

March 20, 2010

Search Committee
Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research


Dear Search Committee:

I am delighted to support the candidacy of **Jeremy Lichstein** for a faculty position at the Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research, and as part of a new Environmental Initiative at the University of Arizona. Jeremy was without doubt one of the strongest students in our program, and is indeed one of the best with whom I have interacted in more than four decades of teaching. He arrived here already an excellent field biologist, then set out to learn theory and became just as strong as a theoretician. He is equally comfortable in the field, in the application of sophisticated statistical methods to analyze complex data sets, and in the application of mathematical methods to explore the evolution of life history traits. Not surprisingly, alone in and in collaboration with others, he is producing some deeply insightful theoretical work informed by his field experiences. As I have watched him develop, I have been really impressed both with the ease with which he has learned and applied difficult mathematical concepts, and with the obvious joy he has had in this effort. The paper that we worked on together is one of which I am quite proud, and I thank Jeremy for his leadership on that.

Jeremy's greatest expertise is in plant ecology and landscape ecology, and in relating population and ecosystem perspectives, though his remarkable curiosity and broad knowledge make him a valuable contributor to any ecological discussions. Within landscape ecology, he has applied sophisticated statistical methods to the analysis of remarkable data sets, and complemented that with wonderfully innovative theoretical approaches to understanding the biodiversity of plant communities. He is, in addition, a superb human being and outstanding teacher, and he would immediately become a valued colleague. He is the complete package, and will only get better as his career develops. He really loves what he does. His research begins from life history theory to address emergent properties of ecosystems, and will make an impact as someone relating phenology to grand challenges in natural resource and ecosystem management. He also works well with people from diverse disciplines, so I think will be a perfect complement to your program's strengths.

Jeremy will make a great faculty member, and certainly will be highly productive. His work will be marked by deep insight and technical strength, and he surely will be among the leaders of his generation of ecologists. He not only is becoming an outstanding scientist, but he also has terrific breadth of interests. In our seminars and lab group meetings, no one asks better or more thoughtful questions. These are obviously fueled by a terrific curiosity, but his capacity for asking penetrating questions in a constructive manner will make him a wonderful mentor. He also collaborates easily with a broad range of scientists, and his intellect and sense of humor make him a continual delight to interact with. His ability to build on strengths, while reaching out to others and to new vistas, convinces me that he is going to be one of the leaders of the next generation of ecologists. Jeremy will be a great colleague, and I would be delighted to have him on the faculty here. I regard him as one of the top young ecologists on the market.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Simon A. Levin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Simon A. Levin
Moffett Professor of Biology