VirginiaTech
College of Science

Department of Biological Sciences
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
www.biol.vt.edu

February 4, 2021

Dear Wine Award Selection Committee:

The Department of Biological Sciences and the College of Science are pleased to nominate **Dr. Ignacio Moore** for Virginia Tech William E. Wine Award for Excellence in Teaching. Dr. Moore joined our faculty as an assistant professor in 2004 and achieved the rank of full professor in 2015. His contributions to the teaching missions of the department, college, and university began early in his career. Two years after arriving on campus he received a prestigious five-year NSF CAREER award, with both research and educational aims, and in 2011 he was recognized for his teaching efforts with a COS CTE. In the following decade, Dr. Moore's commitment to excellence in teaching and mentoring, with a focus on diversity and inclusion, has had increasingly wide-ranging positive impacts on his students and faculty colleagues alike. Hence, we are nominating Dr. Moore for this award as further recognition of his long-term teaching efforts on behalf of Virginia Tech students.

Dr. Moore is a gifted and dedicated teacher. He has an uncanny capacity to make his courses relevant and to stimulate student learning. He also has a remarkable talent to educate students on how to assimilate and apply diverse perspectives in the learning process. As you will see from his teaching philosophy, he wants his students to ask questions and then learn how to answer them as independent thinkers. He works creatively and diligently to help guide them through this challenging process.

Dr. Moore has strived to either update or newly develop all of his courses, with substantial impacts on the curriculum. He has taught the undergraduate Introductory Animal Physiology course (BIOL 3404) 16 times to >1000 students. This course is a valuable elective for undergraduate students interested in topics from medicine to ecology and evolution. More recently, he secured a 4VA grant to develop a new Pathways course, Biology of Sex (BIOL 1034) which he has taught six times since 2015, providing an approachable introduction to biology, and the scientific approach, in general, for non-science majors from across the VT campus. He also partnered with faculty colleagues on two study-abroad courses, Caribbean Biology of the Dominican Republic (in 2008 and 2009) and Conservation and Culture of Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands (taught seven times from 2006-2020). In these courses he not only introduced scientific topics and research questions relevant to the region in which they were studying, but immersed the students deeply into the local culture, including having them work on research projects together with local indigenous people. This past year, Dr. Moore was recognized with the VT Alumni Award for Excellence in International Research, which acknowledged the close ties between his research program and his teaching. The accompanying support letters from undergraduate students share common themes: his strong personalized commitment to his students, both inside and outside of the classroom, and how the experiences he gives them can be life altering. Another undergraduate student who took three courses with Dr. Moore shared the following: *"He reached out to me multiple times outside of the classroom to encourage me, as well as other students, to make the most of the time and resources at Virginia Tech. As a result of his time and effort, many of my most memorable and educational experiences are tied to his outreach and support. He encouraged me to work in his lab with one of his graduate students even though I was not confident in my abilities. He saw I was struggling and gave me a chance to do something that mattered and get my hands on a real*

research project. He led me and my fellow students through a national science conference, an amazing study abroad trip, a fellowship nomination, as well as opening the door to other labs at Virginia Tech."

Dr. Moore has also developed new graduate-level courses. These include Behavioral Endocrinology (BIOL 5174), which has been taught eight times from 2005-2017, and Introduction to Graduate Studies in Biological Sciences (BIOL 5174), which has become a required component of the curriculum for every graduate student in our department. The "Introduction" course helps to smooth the transition for new students in our graduate program by providing essential tools for success, including in the area of diversity and inclusion. In addition, Dr. Moore has led seminar courses and formalized literature-review courses for graduate students, often doing so voluntarily as an overload to his regular teaching assignment.

Dr. Moore also applies his teaching philosophy to the mentoring of a large cohort of undergraduates, graduate students, and postdoctoral researchers in his world-renowned research program. A prior graduate student, now a faculty member, wrote. "*The journey through secondary education is like a labyrinth with multiple dead ends, so having the guidance of someone like Dr. Moore is empowering for the student. Clearly, [he] has extensive knowledge of his field and is an enthusiastic student of new research avenues. However, what a student needs the most is that his professor is available to support and guide him in his educational process. This is the biggest lesson that I have learned from Dr. Moore and that I currently apply every day with my students.*"

Dr. Moore's strong personal commitment to enhancing diversity in higher education comes through, not only in the classroom, but at many other levels. The majority of his graduate students have been from groups that are underrepresented in the sciences. He also has recently created a remote seminar series for students at Virginia State University, a historically black university, to introduce them to research at VT. In addition, Dr. Moore chairs our departmental diversity committee, which organizes not only events to raise awareness and promote community within the department, but also the annual campus-wide Martin Luther King seminar.

