Outstanding Unit Award Nomination Form

Nominated unit: Student Unions & Activities (SUA)
Nominator Information: Team of P&A Staff
Name: Connie LeMire, Asst. to the Director
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Key Area 1: Practices for supporting and enhancing the careers of P&A employees.

Active P&A roles in unit decision-making, such as opportunities to serve on department committees or other governing bodies and participation in policy formation.

Student Unions & Activities (SUA) has 24 P&A staff out of 65 full-time employees. Nine P&A staff serve in leadership positions within the areas of administration, finance, marketing, retail, facilities & operations, and student activities. This group composes our Director’s group whose main purpose is to serve as the unit’s decision-making body. Director’s group is accountable in respective areas for: budget and policy development, maintenance and oversight; development of strategic planning; assessment, evaluation and research related to new initiatives and performance; exploring new initiatives and partnerships; two-way communication of pertinent issues to Director, Associate Directors and respective staff; and oversight of day-to-day operations.

Director’s group members and other P&A staff serve in leadership roles for departmental strategic planning and serve as advisors and mentors to student boards and groups. For example, P&A staff advise and mentor the SUA Board of Governors (student governing body), student program board, which plans more than 500 programs per year, and over 800 registered student groups. P&A are involved in the development and oversight of the $16.6M SUA budget and student services fees process. In addition, P&A staff are involved in setting area and departmental goals and determining cross-functional strategic planning committees that keep our department relevant and forward-looking. These committees incorporate most of our full-time employees and are chaired by P&A staff. Three examples of those committees are External Peer Review, Sustainability, and Diversity and Inclusion.

P&A staff recommended revision of our performance review process to include assessing staff & student employees on how they meet our organization’s core values such as customer service, accountability and diversity. In addition, they recommended incorporating the student development outcomes in the review process for staff, graduate assistants and student employees.
P&A staff are instrumental in development of University policies and procedures. For example:

- **University’s Use of Outdoor Space Policy** - This effort was led by P&A staff who worked with the Office of General Counsel, UMPD, Facilities Management and central administration and included recommendations related to protests and the permit process on campus.

- **Performance and service contracts** - P&A staff worked with Office of General Counsel to review and revise performance and service contracts for the many vendors and entertainers that are used for student events and programs.

- **Insurance options and liability issues** - P&A staff worked with Office of Risk Management on insurance options and liability issues for registered student groups.

**Opportunities to participate in University-wide governance, including Senate committees.**

While SUA primarily advises and supports student governance and student groups that impact University-wide governance, when opportunities to participate arise in University-wide governance P&A are informed, encouraged and supported should they wish to serve. In fact, the Office for Student Affairs senator position is filled by a P&A staff member from our department who also serves on the P & A Outreach Subcommittee. In addition, P&A Senate committee minutes and agendas are shared and discussed among the leadership team of SUA as well as other P&A staff. Our P&A representative communicates all P&A governance information to the 161 P&A staff in the Office for Student Affairs. One staff member served on the former Subcommittee on Twin Cities Facilities and Support Services which was a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Finance and Planning.

**Ongoing professional development opportunities.**

We have an annual process where P&A staff develop a professional development plan which includes proposals to present at or attend conferences, workshops, seminars, continuing education or take University courses while working toward an advanced degree. We allow staff to flex their work schedule to attend workshops or to take classes. This year we approved a budget of $30,000 for travel and $24,000 for registration fees to support P&A staff.

P&A staff have presented and hosted day-long seminars and education sessions at the following regional and national conferences on topics ranging from building design and renovation to political student activism and free speech:

- ACUI - Association of College Unions International
- NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education
- NACAS - National Association of College Auxiliary Services
- ACPA - American College Personnel Association
- MCPA - Minnesota College Personnel Association
- ACCED - Association of Collegiate Conference and Event Directors

The department offers support by offering flexibility with work load and modifying schedules. We have offered flexible schedules and telecommuting to staff to accommodate personal, professional, medical, and/or family needs.
We actively engage in succession planning by reassigning P&A staff in an effort to develop their skills and prepare them for promotions within SUA or the broader University. For example, we have moved staff from student activities to facilities and operations, retail to finance, and events and conferences to student activities. Due to succession planning, seven P&A staff have been promoted to either Assistant, Associate or Sr. Associate Director within the past several years. Additionally, three P&A staff members were promoted to broader University positions within the Office for Student Affairs and four others were promoted to positions at other institutions.

