Pablo Picasso
Fantastic College
Bethesda, MD 20817

October 28, 2013

Dear Dr. Picasso:

I am writing to apply for the one-year Visiting Assistant Professor position in the area of behavioral neuroscience. I am currently working towards a PhD. in Neuroscience with Dr. Benjamina Spock at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). Currently writing the fourth of five chapters in my thesis, I plan to complete my dissertation in December. A year at Fantastic College will provide an unparalleled opportunity to develop my skills as a teacher and mentor.

As my curriculum vitae illustrate, I have pursued every available opportunity to teach. I have assisted in the development and instruction of many courses relevant to those outlined in the job announcement including *Introductory Neuroscience, Brain and Behavior, Human Behavioral Biology,* and *The Biological Basis of Behavior*. For my service as a teaching assistant in *Introductory Neuroscience,* my students selected me for the Long Teaching Award. Yet my crowning achievement has been the development and direction of an upper level psychology course at San Francisco State University. There, I attempted to bridge psychological theories of motivation with the underlying neurobiology for a diverse group of students, many of whom had not taken a biology course since high school. In the classroom, I have three priorities: interdisciplinary content, interactive teaching strategies, and inquiry-based learning. By the end of the course my students could intelligently discuss a topic of their own choosing from this interdisciplinary perspective. Several students said that this was the first time they had seen the relevance of neuroscience as applied to behavior. Moreover, I discovered that not only could I successfully direct a course, but that I simply adored the process.

The theme of interdisciplinary academic pursuits is pervasive not only in my teaching, but in my research as well. I am equally comfortable discussing ideas with neuroscientists, psychologists, and molecular biologists since my research on the neural circuits underlying drug addiction has broad applications beyond the standard techniques I employ. In particular, I am interested in the limbic brain areas that contribute to drug relapse and other motivated behaviors. My work is immediately engaging and accessible to those new to research, and I have directly supervised several such individuals including a high school teacher and a first year graduate student who is now continuing in her pursuit of addiction research.

Finally, I am dedicated to enriching the lives of students outside the classroom. Through student government and committee work, I have advocated for better housing, graduate education, and student advising. Through ten years of service in outdoor education, I helped many young people gain leadership skills and self-confidence. Perhaps most importantly, I am committed to improving scientific education. In partnership with primary school teachers, I led 2 different after school programs and developed hands-on activities for a third. Currently, I am enrolled in the *Strategies in Gender Equitable Teaching* course at the University of California, Berkeley Extension. The position at Fantastic College is particularly appealing since it provides an opportunity for me to draw young people into science through personalized interactions in the classroom and laboratory.

I have always envisioned my future self as a professor at a small liberal arts college. I celebrate the philosophy of a liberal arts education in everything I do. College should kickoff a lifetime of intellectual growth, not simply provide career training or mass instruction for 500 students packed into a lecture hall. Although my educational training has been centered at large institutions, I have consistently sought out the smaller, more intimate communities within them, and I am highly experienced as a facilitator in small group settings. I am thrilled to apply for this unique position because my mission perfectly matches that of Fantastic College: to encourage students to find their passions and to develop into independent thinkers and future world leaders.

I have enclosed my curriculum vitae, a statement of teaching interests, a statement of research interests, a letter of reference from Joan Sutherland (other letters have been sent directly from Benjimina Spock and Marie Curie), and a copy of the article I recently submitted to *Nature*. I would be happy to forward a full teaching portfolio, syllabi for past and proposed courses, or other additional materials at your convenience. I look forward to hearing from the committee and wish you the best of luck in selecting the ideal candidate.

Thank you for your consideration,

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Education

September 2006 to 2013	**University of California, San Francisco, CA** Ph.D. in Neuroscience, expected in December 2013.
September 2006 to June 2009	**University of California, Berkeley, CA** MS, Neuroscience.
September 2002 to June 2006	**Columbia University, NYC** MA, Psychology.
September 2002 to June 2006	**Columbia University, NYC** BA in Biology. Graduated with Honors. GPA: 3.8.