Since joining our faculty, Dr. Moore's teaching contributions have been consistently among the strongest in the department, significantly exceeding departmental averages and expectations, and substantially increasing the diversity of our learning dimensions, especially in the internationalization of our curriculum, with impacts reaching far across our campus. His college- and university-level service efforts, including playing major roles in helping establish the college's neuroscience program and the university's Global Change Center, have had similar far-ranging impacts on students and faculty colleagues. For his career-long commitment to excellence in teaching, advising, and mentoring over the past 17 years we believe that Dr. Moore is well-deserving of the 2021 Virginia Tech Wine Award for Excellence in Teaching and strongly support his nomination.

Sincerely,

Robert Cohen

Ann M. Stevens

Dr. Robert Cohen,
Head of Biological Sciences

Dr. Ann M. Stevens,
Chair of Biological Sciences Honorifics Committee

II. Nomination Letter

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January 23, 2020

To Members of the Alumni Teaching Award Selection Committee:

It is my sincere pleasure to nominate Dr. Carolyn Copenheaver for the Virginia Tech Alumni Teaching Award. Dr. Copenheaver has been a dedicated and effective teacher in the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation (FREC) for two decades and was the 2020 recipient of the Certificate of Teaching Excellence from the College of Natural Resources and Environment (CNRE). During this tenure, she has consistently offered unique and challenging materials to CNRE undergraduate students enrolled in Forestry Ecology and Silvics (FREC 3314). Course offerings provide students with the foundational ecological principles and applications that will allow them to succeed professionally and uniquely allow students the opportunity to practice oral and poster presentation skills and to hone their interview skills, which aid them professionally. Additionally, recent Student Perception of Teaching surveys clearly indicate that students are enthusiastic about her teaching style and they consistently rate her course above others in FREC, which is known as a strong teaching department. Furthermore, she is the co-instructor for the field-intensive Field Experiences in Forest Resources (FREC 2214), the course in which students master basic outdoor and technical field skills needed by forest and environmental resources management students by spending two afternoon labs per week in nearby forests, which is somewhat unique to FREC.

Dr. Copenheaver also provides a graduate course offering, Advanced Forest Ecology (FREC 5374), which offers graduate students opportunities to conduct group research projects that address a different aspect of forest ecology each year. Dr. Copenheaver subsequently leads graduate students through field data collection, analyses, writing, and interpretation processes. Subsequently, she has facilitated development of over 20 peer-reviewed publications co-written with 70 students. Such research and manuscript development opportunities are rare for a three-hour course and provide graduate students with valuable insights into technical writing and peer-reviewed manuscript processes prior to development of their theses or dissertation publications.

Overall, Dr. Copenheaver's course offerings challenge students to work in outdoor settings, think critically and broadly, work with teams, and communicate effectively. These are skills that employers demand, and Dr. Copenheaver's teaching commitment and unique approaches ensure that her students are prepared to succeed as professionals.

In 2018, she was awarded the Carl Alwin Schenck Award by the Society of American Foresters for her outstanding education contributions. This is a national teaching award from her professional society that is presented annually to only one faculty member from the entire country. It is important to note that she was the first female recipient of this award in a

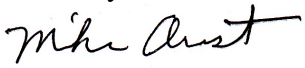
traditionally male-dominated profession. This award evidences another important aspect of Dr. Copenheaver's faculty role: She enthusiastically serves as an example and mentor to many of our undergraduate students and she has a very strong commitment to increasing diversity.

Dr. Copenheaver's student engagement is very high, and she has a welcoming open-door policy. It is a normal sight to see one, two, or a half-dozen students gathered in her office to chat about assignments, future classes they should take, summer internships and job opportunities, or personal life issues. She is clearly well-liked and respected by students and has repeatedly served as faculty representative with the student chapter of the Society of American Foresters. Furthermore, she has served as the principal investigator or co-investigator on approximately $1.2 million of eight sponsored research grants that have been used to examine and improve pedagogy in natural resources and to provide opportunities for underrepresented groups in natural resources. Dr. Copenheaver has presented and published results regarding natural resources education research at multiple conferences and outlets. Such activities were recognized by her College in 2018 with the presentation of the CNRE Diversity and Inclusion Award.

In addition to her strong teaching and natural resource pedagogy research, Dr. Copenheaver has hosted workshops that promote natural resource education, taught continuing education workshops, provided presentations for numerous community organizations, and served on the FREC Undergraduate Affairs Committee, CNRE Student Policies and Affairs Committee, University Committee on Graduate and Professional Studies and Policy, and the University Graduate Honor System. Such service further reflects her commitment to the students.

In summary, I strongly urge you to consider this outstanding faculty member for the Virginia Tech Alumni Teaching Award. Her commitment, effectiveness, innovation, passion for students, and national teaching recognitions evidence that she is deserving of this award.

Sincerely,



Mike Aust
Garland Gray Professor of Forest Operations