

London, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Dear Dipl.-Ing. Eva Kralovicova  
Managing Secretary IAPT

I am writing in support of PhD candidate Chelsea Pretz's application for funds to perform a very interesting evolutionary analysis in the tomatillo genus, *Physalis* L. (Solanaceae). Chelsea has done outstanding work during her PhD studies in testing self-incompatibility and identifying key morphological traits to distinguish species within the groundcherry genus and closely relatives. We have worked together resolving taxonomic and nomenclatural issues in *Physalis* which partially resulted in a recently published article related to typifications of *Physalis* from United States. I can tell that she is thorough, hard-working and is very intended to learn and research more about physaloids in general, but especially in the so taxonomically discussed *Physalis*. She has an outstanding career in outreach, while he has also attended to numerous conferences and has provided invaluable workshops. Chelsea is a careful and deeply dedicated graduate student who has deep knowledge of systematics and phylogenetics and I can assure that she is very well qualified to undertake the study proposed.

Currently, the phylogenetic relationships of *Physalis* species are not resolved and its taxonomic circumscription is being discussed. According to previous studies in physaloids, *Physalis* could have been under a rapid diversification whereas several processes like hybridization and incomplete lineage sorting might be also causing the conflicting phylogenetic relationships. Therefore, the methodology that Chelsea seeks to apply would clarify the underlying processes that explain the evolutionary history of *Physalis*, being a first step to understand the morphological convergence causing a chaotic taxonomy in the group.

I strongly support this proposal and hope that Chelsea will be able to benefit from the IAPT' investment in young researchers. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information.

Sincerely yours,



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