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Dr. Connie Woodhouse  
Search Committee Chair  
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University of Arizona  
Tucson, AZ 85721

Dear Connie,

I am writing on behalf of Dr. John W. Williams (aka “Jack” Williams), who has applied for the faculty position at the LTRR. I have known Jack Williams for more than fourteen years, having first met him when he was a graduate student at Brown University. I served as the official “mentor” for his Post-Doctoral Fellowship at NCEAS, and we have collaborated on diverse projects and papers over the past nine years or so. We are currently co-funded by NSF Ecology on a major research project, by NSF Geoinformatics on a large database project, and are also collaborating on various other endeavors, ranging from manuscripts to symposia. I’ve gotten to know him well in a variety of contexts – in the field, in the laboratory, in workshops, during reciprocal visits to each other’s labs, and at various scientific meetings.

Jack Williams is an extraordinarily talented and productive young scientist, certainly one of the best two or three among an unusually strong cohort who emerged from graduate school in plant-based paleoecology in the late 1990s. In fact, Jack is one of the most energetic and ambitious mid-career scientists I know. He is creative, continually scanning the horizon for emerging opportunities to exercise his talents. His early years, in graduate school and post-docs, were devoted mainly to modeling and database synthesis, and he continues these endeavors. Within the international Quaternary paleoecology community, Jack has few peers in this kind of work. In the past few years he has added a paleoecological field and data-collection component to his effort. Jack has developed a productive lab that is generating primary pollen and charcoal records, and his field/lab program is now highly competitive. Although I think his major strengths will continue to be in the domain of formulating innovative studies using database and modeling approaches, he can clearly attract strong graduate students and post-docs interested in field and lab work. He is positioned to have one of the most dynamic and cross-cutting programs in the field.

I think Jack would be an excellent fit with the environment at Arizona. He is far-sighted and ambitious in his research, and can engage effectively with colleagues in diverse fields, ranging from field- and lab-oriented scientists to modelers and data synthesizers. He is very collaborative, as I’m sure you’ve seen from the numerous and diverse coauthorships in his CV. Working with him in our various collaborations has been a pleasure – a highlight of my career both personally and intellectually. You will

find him to be a dynamic, interactive colleague, someone eager to learn from colleagues and equally able to provide novel insights and perspectives useful to others. He is emerging as an international leader in Quaternary paleoecology, and is among the few people in that field who can engage effectively with a broad mix of ecologists, conservation biologists, climate scientists, and resource scientists. He is committed to communicating with audiences outside his discipline, as witnessed by the book he is developing via Princeton University Press. I encourage you to interview him and see what he has to offer. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

/s/ Stephen T. Jackson

Stephen T. Jackson

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