Outstanding Unit Award Nomination Form

Nominated unit: Academic Support Resources (ASR)

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Key Area 1 (maximum 1000 words):
Practices used for supporting and enhancing the careers of P&A employees. These include:

Academic Support Resources is composed of the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Student Finance, the Office of Classroom Management, and One Stop Student Services; there are 67 P&A staff members distributed across the organization (220 FTE). P&As account for approximately 30 percent of ASR’s staff; over 98% of ASR’s budget is salary and fringe.
Awards:
When our budget allows, ASR presents annual outstanding service awards to staff. These are monetary awards in varying amounts. Routinely, at least half of these awards are given to P&A staff (P&As in the director position are not eligible for this award).

In the past year, P&A staff received awards for contributions to the field of higher education:

- Exemplary new member, Upper Midwest Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (UMACRAO)
- Thomas A. Bilger Citation for Service, American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)

ASR has also submitted a nomination for a P&A staff member for the President’s Award for Outstanding Service (due date: March, 2011).

Support of professional development

In the last several years, Academic Support Resources has made professional development an integral part of its organizational structure and practices; P&A employees have been included as critical members of these initiatives.

Because of initiatives led by P&A staff, every staff member in ASR is encouraged to make an annual individual development plan and to request appropriate resources to meet development goals. Supervisors meet to discuss these plans with their staff 1-2 times a year with the expectation that they will work towards helping staff achieve their goals through a variety of ways, including providing flexible work arrangements to take classes, letters of recommendations, or the temporary reallocation of duties to free up time to learn new skills. P&A staff have received P&A “mini-leaves” to work toward completion of doctoral degrees.

A group of all P&A staff also conceived of, designed, and implemented an ASR-wide professional development request form (PDR). The purpose of this form is to facilitate the request and approval process for a broad range of professional development activities. In just the past month, 29 professional development requests were approved, and 15 of these were for P&A staff.

Additionally, a membership-rotating ASR-staffed development team plans two all-ASR staff events each year to discuss a variety of topics related to staff and organizational development. These events have greatly improved collaboration among all staff members, and P&A have helped lead this change.

P&A staff have also mapped the knowledge, skills, and abilities for every position in ASR and grouped the positions into “career families.” The position descriptions and
career families are available on the Web, so that ASR staff members can intentionally plan and develop their careers through the individual development planning process.

This work has become a model for other University units. P&A staff members from ASR have been asked to share this work with the Office of Human Resource’s (OHR’s) organizational effectiveness unit, the President’s Emerging Leaders program, and University Relations; along with OHR, ASR staff presented their career families work to the President’s leadership team. Two ASR P&A staff are also serving on committees chartered by OHR that are looking at how to best create a job family to support Information Technology and Communications positions, respectively.

Through the individual development process and in our everyday work, the director of ASR challenges all staff members to be “leaders in their positions.” P&A staff from ASR are called on to share their knowledge and skills in the creation and implementation of University-wide polices in the areas of grading and enrollment, classroom scheduling and utilization, financial aid and student billing, and student services. Through the Registrar’s Advisory Committee, P&A staff from ASR gather critical feedback from the University community to aid in the formation of University educational policies, particularly those that pertain to student enrollment and records. Staff from ASR administration played an essential role in the recent effort to gather feedback on the entire body of University educational policies, so that they could be clarified and included in the online policy library. P&A staff from the Office of Classroom Management have been instrumental in the formulation of a revised scheduling policy that will make better use of institutional resources and ensure that students have appropriate access to necessary courses.

P&A staff have also developed their leadership potential within the University by participating in the President’s Emerging Leadership (PEL) program. Since 2001, eight P&A staff members from ASR have participated in six PEL cohorts.

Staff recognition within ASR has also been an important element of our organizational development initiatives, which have been led by P&A staff. Supervisors across the unit were provided with “recognition tool kits” and guidelines, so that recognition of exceptional achievements can be built into the everyday work of all ASR staff.

