



May 15, 2020

To the Editorial Board of Chemeketa Press,

Thank you for considering my proposal for an introductory college-level sociology textbook on the social lives of naked mole rats. This project examines the biology, habitat, and behaviors of naked mole rats and applies these concepts to other mammalian communities, including our own.

The sociobiological approach my proposed project takes is similar to the approaches of other introductory college textbooks in my discipline but with several key differences. For example, the current default textbook for SOC101 explores the social structure of ants, termites, bees, and wasps and applies the concepts of eusocial behavior to human societies. My project focuses exclusively on the naked mole rat, which is the only mammal that exhibits eusocial behaviors and which makes the application to human society a much easier leap for my students.

There are three limitations with the current textbook, *Introduction to Social Behavior: A Bug's Life*. First, the book costs \$444 and will be increasing next year with the digital-only edition. Second, the book includes way more material than I can cover in a ten-week term. Third, the book's content has not been updated since 1998. The project I'm proposing addresses all three concerns by offering a cost-effective, streamlined, and up-to-date textbook.

The book I imagine will have fifteen chapters, each related to an aspect of society and how it is exhibited by these burrowing rodents native to East Africa. To be competitive with other intro-level textbooks, the book needs to have full-color illustrations of naked mole rat burrows and anatomy. A final chapter might include what the naked mole rat can teach us about the future. Recent research has shown that naked mole rats are the longest living rodent species and their mortality rate does not increase with age. They are extraordinarily resistant to cancer and environmental stressors. They don't have pain receptors, so they basically live a pain-free life until they die. They might be the closest thing to immortal beings living in our midst.

I have been working in my spare time on this project for several years, and I have been accepted as a resident in the Oregon Zoo's Naked Mole Rat Observatory Program, in which I will participate during my upcoming sabbatical. With the work that I have already completed, which includes a paper I've submitted to the Naked Mole Rat Institute, I anticipate that I could have a complete draft of the book by the end of my sabbatical in 2021.

Commented [SL1]: This part of the letter answers the questions under the **Project Overview** heading.

Commented [SL2]: This section describes the finished product and other additional elements your project might require by answering the questions under the **Project Description** heading.

Commented [SL3]: This is where you show that you, your team, or your department are ready to take on this project by responding to the questions under the **Preparation** heading.

I have discussed this project with my program chair, and the Dean is excited to see how this project can save students money and demonstrate that the sociology program is engaging in cutting-edge and innovative work. My residency at the Oregon Zoo will also provide opportunities for collaboration. I've reached out to the top two naked mole rat researchers in the country, who just so happen to be at Oregon State University. They have offered to review chapter drafts and provide feedback for me should this project get accepted.

Commented [SL4]: This section answers the questions under the **Support** heading.

This project aligns with the Press's mission to provide affordable and effective textbooks, and it does so in a way that is a little different from all the other books out there. The naked mole rat is an underappreciated and understudied creature, and students enjoy my naked mole rat anecdotes and analogies I've used in class to explain sociological concepts.

Commented [SL5]: This section shows how your project aligns with the **Press's mission**.

If you had asked me a year ago if I was ready to write a book, I would have said no. But I feel ready to dive into this project both personally and professionally. This year I began fostering an injured naked mole rat that had been abandoned at a local shelter, and the opportunity to observe this creature removed from its community while it heals has provided me with interesting first-hand experience that has reinvigorated my interest in this project. Professionally, I'm looking to stretch myself and see if I can create the book I've always wanted to have for my students.

Commented [SL6]: This section shares a little **about you (or your team)** and why you want to do this project.

Included with this proposal you will find a preliminary topic outline that shows the scope and sequence of my proposed project. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 503-399-5253 with any questions regarding the project. Thank you for your consideration.

Commented [SL7]: Don't forget this part! A template is provided to help streamline the process.

Sincerely,

Anita Nubook
Sociology
Chemeketa Community College