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Letter of support for Dr. Peter Otto Hess

I am writing this letter in strong support of Dr. Peter Hess to be named Professor Emeritus at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.

I have known Peter for roughly 30 years, from when he first came to the UNAM on a DFG (German Science Association) Fellowship. During this period we have co-authored one refereed journal article and one refereed contribution to conference proceedings. Even when we were not working together, I retained very close contact with Peter, with his scientific career and with his career of contributions to science and education in Mexico. Put succinctly he is an outstanding scientist with a history of contributions that make him most deserving of Emeritus Status at the UNAM.

Let me first comment on his scientific productivity. Over his professional career, Peter has published over 190 papers in referred journals, with in excess of 1700 citations. In addition he has co-authored one text book, has edited or co-edited in excess of 20 books, and has contributed to several publications for popular audiences. This extremely high level of productivity is reflected in his H-factor, which is 23 according to the Web of Science. This is outstanding, by any standard.

Of course numbers only tell a small part of the story. Peter's scientific career has been highlighted by an enormous breadth of contributions, ranging over a wide variety of fields. In the Nuclear Physics regime he has made major contributions to clustering phenomena, to nuclear collectivity and to applications of algebraic methods to various problems of importance in nuclear structure. He has also made important contributions to low-energy QCD and to General Relativity, in the latter case through the development of a new pseudo-complex formulation of the theory. I know of few scientists who have been able to contribute so broadly in their research career.

A theme that has characterized Peter's work throughout his career has been the search for simplicity in very complex systems. As noted above, his vast expertise in group theoretical methods has played a critical role in achieving many of the important advances to which he has contributed. Equally important is his creativity, which has enabled him to look at problems in unique ways, often with a fruitful outcome.

It is also important to note Peter's great success in training young scientists, many of whom have gone on to very successful research careers of their own. I have had the opportunity to interact with many scientists trained by Peter and have invariably been highly impressed by them.

As should be evident from the above remarks, I have the highest regard for Peter Hess as a scientist and as a leader of the Mexican scientific community. I feel that he is most deserving to be afforded Emeritus Status for a lifetime of major contributions to science in Mexico.

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