

Approved by the
Regents
May 21, 2015

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
COLLEGE OF LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS

Timothy Y. James, assistant professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

2003	Ph.D.	Duke University
1996	B.S.	University of Georgia

Professional Record:

2009 – present	Assistant Professor, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Michigan
2009 – 2015	Assistant Curator, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Michigan
2008	Post-doctoral Researcher, Department of Biology, McMaster University
2006 – 2007	Post-doctoral Researcher, Department of Evolutionary Biology, Uppsala University, and Department of Forest Mycology and Plant Pathology, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
2003 – 2006	Post-doctoral Researcher, Department of Biology, Duke University

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor James is a dedicated teacher in the classroom, laboratory, and in the field. He also excels as a research mentor for undergraduate students in his laboratory, serving as an advisor for seventeen students to date. Professor James fully engages with his students in class settings both large and small. By incorporating active learning approaches, clicker technology, and on-line discussions and exercises, and by continuously upgrading his teaching skills, he has become a highly effective and inspiring instructor. He particularly excels as a laboratory and field instructor. He completely updated the “Biology of Fungi” curriculum, which now includes a large number of hands-on activities involving aspects of fungal biology that range from fermentation and mushroom cultivation activities to direct field surveys of local species in Ann Arbor and at the UM Biological Station. He took the syllabus that was classically structured and reorganized it around broad themes in ecology and evolution, such that it better engages students in the study material. The results are evident in the extraordinary student evaluations he now garners.

Research – Professor James has established a vibrant mycological program at the University of Michigan that is widely admired for its impact across a number of major research themes. He has a vigorous, well-funded research program on fungal diversity, which has been lacking since the 1990’s. He is a fluent collaborator and the scope of his research interests continue to expand in new and exciting directions. His work is also attracting graduate students and post-doctoral researchers. Professor James’ research productivity and citation record are impressive. He publishes in highly regarded journals, including *Science*, *Nature*, *PNAS*, and *Current Biology*, and he has received multiple awards from the National Institutes of Health, National Science

Foundation (NSF), and multiple other granting bodies. He also received the prestigious C. J. Alexopoulos Prize by the Mycological Society of America which recognizes early career mycologists and is based on the quality, originality, and quantity of their published work. Professor James has distinguished himself as a proactive curator of the extraordinary fungi and lichens collections at Michigan. He has obtained multiple NSF grants to digitize the collections, introduced DNA genotyping approaches to collection material, and greatly raised the research profile of this valuable biodiversity resource.

Recent and Significant Publications:

- “Evolution of a morphological novelty occurred before genome compaction in a lineage of extreme parasites,” with K. L Haag, et al., *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, U. S. A.*, 111, 2014, pp. 15480-15485.
- “Polyporales genomes reveal the genetic architecture underlying tetrapolar and bipolar mating systems,” with S. Sun, et al., *Mycologia*, 105, 2013, pp. 1374-1390.
- “Shared signatures of parasitism and phylogenomics unite Cryptomycota and microsporidia,” with A. Pelin, et al., *Current Biology*, 23, 2013, pp. 1548-1553.
- “Archaeorhizomycetes: unearthing an ancient class of ubiquitous soil fungi,” with A. Rosling, et al., *Science*, 333, 2011, pp. 876-879.

Service – Professor James’ service record is exemplary and includes serving on multiple committees in the department and for his profession. He has also served as a specialist reviewer for many scientific journals.

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A)

“No question, James is hands-down the best fungal biologist [of his generation] on the planet, and his breadth as a mycologist is unmatched. ...[his] fingerprints are all over the field of mycology, and several of his papers [are] now ‘classics’ in our field. While his 2006 *Nature* paper certainly stands out as a recent apex, many of Tim’s papers are among my favorites...”

Reviewer (B)

“Dr. James is one of the big leaders in the field of mycology. I doubt that you could find anyone active in the field that would not be familiar with and impressed by his work in systematics and evolution. ...[his] case has all the elements that one looks for in research: great publication record (including high impact journals), great citation record for these publications, ability to attract top students and postdocs, and healthy grant support.”

Reviewer (C)

“The mental image I have of Tim James is that of a world leader in molecular approaches to understand the genetics and evolution of the basal lineages of fungi, and using different state of the art methods and analyses to support or disprove his and other hypotheses. I have no doubt that all would support me in saying that he is a world leader in this field. Without even checking, I would rate Dr[.] James in the top 5% in the field, as he has published some amazing papers in top journals.”

Reviewer (D)

“This is one of those delightful tenure cases where I can see nothing but positives, and indeed a number of superlatives, in the candidate’s accomplishments and trajectory for even greater things, and where the more deeply I delved into the materials on Dr. James you sent...[the] more impressed I became.”

Reviewer (E)

“The promotion, in my opinion, is overdue and most justified. ...I am most impressed by his research versatility. Tim’s research interests are significantly more diverse than those of researchers far more advanced in their careers.”

Reviewer (F)

“Tim’s research is multifaceted, innovative, and impactful. ...[he] is a dynamic and innovative scientist who not only is generating important new knowledge but also is actively curating and enhancing the Universities internationally important fungus collection. ... Tim is a great asset to the University of Michigan and to the evolutionary biology community.”

Reviewer (G)

“...James is a serious scholar and one whose potential is [sic] not been fully reached. He has much to contribute and I am confident he will continue to move the field of fungal evolution and genomics forward.”

Reviewer (H)

“Dr. Tim James is one of those quiet but brilliant scientists who unassumingly moves a field of research forward by inspiring others with their imaginative fire. ... There is no doubt that Dr. James is regarded as a scientist who is at the forefront of his field based on past accomplishments and that he will continue to make outstanding contributions to science.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor James is an internationally-recognized scholar in mycology, an excellent teacher and mentor of students at all levels, and an excellent citizen of the department and his professional community. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Assistant Professor Timothy Y. James be promoted to the rank of associate professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



Andrew D. Martin
Dean, and Professor of Political Science
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

May 2015