

July 27, 2025

SPaRC Awards Committee
1901 South First Street, Suite A
Champaign, IL 61820-7406

RE: Recommendation for **Kathleen J. Veach**, Advanced Senior Proposal Coordinator
Office of Sponsored Programs
2025 SPaRC Outstanding Service Award

Dear Colleagues:

It gives me great pleasure to nominate Kathie Veach for the 2025 SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. As a recipient myself of the SPaRC Lifetime Achievement Award (2016), I am keenly aware of the many, many deeply committed and highly professional employees whose work contributes every day to the excellence of research administration at the University of Illinois. Choosing among so many deserving individuals must be a daunting task for your committee, but Kathie fully deserves to be included in that distinguished cohort, as I will explain in this letter.

I have known Kathie since 1993, when we both worked in the Department of Nuclear Engineering. From Kathie's demonstrated dedication to excellent customer service and her meticulous attention to detail, I knew then that she was a "keeper." I have followed her career since those early days, happy to see that my initial impression has been validated time and time again. I was thrilled when she was assigned the proposal coordinator duties for the Department of Physics, grateful that I had the opportunity to work closely with her again.

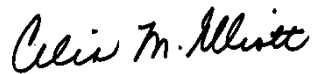
I frequently go to Kathie with questions that nobody else can seem to answer. And if she doesn't know the answer immediately, I can always depend on Kathie to either refer me to the right person on campus or dig out the information for me herself. She commands a *staggering* amount of knowledge and experience, combined with an exquisite ability to set priorities and keep track of details. That she responds to every request, no matter how arcane or seemingly trivial, with unfailing promptness, cheerfulness, and courtesy sets a high bar for all of us.

I have also benefited from the many SPaRC training opportunities that Kathie has contributed to over the years. Her presentations have always been a model of logical organization and deeply practical advice. That Kathie can do it all is remarkable—that she can do it with steadfast good humor and grace under extreme pressure is astonishing. I admire her professionalism more than I can say.

Of the perhaps 150 staff that I have worked with in my 33 years at the University of Illinois, I would rank Kathie in the top 5 percent. In all of her interactions with me, she has truly been the best of the best. I have a reputation for being exacting and attentive to detail, but more times than I care to admit, Kathie has caught mistakes that I had overlooked and kept me and my physicists out of trouble.

For her abiding commitment to excellence at the University of Illinois, for her infinite patience and unflagging willingness to help everyone who crosses her threshold with a question or a problem, for her infectious positive attitude, for her can-do, roll-up-your-sleeves approach to problems, and for her plain hard work, Kathie Veatch is deeply deserving of the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. I recommend her most strongly for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Celia M. Elliott". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Celia Mathews Elliott
Director, External Affairs and Special Projects

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Recommendation for the Outstanding Service Award

Sponsored Programs Administration

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Kathy Webb, and I work in the Department of Statistics. It is with great enthusiasm that I recommend Kathie Veach for the Outstanding Service Award for Sponsored Programs Administration. Kathie serves as the Advanced Senior Proposal Coordinator for our department, a position that requires a high level of expertise, patience, and dedication.

Kathie's primary responsibility is reviewing, providing feedback, and approving requests for external funding for research. Her approach to this demanding role is best captured in a phrase she once shared: *"Trying to find a 'yes' answer in a 'no' world."* This attitude perfectly reflects her commitment to supporting faculty and staff through the complexities of the grant application process.

Having been with the university since 1993, Kathie brings a wealth of experience from various roles related to grant research. Prior to SPA, she has worked in various roles on campus. Coming from the department side, allows her to empathize with colleagues and faculty who face the challenges of obtaining necessary documents and information to meet grant requirements. She understands firsthand the frustrations that can arise, and more importantly, she knows how rewarding it can be to meet deadlines and, even more so, when a grant is successfully awarded.

When I transitioned to this role from another department with nearly four years of experience in post-award administration, I had no experience with pre-awards. My manager introduced me to Kathie on a Zoom call, and a few months later, I had the opportunity to formally introduce myself to her at the annual retreat. Rather than the usual handshake, Kathie greeted me with a warm hug, making me feel immediately welcomed and supported.

Since that day, Kathie has been an invaluable mentor. She has guided me through the complexities of proposal coordination, always ensuring I have the necessary tools and understanding. She takes the time to explain the "why" behind processes, ensuring not only that I understand what needs to be done but also why it's important. Her knowledge is vast, and when faced with a particularly challenging or quirky situation, she's not afraid to seek guidance from others.

One of Kathie's most admirable qualities is her integrity. If a mistake or misunderstanding occurs, she takes full responsibility and works to rectify it. This is a rare and valuable trait in any professional setting, and it speaks volumes about her character. She is often harder on herself than anyone could be toward her, which only adds to the respect she commands from her colleagues.

In a high-pressure role like proposal coordination, with tight deadlines and a substantial workload, Kathie consistently maintains a professional demeanor and continues to persevere, no matter the challenge. Her ability to remain composed and solution-oriented is inspiring.

Kathie's commitment to her colleagues at Sponsored Programs Administration goes beyond mere professionalism. She views them as a family unit and deeply cares for their well-being, which has fostered a collaborative and supportive work environment. Her positive attitude and dedication to service make her an outstanding candidate for this award.

In closing, I wholeheartedly recommend Kathie Veach for the Outstanding Service Award for Sponsored Programs Administration. Her experience, professionalism, mentorship, and unwavering dedication make her a true asset to the university, and she deserves this recognition.

Sincerely,

Kathy Webb

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