

August 29, 2003

Dr. James T. Fisher, Chair
Department of Agronomy and Horticulture
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, NM 88003

Dear Dr. Fisher:

Please accept this application for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor in the Department of Agronomy and Horticulture. I have been an Assistant Professor with an average of 69% research and 31% teaching appointment since December 15, 1997.

My research includes both agricultural and environmental soil chemistry. I am particularly interested in arid zone soil quality and remediation efforts to decontaminate metal and hydrocarbon-contaminated soils. My research program has two overarching and intertwined goals: improve soil productivity and utilize organic wastes to enhance soil remediation and crop yields. Since coming to New Mexico State University, I have co-authored seven peer-reviewed journal articles, four book chapters, and four proceedings or University publications. Four more journal articles are in review or revision.

As lead principle investigator, I have obtained over \$1.1 million in research grants and as co-PI, I have helped acquire another \$300,000 in funding and equipment. I have been fortunate to collaborate with scientists from several departments and colleges at New Mexico State University as well as from government research agencies, environmental consulting companies, and other universities. I have supported eight graduate and numerous undergraduate students on research grants. Four of the above-mentioned peer-reviewed journal articles include graduate or undergraduate students as co-authors.

My teaching responsibility is in the area of Soil and Environmental Science, specifically Soil Chemistry. Every Fall I teach Environmental Soil Chemistry (SOIL/GEOL/CHEM 479/424) and every Spring I co-teach Emergency Response to Hazardous Materials Incidents (ES/ET/WERC 312). I teach Advanced Soil Chemistry (SOIL 551) every other Spring. Introduction to Soil Science (SOIL 252) is rotated among the soil science faculty and I have taught it twice since coming to NMSU. I have received increasingly favorable student evaluations since 1998 and my courses are often rated as superior compared to other classes. It is apparent to most students that I have a high regard for them and their educational experience. I include practical information and applied quantitative examples in all of the courses I teach.

I have served as major professor for three Ph.D. students and four M.S. students; co-advisor for one Ph.D. student and three M.S. students; and committee member for 26 additional graduate students. I have actively recruited both graduate and undergraduate students for NMSU. I have served as Mentor or Sponsor for seven undergraduates and one graduate student from underrepresented minorities involved in AMP, NM-AGEP, ASSURED, or the McNair Programs.

In 2000, I received the Outstanding Student Mentor Award in the WERC Undergraduate Fellowship Program. I firmly believe in supporting our students with scholarships and financial assistance, so I contribute regularly to the NMSU Foundation (for the Environmental Science Scholarship Endowment and the Mary Francis Mexal Emergency Relief Fund).

I have served on departmental, college, university, and professional committees. I have been very active in the Soil Science Society of America (SSSA) and was elected chair of the Soil Mineralogy Division in 1998. I was also an Associate Editor for the *SSSA Journal* from 1997 to 1999 with the responsibility of guiding 6 to 8 manuscripts a year through the double-blind review process and authors' revisions. This year I was appointed chair-elect of the SSSA Book Series Committee – a special committee that makes recommendations to the Executive Board about what books should be published by the Society. I have also served on the selection committee for the Marion L. and Chrystie M. Jackson Soil Science Award, one of the most prestigious awards for mid-career soil chemists and mineralogists.

Working closely with the Agronomic Science Foundation, the development and charity organization of SSSA, I helped launch a new endowment fund to honor Dr. Joe Dixon, one of SSSA's best soil mineralogists. The new fund was designed to garner more interest and activity in Soil Mineralogy and is called the Joe B. and Martha J. Dixon Soil Mineralogy Fund. Two awards will be given to graduate students making presentations on topics central to soil mineralogy at SSSA national meetings. One of the awards is reserved to help defray travel costs for a student from Mexico or another Central or South American country. I felt this was particularly appropriate since Dr. Dixon works so closely with soil scientists south of our border, but is also pertinent to NMSU where we have close professional ties with Mexico through so many of our graduate alumni.

On campus, I have served on several selection committees for undergraduate awards and fellowships; two professional search committees; the University Admissions Appeals Committee; and the Teaching Academy Advisory Board. This year I am the AGHT Library Liaison, substituting for Dr. Paul Bosland who is on sabbatical. I am also active on the AGHT Student Recruitment and Retention Committee, the Curriculum Committee, and the Direct Assessment of Learning Committee. Off campus, I have shared my enthusiasm for science and learning with many local schoolchildren and their teachers.

Over the last five years my program has become an integral and supportive part of this department and the record shows that I have contributed to the teaching, research, and service responsibilities of our department, college and university. My resume demonstrates that I have maintained a sustainable level of research productivity by publishing one to two peer-reviewed manuscripts per year since earning my Ph.D. and that I am proficient in obtaining grant funds. I anticipate continued productivity and fulfillment in my research, teaching, and service activities and hope that you will feel confident in recommending me for promotion and tenure. Thank you very much for the opportunity to be a part of New Mexico State University and the College of Agriculture. I am very grateful for the support and guidance of my mentors in this and other departments. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

April L. Ulery
Assistant Professor, Soil Science