



September 01, 2023

The Forsyth Institute  
245 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Cambridge, MA

To whom it may concern:

It is my most sincere pleasure to write this letter of support for the promotion for Dr. Batbileg Bor. My name is Matthew Ramsey, and I am an Associate Professor in the Cell and Molecular Biology department at the University of Rhode Island. I run an NIH funded research lab working in oral microbiology and have previously worked as a postdoctoral fellow at the Forsyth Institute, prior to Dr. Bor's arrival. Thus, I am well placed to evaluate both Dr. Bor's research and their suitability to the Forsyth Institute. I first met Dr. Bor at a Mark Wilson conference shortly after they began their current position. I was immediately impressed with their description of their research and their enthusiasm. Several other colleagues and I greatly enjoyed spending time with Dr. Bor ("Bat" hereafter) at the meeting and were pleased that a new faculty member had joined the meeting that was enthusiastic, collegial and held an excellent vision for their own lab. Bat and I afterwards met several times at different Boston-area events and Mark Wilson conferences where we have enjoyed each other's company greatly. We have also served together for the past 2 years on an early-stage investigator committee for the Mark Wilson conference and more recently in the NIDCR DSR study section. Throughout these interactions I have gotten to know Bat quite well. I have been asked to comment specifically on 5 areas for Bat for consideration of their promotion that I detail below.

Contributions to the Scientific Community. Relevant to their current research, Bat became known and associated with the study of TM7 to most of us with their PNAS paper in 2018. This landmark work established some of the parasitism and colonization dynamics between TM7 and its host / prey in a way that (in my opinion) began to explain some of the diversity within the TM7 phylum and first hinted at several mechanisms that may be involved in TM7-host colonization binding and initial interactions. From this work Bat began to distinguish themselves from their trainee work with Xuesong He and others with an excellent 2020 ISME paper where Bat's lab discovered host genetic factors that dictate susceptibility to TM7 colonization. In 2021 Bat's group made their biggest findings yet (in my opinion) detailing how TM7, now Saccharibacteria, play a complex role in oral disease. Previous work

indicated elevated *Saccharibacteria* numbers in inflammatory oral diseases which leads to a natural assumption that they may be causative or involved in negative aspects of the disease process. However, this work interestingly showed that *Saccharibacteria* were capable of altering gene expression in host bacteria in a way that ultimately limited host damage via inflammation. This opens many intriguing lines of investigation, not only for further roles of *Saccharibacteria* in disease, but also the tantalizing possibility that these symbiotes could be utilized as a future therapeutic for complex inflammatory diseases. This is exciting work, and I (and likely many other investigators) cannot wait to see where it leads.

Collaboration and Collegiality. I have not directly collaborated with Bat at this point. However, I would love to have the chance to in the future. Bat's collegiality is 1<sup>st</sup> rate and was evident within 30 seconds of our 1<sup>st</sup> meeting. He has a wonderfully open and optimistic personality and is always excited to hear about new data and eager to engage in scientific conversations on just about any subject. I have always looked in advance to find out if Bat would be at any meeting I am going to because I look forward to sharing what we are working on with him to gain his insight. Likewise, I look forward to hearing from him about his newest direction in the lab and I get the impression that many faculty especially at the junior level, feel quite the same. During my time together with Bat on our organizing committee and (more limited) interactions on study section, his collegiality and respect from his peers has been well evident and he is a friendly and calming presence on any group that we have both been a part of.

Mentorship of students and trainees. In this area I have little to contribute to for Bat as I have not been able to work alongside him with trainees. However, I can attest that Bat speaks frequently about his enjoyment of working alongside his trainees and has expressed his concerns about wanting to be a good mentor to them. I believe that he cares greatly about their ability to learn and do research competently. I was impressed by the large volume of trainees that Bat has helped mentor and their immediate success either during or immediately after their time in the Bor lab.

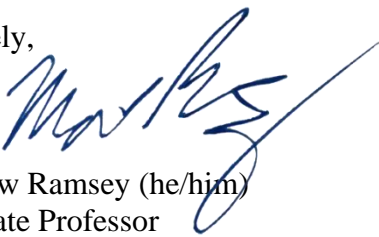
Creativity and impact of research. I believe that Bat's career (and life's) path has left them extremely well placed to 'think outside of the box' in many ways. Their training background and prior research experience are quite different from most oral microbiology investigators, and I believe that the field as a whole can benefit from this distinctly novel view into our studies and how we think about our organisms and model systems. The impact of Bat's research on TM7 / *Saccharibacteria* have already

been highly regarded and Bat is now well known as “the TM7 guy” amongst his peers outside of Forsyth. His work on host colonization specificity and TM7’s potential role for reducing disease severity that I have already mentioned has spurred an interest in these novel organisms outside of researchers at Forsyth and have made widely known the potential utility of these organisms.

Leadership and recognition in the field. While Bat has been a junior faculty member their leadership is already becoming evident. This is based on their invitations to numerous national and international invited presentations and their active roles in serving as either session chairs or helping organize conferences and other meetings. Bat reached out to me as the creator of the committee for early-stage investigators for the Mark Wilson conference that we serve on together and has taken the lead role in initiating all discussions for that group and has been relied upon to make all final decisions for that group and relay them to conference organizers. Likewise, I have been part of discussions with many other researchers over the last few years and in all of our conversations where Bat has come up (>5) the opinion has been identical that myself and many investigators quite senior to myself all view Bat as someone doing extremely well that we are excited to have as part of our profession. I cannot recall any PI that I have interacted with that had a negative comment towards Bat at all. We are all looking forward to what he and his trainees do next.

In conclusion, I believe that Bat is an outstanding investigator and an even better person. I give him my absolute highest recommendation for promotion. Candidly, I would have a hard time understanding why he would not be promoted and desired as part of any research group he chose to work with! I believe that Forsyth is lucky to have him there and that he is also lucky to be surrounded by an excellent team of investigators he is actively collaborating with. I would be happy to discuss any parts of this letter further if helpful.

Sincerely,



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