

Yale University

*Department of Neurosurgery
Yale Univ. School of Medicine
333 Cedar Street
P.O. Box 208082
New Haven, Connecticut 06520-8082*

*Campus address:
FMB 412
333 Cedar Street
Telephone: 203 785-2597
Fax: 203 737-2159*

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RE: Albert E. Ayoub, Ph.D.

Dear Colleagues.

It is a pleasure to write in strong support of Dr. Albert Ayoub and his interest in a faculty position. I've known Albert since he joined the laboratory of Pasko Rakic as a postdoctoral fellow. We have interacted during seminar series, research in progress talks, and a variety of social settings. Of particular importance, we collaborated on a project, that included one of my postdoctoral fellows, which established tangential migration as a mechanism for determining mitral cell locations in the developing olfactory bulb. I think you will agree following a quick perusal of his biosketch that Albert is a creative and innovative neuroscientist that has as consistent record of productivity.

Albert's work has been instrumental in defining the molecular underpinnings of cortical development and neuronal fate. As you know, his interests run strongly toward primate neocortex, though he also employs rodent models. His recent work reported in PNAS showing, for example, that temporally transient expression programs of transcription factors underlies the emergence of cortical specificity is ground-breaking and certainly moving the field in new directions. Similarly, his co-authorship with one of our Ph.D. students, Martin Dominguez, on Brn1 and Brn2 as regulators of cell division in the proliferative zone and final cell fate in the upper layers of cortex is an extremely important paper. These and his related work all contribute to defining the spatial and temporal "code" through which cell fate in the neocortex is established. In Albert's case, an additional interest in evolutionary pressures that have led to these developmental frameworks, and why rodent cortex may differ from primate cortex, is equally interesting and certainly a topic you might enjoy discussing with him. In all, you must agree that Albert's science is exciting. The ideas and principles driving his work are important and timely. The techniques and protocols he develops to test his hypotheses are at the cutting edge.

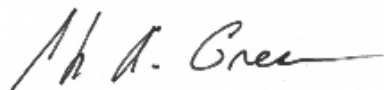
I would be remiss if I did not comment further on Albert's collegiality. As you've seen from his CV, he is exceptionally generous in sharing the expertise and techniques that he has developed. The value of his contributions in this regard is well reflected in the number of co-authorships listed in his CV and the praise he routinely earns from his collaborators.

I have had occasion to send several of my students over to the Rakic lab to borrow an antibody, use the 2-photon microscope, or get some advice. While there, they often interacted with Albert and while they found him intolerant of sloppiness or neglect, they also found in him an enthusiastic teacher that was excited to share his ideas and knowledge with receptive students. During visits to my lab, we have always found Albert congenial and happy to share his ideas. He is aggressive in expressing his ideas and conclusions. But then, he believes in them and therefore argues on their behalf accordingly but, he is also always receptive to testing his conclusions further with new empirical studies.

In sum, Albert is creative, tenacious in pursuing his goals, collaborative, and wildly interested in the work of others. As an independent investigator with his own lab, I think he can establish himself at the leading edge of those questions of interest to him. He will provide his colleagues on the faculty and his students with fresh new perspectives and new ways in which to approach their questions. With his enthusiasm and zest for science, I promise you it won't be boring.

If I can address any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ch A. Greer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Charles A. Greer, Ph.D.
Professor of Neuroscience
Depts. Neurosurgery & Neurobiology
Director, Interdepartmental Neuroscience
Graduate Program