



## OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR RESEARCH

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

July 14, 2019

Re: SPaRC Award Nomination for Career Achievement

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm pleased to nominate Dr. Melanie Loots for the Sponsored Programs and Research Compliance **(SPaRC) Career Achievement Award**. Melanie currently serves as the Chief of Staff and Executive Associate Vice Chancellor for Research under the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research. In her role, Melanie is formally responsible for the policy development, strategic and tactical planning, oversight of employee conflicts of commitment and interest, and serves as a liaison to several cross-disciplinary campus units. In reality, Melanie's impact on the campus sponsored research portfolio is far beyond her formal responsibilities. She is the go-to person for institutional letters of support, central cost share, and anything out of the ordinary that arises during the submission or administration of a sponsored award.

Many of Melanie's contributions are customized efforts to mitigate or manage unique problems or concerns stemming from challenging or unforeseen issues. While her formal title is the "OVCR Chief of Staff", the more appropriate title is the "chief problem solver" for she is frequently called upon by the administration to resolve what seems to be an unresolvable problem. Part of Melanie's secret to her success is her ability to diffuse tensions and sort through an issue while determining the basic facts and initiating reconciliation by offering various reasonable solutions. I have observed her repeatedly finding solutions without alienating faculty, staff, or administration. Some may claim she is a "faculty whisperer"! This is quite unique on any campus but especially one that is as large and complex as the University of Illinois.

For nearly three decades, Melanie has made significant and sustained contributions to the field of research administration at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and I strongly support her nomination for the SPaRC Career Achievement Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David W. Richardson".

David W. Richardson  
Associate Vice Chancellor for Research



## **SPONSORED PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATION**

1901 S. First St., Suite A, MC-685  
Champaign, IL 61820-7406

July 11, 2019

Nomination of Dr. Melanie Loots for the 2019 SPaRC Career Achievement Award

Dear SPaRC Award Selection Committee,

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Dr. Melanie Loots for consideration for the 2019 SPaRC Career Achievement Award. Melanie is the Executive Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and as such plays an integral part in the research infrastructure at Urbana-Champaign. Her duties include responsibility for policy development, strategic planning and implementation of the University's Policy on Conflict of Commitment or Interest.

Melanie is a champion for faculty and provides leadership and guidance for the research community by ensuring administrative support and resources are available. Her expertise and knowledge are called upon daily and she addresses these situations willingly and cheerfully. I have seen her resolve conflicts and handle difficult situations with remarkable patience and tact. Through her daily leadership, Melanie exemplifies being an ambassador for the University. Her dedication to the University of Illinois and the research community make her an excellent candidate for the 2019 SPaRC Career Achievement Award. I strongly urge you to consider Melanie for this award.

Sincerely,

*Robin Beach*

Robin Beach Director, Pre-Award  
Sponsored Programs Administration



## **SPONSORED PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATION**

1901 S. First St., Suite A, MC-685  
Champaign, IL 61820-7406

July 10, 2019

Nomination of Dr. Melanie Loots for the 2019 SPaRC Career Achievement Award

Dear SPaRC Award Selection Committee,

I am very pleased to enthusiastically support the nomination of Dr. Melanie Loots for the SPaRC Career Achievement Award. Melanie is the Executive Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and has faithfully served almost 30 years at the University. In the fourteen years that I have served alongside Melanie I have come to rely on the steady leadership and counsel she provides. She is a reliable point person and stable force within the Vice Chancellor of Research Office serving as a constant source of assistance to the research community.

Melanie is well-known for her professional, calm demeanor and is a respected confidant. She is a problem solver and can be counted on as a voice of reason, always willing to listen to all the facts and then utilize her vast depth of knowledge to find a satisfactory solution to the issue at hand. Being a faculty member herself, Melanie has a well-rounded perspective. She understands the science and a scientist's needs and concerns. This understanding opens opportunities for dialogue and gives her the ability to make an important impact on the research enterprise.

Melanie has served on countless committees related to various research administration topics and in recommendations for development of campus policies and procedures. I had the pleasure of serving with her on the Implementation Committee on Effort Reporting (ICER) for six months developing a policy to define Institutional Base Salary (IBS) and set forth guidelines. Melanie played a key role in the success of the process and in the communication and education that followed. Melanie's contributions extend to the national arena and she and I had an opportunity to travel to Chicago and participate in a Uniform Guidance compensation panel discussion regarding effort reporting with Big Ten colleagues.

Melanie is involved at every level and is always energetically engaged. She is a trusted collaborator and makes herself available at all times whether that be days, nights or weekends providing timely, thorough responses. She is well-respected for her knowledge and her understanding of administrative issues and their impacts on the researchers and the staff supporting them.

I can think of no one more deserving of than Melanie for this recognition. She has devoted years of her career supporting research administration at the highest levels and broadly across the University.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Linda Gregory'.

Linda Gregory Director, Post Award  
Sponsored Programs Administration