September 20, 2007

To: CALS Graduate Studies Committee

From: Chad V. Jordan, Chair, Plant Biology Awards Committee

Re: Plant Biology Nominee for CSGS Master’s Thesis Award

On behalf of the Department of Plant Biology, I am delighted to submit the nomination of JENNIFER MODLISZEWSKI for the 2008 Conference of Southern Graduate Schools Master’s Thesis Award.

Attached are all of the supporting materials for Jennifer’s nomination, including letters of endorsement from Dr. Jenny Xiang, Jennifer’s research advisor and committee chair, and Dr. Rebecca Boston, Director of Graduate Programs for Plant Biology. As you will see from these letters, Jennifer’s curriculum vita, and her thesis (the abstract of which is attached), Jennifer was an outstanding Master’s student who carried out significant research analyzing the phylogeography and population genetics of the southeastern US hybrid zone of the plant buckeye genus Aesculus. Jennifer’s full electronic thesis can be found at the following website:


Jennifer’s research incorporated use of sophisticated software programs to assess the genetic diversity and to construct a haplotype genealogy of the populations she sampled in the Aesculus hybrid zone, as well as from plants that were experimentally crossed. This work sheds new light on the evolution of Aesculus hybridization and patterns of chloroplast DNA inheritance for this genus. Jennifer’s substantial research efforts in her three years as a graduate student led to the publication of a research article shortly after her graduation in the American Journal of Botany, a leading Plant Biology journal, on which she is first author. This is also attached for your review and is referenced in the letter from Dr. Xiang.

We hope that you will give Jennifer’s nomination fullest consideration for advancement to the University-level selection process. Please do not hesitate to contact me by phone at 515-2222 or by email at chad_jordan@ncsu.edu should you need any additional information or have questions regarding Jennifer’s nomination. We will be glad to supplement Jennifer’s nomination with additional materials should she be selected.

Cc: Margo Daub, Department Head
    Becky Boston, Director of Graduate Programs
    Bob Beckmann, JoAnn Burkholder, Niki Robertson, Plant Biology Awards Committee
    Jenny Xiang, Thesis Advisor