

9 August, 2007

Mr. Jeffrey W. Martz  
Department of Geosciences  
Texas Tech University  
Lubbock, Texas 79409

Professor Michael P. Taylor  
School of Earth and Environmental Sciences  
University of Portsmouth  
Portsmouth, PO1 3QL  
United Kingdom

Dr. Mathew J. Wedel  
University of California  
Museum of Paleontology  
1101 Valley Life Science Building  
Berkeley, CA 94720-4780

Dear Mr. Martz, Professor Taylor, and Dr. Wedel:

As incoming Chair of the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences at the University of New Mexico, I have inspected your communication of late June to early July, 2007 (exact date not provided on your letter) concerning recent publications by and editorial practices of Dr. Spencer G. Lucas, Adjunct Faculty in the Department and, currently, the Executive Director of the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science. For me, personally, this is somewhat of a sticky situation, as I have co-authored several publications with Dr. Lucas, as you may be aware. Most of these have been in the mainstream science literature, because that is where I strongly assert most science should be published, not in NMMNHS bulletins.

That said, I appreciate your letter and very strongly respect your concerns, as spelled out in your detailed communication supporting your allegations. Your suggestions of unethical behavior on the part of Dr. Lucas appear to be well-founded. Before going any further, I should note that, other than eventually

remove Dr. Lucas as an Adjunct Faculty, I am not quite certain exactly what can, or should be, done from UNM's side. It is my understanding that adjunct faculty are not legally bound to any practices spelled out in the UNM Faculty Handbook. Most adjunct faculty rarely teach classes at UNM, and thus cannot be considered members of the professoriate. In the role of adjunct faculty alone, these individuals are not paid by the University. Dr. Lucas has served as an active and integral member of many graduate (MS and PhD) committees at UNM. Currently, for example, he is a very active member of Ms. Linda Donohoo-Hurley's PhD Committee, for whom I am the principal faculty supervisor.

Regarding activities at the NMMNHS, we have absolutely no control over the editorial practices and policies of the Bulletins published by the NMMNHS. I confess that I, with colleagues including graduate students, have published short contributions in such Bulletins, but in this case they have usually served as extended abstracts for conference proceedings. I should note that the Museum is in the process of search for a new Director. It is my understanding that Dr. Lucas is not involved in the process of selecting the new Director, and I strongly suggest that you bring up these issues with the new Director when he/she is in place.

Here is what I will do at this point in time. I will provide Dr. Lucas with a copy of your full communication and request that he comment on these allegations and explain his perspective. With a response from Dr. Lucas, I will bring this matter to the attention of my two Associate Chairs in the Department. For the record, I should note that you did not include the response by Mr. Ashman

Putting all of my associations with Dr. Lucas aside, I can assure you that I will not treat this issue lightly. Having been the Editor for the GSA Bulletin for six years, an Associate Editor for several journals, the current Solid Earth Science Editor for Eos as well as the Chair of the Geological Society of America's Publication Committee, I am concerned about these allegations, and promise to carry out the appropriate level of investigation.

Finally, I apologize for taking so long with a response.

Sincerely yours,

John Wm. Geissman  
Professor and Chair,  
Earth and Planetary Sciences

Xc: L.D. McFadden, Previous Chair, Earth and Planetary Sciences