact that Patryk also has a tremendous sense of humor, enjoys many interesting hobbies, and is well traveled and read—all of which make him a lot of fun to talk to. In short, Patryk is exactly the type of person that I would want to have in the office next to mine—someone who will be an outstanding scientist and colleague, but at the same time someone who is extremely well adjusted, very sociable, and a lot of fun to be around. Patryk will be a boon for any institution that is lucky enough to have him.

In closing, I am giving Patryk my highest recommendation, without any qualifications or reservations. If you have any questions about Patryk or anything that I have said in my letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erik D. Reichle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Erik D. Reichle, Ph.D.