

May 15-16, 2024

ITEM 212-1005-R0524

Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Biology on Professor Ragan Callaway; University of Montana-Missoula

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Professor Ragan Callaway from the faculty of the University of Montana, the faculty of the Division of Biological Sciences wish to express its respect and appreciation for his 30 years of dedicated, effective and valued service to the University and the State of Montana by recommending that the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon Professor Callaway by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION

Dr. Ragan Callaway earned his M.S. in Ecology in 1983 from the U. Tennessee and a Ph.D. in Biology in 1978 from U.C. Santa Barbara. Following postdoctoral research at the U. Illinois-Duke and U.C. Santa Barbara, he joined UM in 1993 as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Biological Sciences (DBS) and the graduate program in Ecology & Evolution. Dr. Callaway continued to rise through the ranks, reaching our institution's highest attainable appointment in 2014 as UM's 10th Regents Professor. He retired in November 2023.

Dr. Callaway is nationally and internationally recognized for his research and expertise in the field of plant ecology, especially as related to the interactions between plants and ecosystems. He has published almost 300 papers, putting him amongst UM's (and the nation's) most productive scientists. Beyond the number of papers he has published is the immense impact he has had on the field of plant ecology. This is best captured by the number of times his works have been cited in other publications, where a paper with 100+ citations is considered seminal. Dr. Callaway has over 25 publications that have been cited more than 500 times. A similar assessment of impact can be made using an "h-index", which reflects both publications numbers and citations. While an h-index of above 50 is considered exceptional, Dr. Callaway's is over 100. His exemplary track record of publications is equally mirrored by his success in continually obtaining impressive levels of extramural funding throughout his tenure at UM. To gain a perspective on the range, significance and applications of his research, one need only look to spectrum of funding agencies that have supported his research over the years, including: the National Science Foundation, US Department of Agriculture, the National Geographic Foundation, Mellon Foundation and the Department of Defense. Dr. Callaway had the distinction of being named an AAAS Fellow in 2010.

It is also important to note that Dr. Callaway's contributions to DBS and UM are not limited to his scientific research, but extend to include highly impactful teaching and service. The courses he has developed and taught at both the undergraduate and graduate levels have kept our students (and programs) at the forefront of plant ecology and invasive species, two topics of critical importance to Montana. Outside of the classroom he has mentored more than dozen graduate students and an even greater number of undergraduates. Dr. Callaway's service contributions include a multitude of important committees at the Division, College and University level. What especially stands out among these has been his serving as the State Projector Director for the NSF

EPSCoR program. In this role he has leveraged his expertise in research, funding and program building to the benefit of science faculty, not only at UM, but across the entire state.

In summary, we recommend that Professor Ragan Callaway be awarded an Emeritus appointment with the highest enthusiasm. He has made a lasting impact on UM as a scholar, teacher and leader. It is also readily apparent that Professor Callaway will continue to contribute to and be a champion of this University and that he should do so as an Emeritus Professor of Ecology.

ATTACHMENTS

None