

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
AT URBANA – CHAMPAIGN



**Beckman Institute**

405 North Mathews Avenue  
Urbana IL 61801

July 23, 2016

Dear SPaRC Awards Selection Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Ms. Mary Smith for the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. Mary's track record over her six years at UIUC clearly speaks for itself. As a Coordinator of Research Programs at Beckman Institute, I work with multiple business offices and grant/proposal personnel across campus and Mary has always stood out to me. Whether it is year end, the day before a holiday or the Nth hour before a proposal deadline, she has always been gracious and willing to help until the end. She is knowledgeable in every aspect of her field, giving of her time and dedicated to finding the best solution for the situation at hand.

Starting in the School of Chemical Sciences as a Business and Financial Specialist in 2010, stepping in as Interim and then permanent Senior Financial Analyst in 2014 and now serving as Interim Director for the SCS Business Office, it is evident that Mary is a team player and willing to do whatever is necessary for the School (SCS) and University as a whole. Colleagues, professors and administration alike have increasingly looked to Mary for assistance, guidance and advice during her tenure. I feel this is not only due to their confidence in her knowledge of grants and financial management, but also because of her exceptional support, timely responses and commitment to each situation. Whether I have been working on a grant closeout, a painfully unconventional sub-award, or looking for random answers to purchasing or TEM requests, Mary consistently provides the same remarkable support. Never does it appear that one situation is less important than another.

Along with her knowledge of research administration, also comes the responsibility for compliance. It can get quite frustrating for PIs and other personnel not on the front lines to translate the frequent changes to policy and the sometimes indistinguishable guidelines. Mary, is effective in translating these regulations, breaking them down and clarifying more specifically how it will affect a specific project. Being able to successfully have these conversations is just another reason Mary Smith is such an asset to UIUC.

Lastly, not only does Mary possess the knowledge and customer service skills necessary for research administration, but she is also more than willing to share them. Over the last year, Mary was part of a team that worked together to present the Financial

Administration II portion of the SPaRC'ED certificate series. Sharing experience, knowledge, insight and ways to handle different situations with 53 fellow research administrators across campus. In addition, she was a presenter at the 2015 SPaRC Retreat.

Mary's impact on the UIUC research community in the last six years is surely immeasurable. She exudes outstanding service and is most deserving. I hope you will give Mary your highest consideration in recognizing her with this award.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ashley B. Trimmell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

ASHLEY TRIMMELL | Coordinator of Research Programs  
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To: SPaRC Awards Selection Committee

From: Jenny L. Cox, Senior Financial Analyst, Department of Chemistry

Date: July 29, 2016

Re: Nomination for Outstanding Service Award

It is my pleasure to recommend Mary L. Smith for this year's SPaRC Outstanding Service Award.

Mary has demonstrated excellent service and professionalism during her entire tenure here at the University of Illinois. I had the pleasure of supervising Mary for four years as part of the SCS Grants staff. Coming from outside the university, Mary very quickly learned and adapted to a service role in a high-volume research unit. She has excelled at pre- and post-award administration and has earned a professional rapport with Chemical Sciences faculty. Mary has always had an extraordinary attitude toward customer service. She has exceeded expectations by always being willing to assist faculty with their research administration needs, and to seek input from others when she doesn't have an immediate answer.

I took a different position in 2014 and Mary was promoted to fill the vacancy of Senior Business Analyst. I had every confidence in her abilities then, and continue to be pleased with her level of service and professionalism. Mary has flourished when taking on additional responsibilities, which is evident in her current Interim Business Manager role.

I hope your committee agrees that Mary Smith is a perfect candidate for this award.