



## **Outstanding Unit Award Nomination Form**

**Nominated unit:** The Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport  
**Unit Head Administrator:** Professor Mary Jo Kane

**Nominator Information:**

**Name:** Marta Fahrenz (P&A staff)

**Title:** Communications Director (Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport);  
Coordinator of Graduate Studies (School of Kinesiology)

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**Key Area 1 (maximum 1000 words):**

The Tucker Center (TC) is a superlative example of a University unit that supports and enhances the careers and professional development of its P&A employees. Housed in the School of Kinesiology and CEHD, the TC exemplifies CAPA's criteria in numerous ways as defined below. More significantly, this internationally recognized research center is led by Associate Director Dr. Nicole LaVoi, an academic P&A who manages TC's daily operations. In 2005, Tucker Center Director Professor Mary Jo Kane became Department Chair in the School of Kinesiology. She worked diligently to ensure that an academic P&A—Dr. LaVoi—took on a key leadership role in the TC. This is one of the many ways the TC models Professor Kane's leadership and vision to encourage, support, and reward P&A employees at every level. A critical part of the Tucker Center's culture of inclusion is the Affiliated Scholar Program whereby academic P&As are encouraged to become members at the same level as tenured faculty members in other academic programs and units. The TC casts a wide net so that newly hired P&As such as Dr. Eric Brownlee in Kinesiology's Sport Management program become affiliated with the Tucker Center.

- ***Ongoing professional leave opportunities.*** When CEHD announced professional leaves for P&As last fall, Dr. Jo Ann Buysse, TC Affiliated Scholar and Coordinator of the undergraduate Sport Management program, was encouraged by Professor Kane to apply; Dr. Buysse was awarded a leave for Spring, 2010. The School is covering her full salary and her classes. Professor Kane has communicated by example to all TC Affiliated Scholars that she values and supports professional leaves for P&As.
- ***Ongoing professional development opportunities.*** The TC consistently encourages P&A staff to enrich and enlarge their professional experiences within and outside the Center. All P&A Affiliated Scholars' research publications, presentations, and accomplishments are highlighted in the *Tucker Center*

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*Newsletter* which is distributed to 3,000 individuals and organizations around the globe. P&As are given full support to pursue academic endeavors and are an integral part of the TC's Affiliated Scholars program. Affiliated Scholar Rayla Allison founded The Sport Business Institute whose mission is to provide clients in the sport industry with consulting, educational, and research services while enabling Sport Management faculty and students to engage in real-world experiences. Jo Buysse is passionate about international education and organizes Learning Abroad programs with full support and encouragement from the TC. Such endeavors are considered essential to the professional development, achievements, and contributions of P&As.

- ***Appropriate and fair renewal and non-renewal practices.*** Academic and administrative P&As are reviewed each spring by the School Director, who has face-to-face meetings with each employee to discuss their achievement report and communicate feedback and expectations. P&As submit the CEHD Performance Appraisal Form. Appointment letters are distributed in a timely manner.
- ***Recurring P&A staff awards and recognition within the unit.*** The TC does not have any ongoing awards for P&A staff. However, the TC annually puts up P&A staff for College, University, and national awards and opportunities for broader recognition.
- ***Active P&A roles in unit decision-making; opportunities to serve on governing bodies.*** The TC embodies a variety of practices and opportunities such as democratic and participatory decision-making, working collaboratively, and providing P&As with central roles in the execution and delivery of teaching undergraduate/graduate classes, public engagement, and scholarly activity. The Center meets regularly as a group and P&As have input equal to tenured faculty in key decisions such as establishing policy, choosing TC graduate assistants, and making course assignments. As Associate Director, Dr. LaVoi manages the many outreach endeavors including a Distinguished Lecture Series, sport parent and coach educational workshops, and the monthly "Tucker Table," where P&A scholars share their most recent research. She has also taken the lead in establishing new and innovative research directions and enhancing the national and international reach of the TC. She has developed a parent education program (Parents Learning About Youth Sports), co-founded the Minnesota Youth Sport Research Consortium, and developed a summer internship program. Her success may be in part attributed to the remarkable academic and professional initiative she has been encouraged to exercise in the TC.

