

Jenna Bjork

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Dear Student Employee of the Year Award Committee,

I have supervised Natalie Young for two years and cannot think of a greater way to celebrate all that she has done for us at the Center for Food Security and Public Health (CFSPH) than nominating her for the 2024 Student Employee of the Year Award. She is one of the most mature, professional, and responsible students I have ever met and deserves this Award for countless reasons. I have chosen three examples of her recent accomplishments to highlight how she exhibits community service, collaboration and teamwork, leadership, technology and innovation, and critical thinking.

First, one of Natalie's initial assignments when she started working here was to help produce two videos on collecting specimens for chronic wasting disease testing. She jumped into this project and was willing to help in whatever way she could. She showed critical thinking skills as she first researched all existing videos on the subject matter to determine if and how we should best display the information as a training video for veterinarians and cervid producers in Iowa. She next integrated technology in using an Excel spreadsheet and Microsoft Word to organize her thoughts and recommendations for us to consider in the final script and shot list. She attended production of the video and led our videographer and photographer in an efficient and productive way to ensure all the necessary images and footage were captured. This was not an easy task as we needed to be strategic with the sequence of activities (being that we only had one deer carcass to work with) and needed to be respectful of time for our veterinary pathologist donating their time and expertise. The end results have received praise from not only our contractors at the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship but also six other states as we were fortunate to receive new funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to expand these resources.

Second, Natalie has also taken lead on developing a set of study guides for use in a national online course for veterinary students. The course, Transboundary and Emerging Diseases of Animals / Initial Accreditation Training, is an online training course required for veterinarians to become accredited by USDA and be able to perform important regulatory work. Natalie worked closely with a third year veterinary student to organize, review, and improve student versions of these study guides as well as create, complete, and format instructor versions of these study guides (answer keys). This was a huge task that required dedication, organization, and collaboration to complete on time in a way that is practical for

both audiences and targets the learning objectives for each of the 48 online lessons. I am proud of the work she has done with these educational resources and have received numerous compliments about them from veterinary instructors and students across the United States.

Third, in the past four months Natalie has learned new skills related to online lesson development in a program called Dreamweaver, which our team at CFSPH has been using to create online lessons. In the veterinary course previously mentioned, we have just finished significantly updating the content, graphics, and interactive elements of seven core lessons. We would not have been able to finish these massive updates in our anticipated timeline without Natalie's assistance with creating and editing all those different pieces in Dreamweaver. Our IT professionals and graphic designers who work with us at CFSPH always appreciate Natalie's eager and friendly attitude, her ability to appreciate different priorities at different times, and her close attention to detail without losing sight of the project's overarching goal.

Overall, Natalie Young continues to exceed my expectations as I get to know her better, both personally and professionally. While I highlighted three specific examples of her work above, she inspires others in our community through various efforts as well. For instance, she volunteered to help our team with transporting international visitors to and from the Des Moines airport for our 2022 Institute for International Cooperation in Animal Biologics (IICAB), and did so with reliability and cultural sensitivity. She will also be helping us host the upcoming 2024 Iowa Antimicrobial Stewardship Summit, of which she has been crucial in developing and reviewing new materials we are creating on antimicrobial stewardship programs for veterinary practices in Iowa. Aside from work, she has also been actively seizing opportunities for international experiences with her academic program – including an internship in Kosovo last summer and an upcoming workshop in Uganda over winter break. Ultimately, Natalie Young has allowed me and my team at CFSPH to work productively and make significant progress on many different projects these past two years. She is always responsive to messaging via Microsoft Teams and email as well as open to meeting virtually or in-person, as needed to get the work done right and on schedule. In addition, she is always respectful and eager to learn from others, which makes working with her so easy and pleasurable. It has truly been an honor working with this individual and I am excited to see where she goes in life to impact not only the state of Iowa, but the world around us.

Thank you for your time and consideration,



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