



Habilitation Thesis Reviewer's Report

Masaryk University	of Science
Faculty	Ecology
Procedure field	Jeffrey C. Nekola, Ph.D.
Applicant	Dept. Botany and Zoology
Applicant's home unit, institution	Interdisciplinary investigations into the nature of ecology and evolution
Habilitation thesis	James H. Brown, Ph.D.
Reviewer	Distinguished Professor Emeritus, University of New Mexico
Reviewer's home unit, institution	

I am happy to contribute to the evaluation of the habilitation thesis of **Dr. Jeffrey C. Nekola**. I know Jeff well and have the highest professional and personal regard for him. In 2005 he gave up his tenured position at the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay to join my lab group in New Mexico because he felt that his interests and work were not being supported by UWGB. He had been repeatedly been recognized as an outstanding undergraduate teacher, but his interests in ecology and natural history were not appreciated by an institution increasingly emphasizing molecular biology and biomedical science. It was a brave step, since he came to UNM without a regular tenure-track position and financial support.

The move was successful in reviving Jeff's research career. He got involved in multiple projects, some with me and my students and postdocs, and some with colleagues at UNM and elsewhere. Jeff is a very outgoing, interactive personality, with very broad biological training and interests, and considerable background and skills in statistics, informatics, and related areas. He had a big, positive impact at UNM. He contributed importantly and enthusiastically to our formal Program in Interdisciplinary Biological and Biomedical Science and our informal working group in human macroecology. He is an excellent teacher. He taught two undergraduate courses and volunteered to guest teaching stints in several classes, both undergraduate and graduate. The response of students was uniformly favorable. One grad student said that his guest lectures in my community ecology class were the best part of the course. He was very generous and helpful in working with undergraduate and graduate students on experimental designs, statistical analyses, and interpretations of results.

Jeff is a unique scientist. He has an omnivorous intellect and an amazingly broad background and training. He combines the best traits of a field naturalist with a taste for big, important ecological, evolutionary, and biogeographic problems. He has done a number of very important and interesting things with the land snails: from developing standardized field sampling methods and processing thousands of these samples, some containing thousands of minute snails, from many sites across North America; to producing one edited book and many excellent papers on community composition, macroecological patterns (e.g., body size and abundance), and biogeography. At UNM, in addition to his teaching, he contributed

importantly to our formal Program in Interdisciplinary Biological Science and our informal working group in “human macroecology”.

In summary, Jeff Nekola is a very talented, accomplished, and experienced researcher and teacher. He has my highest recommendation.

Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence:

I urge you to probe the breadth and depth of his interests, expertise, and accomplishments.

Conclusion

The habilitation thesis entitled “Interdisciplinary investigations into the nature of ecology and evolution” by Jeffrey Nekola more than *fulfils* —~~does not fulfil~~ requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Ecology. The proposal for the thesis is outstanding. It accurately reflects the experience he would bring to your institution.

Dated April 5, 2018. If you desire additional information, I will be available by telephone (0011-805-225-1325) and email (jhbrown@unm.edu) between April 6-15, 2018.

