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CENTER FOR POLYMER AND ORGANIC SOLIDS  
(CPOS)  
DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY  
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA 93106-9510  
FAX 805-893-4120

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From  
Prof. Quyen Thuc Nguyen  
Director of Center for Polymers and Organic Solids  
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry  
University of California  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-9510  
Office: 3122 Chemistry  
Phone: (805) 893-4851  
Contact: quyen@chem.ucsb.edu

To  
Prof. Martin Kubala  
Dean of Faculty of Science, Palacký University Olomouc,  
17. listopadu 12, 779 00 Olomouc,  
Czech Republic

***Letter of recommendation for Associate Professor Karolina Siskova***

Dear Prof. Kubala,

It is my great pleasure to write a reference in support of Professor Karolina Siskova's application for promotion to the position of Full Professor.

I am the Director of the Center for Polymers and Organic Solids and Distinguished professor in the Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry at the University of California, Santa Barbara. I have published over 315 peer-reviewed papers (H-index: 104 and over 42,000 citations) and given over 350 plenary, keynote, invited talks at international conferences and seminars at universities. Recognition for my research includes 2005 Office of Naval Research Young Investigator Award, 2006 National Science Foundation (NSF) CAREER Award, 2008 Camille Dreyfus Teacher Scholar Award, 2009 Alfred Sloan Research Fellows, 2010 National Science

Foundation American Competitiveness and Innovation Fellows, 2015 Alexander von Humboldt Senior Research Award, 2016 Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, 2019 Hall of Fame - Advanced Materials, 2019 Beaufort Visiting Scholar, St John's College (Cambridge University), 2015-2019 World's Most Influential Scientific Minds; Top 1% Highly Cited Researchers in Materials Science by Thomson Reuters and Clarivate Analytics, 2019 Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), 2023 Wilhelm Exner Medal from Austria, 2023 Fellow of the US National Academy of Inventors, 2023 de Gennes Prize in Materials Chemistry from the Royal Society of Chemistry, 2023 Elected Member of the US National Academy of Engineering, 2024 Fellow of the European Academy of Sciences, and 2025 American Chemical Society (ACS) Henry H. Storch Award in Energy Chemistry. In 2020, I helped establish the VinFuture Foundation based in Vietnam. I also chair the Pre-Screening Committee of the VinFuture Prize (<https://vinfutureprize.org/>). The VinFuture Foundation gives to give prizes to global scientific breakthroughs and technological innovations that positively improve the quality of life.

I first met Karolina in 2007 in Prague, when she applied for Fulbright research scholarship intended to be solved in my laboratories investigating organic solar cells. Her proposal entitled "Investigation of charge transfer in semiconductive polymer, metal nanoparticle and chromophore nanocomposites for application in organic solar cells" was successful. Therefore, she came into my labs in September 2008 and spent 10 months there. She worked hard on incorporation of plasmonic metal nanoparticles prepared by wet chemistry into organic solar cells (OSC) to increase OSC efficiency. She learned how to use many up-to-date equipment and instruments located in my laboratories – e.g. glove boxes, evaporation chamber, EQE testing, atomic force microscopes (AFM) etc., as well as several electron microscopes available within the UCSB (University of California at Santa Barbara) infrastructure. At that time, she was in her early-scientific career, i.e. 2 years after her PhD defense. Despite this fact, she was an independent researcher with clear ideas, performing solid experiments, and having highly motivated approach to thorough research as I could observe during our regular group meetings. Her investigation revealed that plasmonic nanoparticles prepared by wet chemistry approach are not suitable for reproducible results in OSC. Therefore, her stay in my laboratories did not end with a joint publication unfortunately. Nevertheless, in my opinion, she learned a lot about research group leading, manuscript writing, and scientific discussion. After she returned to Czech Republic, we continue to keep in touch via emails.

This year in July, I met Karolina (after 16 years) in Edinburgh at the 17<sup>th</sup> International conference on materials chemistry (MC17; organized by the Royal Society of Chemistry) where I gave a plenary lecture. It was my pleasure to hear that Karolina has her own research team that is truly international, including two post-docs awarded by Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action Operational Program of Johannes Amos Komenský (OP JAK MSCA), a prestigious grant, and two PhD student from abroad.

Karolina has expanded her scientific research interest from metal nanostructures to nanocomposites applied in environmental (although not in OSC) and biomedical fields. She published 55 scientific works and has gained several Czech grants already (Czech Science Foundation, Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic, and Ministry of Youth, Education and Sports of the Czech Republic). She served as a guest editor of two scientific special issues of

Nanomaterials (international scientific journal in Q1/Q2 ranking in Chemistry – multidisciplinary, Materials Science – multidisciplinary, Nanoscience & nanotechnology, Physics – applied) and as a topic editor (Nanomaterials, IJMS, Materials, Polymers, Nanomanufacturing). Karolina received several certificates as a valuable reviewer – e.g. from the American Chemical Society and from the editor of Science of the Total Environment (Elsevier).

Based on her curriculum vitae, I can see that Karolina supervised over 20 students who successfully defended their theses (2 PhD Theses, 15 Diploma Theses, 4 Bachelor Theses). She taught many lectures and courses at three departments of Palacký University Olomouc, such as at the Department of Physical chemistry (2009 – now), Biophysics (2017 – 2021), and Experimental Physics (2017 – now). In 2014, she became Associate Professor of physical chemistry. Recently (in 2023), she has been awarded for her pedagogical activities in category Physics at Faculty of Science, Palacký University Olomouc.

In summary, I would like to stress that Karolina Siskova is an excellent scientist that has an excellent research records (grants and publications), the supervisory, managerial and funding acquisition skills required to be a full professor. Therefore, I strongly support and recommend her promotion to full professor wholeheartedly and without any reservation whatsoever.

Yours sincerely,

Thuc-Quyen Nguyen

Director of the Center for Polymers and Organic Solids

Essam Khashoggi Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry

Member of the US National Academy of Engineering (NAE)

Fellow of the US National Academy of Inventors (NAI)

Fellow of the European Academy of Sciences

Royal Society of Chemistry De Gennes Prize Laureate

Wilhelm Exner Medalist

Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

Fellow of the Humboldt Research Award

Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)

University of California, Santa Barbara

Email: [quyen@chem.ucsb.edu](mailto:quyen@chem.ucsb.edu)

Phone: 1-805-893-4851

Website: <https://nguyen.chem.ucsb.edu/thuc-quyen-nguyen>