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Dear review committee,

It is my pleasure to enthusiastically and unreservedly nominate **Jamie Hefley** for the **2023 Iowa State University Student Employee of the Year Award**. This nomination recognizes the remarkable impact Jamie has made to both the teaching and research missions of the College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM), and in elevating the international reputation of ISU in the field of Veterinary Medicine education. Jamie is employed as a **Biomedical Illustrator** in the Department of Biomedical Sciences. As Chair of the department, I have been able to work with Jamie on a number of projects and observe how she has exceeded all expectations in her collaborations with other BMS faculty, staff and students. As Chair I can also confirm that Jamie meets all eligibility criteria:

- Jamie is currently enrolled at ISU.
- She is a senior in the Biological and Premedical Illustration (BPMI) Program and maintains a GPA of 4.0.
- She has held an hourly employee position in our department since September 2021.

Community Service

The role of a Biomedical Illustrator is very demanding. It requires an extraordinary level of talent as an artist, but that talent must be allied with an ability to collaborate with biomedical professionals to transform their vision into images and figures that can communicate complex ideas to a broad audience. Jamie's position at the CVM allows her to draw on the training she has received in the BPMI program and apply that to make a lasting impact on ISU's national and international reputation. Jamie's primary responsibility is to work with our faculty on the 14th and latest edition of *Duke's Physiology of Domestic Animals*. This is a seminal text and cornerstone of basic science education in Veterinary Medicine curricula across the US and in other countries worldwide. The outstanding global reputation of our college in this field is, in one small part, due to this text, which has over time become dated. Jamie has worked with our faculty to completely overhaul the images and figures throughout this textbook. This task involves a huge workload but Jamie is exceeding all expectations and displaying a natural ability to understand what each figure is trying to communicate and then improve upon it. Dr. Etsuro Uemura, Emeritus Professor and Editor of this text provided the following testimony: "*I have worked with about 40 students from the College of Design for the last 34 years. They were all talented medical illustrators. However, Jamie stands out as the best student illustrator, with a talent for expressing unique features of biological materials.*" It is without understatement when I suggest that a generation of Vet Med students across the country will enjoy a greatly improved learning experience thanks to the work Jamie has done this past year.

Technology and Innovation

Biomedical Illustration is a field that is constantly evolving in response to advancing technology and new knowledge. This applies just as much to emerging computer hardware and software that expand what is possible in visualization, but also in the need to communicate new and innovative biomedical discoveries. Over the past year Jamie has impacted both our teaching and research missions through her familiarity with new illustration technologies. I have worked with Jamie over the past year to improve my teaching materials. Jamie was able to generate new figures that helped me better convey some complex concepts in renal physiology to our DVM students. Her work transformed several critical lectures and helped student understanding and learning outcomes – students consistently commented on the clarity and quality of my new slides in their ratings of my instruction. As one example of how she supports our research programs,

Jamie was able to generate an exceptional capstone figure for a manuscript our group published this year focusing on circular RNA expression in parasitic nematodes (worms). The figure synergized key concepts in the space and I was delighted to see the image used by other scientists in my field at a recent research conference. Other faculty can provide similar stories clearly documenting how Jamie has directly supported teaching and research improvement through her mastery of technology.

Critical Thinking

When someone is exceptional at their job, that talent is often recognized and that person is usually asked to take on more and more responsibility. This is true with Jamie; I often worry about the amount of work she has on her plate but she has a tremendous ability to multi-task and problem solve. Again, Professor Etsuro Uemura provided the following testimony: *"Jamie is not just an excellent illustrator. She is quick to grasp the need for any given material, makes modifications promptly to clarify structural features. She makes suggestion to make illustration better, promptly modifies illustrations whenever changes are needed, responds to urgent needs for illustrations. Watching her work always amazes me."* Dr. Eric Rowe also works with Jamie on the Dukes' book and commented on Jamie's critical thinking: *"In any of the work that Jamie did, if we wanted something changed or altered, she was able to grasp what we were asking and quickly address what was requested."* Jamie's ability to work independently and with minimal oversight is outstanding.

Leadership

Jamie is one of two Illustrators at our college, both have a home in Biomedical Sciences. Jamie has provided excellent mentorship to our other Illustrator and really helped them integrate into our department. Further, she has shown leadership and initiative in helping to foster a better sense of community in BMS through small but significant actions. A great example was the purchase of a new digital display for our hallways. Jamie volunteered to generate content for the display and posts stories of student, staff and faculty successes alongside event notifications and important updates. This has really brought a sense of visibility to our community and it is empowering for our students when their accomplishments are publicly recognized this way. She also volunteered her skills to edit pet photos for our CVM United Way campaign this year. Again, a small gesture but another example of making a difference.

Diversity and Inclusion

Jamie attends ISU in part through a George Washington Carver scholarship, a program created to advance ISU's commitment to access, equity, justice, and inclusion, and to enhance the diversity of the student population. As a person of color and a woman in STEM, Jamie works hard to amplify the same welcoming environment that she feels was presented to her upon joining this work community and continues to bring warmth to the College of Veterinary Medicine. At ISU she has presented at Iowa State Conference on Race and Ethnicity (ISCORE) about classism in education. She is an active member, leader and Treasurer of the Descarga Latin Dance Club. This is a proudly multicultural student organization that fosters a welcoming community to students from all backgrounds. Outside of ISU, Jamie has established a food pantry in her hometown of Springfield, Illinois, which has allowed her to build connections between people across different socioeconomic backgrounds and help community members in need.

Overall

I have worked alongside many undergraduate employees serving in diverse roles – research assistant, teaching assistant, clinical support, clerical support etc. Without question, Jamie Hefley has been the most accomplished, dedicated and impactful student employee I have worked with in 21 years. Her key job accomplishment has been her work on our textbook *Duke's Physiology of Domestic Animals* and this is where her greatest outward facing impact will be felt. She has, however, leveraged her illustrating skills to enrich our department through other teaching and research related avenues. She has accomplished this with an incredible work ethic, ability to multi-task and manage her time, and her maturity and independence. Throughout, she has maintained a laid-back, collegial and community-minded approach. We are proud of her and her accomplishments and can't think of a more deserving awardee.