University Teaching Experience

January 2010 to June 2010	**Dept. of Psychology, University of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA** Instructor for the upper division course, *Self*, with 150 students. Developed and directed a course investigating motivation and emotion from a psychological and physiological perspective. Lectured, recruited guest speakers, supervised one teaching assistant, advised students, wrote exams, and oversaw group project.
January 2008 to March 2008	**Dept. of Physiology, University of California, San Francisco, CA** Teaching Assistant for the first year pharmacy course, *Introductory Neuroscience*. Led discussion, laboratory, and review sessions to clarify basic neurobiological principles. Designed laboratory demonstrations to illustrate course concepts
March 2007 to June 2007	**Dept. of Psychiatry, University of California, San Francisco, CA** Discussion Leader in the introductory psychiatry course, *Brain and Behavior.* Led discussion sessions integrating concepts in neuroscience and behavioral sciences.
March 2005 to June 2005	**Dept. of Biology, Columbia University, NY** Teaching Assistant for the upper division biology course, *Human Behavioral Biology.* Led two discussion sessions elucidating the contributions of ethology, genetics, endocrinology, and neuroscience to the understanding of human behavior.
June 2004 to September 2004	**Dept. of Psychology, Columbia University, NY** Assistant to the Chair of the Human Biology Department. Designed course materials for the undergraduate courses: *Brain and Behavior, Biological Basis of Behavior,* and *The Human Organism.* Materials for *Brain and Behavior* were newly designed and continue to be used by the department.

Community Teaching Experience

October 2000 to present	**Triad, San Francisco, CA** Scientist in an innovative program to engage girls in scietific inquiry. Participation includes sponsoring a bimonthly science club for middle school girls and extensive training on teaching pedagogy and gender equity in the classroom.

August 2008

Drug Abuse Research Teams, NIDA, Sacramento, CA
Summer instructor and scientific consultant for an innovative state-wide program that funds original drug abuse research projects at the high school level.

June 2008 to June 2009

Science and Health Education Partnership, San Francisco, CA
Scientist for the Links Program, a partnership between University researchers and public school teachers. Participated in 2 weeks of workshops on science education and curriculum development. Developed and implemented a science improvement plan for Aptos Middle School through monthly classroom visits.

August 2007 to August 2009

Fort Miley Adventure Ropes, San Francisco State University, CA
Leader on a challenge course for non-profit groups in the Bay Area, such as women's organizations, homeless shelters, and local YMCAs. Facilitated outdoor educational experiences with the goal of building self-esteem and community.

October 2006 to March 2007

Mission Science Workshop, City College, San Francisco, CA
Volunteer and scientific consultant at an after-school science workshop for elementary school girls. Developed hands-on science activities and exhibits.

September 2002 to June 2003

Challenge Learning Center, Mountain View, CA
Facilitator in an outdoor educational program for youth-at-risk. Trained high school students in leadership and team building skills, enabling them to staff challenge courses for their peers who are at risk for drug abuse or dropping out of school.

Research Experience

June 2007 to present

Neuroscience Program, University of California, San Francisco, CA
Doctoral thesis research conducted with Dr. Benjamina Spock. Pioneered behavioral and electrophysiological experiments investigating the neural mechanisms underlying relapse to drug-seeking triggered by environmental cues. Resulted in 3 publications to be submitted to *The Journal of Neuroscience, Nature*, and *Psychopharmacology*.

June 2008 to present

The Wheeler Center for the Neurobiology of Addiction , San Francisco, CA
Member of a unique scientific community of clinicians and basic scientists trying to understand the neural underpinnings of drug abuse.

January 2005 to June 2006

Dept. of Biology, Columbia University, NY
Masters' thesis research conducted with Dr. Chinua Achebe. Investigated Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) by studying the effect of environmental risk factors for SIDS on sleep development in neonatal rats.

March 2004 to June 2006

Dept. of Psychology, Columbia University, NY
Honors' thesis research conducted with Dr. Georgia O'Keeffe. Coordinated experiments analyzing the effects of stress on social behavior and on the morphology of GnRH releasing neurons in the African cichlid fish, *H. burtoni.*

Mentoring Experience

January 2000 to April 2000

Neuroscience Program, University of California, San Francisco, CA
Supervisor for Sandra Day O'Connor, a first year graduate student. Mentored Ms. O'Connor through a project that explored the role of dopamine in cue-induced relapse.

