

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan
School of Natural Resources and Environment

Approved by the Regents
May 14, 2009

Robert E. Grese, associate professor of natural resources, with tenure, School of Natural Resources and Environment, is recommended for promotion to professor of natural resources, with tenure, School of Natural Resources and Environment.

Academic Degrees:

M.S.L.A. 1984 University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI
B.L.A. 1978 University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Professional Record:

2004- present Director, Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum, University of Michigan
1999- 2004 Director, Nichols Arboretum, University of Michigan
1992- present Associate Professor, with tenure, School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Michigan
1986- 1992 Assistant Professor, School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Michigan
1984- 1986 Assistant Professor, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

For almost a decade, Professor Grese's appointment has been divided between the School of Natural Resources and Environment (SNRE) and the directorship of two major University properties. Initially he served as director of Nichols Arboretum and since 2004 he has been the director of the combined Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum (MBGNA).

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Whether teaching a beginning design studio, a more advanced landscape architecture course, or ecological restoration that serves students from throughout the School and beyond, Professor Grese's highly-regarded courses offer a blend of theory, history, principles, and practice. Students in these courses have worked with land conservancy groups, university organizations, and metro Detroit communities to explore ideas, hone their skills, and serve others by putting course material to use. Students appreciate the great variety of the assignments as well as the well-organized lectures, provocative readings, and especially Professor Grese's genuine dedication to their learning. The impact of his participation in the two-year American Association for Higher Education's "Peer review of teaching project" through the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching continues to be evident in the innovative approaches he has taken in his formal teaching. Professor Grese has also been heavily involved with master's students, serving 120 students on thesis, practicum, and master's projects. His influence as a teacher is further reflected in the vast informal learning network represented by the prescribed burn program and the Saturday workdays he initiated at Nichols Arboretum. Over the years, hundreds of volunteers, mostly students from throughout the University, would not only learn through their service but be treated to explanations about the dynamics of local ecosystems, the role of fire in ecosystems, and problems associated with invasive plants. More recently, Professor Grese helped establish the student-run project called "Cultivating Community," for which, in 2006, he was recognized with the University's Michigan Leadership "Advisor of the Year Award."

Research: Professor Grese's scholarly activities focus on the practice of ecological restoration and the explication of the works of Jens Jensen and other pioneers of the prairie style of landscape architecture. The leading authority on Jensen, Grese has extended his prior historical work to show how the early advocacy of the use of native plants in landscape architecture has contributed directly to the fields of restoration ecology and conservation biology. He has also become widely recognized as a leader in the restoration of Midwestern landscapes. His restoration work moves seamlessly from theory through education and outreach to practical application, creating scholarly impact, generating public goods, and leaving a legacy on the landscape. At the national level Professor Grese has given over seventy lectures on the history and practice of ecological restoration and has been invited to contribute his authoritative analyses to prestigious publications. At more local scales, his efforts have led to honors such as the George Sexton Servant of the Earth Award from the Sierra Club and even an award named for him, the Bob Grese Deep Roots Award, for his many contributions to local restoration efforts.

Recent Significant Publications:

- Grese, R. E., and Michener, D. 2006. "Ethics, water conservation, and sustainable gardens." *Landscape Architecture*, 96, 6, 76, 78, 80, 82-85.
- Ryan, R. L., and Grese, R. E. 2005. "Urban volunteers and the environment: Forest and prairie restoration." In P. F. Barlett (Ed.) *Urban place: Reconnecting to the natural world*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 173-188.
- Gray, D., Grese, R. E., and Orlow, T. 2004. "Saving School Girls' Glen: Erosion control and watershed restoration in a University arboretum." *Erosion Control*, 11(2):34-45.
- Grese, R. E. 2002. Jens Jensen and the culture of nature. In J. S. Bachrach and J. Nathan (Eds.) *A force of nature: The life and work of Jens Jensen*. Chicago: Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and the Chicago Park District. Pages 10-15.
- Ryan, R. L., Kaplan, R., and Grese, R. E. 2001. "Predicting volunteer commitment in environmental stewardship program." *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 44(5): 629-648.
- Grese, R. E., and Knott, J. R. (Editors). 2001. "Reimagining place." Special Issue of *Michigan Quarterly Review*. Pages 1-6.
- Grese, R. E. 2000. Introduction. In *Landscape gardening* by Ossian Cole Simonds (originally published 1920). Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press. Pages ix-lvi.

Service: What has transpired since Professor Grese assumed the directorship of both the Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum is the result of much more than a time commitment. It is the product of thoughtful leadership, vision, and dedication. The same deep sense of public service and true citizenship is evident in the inordinate allegiance Professor Grese has shown in his activities in SNRE, the University, the community, and his profession. He is a prolific writer and speaker for general audiences, with dozens of articles written for the public and over fifty local presentations on his work. He has held over twenty positions on governing boards and steering committees, such as the Michigan Alliance for Conservation of Cultural Heritage, and the Michigan State Parks Advisory Committee. Bob Grese has clearly made a difference that has benefited many individuals, groups, and the land.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "The fact that he is able to carry out such demanding administrative activities while simultaneously maintaining an active program of scholarship not only demonstrates his academic abilities, but also point to his dedication and tremendous work ethic."

Reviewer B: "He has demonstrated a remarkable ability to develop informed and supportive networks of students and citizens."

Reviewer C: "Of course, Bob is a leading expert on these figures and their work, and he provided excellent leads, which we have been following up on in the course of our work."

Reviewer D: "In an era of increased specialization and the academic and financial research reward system that pushes many academics into a silo approach to career management Professor Grese stands out as a truly interdisciplinary thinker and teacher."

Reviewer E: "As our understanding of landscape architectural history deepens, Bob Grese's work is an essential pillar of those studies."


Reviewer F: "Professor Grese is much more than a landscape historian. He is among the finest collaborative scholars I know."

Reviewer G: "I find it most impressive that he has been able to manage not one, but two distinctly different public gardens, write public oriented articles, manage staff, give a dozen or so presentations a year to public and academic groups, work with professional and social organizations and of course raise funds to run the gardens."

Reviewer H: "In sum, Professor Grese is an established expert who has been 'running with the big dogs' for a decade and a half."

Summary:

Professor Grese's expertise as a landscape architecture historian, contributions to ecological restoration, and translation of landscape principles to the restoration process are widely recognized and sought. He is not only an articulate scholar, but someone who consistently demonstrates how to make restoration ecology happen on the ground through his outstanding teaching, numerous community contributions, many speaking engagements, and capable leadership in guiding two major public goods facilities. In light of his outstanding contributions I recommend Professor Grese for promotion to professor of natural resources, with tenure, School of Natural Resources and Environment.



J. David Allan
Acting Dean
School of Natural Resources and Environment

May 2009