

24 September 2025

Dear Deep Springs,

I am writing to express my interest in the Herbert Reich Chair of Natural Science position. Deep Springs has intrigued me since I was an undergrad. The three pillars are a compelling combination, particularly given your isolated location. Having manual labor skills is good. Last summer, I had students build a small wind tunnel so we could try to visualize what is going with insect wings. They needed a few skills to get them started, but with trial and error they succeeded. If the last ten years of American politics has not made a case for the importance of self-governance, I don't know what would. Deep Springs seems to offer a fighting chance to students (and faculty!) struggling to avoid distraction and engage in deep scholarship in an age of social media, AI, and grotesque political theater. I spent a summer as a field assistant at the University of California's Hastings Reservation as an undergrad, and it was one of the experiences that steered me towards graduate school, so I know how transformative places like Deep Springs can be.

My doctoral research focused on the effects of ectoparasitic mites on the physiology and running performance of lizards and bridges ecology, physiology, parasitology and conservation biology. In addition, I have broad interests in evolutionary biology, ecology, herpetology, and the history of biology. More recently, I have developed an interest in Biomimicry. Towards the end of my graduate training, I had the opportunity to lecture for a non-majors general biology course and found it to be the most rewarding experience I'd had in higher education up to that time. I subsequently began seeking academic jobs that were primarily teaching positions. My last semester of graduate school, I co-led a seminar on Darwinian Medicine. I also held a part-time position training medical students in basic clinical skills.

After 26 years at Monmouth College, where I primarily taught Anatomy and Physiology and contributed to gen ed, I and five other faculty recently (1 July) found ourselves on the short end of an "Academic Program Prioritization" that resulted in the loss of several majors and programs (our enrollment is half of what it was a dozen years ago). For the last few years I've prepped Ecology, Conservation Biology, and Animal Behavior as some of my colleagues retired but were not replaced. Such is life at many small colleges in the post-Covid era. I could retire now, but I'd like one last hurrah at a place like Deep Springs College. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. S. Baldwin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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