

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

Jeffrey A. Wilson, associate professor of Earth and environmental sciences, with tenure, and associate curator, Museum of Paleontology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of Earth and environmental sciences, with tenure, and curator, Museum of Paleontology, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1999	University of Chicago
M.S.	1995	University of Chicago
B.A.	1991	Kalamazoo College

Professional Record:

2010 - present	Associate Professor, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, and Associate Curator, Museum of Paleontology, University of Michigan
2004 – 2010	Assistant Professor, Department of Geological Sciences, and Assistant Curator, Museum of Paleontology, University of Michigan
1999 – 2004	Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Geological Sciences, and Visiting Assistant Curator, Museum of Paleontology, University of Michigan

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching – Professor Wilson has contributed to a series of courses at the undergraduate and graduate level, responding to the needs of the department and its paleontology program. Student evaluations have demonstrated that his record of teaching is of consistently high quality. Throughout his career at the University of Michigan, he has been a dedicated teacher and mentor to undergraduate and graduate students, working with them closely in the classroom, the laboratory, in museums here and abroad, and in the field, nationally and internationally. Professor Wilson actively involves undergraduate students in his research program. Since his last promotion, he has engaged five students in the laboratory as assistants and is currently advising two others. He has also maintained a strong graduate student mentorship program during his tenure at Michigan, having graduated four Ph.D. students as sole advisor. Since his last promotion, he has graduated two Ph.D. students and two master's students, and currently has two active Ph.D. students.

Research – Professor Wilson utilizes paleontological data at various scales to gain insights into the history of sauropod dinosaurs, which for ~150 million years of the Mesozoic era were the dominant group of terrestrial herbivores. They include the largest terrestrial vertebrates of all time. He has had significant impact on understanding sauropod phylogeny, their behavior and functional anatomy in the context of their gigantic size, and their patterns of geographic distribution on land masses that were being reshaped by plate tectonics and, near the end of the Mesozoic era, affected by mass volcanism and a meteor impact. Professor Wilson has also made significant contributions to unravelling the evolution of other groups, including turtles, crocodylians, and snakes, demonstrating breadth in the study of vertebrates. His productivity and

impact, as reflected by the number of publication and citation metrics, are excellent and result in an outstanding national and international reputation as one of the preeminent dinosaur scholars. He is highly respected for his exacting and important science.

#### Recent and Significant Publications:

- “The skull of the titanosaur *Tapuiasaurus macedoi* (Dinosauria: Sauropoda) from the Lower Cretaceous of Brazil,” with D. Pol, et al., *Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society*, 178, 2016, pp. 611-662, 2.685, 12, 14.
- “Osteology of *Rebbachhisaurus garasbae* Lavocat, a diplodocioid (Dinosauria: Sauropoda) from the early Late Cretaceous-aged Kem beds of southeastern Morocco,” with R. Allain, *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*, 35, 2015, e1000701, 2.19, 9, 20.
- “Evolution of high tooth replacement rates in sauropod dinosaurs,” with M. D. D’Emic, et al., *PLoS ONE*, 8, 2013, e69235, 2.766, 31, 42.
- “An associated partial skeleton of *Jainosaurus cf. septentrionalis* (Dinosauria: Sauropoda) from the Late Cretaceous of Chhota Simla, central India,” with M. Carrano and P. M. Barrett, *Palaeontology*, 54, 2011, pp. 981-998, 3.73, 20, 22.

Service – Professor Wilson has made significant service contributions to the department and the museum. He was twice elected to the department’s Executive Committee and has served on several departmental committees that make key decisions related to undergraduate and graduate student programs, awards, and research fund allocations. His dedication to external service is widely known and appreciated, as highlighted by several external reviewers. He has given invited lectures to a range of institutions, including prestigious museums and universities in the United States and around the world. Professor Wilson has taken advantage of the widespread general interest in dinosaurs to engage the public and to increase the national and international footprint of the University of Michigan.

#### External Reviews:

##### Reviewer (A)

“Jeff Wilson is unquestionably a scientist of international reputation. I note with admiration his many speaking invitations... I would judge him to be one of the best known American dinosaur paleontologists on the international stage. ...[His laboratory] is one of the outstanding centers of dinosaur paleontology in the world.”

##### Reviewer (B)

“Dr. Wilson is a paleontologist and systematist of world reknown. He is best known for his work on the anatomy and evolution of sauropod dinosaurs. He would quickly be mentioned as one of the top researchers in that area of study (and it is a popular, and competitive, one!). He is fairly unique in also maintaining a side interest in snake paleontology, and some of that work has been very visible and important...”

##### Reviewer (C)

“Jeff is one of the bright lights of vertebrate paleontology because of his attention to detail, the fundamental nature of many of his studies, and the breadth of his contributions. ... While I have no idea what research direction he will choose [to] take in the future...it is a cinch he will be productive.”

Reviewer (D)

“Indeed, I consider Dr. Wilson to be one of the world’s leading experts, and arguable THE leading expert, on the evolutionary and biogeographic history of sauropods. ...his teaching statement is inspiring in demonstrating the depth of understanding of what it takes to be a good educator and in how it requires openness for constant growth.”

Reviewer (E)

“The research work by Jeff Wilson and his team, regardless of the topic, has always been vigorous, thorough, and very effective. ...Wilson is especially well-respected by many colleagues...for his solid, down to earth character... He is an excellent role model...for...[the next] generation of dinosaur paleobiologists...”

Reviewer (F)

“I regard Jeff Wilson as a superb researcher, teacher and communicator. He is extremely caring and detailed in every aspect of his research.”

Reviewer (G)

“He is somebody whose work is about impact, not raw numbers of publications. He publishes carefully, thoughtfully, always using the right amount of space to do proper description and analysis. I see him as somebody whose work will stand the test of time and be a part of the conversation and analysis in the field for years to come.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Wilson has established a productive and impactful research program, has made substantial contributions to the undergraduate and graduate programs in his department, and is a valued colleague within the university and in his professional community. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Jeffrey A. Wilson be promoted to the rank of professor of Earth and environmental sciences, with tenure, and curator, Museum of Paleontology, without tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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Elizabeth R. Cole, Interim Dean,  
Professor of Women’s Studies, Psychology,  
and Afroamerican and African Studies  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

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