

April 17, 2023

Kamil Tamimie
Assistant Director – Training, Outreach, and Data Management
Sponsored Programs Administration
1901 S. First Street, Suite A
MC – 685
Champaign, IL 61820

Dear Kamil,

I am pleased to nominate Brian Merrill, Assistant Director - Data & Cash Management - Sponsored Programs Administration, for this year's SPaRC Innovation Award. Over the years, Brian has been instrumental in assisting our team with developing queries and reporting capabilities to assist in various projects. His efforts have helped increase efficiencies and reduced the need for manual entry, improved accuracy, and developed useful procedure documents to follow so that our team can be consistent and accurate in our reporting. All the while, Brian has maintained an open mind to new and ever-changing requests as we often come to him for solutions and ideas.

A few recent examples where he has helped our team is in the development of a new fabricated equipment email process where we can generate automated emails to departments, Property Accounting, and internal SPA staff to assist with closeout and equipment compliance. This reporting was able to be automated thru the use of various queries and reduced a very manual process which we estimated to take 8 hours every quarter down to less than 30 minutes per month. Not only does this save time but also allows us to run reports on a more frequent basis.

Another area that Brian has assisted with in the past is our annual GAAP reporting where he has streamlined our process to reduce entry errors and any inadvertent changes to background data. He has improved the overall process by searching for outlying Agencies that might need reporting on and making our reporting more efficient. This capability will assist year-over-year as we are required to perform this annually and can utilize the reports each time we report.

Recently, we employed his innovative data knowledge to make adjustments to our annual Sandia Reporting where the Sponsor changed a previously used format for future reporting requirements. Brian had previously helped establish an automated process for this reporting but recent changes required a new analysis of how to accomplish this task going forward. Brian was willing to determine the changes needed and help our team continue to use this automated, and time-saving, reporting capability.

Overall, Brian's willingness to think critically about the process needs of our staff and develop innovative strategies to not only meet the Sponsor's needs, but also reduce the amount of burden our team has to

undertake, is greatly appreciated. His reporting efforts have helped us increase efficiencies and improve the effectiveness of our internal and external reporting. Our team appreciates his data knowledge and can always count on him to be a vital contributor to our overall success.

Sincerely,

Ryan Holmes
Assistant Director – Audit & Compliance
Sponsored Programs Administration





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Dear Kamil,

I would like to join Ryan Holmes in nominating Brian Merrill for this years SPaRC Innovation Award. Over the past few years Brian has been a huge support to the SPA Audit & Compliance team through his willingness and ability to take previously written Access queries and turn them into much more efficient and effective processes. Brian is always willing to listen to our current process and help brainstorm a way to improve that process as well as the output. Many times, he has taken a previously written multi step Access process and turned it into a one step process by creating macros to run the queries in the background. This makes the processes easier, more efficient, and more accurate. Brian is always willing to listen to our wish list and offer ideas to make those wishes a reality for our team and we are grateful to have him and his knowledge as a part of SPA.

Sincerely,

Kristie Lamoreux
Assistant Director – Audit & Compliance
Sponsored Programs Administration