June 2009 to August 2000

University of California Students' Association, Oakland, CA
Vice Chair for a non-profit student organization that represents all 170,000 University of California students. Supervised the orgainization's six full time staff persons, including hiring, evaluation, disciplinary, and firing procedures.

June 2008 to June 2009	**Science and Health Education Partnership, San Francisco, CA** Mentored a middle school science teacher through an 8 week research project studying cues that trigger relapse to drug- and food-seeking. Our results were presented at the International Narcotics Research Conference in 2000.
August 2007 to February 2008	**Academic Decathalon, School of the Arts, San Francisco, CA** Science coach for a high school academic decathalon team. Met with 5 students on a biweekly basis.
September 2004 to June 2006	**Office of Residential Education, Columbia University, NY** Resident Assistant in a 280 resident dormitory. Established a system of student support and counseling in order to stimulate discourse and create a community.

University Service

March 2009 to present	**Curriculum Committee, University of California, San Francisco, CA** Student representative on the departmental committee responsible for curriculum development and educational policy.
October 2000 to present	**Mission Bay Housing Committee, University of California, San Francisco, CA** Student representative on the campus-wide committee responsible for the design and development of student housing at the future Mission Bay campus.
September 2008 to present	**Graduate Student Association, University of California, San Francisco, CA** Director of External Affairs for the UCSF Graduate Students' Association. Worked on policy issues including enhancing faculty-student mentoring, increasing student housing, extending student advising to include non-academic careers, and revitalization of the University's teaching mission.
December 2009 to September 2000	**Commission on the Growth and Support of Graduate Education, University of California Office of the President, Oakland, CA** Student representative on a University-wide task force responsible for planning the long-term growth and financing of public graduate education throughout California.

Awards, Grants, and Training

Fall 2000 to present	*Strategies in Gender Equitable Teaching*, University of California, Berkeley Extension.
August 2000	*Cellular Biology of Addiction,* Cold Spring Harbor, NY.
February 2009	**Long Teaching Award for outstanding teaching in the School of Pharmacy**, University of California, San Francisco. Selected by the pharamcy students who said: " No Teaching-Assistant has ever made understanding material such a mission. For all his time, effort, dedication and enthusiasm, we honor him and hope that teaching is somewhere in his future."
August 2008 to present	Predoctoral Training Consortium in Affective Science, three-year, merit based fellowship, National Science Foundation. Participation includes advanced seminars on emotion and motivation, hands-on training with psychological and neurobiological techniques, private tutorials, and professional development.
June 2007	Graduate Opportunity Fellowship, one-year, merit based fellowship, University of California, San Francisco.
June 2006	Firestone Medal for excellence in undergraduate research, Columbia University.
May 2005	Undergraduate Research Opportunities, Chope Fund Major Grant for honors research, Columbia University.

Publications

Van Rijn, R, Pavola, A, Washington, G, Rousseau, JJ (2001) Dopamine-dependent accumbens neuron firing drives reward-seeking behavior. *Nature.* XX:XX (submitted)

Van Rijn, R and Rousseau, JJ (2001) Basolateral amygdala lesions abolish stimulus-controlled responding for cocaine and disrupt cue-induced reinstatement. *Journal of Neuroscience.* XX:XX (in preparation)

Van Rijn, R and Diderot, D (2000) Operant discriminative stimuli, not classically conditioned stimuli, reinstates food-seeking. *Psychopharmacology*. XX:XX (in preparation)

Van Rijn, R, Diderot, D, Shaw, G.B, and Pavolva, A (2006) Modulation of sleep through ambient temperature increase and sleep deprivation in the neonatal rat. *Soc. Neurosci. Abstracts.*

Thatcher, M, **Van Rijn, R**, Shaw ,BG, and Pavolva, A (2005) Stimulation of adenosinergic A1 receptors enhance non-REM sleep slow wave activity in neonatal rats. *Soc. Neurosci. Abstracts.*

Interests

Bee-keeping, dancing (swing, Argentine tango, and ballroom), astronomy, sea kayaking, and reading fiction.

CV and cover letter provided by:

Bill Lindstaedt, MS Director UC San Francisco Office of Career and Professional Development
Cynthia Fuhrmann, PhD, Assistant Dean, University of Massachusetts Medical School