

Dear Retreat Committee,

It is my pleasure and honor to recommend Janessa Gentry for the SPaRC Outstanding Service award. As Janessa's team lead since she joined NCSA in 2019, I have been impressed with her grace in stressful situations as well as her initiative, her time management skills, and her dedication to NCSA, the University, and the PIs she assists.

Janessa is a tremendous asset to the NCSA Business office, and to the Center as a whole, as she's always focused on ways to streamline and improve processes that lead to the PIs' successful proposal outcomes. For example, in the two-and-one-half years she has been a grants and contracts specialist at NCSA responsible for proposal submissions, Janessa has:

- developed a more user-friendly budget template
- developed and launched a project management system to keep PIs on schedule
- leveraged tools to enhance proposal workflows and increase thoroughness
- developed and implemented enriched quarterly proposal and award reporting to senior leadership

Recently, NCSA initiated planning to create a new proposal development office within the Center. Janessa was instrumental in planning, documenting current proposal development processes and suggesting improvements based on best practices; defining skillsets that will be needed in the PDO staff; and explaining the logistics and interfaces the PDO will require between existing NCSA and UIUC units.

She works closely with PIs to create detailed budgets/justifications and coordinates the submission of grant proposals serving as a liaison to SPA, agency sponsors, and subcontracts organizations. She also develops and oversees the submission of research, training, and development of grant proposals with external funding agencies, including but not limited to extensive, complex program and center grant proposals.

Working quickly and accurately under pressure is second nature to Janessa, always delivering an outstanding product. Janessa has a very seamless approach when it comes to communication and submissions. No matter what glitches or roadblocks may come along, she is very firm yet respectful in her tone to keep the process moving along to meet tight deadlines.

There was a time in our office where she had eight proposals due over a three-day span. This included multiple multi-million-dollar Center proposals that had co-PIs from several universities and very complex budgets. Not only were there several proposals due at once but PIs were making changes up until the very last minute. No doubt the \$20M proposal was awarded due to her superb communication and organization with the PI, proposal development staff, and SPA.

Janessa is known around the Center as an extremely valuable team member. Her support with proposal preparation goes beyond coordinating, she stays on top of all the changes with the proposal guidance from different agencies; is very knowledgeable about NCSA's and UIUC's policies and procedures and goes the extra mile to help prepare the proposal documentation and pays attention to the utmost details. When there are conflicts between the PIs desire to keep working on the proposal as long as possible, and UIUC's need to review the proposal, she carefully

balances the groups, acting as a neutral party that makes the communication and process work as well as possible. Janessa keeps the needs of the proposal teams focused and looks out for their best interests as proven with scheduling leave time around proposal due dates. She is known for working until the job is done, even when that includes nights and weekends.

By going above and beyond the requirements of her day-to-day work, Janessa has successfully shepherded millions of dollars in grants to researchers at NCSA and UIUC.

Janessa's dedication to outstanding service in support of research administration is not limited to her contributions to NCSA. She began her career at the University of Illinois' Institute for Genomic Biology in October of 2006 as an Office Support Associate. From there, she worked her way up to a Business Administrative Associate, creating budgets and submitting proposals.

That's why I believe Janessa's loyalty and dedication to the University of Illinois should be acknowledged by naming her the 2021 recipient of the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award.

Sincerely,

Amy Morgan
Senior Grants & Contracts Coordinator
NCSA

July 2, 2021

Dear SPaRC Outstanding Service Award Committee:

For all her efforts to ensure NCSA's proposals are the most compliant with sponsor and institutional rules and regulations, I would like to nominate Janessa Gentry for the SPaRC 2021 Outstanding Service Award. As the primary SPA reviewer of NCSA proposals over the past several years, Janessa's arrival led to a significant improvement in the quality of proposal applications for the institute.

Janessa has an eye for details and an ear for SPA feedback. She mastered entry in myProposals records and does all the little things that make it easier for SPA to review NCSA proposals. One example is PI eligibility documentation. Not only does she notate the exception and approvals, but she uploads a copy of NCSA's master list of "blanket approvals" and highlights the names of all the PIs and Co-PIs on the submitted proposal. Janessa also revamped and greatly improved the internal budget template at NCSA so it is much easier to follow and confirm figures and calculations.

Of course, it is also important to highlight the quality of the actual proposal submissions. Janessa mastered FastLane applications and is working toward the same mastery for DOE and other grants.gov submissions. From my perspective, it can be challenging to find any feedback on the proposals she submits for SPA's review. When I receive a proposal from Janessa, I know my review will be smooth. Even if I find something that might need to be addressed, she is always available to help troubleshoot and find an answer. Janessa is just a great colleague and an outstanding resource for NCSA and the institution at-large.

Sincerely,



Brian Rogers
Senior Associate Director, Proposals
Sponsored Programs Administration