

June 18, 2023

SPaRC Awards Committee,
University of Illinois,
Illinois, USA

Dear Members of the Awards Committee,

I write this letter with great enthusiasm to endorse and strongly recommend Ms. Stevie Bohlen for the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. In my capacity as a faculty member at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Illinois, I have had the good fortune to work closely with Stevie, and I can confidently say that she epitomizes the spirit of service, dedication, and excellence that this award seeks to recognize.

Stevie previously served as a Grants & Contracts Coordinator in the Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) department, consistently demonstrating outstanding service and tireless dedication to the department and to assist faculty members. Her assistance in the preparation of proposal documents, administration and financial materials, and overall proposal submission process has been invaluable. The faculty and research staff at our department owe a great deal of their success to her exceptional support.

A testament to her commitment is my personal experience when applying for the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Young Faculty Award in 2022. From the inception of my project proposal to the final stages of submission, Stevie was my pillar of support. Her timely inputs, keen attention to detail, and unwavering dedication were instrumental in submitting a compelling and successful proposal. The meticulous nature of her work and her ceaseless commitment to research administration truly goes beyond and above normal duties.

Furthermore, Stevie led the way in the submission of several other successful proposals, including the National Science Foundation CAREER award. Her strong acumen and remarkable leadership skills have been very important behind many accomplishments of faculty members. She has cultivated an environment that inspires collaboration, creativity, and a shared dedication to the pursuit of excellence.

Stevie's professional qualities are complemented by an engaging personality. She is a true pleasure to work with, exhibiting a consistently positive attitude and excellent communication skills that set her apart. Her kindness and approachability create a welcoming environment for open dialogue, fostering a harmonious working relationship within our department.

Stevie's dedication goes far beyond what is typically expected of her role. She has poured countless hours of effort into supporting not only me but also many other faculty members at

Illinois. Her contributions have positively impacted research administration, marking her as a true advocate of academic research and a great example of the spirit of service the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award intends to honor.

I am incredibly grateful for the support she has provided me, and I believe it is fitting that she be recognized for her efforts. With Stevie's unparalleled commitment, sterling leadership, and outstanding service, I can think of no better candidate to honor with the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award.

Thank you for considering my recommendation. I am confident that recognizing Stevie Bohlen's dedication will be a decision that echoes the spirit and values of the SPaRC Awards.

Sincerely,



X. Shelly Zhang, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, CEE, MechSE
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE)
Department of Mechanical Science and Engineering (MechSE)
Grainger College of Engineering

July 14, 2023

Subject: Letter of Support for the Nomination of Stevie Bohlen for the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award

Dear Members of the Award Committee,

I am writing to express my most enthusiastic support for the nomination of Stevie Bohlen, Senior Grants & Contracts Coordinator in the Grainger College of Engineering at the University of Illinois, for the prestigious SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. Having had the privilege of working closely with Stevie during her tenure at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and witnessing her exceptional dedication and unwavering commitment to research administration, I wholeheartedly believe that she embodies the qualities and achievements deserving of this esteemed recognition.

Stevie's unwavering work ethic, attention to detail, and exceptional organizational skills consistently set her apart as an invaluable asset to any team. Throughout the several years that I had the pleasure of working alongside her, Stevie consistently demonstrated her outstanding service in support of research administration at the University of Illinois. She consistently went above and beyond her responsibilities, displaying an innate ability to anticipate and address challenges proactively, while maintaining a positive and solution-oriented mindset.

In her role as a Grants & Contracts Coordinator, Stevie consistently displayed an exceptional level of diligence, accuracy, and thoroughness in handling complex grant applications, contracts, and compliance-related matters. She demonstrated an innate ability to navigate intricate administrative processes and requirements, ensuring the timely submission of proposals, adherence to funding agency guidelines, and proper management of contractual obligations. Stevie's meticulous approach and attention to detail significantly contributed to the success of numerous research projects within our department and beyond.

Furthermore, Stevie's dedication to professional growth and engagement in the field of research administration is truly commendable. She actively sought opportunities to expand her knowledge base and enhance her skills through professional development activities and workshops. This commitment not only benefitted Stevie personally but also directly translated into the improved quality and efficiency of her work, positively impacting the research administration community at the University of Illinois.

Stevie's contributions to the university, college, and department extend far beyond her daily responsibilities. An example of her dedication was in helping with my NSF funded IMLCZO project. This was a multi-institution project and required gathering complex set of financial data and synthesizing them for annual reports. She did this with utmost competence and dedication over many years. She anticipated that her role and help is critical to the success of my project. So even after she moved out of our department, she requested permission (without my knowledge or request) to help with my project during the first year of the transition. This shows a tremendous commitment and recognition of her responsibility to the success of the effort. I, therefore, have the utmost respect for her as a professional.

In summary, Stevie Bohlen's exceptional service, dedication, and contributions to research administration at the University of Illinois make her a deserving candidate for the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. Her diligence, attention to detail, and commitment to professional growth set a remarkable example for her peers and have made a lasting impact on the success of research endeavors at our institution.

