

Nomination Statement

Please also see attachments: 4 letters from: Andy Pomper (CIRES Finance director), Ben Livneh (CIRES Fellow), Tristan LEcuyer (U. Wisconsin), and Kris Karnauskas (CIRES Fellow)

Managing group finances and proposals is among the most stressful aspects of starting as an assistant professor, even in the best of times. Marc Cloninger and the rest of the CIRES Finance Team are world-class enablers of CIRES. We are deeply impressed with their dedication to CIRES success and its hard to imagine a person or group more deserving of a Service award.

As relatively new faculty at CU Boulder, three of us (Kay, Karnauskas, Livneh) have had overwhelmingly positive interactions that have nurtured us in so many ways. Two of us work specifically with Marc (Kay, Karnauskas), while one of us works with Andrea (Livneh). [Please see attached letters of support with specific accolades for Marc from Tristan LEcuyer and Kris Karnauskas, and for Andrea Dietz from Ben Livneh]. We would not be where we are today with grants, research group financial stability, and fieldwork successes without Marc and his colleagues patience, knowledge, and help.

Members of the CIRES Finance Team do everything they can to get it right with budgets and proposals, all while being curious, collegial, respectful, and wonderful to work with. Going over budgets and proposal formats is detail-oriented work with huge implications for the success of CIRES. The CIRES Finance Team (especially Marc for Jen Kay and Kris Karnauskas) have helped us successfully navigate not only the complexity of proposal budgets and writing, but the balancing act of managing the budget of new research group. Marc answers questions thoughtfully he is thorough yet efficient. He cares about getting the best possible solution to any problem, knowing that it has real implications for not only science, but people. He

is innovative and creative, exploring all options when problem solving to get to a solution.

We want to be clear that the finance teams work goes far beyond the professionalism and checking-every-box kind of service one should expect from staff at a major research university. First, their kindness and respect seem boundless. Second, the team anticipates problems before they affect principal investigators, and they protect us from the storms (such as a problematic new finance system the university system unrolled last year, prematurely). Principal Investigators who run their grants through CIRESs finance team spend substantially more time on their own research and less on paperwork than our colleagues in other departments and institutions.

Finally, as well detail below, Marc and the rest of the team clearly strive to continually improve, seeking feedback quickly and efficiently, and working with colleagues to build systems and processes that support continued excellence.

Criteria

Criteria 1: Implementation of a creative or innovative idea, device, process, or system that aids in research, teaching, or outreach at CIRES.

The methods used by the CIRES Finance Team enable creativity and innovation all across CIRES. Why? The whole team ensures ideas are not roadblocked by undue financial concerns. Dont get us wrongthey are rule followers. But they know the rules, and they have systems to implement them efficiently. This straightforward implementation makes it possible to go forward understanding the financial aspects of proposals and research group management with minimal stress. If we ever have questions, Marc or another member of the CIRES Finance team is always there to help either in person, over the phone, or over e-mail.

This flexibility and attentiveness enables creativity and innovation to happen all across CIRES without being sidelined by unnecessary financial stress and decision delays.

We do not have full insight into the creative and innovative processes that Marc and his colleagues used to help CU system staff fix the financial fiascos of last year [more information is in our answer to the second question below]. But we *know* that the teams creativity and persistence is enabling. The fact that we are sheltered from investigating and red tape enables us to spend time on research and teaching. We also know that CIRES was uniquely well situated during the financial system mess, because of the Finance teams experience and determination. As noted above, Marc is a master at outlining options and possibilities. He understand the ecosystem he works in and gives us enough insight to help choose a strategy for navigating it, but he never lets us get bogged down by the details.

To improve their own support of CIRES investigators, Marc and his finance team colleagues have built an online knowledge base that greatly improves their own efficiency and cross training. Members of the team upload and keep updated documents that explain university policies and procedures on a wide variety of Finance issues. These policies and procedures shift constantly, as do the people who implement them, and it is a challenge for anyone to keep up. Marc and his colleagues use this tool to help new colleagues understand the universitys complex landscape and to create an expectation of excellence (which seems to be met always). And theyve set a standard for the entire university system, becoming a go-to team for finance questions from across campus.

It may be primarily Marcs and his colleagues persistence and determination that constitute innovation here: The team is uniquely invested in enabling researchers, to a degree none of us have experienced in other institutions. For example, you will see in the attached letter from Tristan LEcuyer that Marcs clear and consistent

communication with a NASA program manager helped that individual understand exactly the spending status of a grant to one of us (Jen Kay). At that point last year, the CU system had a several-months-long latency, which put the grant in peril. Marc's ability to work with NASA, navigate the challenges, and come up with a solution was astonishing. [Please see attached letter of support from Tristan Lecuyer, University of Wisconsin, Madison]

Criteria 2: Development or improvement of a service that increases the efficiency, quality, or visibility of scientific research or outreach.

