

July 10, 2020

Dear SPaRC Committee Members:

It is my great pleasure to nominate Ms. Kara Johnson for the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. Kara is the Associate Director for Administration at the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology. Beckman has been a wonderful partner to Carle for over 20 years, primarily in the area of magnetic resonance imaging research and technology. Most recently, Carle and Beckman have partnered on two important initiatives, the Carle Illinois 7 Tesla MRI facility and the partnership between the Cancer Center at Illinois, which is housed in the Beckman Institute, and Carle Cancer Center. These partnership would not be successful without Kara's professionalism, creativity and leadership. Kara leads an excellent team who ensure that our joint staff, trainees, facilities, and grant proposals are properly managed and administered.

Both of our key initiatives require complex negotiation and creation of new business mechanism for the campus. Kara worked diligently to understand both institutions regulatory requirements and develop solutions to enable partnership and transparency. Kara is knowledgeable about campus, federal and state policies but is also open to new ideas and information. She is a strong manager who has built a solid team that takes initiative to solve problems.

I am especially grateful to Kara for her leadership in our joint purchase of the Siemens 7 T MRI system. This machine will be the centerpiece of what will be called the Carle Illinois Advanced Imaging Center, which is governed by a partnership agreement between Carle and Illinois. Kara was the administrative lead in developing this agreement. She coordinated with all the necessary campus offices while meeting regularly with our team at Carle. This was one of the most complex engagements we have had with campus, involving state procurement regulations multiple departments and patient care regulations. Kara found a way to navigate through a complex bureaucracy to successfully procure the instrument. She is smart, organized, efficient, and productive. Thanks in great part to her leadership, I look forward to our joint center being inaugurated in the fall of 2020.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Eardley". The signature is written in a cursive style.
Jennifer Eardley, PhD

Vice President for Research
Stephens Family Clinical Research Institute
Carle Health



**OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR
FOR RESEARCH & INNOVATION**

Fourth Floor, Swanlund Administration Building, MC-304
601 E. John St.
Champaign, IL 61820-5711

July 14, 2020

Dear SPaRC Awards Committee,

I am honored to support Kara Johnson's nomination for the Sponsored Programs and Research Compliance Outstanding Service Award. Kara and I have worked together for many years, often communicating about research administration issues, especially in areas related to grants financial management. I respect Kara's honesty, thoughtfulness and pride for the work happening within the Beckman Institute.

Kara is a team player and one of the most reliable and creative people I've had the pleasure of working with at the University. These traits are particularly beneficial during the annual budget process, which Kara manages for Beckman. I have personally leaned on Kara often in the past, to get her perspective on financial issues that not only impact Beckman, but the entire research enterprise.

I admire Kara's willingness to collaborate with and offer assistance to researchers and grants officers across campus. Kara is among the best administrators on campus and incredibly deserving of the Outstanding Service Award. Please let me know if you have any further questions about Kara's work and how it supports both researchers at Beckman and the larger research enterprise on the University of Illinois campus.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sharee D Robinson'.

Sharee D Robinson
Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation

July 10, 2020

Dear SPaRC Awards Committee,

I write to enthusiastically nominate Kara Johnson, the associate director for administration of the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology, for the Sponsored Programs and Research Compliance Outstanding Service Award. Kara is the person who bridges the gap between Beckman's research groups and its administrative staff. She truly understands both sides and uses that knowledge to make sure they complement and leverage each other. Her dedication and perseverance have blazed a trail for researchers at Beckman and their partners in the community and throughout the world. Her hard work makes Beckman the kind of place where interdisciplinary researchers can break new barriers using tools not available anywhere else on campus.

Kara has worked at Beckman for more than 10 years, and has been promoted from the roles of finance specialist, finance coordinator, and director of budget and resource planning. Each promotion gave her significantly more oversight responsibilities within research administration. For example, she has successfully overseen human resources, facilities, IT, and café operations. On any given day, Kara is the mediator who guides our research groups' administrative issues, ensuring that they comply with all policies, laws, and regulations. By reducing the amount of time that these researchers spend on administrative tasks or helping them find compliant solutions, she accelerates the research of the Beckman Institute and the University of Illinois.

One of Kara's most impactful recent accomplishments is the completion of the agreement between the University of Illinois and Carle Foundation Hospital on the planned procurement and use of a Siemens MAGNETOM 7 Tesla MRI system. This magnet, expected to be delivered in fall of 2020, will be the seventh in a clinical setting in the United States. Although the Beckman Institute has a history of collaboration with Carle, this partnership is exceedingly complex due to the shared nature and its location in a clinical setting. Kara navigated the uncharted legal and business aspects of bringing this unique technology to the community by serving as the primary point of contact and establishing the necessary procurement and agreement documents. This required persistence, reliance on her already-strong relationships around campus and at Carle, and bringing together representatives from purchasing, legal, risk management, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, and others. Because of Kara's dedication, this approved purchase will bring scholarship, discovery, and innovation that will change the world in ways we cannot yet imagine. Kara also helped create a path and process for other campus units who might want to enter into similar agreements in the future.

Kara is an incredible asset to Beckman's researchers, the institute itself, and the campus research community as a whole. Her relationship-driven approach, data-focused decision making, and tireless dedication to her work make her an excellent candidate for the Sponsored Programs and Research Compliance Outstanding Service Award. Please let me know if you have any further questions about Kara and her accomplishments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Moore". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeff" being more prominent than the last name "Moore".

Jeff Moore
Beckman Institute Director

