

CIRES Outstanding Performance Award (OPA)

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General Information

Nomination ID:228 - Submitted: 02-05-2024

Lucia Harrop

lucia.harrop@noaa.gov

Nominated for Administrative Service Award

Nominator Information

Guoqing Ge

guoqing.ge@noaa.gov

Nomination Statement

It is with great enthusiasm that I nominate Lucia Harrop for the 2024 CIRES Outstanding Performance Award in the Administrative Service category. Lucia's dedication, initiative, and unwavering commitment to excellence embody the core values of our organization and significantly contribute to the success of CIRES.

Lucia is a Senior Administrative Associate and the dedicated liaison for CIRES at NOAA, serving about 420 people there. Lucia's contributions are multifaceted and far-reaching. As the CIRES NOAA Liaison, she has played a pivotal role in fostering seamless collaboration between our institution and NOAA, ensuring that employees receive unparalleled support and guidance throughout their tenure. Lucia supports employees with whatever issue they may bring to her and she helps them find time-sensitive solutions, resources, and connections to CIRES with a personal touch. This can be finding solutions to sticky problems that might arise due to rules in the Cooperative Institute, NOAA security, or other stumbling blocks and making sure that the employee experience at NOAA is as positive as possible. Lucia strives to ensure that employees feel welcome, included, and valued at the organization. With over two decades of experience in NOAA and DSRC-related matters, Lucia's depth of knowledge is unparalleled. She handles every inquiry with proactive resolution and always delivers world-class service.

Lucia pioneered an exceptional onboarding process for CIRES employees at the NOAA campus, facilitating a seamless transition for new hires and leaving a lasting positive impression on our organization. Building upon the resounding success of this onboarding initiative, Lucia has embarked on a new collaborative endeavor with CIRES HR members to extend a similar program to campus-located staff—a transformative initiative that promises to enhance the onboarding experience for all CIRES employees.

Lucia took the initiative in developing and leading the CIRES training program and, in collaboration with CIRES HR members, provided a comprehensive professional development curriculum tailored to the diverse needs of CIRES employees and supervisors. Lucia excels as a dynamic and engaging trainer, serving as the subject matter expert on the Annual Summary of Accomplishments (ASA) process.

Lucia's role extends to collaborating with CIRES Communications to curate the Administrative News, a monthly publication distributed CIRES-wide. This vital communication avenue serves as a comprehensive resource for employees, offering essential information on training, benefits, presentations, and other valuable opportunities provided by CIRES, NOAA, and the University of Colorado as a whole. Through her contributions to the Administrative News, Lucia ensures that employees remain informed and engaged.

Lucia also plays a supportive role as a resource member in the CIRES Members Council (CMC), where her contributions have been invaluable. With Lucia's involvement in the CMC, all raised issues are ensured a thoughtful hearing and consideration, some are even resolved in the meeting. When new issues come up that require additional discussion and research by a CMC subcommittee, Lucia again offers her help when relevant and provides unparalleled deep knowledge and understanding of particular situations (e.g., Covid-19, return to office) and new needs for employees (e.g., hybrid work, family leave), and access to additional expertise (e.g., Susan Sullivan, Dan Keane, a DU professor about CU furniture suppliers and prison labor, CU Central HR on hybrid work, CIRES Finance on special office purchases).

In summary, Lucia provides exceptional administrative service to about 420 CIRES people at the NOAA DSRC campus (GSL, PSL, CSL, GML, SWPC, NCEI, and WPC) as well as people on the CU campus. Lucia's leadership, expertise, and unwavering commitment to excellence have significantly enriched the professional development landscape at CIRES, empowering individuals to thrive and succeed in their roles. Her contributions epitomize the spirit of the Outstanding Performance Award, and I wholeheartedly endorse her candidacy for this esteemed recognition.

Criteria

Criteria 1: Considerable improvements to operational, technical, or business processes such as lab maintenance and development that aid in research, teaching, or outreach at CIRES.

In her role as a Senior Administrative Associate and as the dedicated liaison for CIRES at NOAA, Lucia serves as an invaluable source of guidance and support for all administrative matters. Her proactive approach and unwavering dedication have had a profound impact on the success, physical and mental well-being of CIRES employees, enabling them to fully engage in their scientific and engineering endeavors and hence contributing to the success of CIRES.