Other professional development opportunities include:
- Guest speakers presenting at monthly staff meetings.
- Trainings at departmental retreats- For example, all staff took the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) and we are developing an organizational plan and personal development plans which encourage intercultural growth.
- Encourage staff participation in central HR sessions offered on campus.
- Technical training to assist staff in becoming proficient with relevant software and equipment for their jobs.
- Six staff were nominated for the President’s Emerging Leaders (PEL) Program and there have been three recent PEL graduates.
- Regents Scholarship - SUA supports schedule adjustments to allow for courses to be taken during the work day. Twelve staff took courses last year.
- Nominate staff to participate in the Women’s Leadership Institute; two P&A staff have completed the year-long Institute and one P&A staff serves on the UP! Circle Advisory Group.
- Informal brown bag lunches - Staff can share a favorite hobby, talk about recent travel experiences, etc.
- Cross-departmental shadowing program where staff attend other departmental meetings (within and external to SUA) to understand those areas and share information.

Ongoing professional leave opportunities.
We are open to semester professional leaves but have had only two requests in the past related to travel abroad; one for professional development and one to complete research for a Master’s degree.

Recurring P&A staff awards and recognition within the unit.
To recognize P&A staff we formed a committee to identify opportunities for “Recognition and Celebrations” throughout the year. Through the committee’s work, several programs have been established:
- Bright Idea - Employee suggestion program designed to encourage employees to contribute innovative suggestions that benefit the department by:
  ○ Improving customer service
  ○ Improving a work process (e.g., eliminating inefficiencies, waste, or duplication)
  ○ Saving money, resources, or time
  ○ Increasing safety, promoting health, or improving morale
  ○ Improving the quality of campus life
- Recognition Leave (up to 2 days off per year) - Awarded to employees to recognize exemplary service, achievements, or completion of a large project.
● Peer-to-Peer Recognition Awards
  ○ Partner in Time - Awarded to an employee or group of employees who have collaborated with another individual or work group within SUA.
  ○ Rescue Me! - Awarded to an employee who has helped someone when they were in a “tight spot.”
● Staff Appreciation Awards - Gift certificates awarded annually by the Director.
● Years of Service Rewards - Awarded for every five years of service with SUA.

**Key Area 2:**
*Outstanding achievements and contributions of P&A staff which support the University’s mission. Of particular interest and importance are examples of outstanding P&A achievements in research, teaching, administration, service, and governance.*

SUA has established a national reputation as a leader in the student union field. SUA P&A staff have earned national awards in building marketing, design and renovation:

- Facility Design Award of Excellence for “design of student-centered facilities that support community building and student learning.” Association of College Unions International
- National Association for Campus Activities Graphics Competition for Non-Publicity Poster
- National Association for Campus Activities Graphics Competition for Innovation
- National Association for Campus Activities Graphics Competition for Theme / Series
- National Association of Government Communicators Blue Pencil Award for Display Signage
- National Association of Government Communicators Blue Pencil Award for Graphic Design Portfolio
- Interiors Awards winner in the Sports/Entertainment category for the Gopher Spot Bowling & Convenience Store - Contract Magazine
- University & College Designers Association national design competition Award of Excellence for Ampersand Adventure
- University & College Designers Association national design competition Award of Excellence for Homecoming T-Shirt
- ACUI Steal this Idea National Competition for Stay & Play brochure, Lookbook Whole Music Club poster, Spring Jam logo, and Homecoming T-Shirt
- ACUI Steal this Idea National Competition for SUA events calendar, SUA search video and Homecoming T-shirt

P&A staff have won the following University of Minnesota awards:

