

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA - CHAMPAIGN

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering  
306 North Wright Street  
Urbana, Illinois 61801



July 29, 2016

Dear SPaRC Outstanding Service Award Committee Members:

I write on behalf of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and its distinguished faculty to nominate Christina Schweighart for the 2016 SPaRC Outstanding Service Award.

Chris joined the ECE Department ten years ago as an Account Technician I. Her excellent work and aptitude for grant management led her to be selected as ECE's Sponsored Research Coordinator for proposals in 2009. She has recently been promoted to Assistant Director for Grant Administration in ECE, effective August 1, 2016, and will oversee all grant administration activity for the Department. Chris also coordinates with administrators for the sponsored research activity of ECE faculty who are housed in Coordinated Science Laboratory, Information Trust Institute, Micro and Nanotechnology Laboratory and Beckman Institute.

For pre-award activity, Chris is extremely organized such that our principal investigators often remark on how they can trust Chris and rely on her to work through the administrative process for ultimate submission, especially with very short notice. For the most recent fiscal year ECE submitted 110 proposals, with a total dollar amount of \$25 million. That amount does not include the activities of budget modifications, renewal funding, non-disclosure agreements or unrestricted gift transmittals. Chris now oversees proposal preparation activity by a new Sponsored Research Coordinator.

In FY 2016, the ECE faculty collectively recorded approximately \$47.5 million in research expenditures, of which \$6.4 million are managed directly by Chris in ECE's organization code (1-933). She is responsible for all fiscal and reporting requirements for these grants. Chris has established excellent working relationships with faculty, and personalizes her contacts and reporting to suit individual styles.

Related to sponsored project administration, Chris also coordinates and maintains all cost sharing commitments, oversees faculty unrestricted gift/grant funds, provides administrative support for the Conflict Management Plans, and coordinates the RNUA annual reporting submission for ECE.

As Chris's direct supervisor, I have great confidence that I can rely on Chris to work efficiently and effectively with the faculty and research administration to solve any issues that may arise with grace and aplomb. Also included in this nomination submission are letters of support for Chris from many of the faculty members with whom she works. Through their testimonials it is clear that Christina Schweighart is most deserving of the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jeannette G Beck  
Assistant Department Head for Administration

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Electromagnetics Laboratory

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering  
306 North Wright Street  
Urbana, IL 61801-2991



Center for Computational Electromagnetics

Jianming Jin, Y. T. Lo Chair Professor & Director  
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July 28, 2016

Jeannette G. Beck  
Assistant Department Head  
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
306 N. Wright Street  
Urbana, IL 61801-2991

Dear Jeannette:

I write this letter to offer my strongest support for your nomination of Christina Schweighart, Senior Sponsored Research Coordinator of our ECE Department, for the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. In my opinion, Chris is exceedingly qualified for this award; in fact, I cannot think of a more deserving candidate for the award.

Chris has been working in our department for as long as I can remember, helping our faculty to prepare and submit research proposals. During all these years, Chris has worked with me and submitted close to 100 proposals. For each and every proposal, Chris's handling was efficient and perfect. When I needed a budget to talk to my sponsors, she could always prepare one within 15 minutes or sooner. When I had questions on the format or certain criteria, she would go ahead to do research and find answers for me. When she had all the documents for a proposal, she would very quickly put the entire package together and submit to the campus and then the sponsor. After the proposals were submitted, she would monitor the status and, when necessary, check with the sponsor on my behalf. For all these proposals, we never had a single problem because of a missed deadline or format errors. I can always count on Chris to handle my proposals and respond to the sponsors to resolve their concerns. Since our ECE Department is the largest department on the campus, I am sure that Chris has helped many of my colleagues with the same efficiency and perfection. This has been confirmed from time to time by my casual conversations with my colleagues.

It is no exaggeration to say that Chris's perfect handling of my proposals has contributed substantially to my research productivity. It made the preparation of proposals less painful and stressful, and occasionally somewhat enjoyable. With Chris's help, ECE is a better place for me to work and become successful. She represents the kind of supporting staff that every faculty wishes to have and she has served as a model for others to follow. Therefore, I support your nomination of Chris for the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award in my strongest terms.

