THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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LIFE AND VETERINARY SCIENCES,
AND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
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Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the University of Arizona Division of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension, congratulations to our colleague **Rod A. Wing, Ph.D.** for his designation as a Regents' Professor, a title reserved for outstanding full professors who have achieved national or international recognition and exemplify the university's objectives and standards for scholarship, research or creative activities, and teaching.

The Arizona Board of Regents confirmed Dr. Wing's appointment as Regents' Professor on April 11. A professor of plant sciences, he will be inducted at a ceremony during the next academic year. Rod receives this title in company with four distinguished UA colleagues: Alfred S. McEwen, Ph.D. (Planetary Sciences/Lunar and Planetary Laboratory), John P. Rutherfoord, Ph.D. (Physics), Marvin Slepian, MD (Medicine), and Lucy M. Ziurys, Ph.D. (Chemistry and Biochemistry).

Rod is well-known to many of you – he has been part of our faculty since 2002 – but I'd like to share with you the statement that the Regents reviewed when considering his nomination. It touches on only a few of the highlights of his career.

Dr. Wing has had a remarkable career in plant science. In the early 1990s, when the field of genomics began to explode, most available vectors were based on yeast artificial chromosomes (YACs), which were nimble enough to accommodate very large pieces of DNA but had the inconvenient habit of rearranging the inserted DNA in ways that no longer mirrored its original structure. This serious hurdle was overcome when Rod Wing developed artificial chromosomes based on bacteria rather than yeast and called BACs. Many years have passed, but BACs remain the cornerstone on which DNA libraries from plants and all sorts of other organisms are still constructed.

Armed with unique tools, several of which he himself developed, Dr. Wing moved on to tackle one of the most formidable challenges in plant sciences: the sequencing on the genome of rice, a crop eaten daily by over three billion people. Professor Wing was the U.S. leader of the ten-nation team that sequenced the rice genome, the completion of

*which was announced in Tucson in November 2004, and published in **Nature** in 2005. This was the first crop genome to be sequenced and remains the highest-quality genome available for any crop.*

Dr. Wing has been recognized by numerous awards, such as his election to be a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (2010), the USDA Secretary's Honor Award for Superior Service (2004), the Alexander von Humboldt Research Award from Germany (2009), the Shennong Professorship at Huazhong Agricultural University in China (2006), and the prestigious 5-year AXA Chair in Genome Biology & Evolutionary Genomics from the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines (2014).

I am so glad to know that Dr. Wing's exceptional achievements and his lasting impact on the lives of so many of our graduates have been recognized with this distinguished title. And I look forward to seeing his continued success. Please join me in congratulating him on this honor.

Regards,

Shane C. Burgess
Vice President of Agriculture, Life and Veterinary Sciences, and Cooperative Extension
Charles-Sander Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Director, Arizona Experiment Station