- President’s Award for Outstanding Service
- Teammate Award from Intercollegiate Athletics
- Academic Staff Award (the predecessor to the P&A Outstanding Unit Award)
- Public Service Award from UM Police Department
- Gordon Starr Award for outstanding student group advising
- Quality Fair 4th place award for Touchscreen Directory
- Communicators Forum Maroon Award for Luuuuuunch Zombie video
- Communicators Forum Maroon Award for Handy Andy: Ampersand Trail
● Communicators Forum Gold Award for Ampersand campaign
● Communicators Forum Gold Award for Superball Drop Social Networking campaign
● Communicators Forum Maroon Award for SUA Website Redesign
● Communicators Forum Maroon Award for Fall Events Calendar Brochure

SUA P&A staff have been published as follows:
● Chapter on “Partnering With Outsourced Service Providers To Create Learning Opportunities For Student Employees” in the book titled Enhancing Student Learning Through College Employment published by Association of College Unions International (ACUI).
● Two chapters in “From Vision to Reality: Designing & Building College Unions to Meet the Needs of the 21st Century Student” published by ACUI.
● Articles related to student learning and development outcomes and building renovation published in College Services, Journal of the National Association of College Auxiliary Services and The Bulletin, ACUI.

Teaching
● Partner with CEHD to offer the OLPD 3310: Special Topics course to our student employees and interns. The course helps student develop leadership and management skills and encourages a career path in higher education, specifically Student Affairs work. Two P&A staff developed and teach the course.
● P&A staff have been given the opportunity to teach in the Leadership minor. In the past ten years, four P&A staff have participated as instructors.
● We support P&A who partner with colleges to instruct or present to academic courses.

Innovations
● Programmed software and installed multiple display screens in Coffman Union and St. Paul Student Center. Currently, content features events in the building, GPS tracking of buses, internal advertisements and important announcements (i.e. Inauguration broadcast), etc. The content is also pushed to residence halls throughout campus.
● Developed an SUA “Intranet”- internal website, prior to Google Sites, used for employee reference, knowledge sharing and forms.
● Created and manage a database for registered student organizations on campus. Other institutions have requested the coding for use on their campuses.
● Student Development/Student Employee program is used in central HR as part of their supervisory training to encourage units with student employees to incorporate the program which adds an educational and developmental component to the student job experience.

Administration, Services, and Contributions to the Field
● P&A staff have served as consultants for ACUI and mentored other student union professionals.
● P&A staff have been selected to participate in External Peer Reviews at other institutions.
● Our construction expertise has resulted in P&A staff who have consulted other institutions throughout the country regarding student union renovations.
P&A Leadership and Service on University-Wide Committees:

- President Kaler’s Inauguration Student Engagement Committee Chair
- President Kaler’s Inauguration Operations Committee members, as well as co-chairs for Public Reception, Bridge Greeting Line and Surprise Birthday Party sub-committees.
- Land Grant 150 Year Celebration Committee
- Alcohol Policy and Abuse Prevention Committee
- Welcome Week Advisory Committee
- Homecoming Executive Committee Co-Chair
- TCF Stadium Committee Game Day Traditions Co-Chair
- Study Space Advisory Committee Co-Chair
- We Are MN Sportsmanship Initiative Chair
- Graduate Assistant Competency Committee Chair
- Student Employee Leadership Program Co-Chair
- Coalition for Respectful U Committee
- EFS Punch List Prioritization Committee
- Student Services Fees Review Task Force
- Large Scale Special Event Protocol Committee
- Student Support Advisory Committee (SSAC) Sub-Group on Diversity and Inclusion
- Serve on search committees for other departmental Director, Vice President and Vice Provost positions.
- Conference & Event Services - Staff specializing in events, catering, technology and guest services collaborate on large events and campus-wide initiatives.
- Senate Committee on Finance and Planning - Subcommittee on Twin Cities Facilities and Support Services
- Communicators Forum - Several P&A are involved as committee members, with two individuals taking a larger role with a leadership position on the Communicators Forum Board and Conference Committee Chair.