Marc and the CIRES Finance Team are world-class, operating at a level of efficiency and quality that is incredibly enabling. They do everything they can to make the best possible outcomes. For grants, their dedication is end-to-end: from the submission of proposals to their management to their eventual decline.

The three Fellows supporting this nomination are generally aware that last year was a challenging year one for finance and grant administrators in CIRES and around the campus. A combination of human error and lack of understanding and foresight led the University of Colorado system to unroll a new human relations and finance system prematurely (e.g., eg: <http://gazette.com/system-failure-plays-into-payroll-error-for-university-of-colorado-system/article/1578694>, http://www.dailycamera.com/cu-news/ci_30041451/cu-spending-15m-fix-frustrating-human-resources-finance, and http://www.dailycamera.com/cu-news/ci_29477032/cu-employees-hang-there-new-payroll-finance-programs). In that challenging time, many finance and grants management units on campus foundered, unable to track and update spending on grants, for example, or close accounts. That wasn't true at CIRES: Marc and his colleagues used an independent tracking system that gave them reasonably up-to-date information on grants spending. And the team didn't stop there: Marc and his colleagues figured out how to give feedback to those trying to fix the glitchy and inadequate system, motivating significant improvements. This communication-of-

problems became a second job at times, consuming huge amounts of time. In the process, however, the Finance team remained consummately professional they did not complain to researchers that, for example, some tasks were taking them many times as long as they did previously, or that others (such as invoicing federal funders) were at times perfectly impossible.

The university finance meltdown was a basically a non-issue for me sheltering that I very much appreciate, Jen Kay said. That is *exactly* the kind of thing that most of us have no bandwidth for. There was some latency in a NASA grant, which Marc resolved with the NASA program manager by showing him spending from CIRES-based accounting. It worked because Marc was so on top of things!

Criteria 3: Providing a service that promotes or inspires excellence and dedication to research performed at CIRES or in the wider community.

Marc is the kind of colleague that inspires dedication to CIRES. All three of the Fellows on this nomination package have had the experience of talking with colleagues in other departments about their experience with grant submission and feeling deep gratitude for what we have here.

One of us (Kris Karnauskas) submitted a multi-institution, ~\$1 million proposal to NASA last year, with CU as the lead institution. Stretched thin with the usual excuses, teaching and travel, I struggled to get the grant budget work and other elements done in a timely manner. Marc's support was extraordinary; there are very few financial administrators or grant specialists in the world who could have pulled it off. [please see letter from Kris Karnauskas, attached]

And the team's excellence goes way beyond grants. For example, during my (Jen Kay's) first year at AGU as an assistant professor, my laptop was stolen from a hotel lobby in San Francisco. The whole experience was incredibly stressful, especially since I had talks and was also presenting

at a press conference the very next day with Katy and the CIRES Communication team. The back-and-forth e-mail conversation with Finance team members was so kind and understanding, it greatly reduced my stress. On a more pragmatic note: when I returned to campus, the University of Colorado insurance policy purchased a replacement computer for me, all because the CIRES Finance Team knew the policy and followed through on it.

Marc and the CIRES Finance Team inspire excellence within CIRES. For example, as a part of Jen Kays NSF CAREER award, she went with two graduate students and one educational research to Churchill, Manitobaa remote location to make videos to use in undergraduate and high school classrooms in Colorado (<http://www.colorado.edu/today/2017/01/17/beyond-boulder-students-video-polar-bears-teach-about-climate-change>). This trip was a complicated endeavor with complex and non-traditional travel arrangements. Marc was just amazing at helping us work through the details including navigating discounted airfare rates and ground support available only through an educational partner, and knowing what was ok to charge to NSF and which ones were more appropriate to charge to Kays startup. I know the trip was a success in large part because of the dedication to logistics details from Marc and the CIRES Finance Team. While the trip was originally budgeted for two people, four of us went because of Marc and our educational partners. We could focus on the science, because we knew the logistics were in place and we had a contingency plan if we needed it. After the trip, I debriefed with Marc and Ted De Mariathey both were curious how the carnet (a passport for the equipment we took) worked, among other nitty gritty details and, of course, they wanted to know about the polar bears.

To reiterate: the qualities described in this nomination are neither usual nor expected in a university or science institution setting. The three Fellows in support of this nomination have all worked at other institutions, and none have experienced anything like the level of service

that Marc and his colleagues provide. From the CIRES administration perspective (Katy), Marc and the rest of the finance team are both jealousy-provoking and inspiring: Marc and his colleagues are just so incredibly effective and respected! We all seek to inspire the kind of dedication they inspire, from everyone they work with.