UCI Staff Assembly Excellence in Leadership Award
Nomination Statement Examples

Example 1

Collaboration

Candidate H has only been with the Dance department for a short time, but their impact resonates across CTSA. Candidate H has supported staff in the department by encouraging career development opportunities through Continuing Education, attending conferences, and by simply granting staff the time to explore opportunities on/off campus. Candidate H uplifts staff by supporting title reconsideration processes and equity reviews. They are a true example of leadership, and values each contribution to the department, whether small or large. In their first year at CTSA, Candidate H began the CTSA Wellness Committee. They brought together seven staff members from various departments to create a newsletter, coordinate events, and market UCI wellness resources. Over the summer when the campus was closed, they reached out to Production (who had no work due to the campus closure) and suggested that they create face masks. With these masks, they began weekly distributions to UCI staff, faculty, University Hills residents, and the UCI Fresh Basic Needs Hub. Candidate H has the ability to not only bring people together, but to inspire them towards a larger purpose.

Employee Engagement
Candidate H is a role model of what a UCI staff member should exemplify. Candidate H cultivates diversity by listening to staff, understanding their needs, and respecting boundaries. They create an environment that is welcoming to all. Their leading example has enabled the department to work together as a team to promote innovative strategies to perform our daily duties while maintaining a work-life balance. Candidate H's approach to work and ethics has really cultivated our love for our jobs. Candidate H restructured our job descriptions to enable each staff member to continue training in various areas, such as: UCPath, Schedule of Classes, KFS, Graduate/Undergraduate Admissions, etc. They truly lead with their employees' best interests at heart, and puts their needs before their own. They maximize their team and individual performance by delegating departmental daily operations, and working alongside us in various departmental projects. They have encouraged UCI involvement in various ways, and staff have followed their lead by becoming SOS representatives, UCI Wellness Ambassadors, and even classmates in the Project Management Certificate program with the UCI Division of Continuing Education. Candidate H ensures that all staff feel comfortable in the workplace, and makes themself available and accessible for any questions or concerns. This allows their team to constantly take initiative in their positions and actively seek ways to improve and grow. Candidate H listens, cares, and supports us as employees and individuals.

Innovation
Transparency and adaptability are two qualities that make Candidate H a great manager. With the implementation of UCPath, there was a restructuring hurdle for our department. We had to navigate not only learning a new system, but also how to continue to complete our jobs successfully. Candidate H attended every training session and drop-in center appointment, and was right next to us during every issue we experienced. They were always transparent about any workload changes and always asked for input. Together, as a team, we adapted to the changes and hurdles along the way. After UCPath, the pandemic changed the way many of us worked; however, Dance department operations continued full steam ahead, despite the challenges that we faced with remote work. The fall Dance placement auditions, for accepted freshmen, and the winter Dance auditions, for consideration into the University and major, were two events that needed to completely transition from in-person to virtual. The former held 30-40 students, and the latter held 300+ applicants. We spent the entire summer planning virtual auditions, as we felt that this would be special for many applicants who were limited to submitting videos only, and had no opportunity to audition in-person. As a team, we learned more about Zoom, worked with our Chair, coordinated test meetings, and collaborated with both CTSA Student Affairs and UCI Undergraduate Admissions. Candidate H's ability to navigate new waters and effectively manage this project inevitably led to its successful completion and a rise in SIRs for the department.

Example 2

Collaboration

Have you ever had one of those experiences where a group of academic professionals get together, with the goal of producing a specific deliverable, and you walk away from the meeting with a sense of accomplishment? Each participant feels like their input was well-received, and the final product will be effective. Perhaps you realize you not only submitted ideas, but you volunteered to do the work of building something innovative that will have and lasting impact. That's the culture of our team. Candidate M works to facilitate a collaborative environment where one person's success is celebrated and sets the foundation for the success of the team. The process is not always easy, but the result is always rewarding. Here is just one example. Merage Digital Learning supports the pilot of a fully-online undergraduate degree. Before the pilot began, our team collaboratively developed the Digital Learning Launchpad (https://launchpad.merage.uci.edu/). This was designed to facilitate student success in the online environment. Candidate M engaged the entire team. Some members wrote content, others built out the website. Still others produced engaging videos with voice-overs recorded by MDL colleagues. Student employees provided feedback. The launchpad, which everyone on the team felt a part in crafting, became more important when the campus transitioned to remote learning. What started as a Merage resource suddenly became a lifeline for Merage, UCI, the UC system, and countless other universities. We're already planning for a launchpad 2.0 – and we can only imagine what it will include!

Employee Engagement

Good managers are purposeful about crafting a team and inviting each member to both develop their own and rely on the expertise of colleagues. Often, the great managers listen as much or more than they talk. They set a high standard, then work to help their employees exceed those expectations. Candidate M is a great manager! They constantly working to learn how to better engage their team. Candidate M works to set us all up for success. They are frequently engaged in professional development of their own about creating highly functional teams, and they work with all of us to establish our own highly functioning culture. Here are just a few of the many examples. Achieve check-ins with Candidate M are an opportunity to articulate professional goals and strategize about ways to meet those goals. They encourage us all to think about our own vision for our career and find ways to leverage that for the university. Candidate M publicly celebrates accomplishments in #teamwins in our Slack workspace. Our team tends to set high goals, and Candidate M encourages that initiative while finding practical boundaries and mechanisms to succeed. As a team, Merage Digital Learning collaboratively wrote core values, and articulated what brings us together. We aligned these with both Merage and UCI strategic visions. In our regular meetings, Candidate M asks one member of the team to talk about how one component of these philosophies personally resonates. As they frequently says, "when values are clear, decisions are easy."

Innovation

With digital learning sometimes comes a tendency to seek out the "bright shiny object" in educational technology. Candidate M encourages their team to be aware of trends, explore and implement ideas that have a probability of positively impacting student and instructor success. With all innovation, Candidate M celebrates collective successes, encourages data-driven best practices, facilitates review of the experiences both before and after implementation. One example, the use of Yellowdig as a social learning platform. The tool was selected based on a competitive analysis, then implemented with strong pedagogy to engage students. With COVID-19, Candidate M sought out mechanisms, including Slack, to maintain our team and keep us collaborating and innovating. Speaking of their team, when Candidate M builds the department, they are not afraid to explore new titles and roles, such as Learning Experience Designer or eLearning Support Specialist. It is no exaggeration to say Candidate M hires employees with strong expertise, then invites each member to contribute their experiences, vision for innovation, and new ideas. They frequently share discoveries and asks us to consider how it impacts our work. Candidate M has long enjoyed working with our multimedia team to transform instructional media, including how it is filmed, the final product, and how it is used to engage students. To put it simply, Candidate M encourages us all to think and work beyond the status quo and to innovate, always with a focus on how groundbreaking ideas and programs will positively impact our broader Merage and UCI community.