

Dear Selection Committee:

I first became acquainted with Jake Krans when he taught a few lectures of my "Biology of the Brain" course during my Junior year at the University of Connecticut. He impressed me with his adeptness for explaining the concepts under study and his confidence in handling the class. My seventh semester I took a course titled "Investigations in Neurobiology" in which Jake was the teaching assistant. This class was an intensive small environment of five students, and Jake interacted with the students a great deal throughout the four hour lab periods each week. Jake was in charge of how the lab was run each and every week and was the main source of guidance to the students during lab class.

Jake is a person who knows how he likes to educate and interact with his students. He has a definite style and is very natural at leading and directing a class and clearly loves interacting with his students. Starting on the first day of the class, he made sure to speak with each student individually and try to get some deeper information from us. He asked involved questions such as why we were each involved in the Physiology and Neurobiology program at UConn and more specifically why we chose to take the challenging course at hand. His questions made us ponder our life plans and also showed us how much he cared about seeing us succeed.

The course in original design was intended to be for serious upperclassmen. The students were required to master techniques of cockroach dissection and also verbal proficiency in the style of formal lab reports. In all aspects of the lab's challenges, Jake was consistently ready and very able to offer advice and his expertise. Jake didn't always just give plain answers to every question asked, but rather, would drop clues to the students if we were headed toward an incorrect way of thinking about a nascent hypothesis, or the wrong reasoning for how a part of an experiment turned out; this allowed us to come to a conclusion on our own, making the work more interesting and exciting.

The lab was an optimal environment to learn about research methods because of the way that Jake respected everyone as a mature and thoughtful adult. He formatted our lab's routine so that we could work independently of him while always having him there for a reference. Jake was always eager to give his time and energy to his students and make sure that we had all the information and equipment we needed. His feedback on our reports each week was always very helpful and the comments definitely helped me to improve my papers. I am confident in my journal style writing skills today because of Jake's guidance. It is truly evident in his nature that he is intrigued by working with motivated students while having a talent for further motivating them. Today I know Jake as my mentor and my friend and highly recommend him for a faculty position in the Neurobiology department at your school.

Sincerely,



Katherine Martucci  
B.S. Physiology and Neurobiology  
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