

July 28, 2023

Dear 2023 SPaRC Awards Committee,

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Richard Sallee for a 2023 SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. Richard is Research Program Coordinator in the Office of Proposal Development (OPD). In this role, he manages campus Limited Submissions—a complex process that involves identifying a “limited” number of PIs/teams to move forward to proposal submission when a sponsor limits the number of applications an institution can submit.

Nationally, Limited Submissions funding opportunities have increased dramatically in a short period of time. From 2020-2022, the average number of federal limited submissions opportunities has roughly doubled, and limited submissions opportunities now make up between 16-20% of all federal funding opportunities. This represents millions of dollars in potential funding for scholarly activities.

At Illinois, management of the Limited Submissions process has grown organically. Richard’s role has evolved from one in which he simply provided periodic administrative assistance, to his current position leading the entire Limited Submissions process. In that time, he has developed and documented systematic and well-defined workflows. His thoughtful approach helps to maintain both the integrity and the efficiency of the selection process.

Funding opportunity announcements with tight timelines are becoming the norm, and this focus on clear process helps the OVCR to move quickly to determine our institution’s selection when time is of the essence. A recent opportunity from the NSF is a good example: with only four weeks to conduct an internal competition and submit a pre-proposal, Richard set up the call in our portal, posted an application form customized to the FOA and sent out a special announcement, all within a few hours. This level of service translates into meaningful impact for investigators, as they can spend more time developing their ideas and fleshing out their concepts.

In addition to good process, managing Limited Submissions also involves developing and maintaining strong working relationships with units across campus. Richard’s colleagues in research administration and development have come to depend on his efficient organization skills, his responsiveness to their Limited Submission questions and his commitment to creative problem solving. He has a clear focus on service and support for faculty and staff, and he is a thoughtful and trusted partner for the University’s research leadership.

Richard’s outreach and service efforts are a testament to his focus on clear communication and efficiency. His recent collaboration with the Office of Foundation Relations on the prestigious

W. M. Keck Foundation Research Program Award showcases this approach. Based on his extensive experience running internal competitions, he contributed to the development of a timeline for the entire process, provided guidance on the conduct of the information sessions and managed the internal selection process. His efforts have led to the creation of standard forms, templates and processes that will serve as a model for managing future iterations of such competitions.

Richard has also developed plans to manage contingencies and he proactively anticipates new and unexpected developments. For example, he is currently developing short information documents for recurring Limited Submission opportunities so that applicants and reviewers have a better understanding of the priorities of the sponsor, the program and the steps and specifics involved in the internal selection process—all of which contribute toward a more robust selection process. He is passionate about continued innovation to better serve the Illinois Research Community!

Richard represents the best of the University of Illinois, combining a can-do spirit with a focus on innovation and excellence in every aspect of his work. Thank you for considering him for the 2023 SPaRC Outstanding Service award.

Sincerely,



Melissa Edwards

Assistant Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation