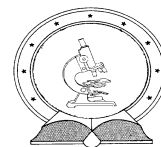




UNIVERSITY OF DEBRECEN
DEPARTMENT OF EVOLUTIONARY
ZOOLOGY AND HUMAN BIOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF DEBRECEN • FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



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Dr Gareth Dyke
Gareth Dyke: Sport Utca 67
Budajeno 2093
Pest
Hungary

22 April 2020

To whom it may concern,

RE: Reference for Christian Laurent

I am writing to express my very strong support for Chris Laurent's application for a scholarship from The Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn. I understand that Chris is planning to retrain as a lawyer and I am sure he will be very successful because he is hard working, trustworthy, and incredibly personable. These key personality traits will stand him in good stead for any career he might pursue and I cannot recommend him strongly enough.

I have known Chris for more than eight years, first as a lecturer, then as his MRes project supervisor, and now as a colleague and good friend. I can attest that of the >150 postgraduate students I have worked with in my 13-year career as an academic, he has been one of the brightest. He was the highest graduating student in his MRes programme and his exemplary dissertation was published by the Royal Society. This is most unusual for a student at that stage and he was rightly awarded a prestigious PhD studentship to continue his work at the University of Southampton. I have since worked with him on a number of journal articles and his academic output has always reflected his intellectual ability and high working standards.

We have recently completed a long-term, grant-funded, project (>250,000 euros) working remotely with a Romanian university; Chris was instrumental in winning the funding, completing the work, and, most importantly, troubleshooting and managing our team along the way. His contribution to this grant was emphasised in the funding agencies' grant report and it should of course be noted that he completed this work alongside his PhD project.

Chris is an excellent orator and I have seen him present work at a number of conferences and even deliver a lecture to the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Audience questions can be quite disarming at academic conferences because they are usually the first criticism any work receives, but Chris is very

able to form an argument, control the narrative, and delicately defend his position, sometimes to very senior academics. Indeed, he is someone you would want as a teammate in any debate. I have also seen him defend an academic position in writing as part of the peer-review process, which in most circumstances is the responsibility of the supervisor and not the student themselves. Responding to questions at conferences or in anonymous peer-review is a particular skill and requires an individual to know when to take advice and when to argue.

Such written and oral achievements can only be accomplished with good interpersonal skills. Chris' PhD work was multidisciplinary and necessarily he has coordinated a large number of supervisors in different departments. Further along in his work he has taken the lead on a number of publications with authors in different countries, some of whom were fellow PhD students and some of whom were senior Professors. Any work with multiple authors requires a collaborative attitude and Chris' publication record (both as a lead author and a middle author) demonstrates his ability to get along with other members of a team.

Chris is so personable because he can draw on a varied extra-curricular life. I know he played water polo during most of his time at Southampton and he has many captivating stories from the time he spent teaching SCUBA diving in Indonesia. When he was my student he was always involved in student life.

Although it is a shame for our research field that Chris has decided to leave a promising career in academia, he has my very best wishes in becoming a barrister. I'm sure he will prove to be a strong investment for any organisation that he joins.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Gareth Dyke', with a stylized, flowing script.

Dr Gareth Dyke