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International Association for Plant Taxonomy
Student Research Award Committee

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing in support of the application of my doctoral student, Amanda (Yingtong) Wu, for a Student Research Award. Amanda is finishing her third year in our doctoral program and clearly is one of our outstanding graduate students. She came to us with research experience from her undergraduate studies in China and her internship research in Canada. Her undergraduate project on the distribution of Chinese mangroves has been published in *Global Ecology and Biogeography*, and her Master's study on plant distributions in relation to soil conditions and mycorhizzal fungi in Alberta has been submitted for publication. For her doctoral dissertation at the University of Missouri—St. Louis, Amanda is tackling the fundamental ecological problem of why some species are widespread and abundant, while related species are often highly restricted in their distributions. She is focusing on the maple-leaf oak *Quercus acerifolia*, which is narrowly localized, primarily in Arkansas, in contrast to several related oak species that are widespread in eastern North America. The research program includes documenting distributions in nature, as well as growing seedlings of several species to set out in experimental plantings under different climate and soil conditions. She will also use genetic approaches to quantify gene flow across sharp habitat boundaries, principally with respect to soil conditions, and between species. Her thesis research should produce a detailed analysis of the factors influencing the distribution of a spatially restricted species in contrast to more widespread, related species. Amanda has a deep understanding of experimental approaches, strong analytical abilities, and a sense of what are important ecological issues. She is broadly recognized as one of our most talented students, and she is very much living up to what we perceive as her exceptional potential. Amanda's teachers, doctoral committee, and collaborators, particularly at the Missouri Botanical Garden, recognize in Amanda a unique talent at the beginning of what promises to be a distinguished career.

Sincerely yours,