

## **Nomination Letter for Student Employee Supervisor of the Year – Ray Schmidt**

Dear Selection Committee,

I am pleased to recommend Ray Schmidt, Senior Marketing Coordinator for Recreation Services, as the Student Employee Supervisor of the Year. In my current role, I supervise Ray as a professional staff member of the department. He oversees a student staff of six employees with diverse skills. Ray and his student team collaboratively create the marketing, advertising, and communications for the Department of Recreation Services. This includes our facilities and programs, including personal training, group fitness, outdoor recreation trips, climbing wall events, intramural sports, sports clubs, e-sports, and swim lessons. You can imagine this is a significant workload, with facility hours and programs being morning, noon, and night. As a team, they manage the creation and presentation of the department's brand identity, social media, website, email advertising, printed materials, and tabling events. Their success relies on a team with many skills, including graphic design, web page management, photography, videography, public relations, and communication. Many of the software programs they use to produce these materials require specialization. Please see Ray's qualifications for this award.

### **Nominee's Greatest Attributes as a Supervisor**

Ray is very talented and experienced in the skills listed above, which are necessary for the team to be successful. This is important for his role. Equally important to their success is that he is a kind and patient mentor. He hires students from various academic programs, such as design, marketing, advertising, etc. He creates an environment that is welcoming and supportive. He mentors these students in their design skills, strategic thinking, and software capabilities. He also creates an environment where there is an expectation of teamwork in which the students mentor and collaborate with each other.

### **Above and Beyond as a Supervisor**

In addition to mentoring the students in the skills needed to be successful in their job. He also leads weekly career development workshops with his student staff. They focus on writing resumes and cover letters, creating their personal brand, portfolio, and website, preparing for interviews and interview etiquette, networking, negotiating offers, and learning about their strengths through assessments such as the enneagram and strengths finders. Many of these services are provided to students on campus, but Ray customizes the sessions for students interested in marketing and communications careers. Many former student employees have attributed their success in the job market to skills they gained working on Ray's team.

### **Quality of Work and Work Style**

Ray creates exceptional materials for the department. He has developed a strong brand for our department and increased our social media presence and aesthetic. He knows the importance of creative freedom and allows students to suggest new ways to reach the ISU community and student body. The student employees get excited to be at work and implement new ideas. Our slogan and brand is currently "Your Rec, Your Way." The students created a logo

imitating ours that says "Your Boss, Your Ray" that they hung up in their office. He has created a fun environment where students enjoy working.

### **Leadership Skills, Initiative, and Motivation**

Ray is creative and motivated to reach an end goal. He is an entrepreneur and a strategic thinker. He learns about the student demographics and develops initiatives to reach their population. This past Fall semester, he submitted a presentation and was selected to present at the NIRSA Marketing Institute in Denver, CO. He presented to his colleagues from colleges and universities around the country about brand recognition and social media engagement.

The University is currently in transition with our website. Ray took the initiative to learn a new web language to convert from our current website to the new University-wide website. Ray went above and beyond to spend many hours in training sessions to learn the new skills needed to build the website on the new platform. Additionally, he included his student staff in the training and skill development and allowed them to work alongside him to develop new skills. He recognizes the students' value and supports their development to assist them in their career growth. This work allowed the department to make significant savings by doing the work in-house.

### **Impact On Student Employees**

Ray is committed to student development. He hires students studying marketing or design and helps develop their career readiness competencies and industry-specific solid skills. This past year, he acquired funds to take a group of his student staff to St. Louis for a digital media conference. Many former student employees have told him after graduation that they learned the most transferable skills while working with him. In fact, in the last year, two former student employees have been hired into roles such as his in the area of student health and wellness within higher education. One here at ISU and the other at the University of Iowa. He is developing students, and also inspiring them to go into the field.

### **Qualities Apart from Other Supervisors**

Ray does not see his relationship with student employees as a one-sided transaction in which he hires them, and they put in the work during their time employed with the department. He also considers what he can do for them as their supervisor to help them develop and be successful in their careers after college. He invests not only in their time while employed at Iowa State, but also in their future.

For additional evidence of the high-quality student team that Ray empowers and supervises, be sure to check out our Instagram page - [@isurecs](#)

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Ashley Artist  
Associate Director – Business Operations  
Recreation Services