



Christophe Van Neste

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"Philosopher and [bio]engineer in theory, visionary [bio]programmer in practice."

Science Division

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YALE-NUS COLLEGE, SINGAPORE

Job Application for Assistant Professor in Life Sciences

Dear Mr./Ms./Dr.,

About Me

In 2008, I obtained a Master degree in Bio-Engineering at Ghent University (Ghent, Belgium). In the following years I studied philosophy and in 2010 obtained a Master degree in Philosophical Sciences at Ca'Foscari University (Venice, Italy). Thereafter, I became a full-time doctoral fellow in the lab of Prof. Dieter Deforce (Ghent University) where I worked as a bioinformatician and endeavored on a project to apply massively parallel sequencing to forensic DNA profiling analyses. During March and May 2014, I had a 6 weeks' internship at the Illumina headquarters in San Diego (USA), where I had the opportunity of working closely with the Illumina BaseSpace development team and Illumina's forensic team. I successfully defended my doctoral dissertation "Porting forensic DNA analysis to deep sequencing" for an international committee in June 2015. Shortly thereafter, I fully committed to cancer research and joined the team of Prof. Frank Speleman of the Ghent Center for Medical Genetics to work on replicative stress in neuroblastoma. In 2016 I won an FWO supported research mandate for three years to work on "Computational probing of replicative stress resistance and induced G-quadruplex resolving processes in embryonic stem or cancer cells." Since July, I also joined the knowledge mining lab of Prof. Vladimir Bajic (King Abdullah University of Science and Technology) to work on text mining and machine learning in life science research.

Why Yale-NUS College?

I recently visited Singapore, and out of curiosity I looked up if there were any assistant professor positions for computational biology in the area, landing me on the present job advertisement. As shared above, my own background is quite broad, including bio-engineering, pharmaceutical sciences, and philosophy. Giving this context I am intrigued by the liberal arts system, and interested to know if I would be a good fit.

Why Me?

I have been working and researching in the field of bioinformatics since 2011, including three years and a half of postdoctoral experience. In effect, I always assumed going for a job in industry after 2 or 3 postdoc years. This year however I have had a transformative experience: my principal investigator, Vladimir Bajic, involved me in his course "AI in bioinformatics" where I introduced computer science students to bioinformation theory. Although I was quite struck by how little biological knowledge these students had, I very much enjoyed teaching them on the subject and finding ways to make the subject more accessible to them giving their computational background. I also enjoyed challenging them to become more critical thinkers. This experience opened up for me a desire to pursue a career as a professor. During the last years, I have also developed a set of personal insights in cancer biology that help me formulating novel hypotheses and topics for research, on which I would like master or PhD students to work on. Although I have not been educated in the liberal arts system, giving my broad background I believe to be well suited for the position. I would much appreciate a chance at a sample class to prove my worth as far as my teaching qualities are concerned. For my research qualities, my publications should sufficiently inform you.

Sincerely,

Christophe Van Neste

Attached: Curriculum Vitae