

September 16-17, 2015

ITEM 168-1010-R0915

Request for Authorization to Confer the Title of Professor Emeritus of Biological Sciences on Ken Dial
– University of Montana-Missoula

THAT

Upon the occasion of the retirement of Professor Ken Dial 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. Dial earned his Ph.D. at Northern Arizona University in 1984 and joined the Division of Biological Sciences at the University of Montana in 1988 after a postdoctoral position spent at Harvard University. Professor Dial rose rapidly to the rank of Associate Professor and then Professor. He served as Program Director of the graduate program in Organismal Biology and Ecology in 2000-2003 and has remained a consistent and effective champion for maintaining the excellence of that program.

Professor Dial quickly established a world-class research program on the biomechanics of flight, principally in birds. With the use of high-speed photography of flying birds, Dr. Dial was able to address many puzzles about flight in living birds. For the past 15 years, he has focused on the origins of flight in the dinosaurs that gave rise to modern birds, advancing the provocative idea that small proto-wings were highly adaptive in helping ground-living small dinosaurs escape their predators, just as they are for the chicks of modern ground-nesting birds such as partridges. Many of his papers have been published in the leading journals of science both nationally and internationally.

Dr. Dial was also known for his dynamic teaching in vertebrate morphology, human anatomy and physiology, and his signature alternate-year graduate field course in East Africa. He has inspired many students to pursue advanced study. He has also been a strong collaborator in boosting fund-raising efforts that have benefitted educational and research programs at UM, for instance the historically-sensitive renovation of the former Quartermaster's Stable at Fort Missoula into a biology field station.

The Division of Biological Sciences is most pleased to nominate Professor Dial for emeritus status.

ATTACHMENTS

No Attachments