

September 21-22, 2022

ITEM 202-1006-R0922

Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Biology on Dr. William Holben; University of Montana-Missoula

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Professor William Holben from the faculty of The University of Montana, the faculty wishes to express its appreciation for his 28 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 William Holben by the Board of Regents of the Montana University System.

EXPLANATION

Dr. William Holben earned his Ph.D. in Cell and Molecular Biology in 1985 from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Following postdoctoral research in microbial ecology at Michigan State University, he joined the Center for Microbial Ecology in the Department of Crop and Soils Sciences as Research Assistant Professor at Michigan State University in 1988. In 1995, Dr. Holben moved to the University of Montana as an Associate Professor of Microbial Ecology in the Division of Biological Sciences. At the University of Montana, he advanced to the rank of Professor in 2001. From 2005-2013, he served as the Director of the Montana–Ecology of Infectious Diseases (M–EID) Program, a National Science Foundation-funded graduate training program. From 2006-2013, he served as Director of the Montana Integrative Learning Experience for Students (MILES) Program, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Undergraduate Science Education Program. From 2006 to the present, he served as Director of the Office of Research and Educational Opportunities for Students (OREOS) at the University of Montana. From 2015 to the present, he held an appointment as Affiliate Scientist at the Center for Permafrost Studies at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark. Professor Holben retired from the University of Montana in May 2022.

Professor Holben’s contributions to the field of microbiology are extensive. His work has illuminated microbiome structure and function in animals, plants and insects as well as interactions between microbial communities, natural environments and human systems. He elucidated the role of microbial communities in climate change and in the success of invasive weed species. The impact of his scholarly contributions is reflected in his CV, which lists 89 published articles, including papers in outstanding journals such as Journal of Ecology, Ecology Letters, PLoS Genetics, Applied & Environmental Microbiology, and Microbial Ecology. He has published 33 conference abstracts in the last 10 years and has presented fifteen invited talks at colloquia and conferences since 2005. Furthermore, he has been PI or co-PI on 12 funded grants in the last 10 years, from the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Agriculture and other agencies.

Throughout his career at UM, Professor Holben has remained committed to and invested in teaching, at several levels. He has taught microbiology courses to undergraduates and graduate students here at UM and abroad. Professor Holben also mentored and served as Major Professor to more than 10 UM graduate students in several graduate programs. He also impacted our curriculum significantly; he was co-developer of new graduate and undergraduate degree options in Microbial Ecology at UM, and he served as Chair of the Biological Sciences Curriculum Committee for 10 years. He used his curricular expertise to bring many new educational programs to UM. For example, he was PI on both a Howard Hughes Medical Institute grant to purchase science education infrastructure (\$1.5M) as well as a National Science Foundation graduate training program to support UM’s graduate education (\$3.18M). He also initiated and procured funding for several National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduate (REU) programs

that funded immersive research experiences for dozens of undergraduate students during the summer. Professor Holben's dedication to educational programs made a significant impact on UM's students and its educational mission.

Professor Holben's service to science has also been commendable. He served as editorial board member to the journals Microbial Ecology Journal and Applied and Environmental Microbiology for a combined 13 years. He served on numerous review panels for granting agencies including at National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, US Department of Agriculture and Department of Energy (and received the Department of Energy Director's Certificate of Appreciation in 1994).

In summary, we recommend that Professor William Holben be awarded an Emeritus appointment with the highest enthusiasm. He has made a lasting impact on the University of Montana as a program director, scholar and teacher. Professor Holben would continue to contribute to this University as an Emeritus Professor of Microbiology through his continuing outstanding grant and scholarship activity.

ATTACHMENTS

None