

Finally, Dr. Bolte has a long-term program with former student Dr. Eric Sandquist at San Diego State University measuring complete samples of evolved stars in Galactic stars clusters and using these data to measure quite precisely the timescales of stellar evolution in different stages of a star's life. This information is being used to make detailed tests of stellar structure and evolution physics. Here, too, his research has led to extremely important results. Referee F writes, "In their recent major study of M12 [Bolte and former student Sandquist] were able to show how inclusion of helium diffusion in the stellar evolution models they compared to their extensive photometry resulted in an age of the Universe consistent with that from WMAP [a cosmic microwave background satellite experiment]. Mike's interpretations of such painstaking observations always address issues relevant to the latest developments or current uncertainties in stellar evolutionary theory."

We should point out that we find the letter of Referee D anomalous and confusing. This writer has difficulty with the definition of the term "great distinction," which is of course open to interpretation. He makes a comparison with R.P. Kraft, who is certainly one of the great astronomers in the world alive at present, but he makes the comparison to when Kraft was in his early 40's and before he did his most impressive work on globular clusters. We do not understand what is meant by this comparison. He then goes on to compare him to Beers, who has only worked in just one field, and makes no mention of the fact that Dr. Bolte's research has extended far beyond this particular research area in recent years. He also doesn't realize that the vast majority of Dr. Bolte's co-authors have been his present and former students, and Dr. Bolte generally played a leading role in these studies. Compared to the thoughtful and careful assessment provided by such letter writers as A, B, E, and F, we find the letter of Referee D to be of little or no value in the consideration of this case.

Dr. Bolte's research resulted in nineteen journal papers during the three-year review period. Despite having only recently initiated research in these areas, Bolte secured, as PI, NSF individual investigator grants for all these programs (he has held four simultaneous grants during this review period) with a total dollar amount of \$530,000. In these days when less than 20% of proposals to the NSF Astronomy Division are funded, this is a remarkable achievement.

The research accomplishments of Dr. Bolte during the review period are extensive and of extremely high quality. In fact, they could be considered what one might expect to be normal progress for a period more than six years long and are consistent with the advance proposed here. They are all the more remarkable when seen in the context of the superb and extensive record of teaching and service.

Teaching:

Dr. Bolte has the normal UCO faculty appointment, which means that 20 percent of his total appointment is in the Department of Astronomy. This implies that he has one-fifth the normal teaching load. It is clear that Dr. Bolte takes his teaching responsibility extremely seriously. During the review period, he taught three courses: two were introductory courses for non-science majors on the topic of stars, and these had large enrollments of 126 and 216 the two times he taught it. He also taught a graduate course on modern observational techniques, which had an enrollment of nine students. Dr.