I've heard numerous uplifting stories about Lucia's remarkable contributions. For instance, her genuine concern for everyone's well-being and the work environment drove her to spearhead the initiative to procure stand-up desks for many CIRES/NOAA employees. This initiative has had a profound impact, particularly for colleagues struggling with back problems, as it has enabled them to work more comfortably, efficiently, and innovatively.

One of my team members, [REDACTED] faced a challenging health issue with severe nosebleeds while working at the DSRC building. He urgently required an air humidifier in his office to alleviate his discomfort. Unfortunately, GSA regulations prohibited the installation of humidifiers in the office space. However, Lucia intervened and advocated persuasively with GSA to make an exception and install the humidifier. This

intervention proved to be life-changing for [REDACTED] significantly improving his working conditions and overall well-being. [REDACTED] expressed profound gratitude for Lucia's exceptional support and assistance on this matter.

During a time-sensitive hiring process last spring, I needed to invite three candidates for on-site interviews within a tight timeframe. However, I encountered a complex visitor approval issue that threatened to impede the process. When Jimena Ugaz and I reached out to Lucia for assistance, Lucia swiftly sprang into action, surpassing her usual responsibilities to resolve the issue promptly. Her proactive help not only saved considerable time and effort on my part but also ensured that we could secure top talent for our team within the necessary timeframe.

The examples mentioned above offer merely a glimpse into Lucia's extensive portfolio of contributions and achievements. If given the opportunity to interview the approximately 420 CIRES/NOAA individuals, we would uncover a plethora of additional stories that highlight Lucia's invaluable impact and dedication.

Lucia also coordinated a multi-month effort to reorganize multiple CIRES admin staff offices at the DSRC building. She addressed challenges with the GSA and federal partners related to scheduling and funding. Her excellent communication skills have been evident throughout the process, ensuring a smooth transition for the team. Lucia also supports the CIRES senior management team during rotations at the DSRC facility, taking care of office space, furniture, scheduling, and logistics, and ensuring compliance with training and security processes.

With over two decades of experience on NOAA and DSRC-related issues, Lucia stands as an indispensable reservoir of knowledge. She is regularly consulted by CIRES employees, the HR team, and the leadership, on issues related to the federal clearance process, Limited Unescorted Access (LUA) for foreign nationals, visitor passes for access to the federal building, on-site interviews, the process of obtaining Common Access Cards, the role of the access verifier in ensuring the federal clearance process is completed on time, and on questions about technology support and training requirements for NOAA-based employees, etc.

Criteria 2: Development or improvement of a service that increases the effectiveness, efficiency, or quality of CIRES work and operations like assistance with grants, travel reimbursements, building and equipment maintenance, purchasing, or non-scientific software development.

Lucia pioneered an exceptional onboarding process for the CIRES employees at the NOAA DSRC campus, facilitating a seamless transition for new hires and leaving a lasting positive impression on our organization. As the first point of contact for new employees, Lucia's personalized onboarding sessions cover a breadth of essential topics, including benefits, retirement planning, I-9 compliance, MyLeave walkthroughs, diversity and inclusion initiatives, facility orientation at the David Skaggs Research Center (DSRC), NOAA training requirements, University of Colorado resources, and key information about our complex organizational structure. Her deep knowledge of both CIRES and NOAA ensures that new hires receive comprehensive guidance tailored to their needs, setting them up for success from day one.

In 2023 alone, Lucia successfully onboarded 40 new CIRES scientists, a testament to the efficiency and effectiveness of her onboarding program. Beyond the initial onboarding phase, Lucia's commitment to fostering a culture of support and integration extends through regular check-ins at one month and six months, ensuring ongoing guidance and assistance as employees acclimate to their roles within the CIRES community. Her unwavering dedication to serving as a dependable point of contact for employees throughout their tenure further underscores her invaluable contribution to our organization's success.

Building upon the resounding success of the onboarding initiative, Lucia has embarked on a new collaborative endeavor with CIRES HR members to extend a similar program to campus-located staff—a transformative initiative that promises to enhance the onboarding experience for all CIRES employees, irrespective of their location.

Criteria 3: Providing initiatives to advance Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Human Resources programs, or other administrative divisions that support effective and invaluable work and operations at CIRES.

Lucia took the initiative in developing and leading the CIRES training program. Collaborating closely with CIRES HR members, she has demonstrated exceptional leadership in organizing, coordinating, and facilitating a comprehensive professional development curriculum tailored to the diverse needs of CIRES employees and supervisors. The training program encompasses a wide range of critical topics, including performance management, Crucial Conversations, DEI training, project management, and more, reflecting Lucia's astute understanding of the evolving needs of the CIRES population.


