

May 25-26, 2017

ITEM 175-1002-R0517

Request for authorization to confer the title of Professor Emeritus of Forest Management on Stephen F. Siebert – University of Montana-Missoula

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Professor Stephen F. Siebert from the faculty of the University of Montana, the faculty wishes to express its appreciation for his 27 years of dedicated and valued service by requesting that the rank of Professor Emeritus be conferred upon him by the Board of Regents of Higher Education.

EXPLANATION

Dr. Stephen F. Siebert earned his Ph.D. in 1990 at Cornell University in Natural Resources/Forest Sciences, and joined the School of Forestry in April of that year. As a faculty member in the (later established) Department of Forest Management, his career evolved through Adjunct Assistant Professor, to Associate rank in 1995, achieving full Professorial rank in 2002. During that tenure Dr. Siebert has consistently been recognized for his meritorious research, teaching and service. He was initially hired to spur internationalization in the School of Forestry. Toward that objective, he created a variety of opportunities for both faculty and students, and has left a legacy of path-breaking courses and programs. He is distinguished for establishing and coordinating the highly popular Masters option in the Resource Conservation major in International Conservation and Development (ICD).

Professor Siebert has been a very successful, original and popular teacher. He consistently provided leadership for our undergraduate courses related to international environmental change and especially about sustainability (long before the latter became a common subject). Student evaluations of his teaching have been outstanding. Dr. Siebert's success as a teacher is particularly noteworthy given the interdisciplinarity, novelty and rigor of his courses. The titles of his classes reveal his unique and important niche in the college – indeed university—curriculum. He developed and taught courses in Sustainable Development, Bio and Cultural Diversity in Resource Management, Tropical Forest Management, International Environmental Change, and Field studies in International Social and Environmental Change. He co-taught a very popular (interdisciplinary) course on Community Forestry with an Environmental Sociologist for twenty years. Associated with a half-million dollar grant he was awarded from USAID to develop the first Natural Resources Department at a University in Belize, he led six field study courses to Belize and provided international opportunities for the College of Forestry and Conservation (CFC) and other UM faculty and staff. The field courses were significant not only because of their interdisciplinarity and combination of academic and field-based pedagogy, but because they involved Belizean resource managers and students, many of whom went on to become key resource managers and academicians in Belize. His leadership and impact on graduate students have been exemplary. He served as the major professor for 47 students who completed graduate degrees and he continues to chair two ICD MS students. Almost all of these students conducted international research, and many hail from other countries themselves. His effectiveness as a graduate adviser required not only subject matter expertise, but a willingness and capacity to develop deep connections and high levels of support and engagement with his graduate advisees. Even a cursory look at the ICD newsletter he edited and published annually demonstrates the deep personal engagement and knowledge of each graduate, and their success in developing impressive careers in their chosen fields. Professor Siebert's able mentoring and personal

commitment to his students and even their lives post-graduation has been extraordinary. His impact in the field of international forest ecology and management continues to be felt not only in the U.S. but globally through the ongoing contributions of his advisees and alumni of the ICD program.

Professor Siebert's own research has been foundational in the areas of tropical forest ecology and management. His early research was on conservation farming in upland tropical forests and was instrumental in expanding knowledge and outreach efforts to stem erosion in steep forested areas, and in ways that contribute to the livelihoods of local cultivators. He combined sustainable resource management and local economic development foci in path-breaking work on non-timber forest products, especially rattan, an historically important and extremely important climbing palm found throughout the old world tropics. Towards identifying effective approaches to sustainable forestry, he conducted in-depth field research in the Philippines, Indonesia, Bhutan and Greece that resulted in publications in leading international journals. He has published thirty-three peer-reviewed publications and forty technical and professional publications on his research. His book, *The Nature and Culture of Rattan: Reflections on a Vanishing Life in Southeast Asia*, published by the University of Hawaii Press in 2012, was highly praised for the detailed and critical understanding of not only rattan biology, but also the traditional knowledge and real-life struggles of rattan harvesters, forest villagers and communities; including nation-state and global politics that affected their historical access to land and resources. His writing in this book, as well as in his other publications, is consistently applauded for its clarity and ability to communicate complex, interdisciplinary subjects to a wide range of audiences. As such, Dr. Siebert is a much sought-after speaker and authority on these issues, and has presented his work in over forty invited speaker forums around the world.

Professor Siebert has made significant and far-reaching service contributions to his profession and the practice of international forestry development. As noted above, he founded and served as the Program Director of the ICD option in CFC's Resource Conservation graduate major; and has unfailingly served on College and UM-wide standing committees throughout his career. Professor Siebert is renowned for his professionalism and ability to work across disciplines. He served as a consultant to the Ugyen Wangchuck Institute for Conservation and Environment in Bhutan, as well as with The Nature Conservancy program in Indonesia, USAID, the International Fund for Agricultural Research, and was an instructor in UM's annual International Seminar on Protected Area Management. In addition, his professional service included work with the Asian Studies Committee (UM), program director of the undergraduate Resource Conservation program, the Campus Sustainability Committee, a board member of Northwest Connections (now Swan Connections) in Condon, Montana, and he served as the Peace Corps campus faculty advisor from 1997 to 2009. He received the Wambaugh Award twice for his service contributions to the College of Forestry and Conservation.

Based on his accomplishments in teaching, research and service, as well as a career dedicated to students and to the viability of our natural and cultural forest systems, the Department of Forest Management is pleased to nominate Professor Siebert for emeritus status.

ATTACHMENTS

No attachments