

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Christopher W. Dick, assistant professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, and assistant curator in the Herbarium, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, with tenure, and associate curator in the Herbarium, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1999	Harvard University
M.A.	1996	Harvard University
B.S.	1988	Hampshire College

Professional Record:

2005 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, and Assistant Curator, Herbarium, University of Michigan
2006 – present	Research Associate, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
2003 – 2004	Postdoctoral Research Associate, University of Washington
2002 – 2005	Tupper Fellow, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
2001 – 2002	Mellon Fellow, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute
1999 – 2001	Molecular Evolution Fellow, Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Dick is an innovative and dedicated teacher. He has developed and taught two very different courses at Michigan, both involving substantial curricular development and instructional investment, and enrolling a mix of undergraduate and graduate students. He is a fluent and well-organized lecturer who engages with his classes in an interactive and positive manner. He has mentored a number of undergraduate researchers and has obtained National Science Foundation (NSF) Research Experience for Undergraduates funding to enable their participation in field research in Panama. He has also met with considerable success as a graduate student mentor, attracting excellent students who had been awarded coveted NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement grants and had produced high profile publications.

Research – Professor Dick is widely admired for his creativity, rigor, and willingness to take on the classic and important question in evolutionary biology: why are there so many species of trees in tropical rain forests? He has attacked tropical biodiversity on multiple levels using novel molecular approaches and has established himself as a leader in the relatively new field of phylogeography (the structure of genetic variation across large landscapes) of tropical plants. Professor Dick has published 20 articles in peer-reviewed journals and has been successful in attracting both graduate students and significant levels of external funding.

Recent and Significant Publications:

“Native bees mediate long distance pollen dispersal in a shade coffee landscape mosaic,” with S. Jha, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*, 107, 2010, pp. 13760-13764.

- “Dissecting tropical plant diversity with forest plots and a molecular toolkit,” with W. J. Kress, *BioScience*, 59, 2009, pp. 745-755.
- “The complex biogeographic history of a widespread tropical tree species,” *Evolution*, 62, 2008, pp. 2760-2774.
- “Extreme long distance dispersal of the lowland rainforest tree *Ceiba pentandra* L. (Malvaceae) in Africa and the Neotropics,” with E. Bermingham, et al., *Molecular Ecology*, 16, 2007, pp. 3039-3049.

Curation – Professor Dick serves as one of four curators in the Herbarium. He is spearheading a major effort to rethink the nature of Herbarium voucher specimens themselves, their metadata, and how the vouchering process relates to field research. He has initiated a program of taxonomic standardization in a global network of permanent forest inventory plots, which have become the central resource for research in tropical forest ecology. The program includes linking voucher specimens to marked plants in the field, depositing vouchers that include high quality DNA templates in multiple herbaria, genotyping the vouchers using standard plant DNA barcoding markers, and depositing those sequences in the Barcode of Life data system. He has also developed a web-based interactive key to identify woody plants in Michigan that is heavily used for teaching and public outreach. All of his curatorial initiatives have provided funds for undergraduate training and students have been closely involved in these efforts.

Service – Professor Dick has provided noteworthy service to his department and has been very active nationally and internationally in his profession. He has served on the Graduate Affairs, Diversity, Graduate Preliminary Examination, Seminar, Early Career Scientist Symposium, and faculty search committees. Professionally, Professor Dick serves as a councilor of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation and has organized multiple international symposia in the United States, Germany, and the United Kingdom on phylogeography. He has served as associate editor of *Tropical Plant Biology*, a new journal in his field, and has edited or co-edited special issues in two other journals. He is a very active reviewer of manuscripts for a wide range of journals and of proposals from different granting agencies, including serving as a panelist in the NSF phylogeography program.

External Reviews:

Reviewer (A)

“...Dr. Dick has become the top authority and most important researcher on phylogeography and genetic structure of tropical plants, especially in the New World. He has made remarkable achievements in tackling many long-standing questions about patterns and processes of evolution and historical biogeography in tropical woody flora.”

Reviewer (B)

“Dr. Dick has clearly established himself as a leader and organizer in the field of plant evolutionary biology and phylogeography. He has developed a world-class program of research training and mentoring at the University of Michigan. ...Dick would be highly qualified for tenure and promotion at my institution...”

Reviewer (C)

“Dick clearly combines excellent skills and knowledge in the lab with a field biologist’s

dedication and determination to work in challenging places and with big, long-lived organisms. I think it very clear that Dick is one of a small handful of leaders in his areas of research focus.”

Reviewer (D)

“At this point, I can’t name a single investigator [of his generation] in the US who has made such an impact in this area, with this particular combination of interests.”

Reviewer (E)

“It is hard to imagine a stronger candidate for promotion!”

Reviewer (F)

“I know of no other worker of his peer group who has worked in tropical plant biology using so many different approaches.”

Reviewer (G)

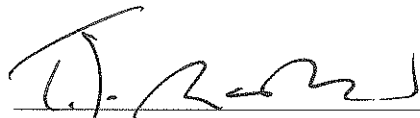
“Chris delivered the wakeup call that we had to start thinking like pollen-vectors if we were ever to have any hope of ‘getting it right’; that paper [on *Dinizia*] rates a ‘must-read’ for everyone new to the arena.”

Reviewer (H)

“...Dr. Dick’s work is very interesting and of excellent quality. ... I particularly like the *Evolution* paper because it combines elements of systematics and population genetics, and this union too often is ignored.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Dick is a leading scholar in tropical biodiversity. He is an excellent teacher and mentor of undergraduate and graduate students, as well as an innovative curator in the Herbarium. The Executive Committee and the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Christopher W. Dick be promoted to the rank of associate professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, with tenure, and associate curator in the Herbarium, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Terrence J. McDonald
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor,
Professor of History and Dean
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

May 2011