In her role, Lucia meticulously manages the master schedule for CIRES-wide training, ensuring that employees on both the CU Boulder campus and NOAA sides have access to valuable professional development opportunities. Furthermore, she diligently oversees the recording and dissemination of all training sessions, promptly uploading videos and slides to InsideCIRES for easy access by all employees.

Lucia excels as a dynamic and engaging trainer, serving as the subject matter expert on the Annual Summary of Accomplishments (ASA) process. Each year, she conducts ASA sessions for CIRES employees, demonstrating her expertise and commitment to facilitating a seamless experience during the evaluation process. Recently, Lucia collaborated with CIRES DEI Director, Becca Edwards, to integrate mandatory DEI prompts into the ASA process, further enhancing its inclusivity and relevance to the CIRES community.

Lucia regularly engages with the CIRES Members' Council, and is often on the forefront of raising issues and suggesting improvements to the employee experience that sometimes involve complex administrative solutions. Quite often these issues overlap with DEI concerns and she is always thoughtful and considerate in her discussions and resourceful in suggesting solutions.

Lucia's dedication to continuous improvement is evident in her efforts to enhance training offerings, align the ASA with career trajectories, and expand the training catalog to support employees at every stage of their CIRES journey. Her profound understanding of the organization's dynamics and commitment to ensuring a positive experience for employees and supervisors exemplify her exceptional contributions to CIRES.

Supporting Documentation

 [Download All Documents as a ZIP File](#)

Supporting Statements

Jimena Ugaz

jimena.ugaz@colorado.edu

February 12, 2024

To the Outstanding Performance Awards Selection Committee:

I am writing this letter of support on behalf of Lucia Harrop, who has been nominated for an Outstanding Performance Award in the Administrative Service category. I have worked alongside Lucia since May of 2019 and I can attest to the consistently excellent quality of her work as well as her success in developing collaborative and productive professional relationships. For over more than two decades, Lucia has been an asset to the CIRES organization and her sustained efforts have helped advance the mission of our Institute.

For almost 5 years, Lucia and I have worked together in managing the training program for CIRES employees. We annually organize, coordinate and also facilitate a professional development curriculum which provides valuable opportunities to CIRES employees and supervisors. In putting together this curriculum, we collaborate with our University of Colorado partners who facilitate some of these sessions on Performance Management, Crucial Conversations, Project Management and more. Lucia is interested in the professional development needs for the CIRES population and willing to broaden our offerings in order to support them. Lucia is also in charge of the master schedule for CIRES trainings and graciously keeps up with all professional development opportunities available to our employees both on the CU Boulder campus and at the NOAA federal building. Additionally, Lucia coordinates the recording of all trainings and promptly uploads videos and slides for each session to InsideCIRES thus making these trainings easily available to our employees.

Lucia is also an outstanding trainer herself and the subject matter expert on the Annual Summary of Accomplishments (ASA) process. Every year, Lucia offers this ASA session to our employees and has recently collaborated with our Director of DE&I, Becca Edwards, to organize and provide training to our employees on the now mandatory DEI prompt. In each of her training sessions, Lucia offers employees and supervisors innumerable resources for an informed experience as we complete these mandatory annual performance evaluations. Lucia's ASA presentation is evidence of her knowledge of the CIRES organization and the potential complexity in the interactions between CIRES employees and federal partners.

Lucia is also in charge of the Onboarding process for the CIRES employees housed at the David Skaggs Research Center. This means that after a candidate joins CIRES and within their first week of work, Lucia offers them a personalized session covering the essentials of the DSRC facility, NOAA training requirements, resources available through the University of Colorado, and additional valuable information on benefits, perks and our complex organization. Lucia is so knowledgeable about both CIRES and NOAA that she is consistently identified by these newcomers as a key point of contact and support for years to come. Currently Lucia is collaborating with our HR Coordinator, Christen Cousins, to build an Onboarding website that will centralize our resources (many of which she has developed herself) and improve our new employees' onboarding experience.

With over two decades of experience in NOAA and DSRC related issues, Lucia offers a wealth of information. I consult with her constantly about issues related to the federal clearance process, Limited Unescorted Access (LUA) for foreign nationals, visitor passes for access to the federal building, on-site interviews, the process of obtaining a Common Access Card, and on questions about technology support and training requirements for NOAA-based employees. I have reached out to Lucia about these issues dozens of times over the last 5 years and 100% of those times my inquiries have been received with great interest and resolved with world-class customer service.

Lucia's responsibilities also include collaborating with CIRES Communications to put together the Administrative News which are sent out CIRES-wide every month and which provide key information to our employees on trainings, benefits, presentations and other opportunities provided by CIRES, NOAA and the University of Colorado as a whole. Her work is precise and carefully written and she always invites collaboration and graciously accepts constructive feedback.

Lucia's communication skills are outstanding. She is very sharp, clear in expressing her objectives and courageous in identifying issues of concern and advocating for those who are in a more vulnerable position or just don't feel comfortable enough to speak up. At the same time, Lucia is very respectful of authority and notable for her interest in assisting candidates, new employees and unit Directors with the same level of empathy and effectiveness.

I have participated in the CIRES Members Council (CMC) since May of 2021; Lucia has been part of our governing body for much longer than that: maybe even a decade! Meeting after meeting, I have witnessed Lucia's authentic interest for any and all of our employees' concerns. She does not dismiss anyone and constantly takes on extra work to involve the appropriate stakeholders and research solutions for all members of the CMC. She truly is an example for how Inclusion should work. With Lucia in the CMC, all issues raised will always be heard and considered.

Lucia also participates in our CIRES HR weekly meetings, so I am very familiar with the volume and with the quality of her work, which is consistently of the highest standards. Lucia collaborates very well with each member of the HR team, federal partners, CIRES liaisons and unit Directors. I find comfort in having Lucia be part of the CIRES Administration as she elevates the quality of our work and rather than letting us rest in our achievements, she continues to push us towards overall improvement.

The day that Lucia retires CIRES will suffer the loss of irreplaceable knowledge. She is truly one of a kind and one of the strongest forces making CIRES operations at NOAA run so smoothly.

Lucia, Thank you!

Jimena Ugaz
Talent Acquisition and Training Manager
CIRES HR
University of Colorado Boulder

Aleya Kaushik

aleyka.kaushik@noaa.gov

February 20, 2024

To: CIRES Outstanding Performance Award Committee

Dear Committee Members,

It is a great pleasure to write this letter of support for our colleague Lucia Harrop who has been nominated for a 2024 CIRES OPA in the Administrative Service category.

For a lot of CIRES employees, especially those of us working in DSRC, the NOAA building, Lucia has been an approachable and reliable colleague and a proactive and extremely resourceful HR specialist.

Lucia has worked at CIRES in various HR functions for over twenty years. As the CIRES Administration

liaison at DSRC, Lucia serves over 400 CIRES employees, affiliates in various Federal labs or centers. She has a vast reservoir of institutional knowledge and a deep understanding of how CU, CIRES, and NOAA work and how this complex landscape sometimes brings up new requirements or issues for CIRES and its employees. Lucia has onboarded most of the CIRES employees working at DSRC. In 2023, she onboarded 40 new researchers as well as students and hourly employees. She formalized an improved onboarding process a while back and has constantly engaged to update it and involve the CMC Membership chair and CMC representatives to reach out and participate in welcoming new employees. She has organized new employee meet-ups to introduce new hires to CIRES admins and CMC representatives. She also does regular check-ins with employees during their first year of employment at CIRES as new questions or needs can come up over time.

One may think these accomplishments are just a normal part of an HR specialist's job but as the CIRES liaison at DSRC Lucia works beyond expectations every day. She is empathetic, takes the time to listen to people and takes their concerns to heart to understand situations. She communicates proactively and discreetly with CMC leadership to discuss issues that sometimes benefit from high-level discussions without involving too many people. She promptly connects employees to relevant resources (for ex. FSAP, the CU ADA office, an ergonomic furniture specialist, the Commerce Children Center or other local daycare information) and provides the right level of guidance and information always in a timely manner. Over the years, Lucia has provided explanations on various policies to employees as needs and situations come up from work accommodation due to covid, or an injury, or helping with bereavement leave following a family loss.

Lucia is a champion for employees and their growth and this is why she cares deeply about contributing and promoting training opportunities. CIRES is a somewhat unique workplace in various ways, for example when it comes to promotions and achievements assessments, employees have to be self-advocates. This is why every year, Lucia leads the Annual Summary of Accomplishments (ASA) training. This must be one of the longest standing trainings at CIRES! Every year, she gives a clear training with support from others in HR to teach new employees what they need to know about the process, update the content based on feedback and clearly explains the kind of information that each section requires. During ASA submission season, she also sends useful reminders about the deadlines so that every employee and their supervisor take care of this requirement together to be eligible for an annual pay raise.