If you have any questions about Chris's qualifications for this award, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for preparing this nomination to get our best staff recognized.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jianming Jin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jianming Jin

Y. T. Lo Chair Professor in Electrical and Computer Engineering

Director, Electromagnetics Laboratory & Center for Computational Electromagnetics

Peter D. Dragic  
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
4064 ECEB  
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July 28, 2017

Dear SPaRC Awards Committee,

With this letter I would like to offer my full support for and nomination of Christina Schweighart for a SpaRC Outstanding Service Award. Chris' dedication and selfless efforts in supporting Research Administration in Electrical and Computer Engineering have been essential to its success as a Department. I have known Chris for many years and have worked with her on developing and maintaining several research projects. I can attest that she has been the key to success in securing funding and always finds a way to make the proposal preparation process very smooth and easy. That said, I am but one individual in a much larger Department, and given that she manages and supports many of the ECE faculty research programs makes her an invaluable asset. I can confidently say that all of us who have worked with her owe her a deep debt of gratitude.

Awarding Chris the Outstanding Service Award would go a long way in recognizing her outstanding work, service to ECE and the University, and her numerous achievements. I hope that Chris will continue to act in her current capacity in the future, especially since it affords an exceptionally high degree of confidence in the proposal and contract execution process. Once again, I very strongly support Chris Schweighart for the Outstanding Service Award and I invite the Committee members to contact me directly if they should have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Dragic", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter D. Dragic

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering  
4046 ECE Building  
306 North Wright St.  
Urbana, IL 61801



Peter W. Sauer  
Grainger Chair Professor  
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July 27, 2016

To: 2016 UIUC SPaRC Awards Committee

On behalf of the Power and Energy Systems Area of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, I am very pleased to provide this letter of support and recommendation of Ms. Christina R. Schweighart for your use in considering her for a SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. Chris stands out as a person of high integrity, superb performance, and pleasant personality. In nearly 40 years of my working with UIUC staff, nobody has been as responsive, punctual and accurate in the management of the financial accounts associated with our grants, gifts, and contracts. What is remarkable is that she has left this same impression with faculty that have only been here for six months!

Her knowledge of the differences in processing and managing gift funds versus contract research funds is profoundly important in our area. In the gift area, she has responded to requests in our Power Affiliates Program, our Grainger CEME effort, and our Power Systems Engineering Research Center (PSERC) program. This last program is complicated because it involves corporate gift accounts, which are used as seed funding to obtain much larger federal contract grants. In addition, it includes a subcontract with another university to handle federal funds (both NSF and DOE).

In many cases Chris has responded with very short deadlines and complex situations. She has produced project budgets, with appropriate matching and cost sharing funds as required and helped us be competitive in each case. Most importantly, she has also kept us within federal, state, and university requirements in the budget specification. In a recent audit of our PSERC program, she worked diligently with us to help the auditor understand the complications of processing and managing projects that were based on corporate gift funds and not subject to overhead costs. Her intimate knowledge of the grants and contracts processes and requirements helps us to be productive and able to obtain major funding support for research and education.

Chris is especially patient with new faculty members who have just started their jobs. She guides them through any particular requirements stated in the guidelines and offers her past experiences with the various agencies. Considering how new PIs sometimes have little or no exposure to some funding agencies, her service is absolutely crucial for them to secure their first few grants. She has helped our team build a deck of projects with NASA totaling \$3.5M in the last couple of years, and potential for more, by helping us to rapidly respond to solicitations within a funding mechanism which is new to the PI's, leading to NASA Research Agreements. She has also helped PI's partner with agencies that have traditionally been hard to deal with because of significant programmatic overheads, specifically the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI).

Most recently, Chris was key in successfully working out all the details of an ARPA-E grant submission and budget allocations after the grant was awarded. ARPA-E submissions are extremely complex and require very detailed budget justifications, including cost-sharing rules. Without Chris' help, it would have not been possible to obtain this grant. This is just one example of how helpful Chris has been through all the years working with her. It is people such as Chris who make the University of Illinois run smoothly and effectively. In fact, among all the administrative staff members with whom we have interacted at Illinois, Chris stands out for the efficiency, effectiveness and diligence in her work. She is clearly within the top 1% of these staff personnel. Chris' outstanding performance richly deserves the recognition given by the UIUC SPaRC Award. We enthusiastically give her our highest recommendation for this recognition.

Sincerely,

Peter W. Sauer

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peter W. Sauer".

