

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

School of Molecular and Cellular Biology
393 Morrill Hall
505 South Goodwin Avenue
Urbana, IL 61801



Stephen G. Sligar
Director
I.C. Gunsalus Professor

July 27, 2015

Selection Committee
The University of Illinois
SPaRC Awards
Submitted on-line

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to provide my strongest recommendation on behalf of **Ms. Ann Zielinski** for receipt of the **SPaRC Career Achievement Award**. Ann is the Associate Director for Business Affairs in the School of Molecular and Cellular Biology. In this capacity she is responsible for all financial aspects of MCB. Importantly, she manages the pre- and post-award functions for the extensive MCB research enterprise. MCB is composed of four Departments (Biochemistry, Cell and Developmental Biology, Microbiology and Molecular and Integrative Biology) and has the highest per faculty member level of grant support on campus. As such, our success in the research arena is directly related to Ann's dedication and successful stewarding of the internal and external revenue streams that fund this function that is critical to the success of the University of Illinois. She serves tirelessly on campus and college level administrative committees and is the 'go-to' person for advice and strategic vision. In addition to this major role, Ann also is the grant manager for the department of Cell and Developmental Biology (CDB). Her performance in this role is separately attested by the supporting letter from Professor Jie Chen, Head of CDB.

By way of historical perspective, Ann's first exposure to federal research grants was in graduate school 1979 when her faculty mentor and five other faculty members at Rutgers gave her train fare to hand-deliver their grants to NIH on the due date. After graduate school, Ann worked in several laboratories as a researcher, but her math and financial abilities were quickly recognized and grant expenditure management was added to her responsibilities.

Ann moved to the University of Illinois in 1986 and worked with I. C. Gunsalus, then an Emeritus Professor in Biochemistry, managing his research laboratory and as well as his new endeavors as Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations. In 1988 she expanded her responsibilities by taking on the duties as Laboratory Coordinator for Professor Larry Faulkner, then head of the Department of Chemistry, and took charge of research grant accounting and assisting with grant renewals. When Professor Faulkner moved to the Dean's office, Ann accepted a position as Assistant Head of Cell and

Structural Biology in 1992 where she took over managing the various departmental accounts and the extramural funding for the department's faculty. Here Ann firmed her operating belief: Leave the faculty to worry about the scientific part of the grants and all strategic financials and accounting aspects she would take over, tracking the expenditures and reconciling every account.

When the School of Life Sciences split in to two Schools (School of Molecular & Cellular Biology and School of Integrative Biology) in 1997, Ann was asked by the founding Director, Dr. Charles Miller, to head up the grant and budget component of the new School of MCB. The first day Ann and one secretary opened an empty office and started business, with the first grant applications appearing on her desk that week. Ann played a leading role with the complex financials involved in transforming the old School of Life Sciences into SIB and MCB. This required establishing new organization codes, and bringing responsibility for all extramural funding from individual faculty and departments into School administration. Under my Directorship, from 2007 to the present, Ann has further expanded her duties to better serve the research and educational aspects of the Departments and School by establishing pre- and post-award grants administration, all staffing for a centralize procurement unit and storeroom function as well as accounts related to research related remodeling and facilities administration. She also directly manages and provides strategic leadership in the large budget for our undergraduate educational and research mission.

Most importantly, Ms. Zielinski is responsible for our performance in audits from the University, State and federal agencies. She serves as the go-between the faculty/staff and administration on research related issues, updating everyone on changes in grant policies. She also is responsible for the semi-annual certifications for grant activity for all in MCB, reviewing all proposals and signing the transmittal forms.

Ann's dedication extends to maintaining operational status of all state budgets for the School and its four Departments, works with the Department Heads and School Director to implement salary adjustments in Salary Planner and Budget Planner, monitoring all obligated and un-obligated state accounts. Ann also maintains and advises on all financial commitments between MCB, its Departments and other units, making scheduled transfers and executing all promissory notes.

Ms. Zielinski is clearly an outstanding asset to the Illinois research enterprise. Her long-term dedication to excellence and high standards has served the School and Campus exceedingly well. Her service is most appropriately rewarded by receipt of the **SPaRC Career Achievement Award**.

Sincerely,



Stephen G. Sligar

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Department of Cell and Developmental Biology
B107 Chemical and Life Sciences Laboratory
601 South Goodwin Avenue
Urbana, IL 61801



July 27, 2015

Dear SPaRC Award Selection Committee Members:

I am writing to offer my most enthusiastic support for the nomination of Ms. Ann Zielinski for a Career Achievement SPaRC Award. Ann is the Associate Director for Business Affairs in the School of Molecular and Cellular Biology (MCB), in which my department, Cell and Developmental Biology (CDB), is one of the four departments. As a faculty member in CDB for 18 years, I have experienced first-hand the tremendous help from Ann on the business side of running a research program. As the department head, I rely heavily on Ann's vast knowledge of the financial landscape and her wisdom.