Key Area 2 (maximum 1000 words): P&A involvement in decision-making. (I.e., how does the unit involve and support P&A employees in governance?)

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ASR provides core services that support the University’s teaching, learning, research, and outreach missions. We work in collaboration with colleges and departments across the University to support core business functions, implement policy changes, and discover ways to help the institution work more effectively and efficiently. In doing this work, P&A staff in ASR have contributed to several outstanding achievements in service and administration. ASR staff are encouraged to and do serve in governance positions
on the Council of Academic Professionals and Administrators, the University Senate, the University Senate committee on Information Technologies, the Faculty Athletic Oversight Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics, and HR’s Benefits and Compensation Committee.

P&As also serve in leadership capacities with external organizations such as the Higher Education User Group (HEUG), the Association of American Universities (AAU) Registrars, American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRO), and the Upper Midwest Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (UMAACRO), the Minnesota Association of Financial Aid Administrators (MAFAA), and the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA). Several P&As have also received awards from many of these organizations.

**Key Area 3 (maximum 1000 words):** P&A contributions to the profession and community. (I.e., how do the unit’s P&A employees support the University’s mission?)

Notable examples include:

1. **Graduate education restructuring:** ASR is playing an integral role in the transition to departments and colleges of student administrative processes related to graduate education. Approximately half of ASR’s P&A employees are involved in this effort; the project director is also a P&A staff member.

2. **Review of educational policies:** Over the past two years, a P&A staff member served on a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Educational Policies (SCEP) to review and revise all of the University’s educational policies. This same staff member is currently serving on the creation of policies to support graduate education.

3. **Development of the award-winning “One Stop” model:** The “One Stop” model of delivering student services in registration, financial aid, billing, and payments, was pioneered by P&A staff in ASR. In 2009, the director of One Stop Student Services was honored with the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers’ (AACRAO’s) “Apex” award for the development of the One Stop model, which has been emulated by institutions across the country and internationally.

4. **Launch of student Web tools:**
   - ASR P&A staff led the extensive business analysis, testing, and roll-out of the University’s online degree-planning tool for students. (Development was performed by Web and PeopleSoft developers in the Office of Information Technology.) Graduation Planner is an essential component of the University’s efforts to improve four-year graduation rates.
   - ASR P&A staff led the business analysis, testing, and user interface development of the University of Minnesota Undergraduate Scholarship
Search, which allows students to search for University-offered scholarships based on their unique student characteristics.

- ASR P&A staff led the business analysis, testing, and user interface development of the Engage! search, which gives students a central place to search for ways to get involved around the Twin Cities campus. (Engage! was developed for and in partnership with the Office for Student Engagement and Leadership.)

5. **Academic planning process for student-athletes:** ASR P&A staff worked with advisers from the colleges and the McNamara Center for Student-Athletes to design and implement a four-year planning process that helps student-athletes to be more proactive in maintaining their academic eligibility and make timely degree progress. ASR introduces Graduation Planner and the planning process to first-year student-athletes each year in the PSTL 1086 course.

6. **Welcome Week contributions:** ASR plays an essential role in the two Welcome Week sessions that all first-year students are required to attend. The “Money Matters” introduces students to essential concepts in fiscal literacy. “Do What Matters,” created in partnership with the Office for Student Engagement and Leadership and CLA’s Office for Student Engagement, helps students understand what it means to build an engaged four-year experience that incorporates in-classroom and out-of-classroom learning opportunities.

7. **Science Classroom and Student Services building:** P&A staff in ASR’s Office of Classroom Management (OCM) were instrumental in the design and piloting of the University’s “Active Learning Classrooms,” which are future-oriented spaces designed for technology-enhanced, engaged learning. Active Learning Classrooms, designed under the leadership of OCM’s P&A staff, form an important part of the new Science Classroom and Student Services building (STSS). P&A staff also launched a new service in STSS: the “Helping U” desk is the information desk staffed by ASR student employees and overseen by a P&A staff member.