

From: Benjamin Blonder
Subject: PhD opportunities available in macrosystems ecology lab at Arizona State University

The Macrosystems Ecology Lab (PI Benjamin Blonder) will be moving from the University of Oxford to Arizona State University (https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.asu.edu&d=CwIBaQ&c=Ngd-ta5RYsqeUsEDgxcqsYYY1Xs5ogLxWPA_2Wlc4&r=e2OJ1azRfN8ihJzh2HxZT0AqoiqLvxfeeTyN59ZLoI&m=WRua5kcNQFstdbeU5yBWCua5EUJ5x9bfqmXxKoCJwHo&s=6MNXsITy5UO4-UgCwgr4wRIBEA9vak0dIC2R1Bvc04&e=) in Tempe, Arizona. The lab's focus is on predictive community ecology and biogeography, paleoecological and anthropogenic effects on biodiversity dynamics, and global change plant ecophysiology. We use a combination of field, eco-informatics, and modeling approaches to address these questions with a broad team of international collaborators. Field sites are focused in forests and alpine environments in Latin America, southeast Asia, Scandinavia, and the United States. Learn more about this work at https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__benjaminblonder.org_research_&d=CwIBaQ&c=Ngd-ta5RYsqeUsEDgxcqsYYY1Xs5ogLxWPA_2Wlc4&r=e2OJ1azRfN8ihJzh2HxZT0AqoiqLvxfeeTyN59ZLoI&m=WRua5kcNQFstdbeU5yBWCua5EUJ5x9bfqmXxKoCJwHo&s=baK5CUCt4Qtm1Q1qWdxx08Eh8Dt-pVwthLn26pP83-s&e=.

The lab will be a collaborative working environment within a dynamic university that hosts many other excellent ecology and sustainability research groups. Arizona State University is easily reached by light rail service from the Phoenix international airport. The Phoenix area hosts a vibrant multicultural community, and the region provides excellent recreation and research opportunities, with the Grand Canyon, Colorado Plateau, Madiran Sky Islands, and northern Mexico all close by.

Up to two PhD positions are available within any of the School of Life Sciences (SOLS). More information about the graduate program is available at https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__sols.asu.edu_degree-2Dprograms_graduate&d=CwIBaQ&c=Ngd-ta5RYsqeUsEDgxcqsYYY1Xs5ogLxWPA_2Wlc4&r=e2OJ1azRfN8ihJzh2HxZT0AqoiqLvxfeeTyN59ZLoI&m=WRua5kcNQFstdbeU5yBWCua5EUJ5x9bfqmXxKoCJwHo&s=tVtJrbg9WQF1YiW2ST7H94FDI5zckUsi37X1bWivL8&e=.

Independently-developed theses are encouraged and may be broad-ranging within the scope of the lab's focus areas. However possible dissertation areas include:

(1) Building more predictive models of community dynamics via incorporation of energy budget and trait-based performance concepts into coexistence theory. This work could involve a combination of mathematical modeling and field observation / manipulation in a range of long-term plant census plots throughout the Colorado Rockies, Peru, and Malaysian Borneo.

(2) Assessing the role of species interactions and phenology in modulating plant performance and demography. This project could involve coupling a range of leaf-level plant ecophysiology measurements with leaf lifespan and herbivory observations across environmental gradients, and would be primarily field-based. Sites could encompass a Canada - Mexico latitudinal gradient or a South American elevation / rainfall gradient.

Students should be independently motivated and come with strong writing and critical thinking skills. Those with an interest in developing their training in computational statistics, modelling, field methods, and/or foreign languages are especially encouraged.

The lab also has a strong community outreach component via inquiry-based science education partnerships with underserved communities. Students interested in contributing to these efforts are very welcome.

The School of Life Sciences has a vibrant graduate program with a strong graduate student community. Funding for five years is guaranteed via a combination of teaching and research assistantships for both United States and international applicants. There are additional funds available for summer fieldwork and conference travel. The fall priority application deadline is 1 December 2016. Applications can be submitted via the SOLS website. Please get in touch by email (bblonder@gmail.com) if you are interested in applying.

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Benjamin Blonder

Website + photoblog: https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.benjaminblonder.org&d=CwIBaQ&c=Ngd-ta5RYsqeUsEDgxcqsYYY1Xs5ogLxWPA_2Wlc4&r=e2OJ1azRfN8ihJzh2HxZT0AqoiqLvxfeeTyN59ZLoI&m=WRua5kcNQFstdbeU5yBWCua5EUJ5x9bfqmXxKoCJwHo&s=5EBL1zy5XUXijid2OxLTLTF6FvVIU-m5Vg9pQ0bfEJYM&e=

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University of Arizona Sky School: https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__skyschool.arizona.edu_&d=CwIBaQ&c=Ngd-ta5RYsqeUsEDgxcqsYYY1Xs5ogLxWPA_2Wlc4&r=e2OJ1azRfN8ihJzh2HxZT0AqoiqLvxfeeTyN59ZLoI&m=WRua5kcNQFstdbeU5yBWCua5EUJ5x9bfqmXxKoCJwHo&s=8hmNNIEAthBS7ofAkNbuSHvulO4KsR8BBc6hS0f5M&e=