

July 1, 2021

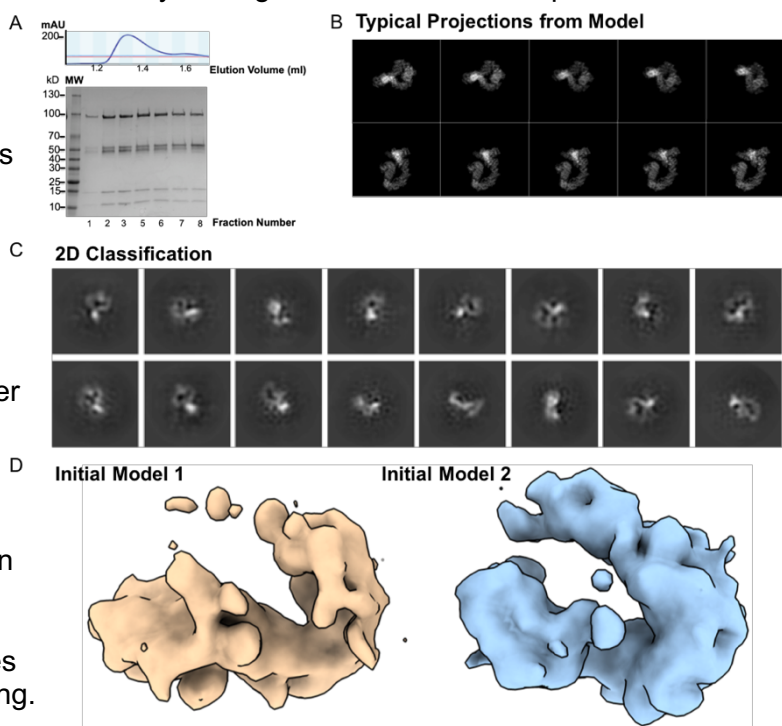
Dear NCCAT Review Committee,

I write this letter with strongest support for Dr. Lijia Jia's NCCAT TP2 Application for Facility Manager Training. I am a tenured Associate Professor in the Department of Biochemistry & Structural Biology, and Director of the Structural Biology Core Facility (SBCF) at UT Health San Antonio. The Structural Biology Core Facility comprises X-ray crystallography, NMR, and as of early 2022, cryo-EM. The cryo-EM facility will be the first of its kind in South Texas, and will feature a 200 kV Thermofisher Glacios equipped with a Falcon 4 detector and Selectris energy filter. It is therefore critical Dr. Jia receive the training before the facility goes on line in January 2022, as we currently have no other hands-on training opportunities.

Dr. Jia approached me regarding a post-doctoral position summer 2020. Given his interest in DNA repair and strong background in single particle cryo-EM, Lijia joined the laboratory in January 2021 as a joint trainee with Dr. Patrick Sung, who recently moved to UTHSA from Yale. Dr. Jia recognized an opportunity to build the upcoming cryo-EM facility and transition to facility manager / research assistant professor with freedom to work on DNA repair complexes.

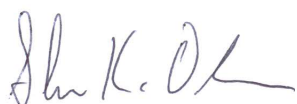
Dr. Jia has impressively hit the ground running on multiple projects, while independently and successfully setting up the facility's Vitrobot, glow discharger, and our labs' GPU workstations and file server. Dr. Jia has also independently impressed another incoming faculty member experienced in cryo-EM who is remotely helping establish the facility.

As an example of Dr. Jia's skills, I was recently able to secure a 12 hour Krios session at another colleague's institute to image a ubiquitin-related complex from my lab. Dr. Jia prepared the sample and analyzed the data (see figure). Despite the small size of the dataset (200,000 particles total), Dr. Jia was already able to obtain promising 2D and 3D models that resemble the predicted 2D projections and that of related complexes. This will serve as one of the samples Dr. Jia would bring with him to NCCAT for training.



In the 6 months I have known Dr. Jia, I have found him to be knowledgeable, hard working, enthusiastic, independent, and collegial – all ingredients to be an exceptional facility manager, and would benefit immensely from the facility manager training at NCCAT.

Best wishes,



Shaun K. Olsen, Ph.D.