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SAINT LOUIS  
UNIVERSITY

Department of Biology

26 January 2012


To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing this letter in support of Mrs. Alejandra Domic's application for the IANAS-OWSD prize. This letter will address the potential for collaboration of our home institution, Saint Louis University (SLU), with the host institution, La Pontificia Universidad Católica de Ecuador (PUCE), as required by your award's announcement. I will address the collaboration at two levels, first an administrative and then a practical perspective. The first thing that you should know about these two institutions is that they are both catholic Jesuit universities, with strong traditions in education and research. Since the early 1990s, Dr. Paul García, former director of our International Studies program, has established strong ties with the study abroad program at PUCE. This culminated when in 2005 both institutions signed an agreement of understanding concerning exchange of students and tuition. Since then, over 50 of our undergraduates have spent at least one semester at PUCE, while half a dozen students from PUCE have come to SLU. This agreement of understanding allows then for a much more easier exchange of students and faculty, which in turns would make collaboration much more plausible.

From a more practical and immediate perspective, the awarding of the IANAS-OWSD prize to Mrs. Domic will open the door for further collaboration. Collaboration in the sciences, as you are probably aware, results from bringing different perspective, ideas, and resources to the table. PUCE offers a tremendous range of resources and ideas that would benefit myself, my students and many of my collaborators at SLU. First, the fact that Ecuador has a tremendous ecological diversity is a very strong attraction. The fact that PUCE owns and operate the Yasuní field station, one of the premier stations in the tropics, would allow for many of us to conduct research in Ecuador. Dr. Fernando Serrano (SLU) is a native Ecuadorian in our environmental health program which is already very interested in potential collaboration.

As the home institution, we have resources that would make it attractive to our PUCE counterparts to start collaborations. We have a broad range of advanced technology, like our high performance computing cluster, and the advance remote sensing environmental data streaming network, that would allow our colleagues at PUCE take great advantage of our potential relationship. But this can only get of the ground if an individual crosses that bridge and creates the human connection among our institutions. I have full confidence that that individual is Mrs. Alejandra Domic. Her record of scientific productivity, as demonstrated by the strong publication record and grants awarded, shows that she will continue such productivity at PUCE. If awarded, I would definitely visit her there in order to provide scientific, statistical and computational assistance to her and the host institution's member. Alternatively, I would be looking forward to learn tropical ecology and biodiversity from them.

Sincerely,



Gerardo R. Camilo, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Biology and International Studies  
& Conservation Fellow, St. Louis Zoo