

July 21, 2020

### **Nomination for SPaRC Collaboration Award**

Dear Review Committee Members:

It is truly my pleasure to support the nomination of the following group of individuals for recognition via the Sponsored Programs and Research Compliance (SPaRC) Collaboration Award:

- **From the Beckman Institute:**
  - Jeff Moore
  - Kara Johnson
  - Patty Jones
  - Robert Fritz
  - Earle Heffley
  - Kara Haley
  - Lanata Kendrick
  - Ashley Trimmell
  
- **From the Cancer Center at Illinois:**
  - Rohit Bhargava
  - Jason Butler
  - Tim Fan
  - Joseph Irudayaraj
  - Hui Xu
  - Paloma Pearson (no longer at UIUC)

The team listed above represents a group of individuals from two UIUC institutes who jointly partook in an administratively innovative approach contributing to the improvement of research at the University of Illinois. Organizationally, this effort resulted in submission of a grant application (and subsequent awarding of an NIH grant) to support the development of a unique shared resource laboratory facility. This effort involved a seamless conceptualization of the facility, management of the design, navigation of the proposal process and submission, and coordination on all aspects of the resulting award. The outcome is an innovative core facility that benefits researchers across campus.

Even more impressively, the team prepared a grant proposal to fund the project which was successfully awarded \$3.3 million. The proposal required a significant effort in envisioning the project, preparing detailed architectural and scientific plans, preparing the grant application, managing the post-award regulatory and design approvals, fiscal management, and scientific engagement – all spanning a 2-year time frame. While the award is significant, perhaps the greatest recognition of its quality is that the grant application received a perfect score by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) committee that reviewed it- as score rarely given out by NIH reviewers. This objective measure demonstrates the importance and quality of this collaboration.

The grant proposal that was submitted was in response to an open national call by the NIH Biomedical Research Facilities program via its C06 funding mechanism. Our submission was to support the design and construction of

a Tissue Engineering and Phenotyping (TEP) shared resource facility to be housed in the lower level of the Beckman Institute, and staffed and managed by the Cancer Center at Illinois. In addition to this internal collaboration, coordination with many other parties was required, including working with F&S, architects, NIH regulators and contractors, as well as with UIUC faculty whose use determined the scientific needs for and benefits of such a facility. The above-mentioned score reflects how well this coordination was conducted, the how the information assembled and presented.

My personal involvement with this project began just around the time that the grant was awarded. This has allowed me to bear witness not just to the quality of the submitted application, but also to the ongoing aspects of the post-award processes. Beyond the grant requirements, this funding supports an incredibly complicated and sophisticated construction project within an existing research facility. Moving forward, this unique shared resource will promote and support the conduct of new research, and more efficiently support existing research endeavors.

This collaboration continues to run remarkably efficiently. Objectively, the NIH has commented on both the quality and timeliness of all of the post-award requirements and construction approvals. Subjectively, I have never been involved in a major construction project that has so seamlessly avoided the typical territorial organizational and space battles. Everyone... yes, EVERYONE... involved in this project has been, and continues to be, completely focused on the big picture, the greater good for the University of Illinois, and creating the best facility that can be built and managed to enhance our research mission.

This is a unique example of an effort of genuine and effective collaboration, and I believe is a credit to both of the involved institutes, as well as to all of the members of this project team. This group is truly worthy of the SPaRC Collaboration Award in recognition of its commitment, cooperation, and achievements in advancing collaborative research on the UIUC campus.

Most sincerely,



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## **BECKMAN INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

405 N. Mathews Ave., MC-251  
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July 28, 2020

RE: SPaRC Collaboration Award Nomination

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to nominate leaders and staff members of both the Cancer Center at Illinois and the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology who partnered on a new Tissue Engineering and Phenotyping Core Facility. It will support a variety of biomedical experiments, store valuable research materials, and provide professionally staffed services for more than 70 federally-funded investigators researching food, nutrition, energy, health sciences, and cancer. Many people from both institutes worked together to respond to the National Institutes of Health's Biomedical Research Facilities (C06) call for proposals. The NIH gave the proposal a perfect score and awarded the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign \$3.3 million for the project. Construction will tentatively begin in November 2020.

The new facility, which is expected to be completed in the fall of 2021, will foster interdisciplinary research, outreach, and education. The people who have been involved in this project are working to:

1. Provide a state-of-the-art, flexible research infrastructure that strengthens biomedical research programs by providing proven and consistent biological resources, services, and superbly maintained facilities.
2. Serve recent and emerging institution-wide biomedical research needs by being agile and responsible to opportunities.
3. Provide a long-term, shared-use enhancement to the institutional research infrastructure.

Of note: The team had to work efficiently and diligently to meet the proposal submission date of March 4, 2019. Even though preliminary discussions began in late December 2018, the official kick-off meeting was January 23, 2019, leaving only 41 days to compose and assemble a complex proposal that required drawings, tables outlining equipment, sizes, existing research grants, and construction timelines in addition to the traditional NIH proposal documents.

When awarding the grant, the NIH acknowledged both institutes' leadership and commitment to broaden interdisciplinary research. The agency expressed faith in the involved facilities team members to finish the project on time and on budget based on the success of existing facilities within the Beckman Institute.

Cancer Center personnel who contributed to the NIH C06 proposal and/or to the post-award management of the grant include:

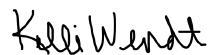
1. Director **Rohit Bhargava** along with Cancer Discovery Program Leader **Timothy Fan** and Associate Director for Shared CCIL Resources **Joseph Irudayaraj** provided overall leadership and vision for the Cancer Center at Illinois and the new facility itself.
2. Former Program Manager **Paloma Pearson** helped organize the team and contributed to the scientific documentation.
3. Assistant Director for Finance and Resource Planning **Jason Butler** worked with Beckman's Associate Director for Administration **Kara Johnson** to compose a budget for the proposal.
4. Tumor Engineering and Phenotyping Research Coordinator **Hui Xu** oversees the daily operations of the NIH core facility.

Beckman Institute personnel who contributed to the NIH C06 proposal and/or to the post-award management of the grant include:

1. Director **Jeff Moore** provided overall leadership and vision for the Beckman Institute and the facility's role within the institute.
2. **Kara Johnson** compiled the budget with **Jason Butler**, coordinated with SPA, Legal Counsel, and the OVCRI to secure the required institutional documentation, and supported the overall vision of the facility within Beckman.
3. Associate Director for Research **Patty Jones** provided support for the scientific documentation and overall vision of the facility within Beckman.
4. Director of Facilities and Planning **Robert Fritz** and **Earle Heffley**, an academic hourly on the facilities team, supported the project by reviewing the existing space, participating in the feasibility study, and contributing their expertise to the construction documentation.
5. Grants and Contracts Coordinator **Kara Haley** contributed with the uploading of required documentation and reviewing proposal documentation for compliance with NIH guidelines.
6. Grants and Contracts Specialist **Lanata Kendrick** coordinates the post-award management of the NIH grant including financial and construction reporting.
7. Senior Coordinator of Research Programs **Ashley Trimmell** supports Director Moore's research portfolio and assisted with required documentation both during the proposal and NIH Just in Time stages.

I appreciate your consideration of the nomination of this outstanding group of individuals for the Collaboration Award. It will be exciting to see how their continued dedication and enthusiasm for this new facility will impact research at this university and beyond.

Sincerely,



Kelli Wendt  
Director of Budget and Resource Planning