I wholeheartedly endorse Stevie Bohlen's nomination for this prestigious award, and I trust that the award committee will give strong consideration to her outstanding achievements and contributions. Please feel free to reach out to me should you require any further information or clarification regarding Stevie's exceptional qualifications.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Praveen Kumar, Ph.D.

Executive Director | *Prairie Research Institute* | prairie.illinois.edu

Lovell Endowed Professor of Civil and Env. Engineering | cee.illinois.edu/directory/profile/kumar1

Director | *CINet: Critical Interface Network for Intensively Managed Landscapes* | criticalzone.org/cinet

Field Chief Editor | *Frontiers in Water* | www.frontiersin.org/journals/water

Affiliate faculty | [Atmospheric Science](#), [NCSA](#), [iSEE](#), [IGB](#), [CSE program](#)

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Electrical and Computer Engineering Building
306 North Wright Street
Urbana, IL 61801



July 17, 2023

SPaRC Award Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Stevie Bohlen, Senior Grants & Contracts Coordinator, for the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award.

The Nick Holonyak, Jr Micro and Nanotechnology Laboratory (HMNTL) Business Office has recently closed, and all our pre-grant activities are managed by the GCoE central office. This is how I got to work with Stevie. In the last six (6) months, she worked with me on ten (10) proposal preparations/submission, totaling ~\$30M grant value. We have already received one ~\$1M grant award. Stevie was timely, dedicated and was available beyond regular work hours, staying focused. Overall, her support has been essential for me to be part of last-minute proposals as well as for me in deciding to lead further proposals.

While she has only supported HMNTL since the Fall of 2023, she has been supporting research portfolios for well over 8 years and been part of the campus system for over 11 years. With my nomination, in addition to a support letter from Stevie's boss Missy, I am providing supporting letters from two specific faculty members that were especially pleased with the service that they received from Stevie. I can provide more if necessary. In one instance, she helped collect/organize financials for Professor Praveen Kumar in support of his CINet Annual Report for multiple years. Another opportunity was an especially difficult DARPA submission with Professor Shelly Zhang. It was a challenging submission, but they worked together to deliver an outstanding package that was ultimately selected for funding.

Overall, Stevie would be a well-deserving recipient of the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. I recommend her strongly without any reservations.

Please feel free to contact me for further inquiries.

Best Regards,

CAN BAYRAM
Assoc. Prof. of Electrical and Computer Engineering,
Innovation COmpound semiconductoR LABoratory (ICORLAB),
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering,
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June 19, 2023

Dear SPaRC Award Selection Committee:

It is my pleasure to support the nomination of Stevie Bohlen for the 2023 Outstanding Service Award. Stevie has contributed to the growth and success of various departments throughout her 11.5 years of service at the University of Illinois.

Stevie began her career with the College of Fine and Applied Arts ("FAA") in 2011 as an Office Support Associate. In this role, she was able to grow and define her style of customer service. She was often the first point of contact for a wide variety of customers that ranged from students, staff, or faculty. She was involved in many of the financial transactions that were processed by the department and was also responsible for preparing and reconciling financial statements for 25 different programs. During her time at FAA, she was also integral in the inventory management and biennial reporting for the department.

In 2013, Stevie began her research administration journey with Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture. She assisted with the grant application and management process. She expanded her institutional knowledge and her knowledge base to include Federal, State, and other sponsor regulations that were applicable to sponsored projects. She was able to leverage the experience gained in her prior role to review expenditures, provide guidance on purchasing decisions, and execute journal vouchers or labor distributions to align expenditures with project objectives and award terms. Stevie continued to expand her level of responsibility by monitoring and handling other reporting activities that were not directly related to grant administration, but it was specific to the department/unit operation.

Stevie joined the College of Engineering, Civil and Environmental Engineering ("CEE") in March 2015. Upon joining the CEE team, she was focused on the post award grant administration activities. Her well-rounded knowledge of university systems and policies allowed her to quickly assume tasks and responsibilities for a robust research portfolio very quickly. During her seven (7) years of service in that department, her role evolved. Following the retirement of a long-time employee, she was immersed further in the research portfolio. The unit transitioned to a cradle-to-grave business model, allowing her to work with a faculty member on the development of a proposal, at award stage and she continued her support through award close out. It was during this time that she showcased her dedication to her customers, whether they were her faculty, graduate students, stakeholders from other campus offices, or external customers and collaborators.

Engineering Business Services was excited to welcome Stevie to the team in May 2022. With her rounded experience, dedication to her customers, commitment to continual learning and pursuit of excellence she was able to make an immediate impact on the EBSC portfolio. She embraced working with a new team and learning how to support a different group of faculty members. She further demonstrated her dedication to teamwork by volunteering to work with a unit that was added to the EBSC portfolio in September of 2022. During her first year with EBSC, she was one of our top producers in terms of proposal submissions. Many of those submissions overlapped with others so intentional time management and effective communication was required in support of successful submissions. Her ability to collaborate with various stakeholders across campus and be extremely resourceful are just a few more reasons that Stevie is deserving of the 2023 SPaRC Outstanding Service Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Missy Beck-LeFaivre". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Missy Beck-LeFaivre
Associate Director, Grants and Contracts
Engineering Business Services Center (EBSC)