

Saint Louis, January 28th, 2012

Dear Application Committee:

Please consider my application to IANAS-OWSD Research Prize for Female PhD student in the Sciences. My main professional goal in life is to become a competitive research tropical ecologist. I want to be an agent in the growth of ecology in tropical countries, through the implementation of scientifically rigorous research. The Ph.D. of Saint Louis University has provided me with the ideal graduate academic training and setting that is allowing me to achieve this goal. If I am awarded by IANAS, the opportunity to conduct research in another country will help me to expand my dissertation.

During my graduate studies, I am specializing in plant ecology. I am interested in testing hypotheses related to patterns of distribution, population structure, and composition of fragmented Neotropical forests. I am concerned about the impact and effects of local long-term human use in the population dynamics and conservation of these ecosystems. I am interested in examining forest regeneration processes by modeling the relationship between ecological variables, patterns of distribution, and human impact. The sound modeling of the interactions of these factors in specific forest species will provide a comprehensive understanding of their population biology, and eventually aid in the critical goal of improving their conservation.

I believe that the outstanding faculty of Saint Louis University and of Herbario Nacional de Bolivia granted me the ideal academic training I need to develop a sound dissertation project as well as endorse my career in Biology. I am very fortunate to be able to work with researches from the United States and Latin America with a vast experience in ecology, evolution, and botany, which has been invaluable in my academic formation as a research biologist.

With the education and training I receive in graduate school, I intend to become a well-trained and productive research biologist. I plan to continue doing ecological research connected with the broader scientific academia. I plan to engage myself directly

with education, doing my best to pass on the knowledge and experience I receive in graduate school to university students and the general public through environmental education programs. I am also concerned with improving scientific research in conservation biology and providing informed expertise to sustainable development initiatives.

I am highly motivated Ph.D. candidate. As a graduate student, I have published research papers and published, in collaborations with botanists, a series of field guides of the flora of Andean Highlands. Several grants, particularly from International Science Foundation, have funded my dissertation which has enabled me to conduct field assessment and complete data collection. If I am awarded by IANAS, I will do my best to expand my dissertation and publish it in scientific journals.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Domicri". The first letter 'A' is enclosed in a square box, and the name is underlined.

Alejandra I. Domic
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