Grainger Chair Professor of ECE and also on behalf of Professors Subhonmesh Bose, Hao Zhu, Thomas J. Overbye, Philip T. Krein, George Gross, Kiruba Haran, Alejandro Dominguez-Garcia, and Robert Pilawa-Podgurski plus the staff and students of the Power and Energy Systems Area

July 27, 2016

Chester S. Gardner, Research Professor and Professor Emeritus  
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Urbana, IL 61801

Ms. Jeannette Beck, Assistant Head  
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

**Subject: SPaRC Award Support Letter for Ms. Christina Schweighart**

Dear Jeannette,

I am pleased to provide this letter of support for Ms. Christina Schweighart who is being considered for the University's SPaRC Award. I have known and worked with Chris for more than a decade. During most of that time she served with distinction as the Grants and Contracts Specialist for the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. Her work involved assisting the faculty with research proposal preparation and submission to the funding agencies. Specifically, Chris helped prepare all the proposal financial and administrative documentation, secured approval of these documentations from the University Office of Grants and Contracts (OGC) and then provided assistance in making the formal submission of the proposals to the funding agencies. Chris was recently promoted to Senior Sponsored Research Coordinator in the Department. I continue to work with her in her new role.

Ms. Schweighart's work products and the support she provides to me and my faculty colleagues are simply outstanding. She is always prompt in responding to my queries and extraordinarily helpful in addressing the requirements of the funding agencies and OGC. Her work is demanding, as she serves a large number of faculty in the Department, and is often faced with tight deadlines imposed by both the funding agencies and her faculty clients. She addresses those demanding challenges with grace, skill and exceptional competency. She always maintains a calm and professional demeanor; in spite of the multi-varied pressures she faces, almost daily.

Ms. Schweighart's competency and effectiveness are truly outstanding. During my almost forty years on the faculty and in the senior administration of the University of Illinois, I have interacted with many hundreds of staff and administrators on all three campuses. I can confidently state that Chris is one of the most dedicated and effective staff members that I have encountered throughout the University during that time. We are extremely fortunate to be able to benefit from her service in the Department. The superb support she provides to my faculty colleagues, and me enables all of us to be more effective and to accomplish more than we would have otherwise. For that I am grateful. I am aware of no one more deserving of this important recognition than Ms. Schweighart. She has my enthusiastic support for the SPaRC Award.

Sincerely,



Chester S. Gardner

Research Professor and Professor Emeritus

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA - CHAMPAIGN

Beckman Institute for  
Advanced Science and Technology

405 North Mathews Avenue  
Urbana, IL 61801



May 10, 2016

To whom it may concern:

I would like to recommend Christina Schweighart for the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. Chris is a gem. She consistently makes goes the extra mile to help the faculty in ECE get proposals submitted and now to deal with the post-award administrata.

In just the last two years Chris has helped me bring in to the University tiny little instructional grants to help our seniors in their capstone class and a big megabuck grant that required coordination across units and navigation of very strange time accounting rules. I am always running up against deadlines if not actually late. Chris tolerates this nonsense and still delivers excellent work. I couldn't have gotten it done without her help.

Effort is not enough though. Chris is also very, very sharp and that helps a lot. I have very high confidence in anything she does. That subsequently take a lot of stress off my plate.

Lastly, Chris is a pleasure to deal with. She is funny and patient and genuinely concerned with the mission of the university to serve our students and do great research.

I recommend Chris Schweighart for the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award most enthusiastically.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Carney', with a horizontal line underneath.

Prof. P. Scott Carney  
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering  
Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology  
Coordinated Science Laboratory  
University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign  
Email: carney@illinois.edu



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Remote Sensing and Space Sciences  
306 N. Wright St., 5044 ECEB  
Urbana, IL 61801



July 15, 2016

Dear SPaRC Outstanding Service Award Committee:

I am pleased to lend my strongest endorsement of Christina Schweighart's nomination for the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. Chris has supported numerous proposal submissions to federal funding agencies for me over the years. In these interactions, I have found that she is unfailingly professional, prompt, and thorough, representing the best service that I have encountered at Illinois in support of my research program.

Many of the proposals I write to external sponsors are unusually complex, involving creating and deploying instrumentation to international locations. These complexities necessitate a certain level of care during the proposal-writing phase to ensure I am complying with relevant rules and regulations. Chris is always willing to go the extra mile and track down this sort of information, be it within the university or at funding agencies, if she does not already have it at her fingertips. I think Chris' pleasant and positive demeanor has enabled her to develop an extensive network of colleagues across campus which she can leverage to quickly address any of the requests made of her to support our research programs.

I know I have benefited from these networks, as Chris has been able to efficiently find an answer to any question I have thrown her way over the past decade, be it how to get an intricate non-disclosure agreement approved, how to facilitate a bailment agreement so students would have access to equipment loaned from an external collaborator, or how to set up a memorandum of understanding with a university in Africa so they could host equipment for a funded project. I have taken this level of support for granted over the years, but realize through conversations with colleagues at our campus and others, that Chris provides service above and beyond the norm.