Over the years, Lucia has taken many initiatives to improve the employee experience at CIRES. Being a very open, creative and approachable liaison, she is often the first person most aware of how new situations bring new challenges to some or all employees. For example, the DSRC site access for foreign nationals is an ongoing challenge that requires constant adaptability and patience from employees and Lucia hears the frustrations and communicates feedback to higher ups. During and after covid, Lucia has regularly checked in and encouraged discussions on the CMC and with employees on how the remote or hybrid work arrangements are working and if teams have access to the needed tools to support their communications and shared work space needs. She has shared articles and information on training over the years which have been very useful, especially for supervisors who needed to take a more proactive approach to check in with employees. She regularly participates in CMC meetings and consistently engages with the members and is often able to provide answers to our questions directly in those meetings.

There would be so much to cover to praise Lucia's contributions at CIRES, but we will end with her role in compiling and distributing relevant and on point information to employees. Lucia has a good understanding of what information is useful, how to make some communications clearer, and what

reminders are needed, so her emails have been extremely useful to all of us over the years. We know that if Lucia sends an email, it is because it is timely relevant information. As CMC representatives in GML, Lucia makes our jobs a lot easier with her emails and contributions to other communications including the CIRES Admin blogs. We regularly stress the importance of reading Lucia's and other CIRES emails to our CIRES colleagues.

This award is long overdue, it feels. Lucia is one of those rare, sensitive and dedicated people who keep excelling at serving others, keep growing in their job skills and knowledge and keep doing it with no restraint even when their work and efforts go unnoticed. We hope the committee will agree and offer all of us the opportunity to recognize Lucia and her many valuable contributions to CIRES, its employees and through them its mission.

Sincere regards,
Gaby Petron and Aleya Kaushik

Charles Anderson

charles.anderson@noaa.gov

Dear Outstanding Performance Award Committee,

We are writing this letter of recommendation in vigorous support of Lucia Harrop's nomination for a 2024 CIRES Outstanding Performance Award for Administrative Service. This letter represents not only our support, but the support of the CIRES members embedded at the NOAA National Centers of Environmental Information (NCEI). The nomination statement for Lucia does an excellent job highlighting her contributions to CIRES as liaison between CIRES and NOAA, and the vital role she plays for we CIRES employees embedded at NOAA. So, what makes Lucia outstanding among a CIRES staff full of great people? It is Lucia's unwavering compassion, support and dedication to the people here at DSRC as individuals and not just CIRES employees.

Working as a CIRES employee at NOAA comes with many rewards, but also many challenges as we navigate the complicated rules governing the relationship between us and our federal partners and organizations. Lucia is our guide and advocate when things get difficult. Drawing on her vast experience Lucia quickly comprehends the issues and either assists directly or connects employees with the proper resources whether they be in CIRES, CU or NOAA. She is both compassionate and realistic - Lucia genuinely listens, understands and cares about employee experiences and helps find solutions while also being direct about aspects of the organization that cannot be changed. Additionally, many of us have personal situations arise while working at CIRES, and Lucia plays a critical role in helping individuals navigate difficult situations. Lucia is also very proactive, staying in contact with CIRES staff at DSRC to learn about emerging issues, conveying that information to NOAA and CIRES administrators and passing timely and relevant information back to employees. A recent example is generational differences in available employee benefits. Caring for aging family members is a growing concern for more senior employees and Lucia brought the topic to CMC's attention at a recent meeting, pointing out the growing inequity with expanding family leave for new parents.

Lucia is committed to supporting all of the CIRES employees, and she demonstrates a unique ability to connect with people from a wide variety of backgrounds and perspectives. Lucia also gets all new CIRES

employees at DSRC off to a great start with a personal and welcoming onboarding process featuring an introduction to CIRES, life at DSRC, and tips on working as an affiliate at NOAA. It is impossible to overstate the importance of this in making new employees feel at home in DSRC and also connected to the larger CIRES and university community. By working to prevent issues from growing into problems, expertly and compassionately helping people when problems do arise, and making all CIRES employees feel welcome and appreciated, Lucia provides outstanding service to CIRES. Lucia exemplifies the human aspect of human resources and we hope her dedication and service to the people of CIRES is rewarded with an Outstanding Performance Award!!

Sincerely,
Samuel Califf and Charles Anderson
CMC Representatives for NCEI

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