
1 March 2022

Dear UNI Faculty Senate members,

I am most pleased to provide support for Dr. James Jurgenson's application for Faculty Emeritus status. Dr. Jurgenson earned a PhD in Molecular Biology from University of Arizona in 1980. He completed two post-doctoral positions at Rutgers, and then served as a faculty member at Dickinson College for seven years before coming to the University of Northern Iowa (UNI). When Dr. Jurgenson retires from UNI this summer, he will have served the Department of Biology for 30 years.

Over the course of Dr. Jurgenson's career at UNI, he has improved the Department of Biology and the learning of its students through a devotion to adopting new technologies and making them available to students. He was an early promoter of student-centered, project-based learning in his molecular laboratory classes. Thanks to his foresight, Dr. Jurgenson was awarded a National Science Foundation grant in 1994 to support PCR-based undergraduate molecular biology work, less than 10-years after PCR was first described and well before it was commonly used in classrooms. For the past 15 years, he has made it possible for students in our general education classes to observe and analyze their own DNA profiles; this was a time-consuming labor of love for him. Student comments from his classes have always centered on two points: Dr. Jurgenson cares about his students, and he challenges them. Under Dr. Jurgenson's guidance, 13 students completed their MS or MA degrees. Many of his 45 public presentations at scientific conferences included student coauthors.

Dr. Jurgenson is regarded by faculty and staff in the Department of Biology as an innovator and a problem solver, developing resourceful solutions to benefit a community of faculty and student researchers working on small budgets. Many of his colleagues have benefited greatly from a list of projects too long to enumerate, but that include cloning *Thermus aquaticus* DNA polymerase for student research when industry pricing would have been prohibitive to student work. He also found ways to create reagent-quality water to assure accurate analyses. Dr. Jurgenson has advanced this department both through devotion to his own research agenda, and through his generosity and willingness to collaborate. Most of these collaborations remain only in the memories of colleagues and students, but some are documented in Dr. Jurgenson's publication history. Over the course of his career, he has published 20 manuscripts, at least five of which involved collaborations with other faculty in either the Department of Biology or in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry.

Dr. Jurgenson's research at UNI has been supported by the National Institute of Health, the Carver Scientific Research Initiative, the National Fish & Wildlife fund, and through a series of seven awards from the Department of Transportation. These awards total over \$360,000. In addition, Dr. Jurgenson's efforts to improve teaching facilities at UNI resulted in another \$170,000 of funding to support student learning.

Over the course of his career, he has given generously of his time. For the community, Dr. Jurgenson led numerous DNA workshops for high-school classes. At the university, he served at a variety of levels. He has been the chair of the Department of Biology Professional Assessment Committee, and he was a member of the Committee on Academic Program Review and numerous other university and college committees, including the College Promotion and Tenure Committee. Most prominently, he served as

Faculty Chair. Beyond that, Dr. Jurgenson was extremely active in service to his profession through membership on boards and service as a reviewer.

In light of Dr. Jurgenson's laudable accomplishments in teaching, scholarship, and service to others, I wholeheartedly recommend that he be awarded emeritus status.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Theresa Spradling".

Theresa A. Spradling
Professor of Biology and Department Head