When I first arrived at Illinois as an assistant professor, I had no prior experience running a lab, and the task of taking the "sack of money" (i.e., start-up fund) and turning it into a thriving research program was daunting, to say the least. Ann immediately took me under her wing, walked me through making a comprehensive list of lab equipment and getting the best package deals from vendors, and tutored me on the art of hiring various types of personnel. Soon after I arrived, I submitted my first NIH and NSF grants, and it was Ann that took care of the myriad of forms and budget calculations. Eighteen years later, it is still Ann that I turn to every time I submit a grant. Funding agency guidelines have changed, application forms have changed, budgets and costs have changed, but Ann remains the encyclopedia of research grants.

The CDB department has had 17-22 primary tenure-system faculty members in any given year. Almost every one of us submits several grants a year. Ann works directly with us on all of our individual grant submissions and budgeting/balancing of our accounts, in addition to managing the entire business affair of the school. "Ask Ann" or "Ann will take care of you" is my standard response whenever a junior faculty has any questions on grant submission or grant management. CDB has one of the highest grant award dollars per faculty on campus, and Ann has played an indispensable role in this achievement.

I have gained appreciation of Ann's financial knowledge, wisdom, and vision at a whole new level since I became the department head. She has guided me through every financial decision for the department, big or small. Impressively, she is familiar with every faculty's funding history, collaborative efforts, and grant expenditures. Such deep knowledge offers unique and crucial insights when the department is called on for bridge funding, for instance. When the department was involved in an internal audit, Ann offered support and confidence with her infallible knowledge and integrity.

The combination of strong academic background and sharp business sense makes Ann a unique research administrator. Ann understands the science, the scientists, and the way scientists do science. This understanding wins her tremendous respect from the faculty and gives her the

ability to make an important impact on our research enterprise. Although she likes to say it's just her job to make the faculties' lives easier, Ann goes above and beyond with her duties as the Associate Director of Business Affairs and champion for the faculty. The department, the school, and the campus are most fortunate to have had Ann's long-time service at the highest caliber. I cannot think of a better way to recognize her exceptional dedication and contribution than a SPaRC Career Achievement Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jie Chen', with a stylized, wavy flourish extending to the right.

Jie Chen, PhD
Professor & Head
Department of Cell and Developmental Biology

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Susan A. Martinis, Ph.D.
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July 31, 2015



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RE: Nomination of Ms. Ann Zielinski for SPaRC

Dear Colleague:

I am writing to very strongly support the nomination of Ms. Ann Zielinski for the SPaRC Career Achievement Award. Indeed, I can't think of a better candidate. Ann has ~30 years of experience at the University of Illinois that includes directly working in research laboratories, departmental offices, and school human resource as well as grant preparation and support. The vast breadth and depth of her expertise shows whether she's assisting students and faculty or connecting with other administrative offices across campus. It is a form of "one-stop shopping" when you call on Ann for assistance. You know that the "buck stops with Ann" and that she will take care of the issue effectively and efficiently.

I first met Ann when I was recruited to Illinois in 2005. She was a very important part of the recruitment team as my husband and I decided to come to Urbana or head to Ann Arbor or La Jolla for competing offers. It was clear that she was a take-charge type of person, who could get at the core of the problem. She does so with dogged professionalism, but also a great deal of compassion. One issue of ours dealt with high-stake healthcare issues related to our disabled child. Many administrators would shy away from these tricky issues and pass us along to someone else, but Ann dug into the details, working on our behalf to ensure a smooth transition. I cite this event, because it epitomizes every interaction that I have had with Ann as she connects with every soft- and hard-ball thrown at her. It doesn't really matter if the issue is large or small, she will ensure that it is addressed.

As Head of the Department of Biochemistry, Ann has been an incredibly valuable asset. She mentored and taught me many aspects of my job and responsibilities. This includes sitting down and patiently explaining the numerous research, administrative, and advancement accounts that I oversee in Biochemistry. She also provided sage advice on structuring start-up packages for new faculty recruits, aiding young faculty in securing that first grant and then managing their new funds, as well as advising how to best assist a faculty member who was struggling between grants. Biochemistry has had tremendous opportunities to work with alumni on advancement issues. Ann has been very important to help with managing the nuts and bolts of those endeavors.

Ann is no doubt known across campus for her brusque approach to tackling problems. However, it always comes with a strong sense of advocacy – for the University, for the School, for the Department, and for the individual. These combinations of advocacy and persistence with an awareness of all the issues that surround a problem are important ingredients to her success.

Another key is that she is straightforward in communicating the solutions in a way that people understand the solution. This is particularly valuable when the problem is complex and the solutions are challenging.

Again – I fully support Ann’s nomination. Her job in grants submission and management can be relentless. For years, she has lead the charge in the School of Molecular and Cellular Biology, such that it has achieved the top grant support from the National Institutes of Health per capita. Her important role has been greatly undersong. This is a perfect opportunity to recognize Ann for her tremendous service to the School, its Department and the University.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan A. Martinis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Susan A. Martinis, Ph.D.

Head and Professor

Departments of Biochemistry and Medical Biochemistry