It is my opinion that Christina Schweighart is very deserving of being recognized by receiving the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. From my perspective, she plays an integral role in keeping the research enterprise within the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering running smoothly through the service she provides to the individual researchers, such as me. I, therefore, strongly support her nomination for this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. J. Makela', written over a light gray rectangular background.

Jonathan J. Makela  
Professor  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering  
Electrical and Computer Engineering Building  
306 North Wright Street  
Urbana, IL 61801



July 29, 2016

Dear SPaRC Awards Committee,

It is my pleasure to write to you in support of the nomination of Christina R. Schweighart for an Outstanding Service Award.

I have been a member of the UIUC faculty for 37 years, and have known Chris ever since she joined the staff of the Business Office of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. As you might imagine, I have known literally scores of individuals who have served faithfully as members of the ECE staff, and virtually all of these individuals have been of the highest quality. However, as a result of my working with Chris in many situations over the years, I can say emphatically that she is truly exceptional. Let me share just a few representative examples of the way in which she has served our faculty at a level “above and beyond the call of duty”.

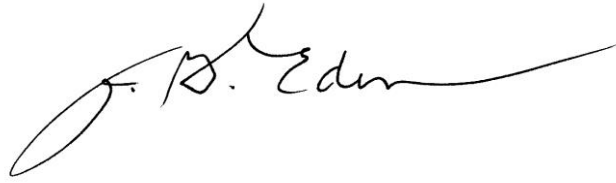
As I write this, the strongest impressions I have of Chris are of working well beyond what anyone could possibly expect in demanding situations. I can think of more than a half dozen times when she worked long hours to see that a prodigious and complex proposal was submitted by the government’s deadline. During the last frantic days when budgets are required from partnering universities, letters of support, or detailed budgetary information must be gathered and presented, Chris was calm, gracious and incredibly efficient at interfacing with financial or grant management staff at the campus level or interacting with officials at other universities. I have been amazed at the congenial spirit she has shown consistently when dealing with trying situations that would cause most people to become less than gracious.

Let me also mention the initiative that she shows when confronting a request that is not in her “job description”. I remember a number of times that I have approached her about a matter that was not officially among her duties. Such requests do not trouble her one bit; rather, she cheerfully investigates whatever procedure might be at issue and resolves the matter quickly.

Let me summarize by saying that it has long been clear that Chris is the rare individual for whom serving others is of paramount importance. Although performing her duties at a high level is certainly a priority to her, it is obvious that meeting the needs of students and faculty are of greatest

importance. Despite having had the privilege of working with many marvelous individuals here at Illinois over the years, I have not known many people of her caliber. We are fortunate to have her, and I urge you to recognize her dedication by naming her a recipient of an Outstanding Service Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Gary Eden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

J. Gary Eden  
Gilmore Family Professor



University of Illinois  
Electrical and Computer Engineering  
3108 Micro and Nanotechnology Laboratory  
208 N. Wright Street  
Urbana, IL 61801

Kent D. Choquette  
Able Bliss Professor of Engineering  
(217) 265-0563 voice  
choquett@illinois.edu

July 29, 2016

Dear Evaluation Committee:

This letter is written to support the award nomination of Chris Schweighart. Chris works in the business office of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. Chris has directly supported my proposal efforts for many years. Ms. Schweighart is among the hardest working and responsive individual I have ever had the pleasure of working with.

Among the many responsibilities of faculty include the preparation and submission of research proposals. Often my schedule is driven by deadlines, which means that nearly every time I have a proposal to submit, I show up in Chris's office without warning less than a week and sometimes the day before the proposal deadline. In spite of no notice and last minute timing, her response is professional, effective, and extremely productive. Chris does not change her demeanor and simply jumps to work and often has most of her portions of the research process completed before I return to my office. She has on numerous occasions worked beyond the end of a workday or has come in early to assist with proposal preparation. An exemplary example of her knowledge, skill, and extreme professionalism is her creation of a budget. Typically I provide her the most basic parameters, and she develops and provides a complete budget. She will have looked up the budgeting requirements for the particular type of proposal and will have ensured that my budget is in compliance. No proposal can be successful if it does not comply with the particular requirements, which I can always count on Chris to make happen. Chris often anticipates what I need even before I realize what I need!

During my 16 years as an ECE faculty member, Chris Schweighart is among the best, if not the best, support staff I have ever worked with. She has consistently provided superior service and performance, nearly always in the circumstance of short and unannounced notice. Beside my graduate students who work on my group, Chris is the most valuable contributor to my research programs. I consider Chris Schweighart to be an extremely worthy candidate for this award, and I am delighted to give my highest possible recommendation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kent D. Choquette".

Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering