

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA - CHAMPAIGN

Department of Psychology

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
603 East Daniel Street
Champaign, IL 61820



July 28, 2016

Dear SPaRC Awards Committee:

It is my great privilege to nominate Ruth Boardman as a candidate for SPaRC's Outstanding Service Award for her dedication to excellence in research administration. During my tenure at UIUC, I have had the distinct pleasure of working with Ruth in some capacity at each research administration position she has held.

I first came to know Ruth in 2006 when she came on as the Administrative Manager of the Mid-America Earthquake Center where I had just started my University Career as a Program Coordinator the year before. At that time MAE Center was a NSF sponsored interdisciplinary, inter-institutional engineering research center focused on earthquake risk management and mitigation, headquartered at Illinois, with eight sister institutions around the country and collaborative partnerships with a dozen more universities, industry partners, and government agencies. At any given time, the Center would have 20+ faculty (and 100+ graduate students) leading at least as many projects in fields as diverse as Civil Engineering to Public Policy to Geology to Urban Planning. Although housed under the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, the Center was truly a research unit unto itself. Please take a moment to reflect on the juggling act needed to manage the subawards and contracts, the purchases and reimbursements, the meetings and the conferences; imagine the balancing act required to handle the often conflicting needs/ wants- not to mention temperaments!- of multiple high-level researchers at the very tops of their respective fields. That is what Ruth did for the circus, I mean, the Center. She was the juggler and the tightrope walker and she performed all of these functions with the agility and dexterity of an acrobat, which, metaphorically speaking, is exactly what she was.

After leaving the MAE Center I accepted a position as Grants and Contract Coordinator in CEE's Business Office. Now I had learned quite a bit about the "how" of research administration from Ruth while at MAEC: how to prepare subaward requests, how to manage a conference, how to manage difficult personalities, etc. But it was working in the Business Office that I got some context, understanding the "why" behind it all. I mean, I finally got the reasoning behind a 25 digit CFOP string- I could even decode one! But there was some big picture stuff that that I really didn't comprehend. Why were faculty assessed \$0.586 for every dollar research dollar they spent? What in the heck are indirect costs? Enter Ruth, who by now was working as Coordinator at the Office of Government Costing. Ruth explained to me exactly, and I do mean *exactly*, what F&A was, why it was needed, and how it was calculated. In turn, I was able to explain to our faculty- because they *really* want to know- what F&A is and why it is necessary. I can't explain how it is calculated, though. That's through no fault of Ruth's, by the way; it's just that I did not show up to class prepared to take notes!

Which brings me to the present. Ruth now serves as the Associate Director for Audit and Compliance, a role with such immense significance and accountability that few would venture to pick up the mantle. During her term she has steered the University through a federal audit and a complete overhaul of federal governing grant policy. Despite these challenges, she has personally helped me sort through a number of minor (in the scheme of things, major to the particular researcher/project in question) compliance issues that have come up since I've been working in the Business Office of the Department of Psychology. I serve in Psychology in the same capacity as I did at CEE, but although the responsibilities are remarkably similar I can say that I've discovered that the NSF and the NIH are very different beasts (as are, broadly speaking, engineers and psychologists). For example: a lot of the research by our faculty involves human subjects, often children. Now with adults you can encourage participation in research with a nominal monetary incentive. With a toddler who has no concept of money? Not so much . . . But if the incentive is a little toy? Now you're speaking that kid's language. NIH sponsors a LOT a research with human subjects; they get this. NSF, however, does not do as much research with young subjects. What is standard operating procedure at NIH is a policy quagmire at NSF (Is it a gift? Is it a participant cost? How can it be a subject "payment" if it is not cash? How can it be tracked for tax purposes? Right, because all kids I know regularly file annual tax returns . . .) But with Ruth's input based on her insight on the Uniform Guidance we were able to develop a payment process which satisfied NSF Grant Officers, much to the relief of our very worried faculty member whose entire grant approval was hinging on the ability to engage young learners.

Spanning her career I have always been able to go to Ruth with any question I've had pertaining to research administration, federal or University policy, and without fail she has given me an answer directly or provide me with the means to an answer via resources she has shared. The different positions she has held have given her a vast skill set and knowledge base. More than these technical attributes, her experience has endowed her with an uncanny ability to see issues from multiple perspectives and determine the needs of the different stakeholders, enabling her to provide excellent service because she is able to fully understand a problem and find reasonable, workable solutions. Truthfully, I was torn as to whether Ruth to nominate for the Outstanding Service or the Career Achievement Award because both are so applicable. In the end I went with Outstanding Service only because I know that she will continue to strive in everything that she does, racking up more achievements as her University career continues!



Sarah Challand
Post-Award Accounting Associate
Department of Psychology

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

Chicago • Springfield • Urbana-Champaign

Office of Government Costing
Office of Business and Financial Services
1901 S First St. – Suite C
Champaign, IL 61820

July 22, 2016

Dear SPaRC Awards Committee,

It is my pleasure to nominate Ruth Boardman for the SPaRC Outstanding Service award. Ruth is an outstanding professional and colleague that always goes above and beyond what is required.

I had the pleasure of working with Ruth for four years in the Office of Government Costing. While Ruth worked in the Office of Government Costing she demonstrated outstanding customer service, especially in the area of service centers. At that time, the service centers' rate calculation process had not been highly reviewed by any department on campus. Ruth showed compassion and understanding to all the departments as she explained to them that the University needed to become proactive and more diligent with the review process of service centers due to increased federal scrutiny in this area. After the departments spoke with Ruth they felt more at ease and comfortable with the process. I still remember her words in the training sessions that we had with the multiple departments, she said "we are your advocates. We are here to help so if you have any questions or concerns please let us know."

Ruth has since left the Office of Government Costing and went on to become the Associate Director of Compliance in the Grants and Contracts Office. In this role, she has shown leadership in research administration at the University of Illinois. She actively shares her knowledge with the campus community by presenting at SPaRC sessions, the Business Leadership Conference, and by creating and updating University policies. Ruth was instrumental in the University's implementation of the Uniform Guidance by serving on the task force that was created as a resource to departments that had questions regarding the new federal guidelines.

Ruth's contribution to research administration is not confined to only the University of Illinois. She also provides leadership in research administration at a national level by presenting at multiple conferences and by representing the University of Illinois at the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP). FDP is a cooperative that consists of federal agencies and academic research institutions whose mission is to streamline the administration of federally sponsored research.

I feel that Ruth Boardman is very deserving of the 2016 Outstanding Service Award. Her commitment to the University and research administration exemplifies what the Outstanding Service Award represents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Otto". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "J" and "O".

Jennifer Otto
Associate Director, Office of Government Costing



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT URBANA - CHAMPAIGN



RAIL TRANSPORTATION AND ENGINEERING CENTER

Timothy A. Gress

1235 Newmark Civil Engineering Laboratory, MC-250

205 North Mathews Avenue

Urbana, IL 61801-2352

Managing Director - RailTEC

July 28, 2016

Dear SPaRC Awards Committee:

It is my great pleasure to write to you to support the nomination of Ruth Boardman for the 2016 SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. As the Managing Director of the Rail Transportation and Engineering Center (RailTEC) I have had the opportunity over the years to work with Ruth on several issues related to RailTEC's large research grants. One of the things that has always impressed me about Ruth is her professionalism, positive attitude, and her ability to quickly think on her feet and be a problem solver. The instructions for nominating an individual for this award include providing concrete examples of the nominee's contributions to research administration and to justify why the nominee is deserving of the award. To that end I would like to highlight a recent example where Ruth demonstrated her exceptionalism.

Recently one of our partner universities, a partner on two of RailTEC's University Transportation Center grant from the US DOT, was considering declining funding allocated to them on one of its two, concurrent subaward agreement. This university's sponsored programs office had mistakenly determined that the scope of work for their two subawards were identical and therefore the University could not ethically be paid twice for the same work. Despite the PI's assertion that the scopes of work were in fact different he could not convince them of their difference and was willing to capitulate to their wishes. This was particularly problematic for RailTEC, and UIUC, because: 1) this partner played a key role in accomplishing a major portion of the scopes of work in our two grant proposals; and 2) UIUC would have to develop an alternative plan for this funding (reallocate to the other partner universities on the grant, find a new substitute partner, keep the funding at UIUC, etc.) and the requisite 1:1 match.

Ruth along with other representatives from the Grants and Contracts Office (GCO) agreed to participate in a teleconference with RailTEC personnel, the PI on the subaward, and representatives from this university's Sponsored Programs Office to ostensibly discuss modifying their subaward agreement and associated budget. From the outset of the teleconference Ruth took control of the meeting and changed the atmosphere of the meeting from one that was somewhat adversarial in nature in the beginning to a cooperative, collegial, and professional discussion. She, along with her team from GCO and RailTEC personnel, went through the scopes of the two subaward agreements line by line with the representatives from the university's sponsored programs office pointing out the similarities but more importantly

the differences that made the two scope of work unique. It should be mentioned that Ruth did not have much time to prepare for this meeting so the differences she correctly identified where assessments she made in real-time, at the actual teleconference. By the end of the meeting she had completely changed their thinking and the University agreed to keep the existing subaward agreement in place as written and accept the last two years of funding.

This is just one example of Ruth's exceptionalism in sponsored research administration and supporting the University's research mission. In my opinion Ruth is well deserving of this award and I hope you give her your strongest consideration. I would be glad to discuss in more detail Ruth qualifications for this award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy A. Gress". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'T' and 'G'.

Timothy A. Gress
Managing Director
Rail Transportation and Engineering Center

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN • CHICAGO • SPRINGFIELD

July 29, 2016

Re: SPaRC Outstanding Service Nomination for Ruth Boardman

Dear SPaRC Awards Committee:

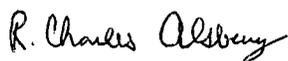
Please accept this letter as nomination of Ruth Boardman for the SPaRC Outstanding Service Award. Ruth is the Associate Director for Compliance in the Grants and Contracts Office and consistently provides outstanding service and exemplary leadership in research administration.

Over the past four years, I've had the opportunity to work with Ruth on some very challenging projects. Whether it was the University's annual Single Audit, the NSF OIG Data Analytics Audit, or the University's implementation of Uniform Guidance, Ruth has always provided strong leadership and a "can do" attitude. During the past four years the University endured over 180 external audits and Ruth's leadership ensured that each audit was successfully completed and on time, which is an outstanding achievement. No matter how many projects are in progress Ruth always finds a way to meet our obligations.

In her role at the University of Illinois, Ruth provides both extensive knowledge and leadership to the Grants and Contracts staff as well as campus units on research administration issues. Ruth continuously demonstrates her commitment to research administration and leadership by providing campus training at meetings such as SPaRC and the Business Leadership Conference, as well as representing the University of Illinois through presentations at various national conferences. Ruth is a wealth of knowledge and is well respected both at the University of Illinois and in the external research community.

Thank you for your consideration, I could not think of anyone more deserving of this award.

Sincerely,



R. Charles Alsbury
Assistant Director, Audit and Compliance
Grants and Contracts Office, Post-Award Administration
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