6 April 2008

Memo to Whom It May Concern

From: Sheila Conant, Ph. D.
Professor and Chair

Subject: Support for approval of Wildlife Ecology and Management Course (NREM 450)

I am writing to express my strong support for the approval of this course, which is to be taught (and has been taught on an experimental basis) by Dr. Christopher Lepczyk. I have taught courses in conservation biology at both the undergraduate and graduate level at UHM for many years. The proposed course will have a small amount of overlap with the courses I teach; however, it’s focus on principles of management and management approaches is an important strength and these are areas covered only briefly in my courses.

A number of years ago, I was approached by the Hawaii Chapter of the National Wildlife Society and asked to modify my course, including the title, so that it clearly included either wildlife biology or wildlife management. Because my course did not cover management approaches in any detail, I called it “Wildlife and Plant Conservation.” That course meets a requirement for the Wildlife Biologist certification program of the National Wildlife Society. After I modified my course, the University of Hawaii at Manoa only lacked one course of the many required for certification, and that course was wildlife management. If Dr. Lepcsyk’s course is approved, our students could take all of the required courses for the certification program.

The addition of this course to the UHM curriculum is highly appropriate in light of Hawaii’s very significant conservation challenges (we have the highest number of endangered species of any geographic region on earth). In the last two decades there has been a tremendous increase in public interest and availability of public funds for natural resource management, and the number of job available in this field in Hawaii has grown along with these trends.

I believe this course would be an appropriate elective for several of the life science degree programs (e.g., Zoology, Botany, Biology) in the College of Natural Sciences as well.