Montana Climate Office

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March 10, 2022

Dear Provost Postdoctoral Fellowship selection committee,

I am writing in support of Andrew Gillreath-Brown being named a Provost Postdoctoral Fellow at Florida State University. Andrew is applying to work with Professor Jayur Mehta as part of the NSF-funded Coastlines and Peoples program. Andrew will bring substantial expertise in remote sensing and environmental modeling to provide holistic decision-making for historically underrepresented communities impacted by coastal hazards due to climate change. Andrew is not only well-suited to join this project, but also is passionate about supporting equitable climate futures for diverse coastal communities, including Indigenous communities along the Gulf coast. Being a first-generation college graduate, Andrew also brings economic and educational diversity to the field of anthropology, perspectives that inform his research, advocacy, and especially his teaching.

I've known Andrew for many years now, first while I was a graduate student when we met for research in the Four Corners region of the US Southwest, and later during my own postdoctoral appointment at Washington State University when Andrew started his PhD there. I am currently mentoring Andrew in computational social science as he completes his dissertation research. I am also a Co-PI on the NSF-funded Synthesizing Knowledge of Past Environments project on which Andrew collaborates as a graduate assistant. Andrew is a thoughtful interdisciplinary scholar, generous colleague, and curious student of human behavior — all qualities make him a well-qualified candidate to be an FSU Provost Postdoctoral Fellow.

Throughout the time I've known him, Andrew has been hard-working and dedicated to learning. He is a collegial and enthusiastic lab member in Dr. Timothy Kohler's Village Ecodynamics Lab at WSU, and has rapidly gained the skills necessary to effectively contribute to our research program. Beyond that, Andrew has demonstrated research interests that transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries. Andrew has published widely on hydrology, ethnobotany, geography, and archaeology, and his dissertation research is a truly groundbreaking blend of dendro-climatology, palynology, and archaeological science. His undergraduate experience in southeastern archaeology and graduate focus on the Southwest give him a uniquely pan-American research perspective. He has continued to make fascinating contributions to south-eastern archaeology on the production and use of turtle shell rattles.

Andrew has also developed expertise in complexity science — expertise that he will explicitly engage in his work with Prof. Mehta and Gulf coastal communities encountering complex challenges due to climate change. Early in his graduate career (and on his own initiative) Andrew completed the Introduction to Complexity MOOC from the Santa Fe Institute, and was selected to attend SFI's highly competitive and emphatically interdisciplinary Complex Systems Summer School. At the CSSS, Andrew developed several interdisciplinary research collaborations that continue to yield high-quality scholarship. Andrew has completed a range of courses at WSU in computer science, spatial statistics, and agent-based simulation, further preparing him for a career of thinking outside traditional disciplinary paradigms. Andrew is uniquely prepared to develop convergent research with faculty and other postdoctoral scholars at FSU, as he has done with colleagues from SFI and elsewhere.

Andrew's research is explicitly computational, and he is rapidly becoming a leader in not only using computational tools such as R and geographic information systems in his research, but also developing such tools for

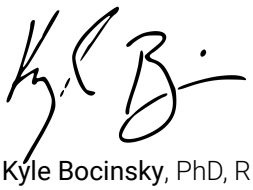
use by other researchers. For example, as part of his dissertation Andrew is developing a software package in R that will enable researchers to blend high-frequency climate reconstructions developed from tree rings with low-frequency ones developed using from pollen records and other paleoclimate proxies. This tool will allow researchers to better understand the compounding interactions of short-term weather patterns and long-term climate change on agricultural communities in the past. Andrew is committed to open-source software and open-access research, and he is developing his dissertation code publicly on Github, thus inviting broad collaboration in his research program. The open research principles Andrew adheres to are essential for expanding diversity in academia by lowering barriers to knowledge, especially for historically economically disadvantaged communities.

Andrew is a creative and independent scholar, and is truly gifted in his ability to communicate his research to the general public. For example, Andrew has published widely on evidence for ritual paraphernalia and tattooing in the archaeological record, and has been generous in providing interviews and public lectures about his research. These projects, which he undertook adjacent to his paleoclimatological work as part of the Village Ecodynamics and SKOPE projects, demonstrate Andrew's scholarly independence and curiosity, and also that he will be a strong ambassador for FSU as a postdoctoral fellow.

That being said, Andrew is humble in the limits of his current knowledge, and his understanding that he has more to learn and grow as a scholar. Joining Prof. Mehta's applied research with historically underrepresented communities along the Gulf coast will provide Andrew with training on listening to and effectively advocating for coastal Tribal communities. I am confident that Andrew will not only grow personally from this opportunity, but also will enrich the program for other postdoctoral scholars, faculty, students, and the coastal community members.

I fully and enthusiastically support Andrew being named an FSU Provost Postdoctoral Fellow.

Sincerely,



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