

Name: Ariane Parkes
Working Title: Student Affairs Manager
Payroll Title: STDT SVC ADVISOR 3

Dear Exemplary Staff Employee Award Committee,

We are truly delighted to nominated our colleague, Ariane Parkes, Student Affairs Manager in the Department of Political Science, for UCSD's Exemplary Staff Employee of the Year Award. Ariane's accomplishments not only exemplify the campus standards of nomination, but exceed these in multiple dimensions, as described below. Ariane has served as the Student Affairs Manager in our department since September 2017, and prior to this was our Undergraduate Student Affairs Advisor since June 2002. In response to the nominating criteria, this letter focuses only on a small subset of Ariane's many accomplishments in the last three years, but over nearly twenty years, her contributions to our department have been consistently exceptional. Ariane has worked tirelessly on behalf of the well-being and success of our undergraduate students, our graduate students, our faculty, and our staff. She has consistently performed above and beyond the scope of her responsibilities with exceptional contributions, innovative and proactive leadership, extraordinary service, inclusive excellence, and supportive relationship building. We strongly believe there is no one more deserving of this prestigious campus award than Ariane Parkes.

There are numerous examples of Ariane's innovative and proactive leadership we could highlight even in her last three years of service, but here we focus a subset of her initiatives that have been especially transformative for our undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff. We are a large and diverse major, with approximately 1200 students, an estimated 53 percent of whom have received Pell grants, 48 percent are first generation college students, and 44 percent self-identify as poor, low-income or working class (2016 UCUES). Ariane has worked creatively and tirelessly to support our diverse majors through a series of innovative and impactful programs. Perhaps first among these is our Alumni Mentor Program, which Ariane conceptualized and implemented over the past three years. What distinguishes this program from others is that it pairs students with two different types of mentors, both of whom are graduates of our department. Students have both a "Career Mentor" to help them navigate the path that fits with their current goals, but also an "Exploratory Mentor," who can share very different experiences to ensure that students broaden their thinking. Ariane's thoughtful approach to designing this program, which fully leverages the diverse expertise of our alumni, while both supporting and challenging our students, has delivered clear benefits to each group. As one student participant has recently commented: "The benefits that I found in the program was guidance for possible career paths. Not only did my mentors offer me help in guidance at UCSD, but they also referred me to other lawyers or political scientists whom they are connected with. As a first generation transfer student, this program allowed me to see other opportunities that I can have with my academic path and career." And, as one mentor has recently reported: "It reminded me of the challenges and needs of undergrads. It gave me an actionable way to be connected and give back to my home department!" These impactful experiences were only made possible through Ariane's creative leadership and commitment.

In the last three years, Ariane has also developed both an internship opportunities portal for our majors, which now provides internship information to more than 70 interns, and an extensive scholarship program to help financially support these interns. Specifically, Ariane has worked closely with our department chair and Advancement Services to secure donor funding and develop the infrastructure to provide annual scholarships to 22 of our majors. These scholarships have allowed our majors without sufficient financial resources to pursue research and internships both during the academic year and summers. These experiential learning opportunities have profoundly enriched these students' academic experiences and distinguished them for an array of post-graduate opportunities, including employment, graduate, and professional programs. Again, these transformative opportunities were only made possible through Ariane's dedication to inclusive excellence among our majors.

Ariane has also played a significant leadership role in developing our department's "Law and Politics Initiative" in the last three years. For this program, she has engaged in proactive outreach to bring legal professionals from the greater San Diego community to departmental events with our majors to provide information about the legal profession and professional networking opportunities for our students. Example events include, "What I Wish I Knew Before Attending Law School" and "Preparing Your Strongest Law School Application: Tips and Questions Answered by the Experts." Attendance at these events typically exceeds 100 people.

In addition to her impactful work with our undergraduate majors, as Student Affairs Manager, Ariane has also brought her creative and proactive leadership to our graduate program as well. One initiative we would like to highlight is her comprehensive reform of our TA allocation system. As a result of Ariane's efforts, this system is now much more efficient, transparent, and fair, which has had efficiency impacts for our department and the