



DEPARTMENT OF INTEGRATIVE BIOLOGY  
2415 SPEEDWAY, STOP C0930  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

*Austin, Texas 78712 U.S.A. • (512) 471-5858 • fax (512) 471-3878 • fax (512) 232-9529*

---

December 4, 2020

This letter is a testimony to the contributions to scholarship, service, and teaching by Dr. Patricia D. Dávila. I have known Dr. Dávila for more than 30 years and have collaborated with her in several projects. She is an internationally recognized scientist, a gifted administrator, has been an effective ambassador for Mexico in multiple international forums dealing with global Biodiversity, and a dedicated, kind and effective teacher at all academic levels of the university educational system.

The research of Dr. Dávila has as a central theme the study and conservation of the native plant resources of Mexico. Doctor Dávila is a trained plant systematist with a specialty in grass (family Poaceae) systematics. Many of her more than 110 publications are focused on the systematics of the family in Mexico. Poaceae are economically important and Mexico is one of the global centers of diversity for the family. Soon after returning to Mexico from her Ph.D. studies her research focus expanded to include not only grasses but other plant families and the areas where these plants are found. These efforts have resulted in multiple scientific collaborations and grants providing opportunities for publications, development of human resources, and identifying areas that maximize the conservation of biodiversity. Her seminal studies on the biology of the Tehuacán-Cuicatlán Biosphere Reserve have paved the way for the recognition of this area as a place of high species diversity in an arid environment. Furthermore, these efforts have created an extensive body of scientific literature that has allowed many other researchers to start careers in studying the ecology and evolution of this area of Mexico. Thinking of the future and the rapid extinction of species due to anthropogenic land use change, her research has also focused in the preservation of seeds from plants found in all areas of Mexico. This and other initiatives have resulted in millions of dollars in research funds that she has administered deftly to the benefit of students, researchers and the natural patrimony of Mexico.

Doctor Dávila has an exemplary record in the formation of human resources. At the core of Dr. Dávila's career lies an educator and this has propelled a distinguished career in teaching ranging from the dictation of innovative classes to the formation of multiple professionals in the biological fields. She has been an advisor in nearly 300 theses in addition to being the major advisor in 50 theses including 35 graduate degrees. Throughout her administrative career she has continued to teach and guide students. Her teaching repertoire is broad with more than 15 different courses taught. As many as 16 of her graduate students have secured academic positions in several universities and institutions in Mexico securing them a solid career and the continuation of research that focuses in the environmental resources of the country. Some of her graduate students have

come from several countries of Latin America enhancing the recognition of UNAM as a serious institution to obtain terminal academic degrees for Spanish-speaking students of the subcontinent.

Administration is only feasible for a few scientists because it requires a set of skills rarely found in researchers. Doctor Dávila has been an outstanding administrator not only of her grants and research but of multiple entities and institutions within UNAM and the Mexican government. She has been director of the National Herbarium (MEXU), director of the Department of Botany (UNAM), coordinator of the UBIPRO program in UNAM-Iztacala, and director of the FES at UNAM-Iztacala. In addition, Dr. Dávila has represented Mexico in several international forums such as CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) and global Biodiversity database initiatives with distinction.

Evaluating her scholarship, teaching and service it is self-evident that Dr. Dávila is an outstanding scientist, an able administrator, and a gifted and caring teacher. I am convinced her future activities will continue on the same path of excellence that she has amply demonstrated in many aspects of her career. I enthusiastically support Dr. Dávila candidacy to the position of Researcher Emeritus.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jose L. Panero". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and "P".

Jose L. Panero  
Associate Professor  
Associate Director of the TEX-LL Herbarium  
Billie L. Turner Plant Resources Center  
Department of Integrative Biology  
The University of Texas  
Austin TX, 78712  
USA  
Ph. 512 232 1990  
panero@utexas.edu