With respect to governance, P&A staff routinely serve on School, College, and University-wide committees and outreach projects. Dr. Buysse has served on various committees including the International Education Work Group, CEHD Professional Studies Curriculum Committee, Kinesiology Curriculum Committee, CEHD First-Year Admission Committee, and the Disability Studies Initiative. Rayla Allison has served on numerous University-wide and College committees, most notably the University's NCAA Certification Equity Subcommittee and the Recommendation 3 Implementation Task Force and the CEHD Undergraduate Planning Committee. Dr. LaVoi has served on the CEHD Honors & Awards committee and as a CAPA alternate.

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- **Provision of adequate travel funds for attendance at professional conferences.** Unlike many U of M academic units, the Tucker Center/School supports and supplements travel to conferences for P&As, who are encouraged to attend conferences to present their research and meet with colleagues from other institutions. For example, Dr. LaVoi attended four professional conferences this year supported by funding from the TC. Rayla Allison serves on boards of professional sport organizations and uses travel funds to increase her visibility as a national leader on issues related to Sport Management and Title IX.
- **Prevailing climate and culture of respect, support, and encouragement.** Professor Kane believes in according P&As the same rights and privileges as their tenured and tenure-track counterparts. For example, TC P&As are given equal consideration in nominations for Departmental, College or University awards, and all policies are applied equally between tenured faculty and P&As. The School recently undertook a major overhaul of curriculum; TC P&As played an integral role in the project. This effort provided symbolic and tangible proof that the TC in general and Professor Kane in particular are deeply committed to a culture of mutual respect and empowerment, acknowledgment of individual accomplishments, and a climate that celebrates diversity and recognizes that P&As can (and do) make significant contributions to our mission of teaching, research, and service.

## **Key Area 2 (maximum 1000 words):**

### ***Outstanding achievements and contributions of P&A staff to the unit and University. Outstanding P&A achievements in research, teaching, administration, service.***

Tucker Center P&As have a rich tradition of making significant contributions—and achieving national and international recognition within the University and beyond. However, these outstanding efforts and accomplishments could not happen without the support, encouragement, and climate established by and embedded in the Tucker Center. With respect to scholarly activity, TC Affiliated Scholars have robust scholarly publications in some of the most prestigious peer-reviewed journals in their respective academic disciplines. P&A employees such as Drs. LaVoi and Buysse, JD Rayla Allison, and newly minted PhD Jennifer Bhalla not only present their research at national and international conferences but have been asked on numerous occasions to give keynote addresses in prestigious academic venues. More specifically, Dr. LaVoi co-authored (with Professor Kane) the groundbreaking and nationally acclaimed *Tucker Center Research Report: Developing Physically Active Girls*, which was distributed to a worldwide audience. Dr. LaVoi is a nationally known scholar in youth sport and gender issues, published 13 peer-reviewed articles in 2007-2008, and was awarded over \$20,000 in grant funding from the U of M (President’s Initiative on Children, Youth and Families) and externally (“Team Up For Youth” from the Melpomene Institute). With respect to using their research as a vehicle for public engagement, P&As Dr. Buysse and Rayla Allison worked with a variety of community organizations on behalf of the TC, including the American Association of University Women, local Rotary Clubs, the U of M Alumni Association, youth sport associations, and the Forum of Executive Women. Dr. Bhalla, who was recently awarded the PhD, serves as the liaison for the Kinesiology-North Community YMCA Partnership, which creates physical activity opportunities for youth in North Minneapolis and gives Kinesiology students training and experience as youth sport coaches.

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Not surprisingly, all academic P&As have a heavy teaching load, averaging three courses per semester; they deliver these classes to both graduate and undergraduate students. They have also made contributions with respect to course and program development. For example, Rayla Allison and Jo Ann Buysse played a critical role in securing a new M.A. degree in Sport Management which was approved by the Board of Regents in February. This was an arduous process, and without their commitment—not to mention their persistence—this significant achievement would never have been accomplished. In addition to program development, P&A staff affiliated with the Tucker Center routinely receive some of the highest student evaluations in Kinesiology and are highly sought after by graduate and undergraduate students alike. Because academic P&As have degrees ranging from PhDs to JDs to MDs, they are members of our graduate faculty and routinely serve on MA and PhD committees. They also serve as the primary adviser to literally hundreds of students majoring in Kinesiology, Sport Management, and Recreation at both the graduate, MEd, and undergraduate levels.

It is a testament to their outstanding talents that the work of Tucker Center P&As has been recognized at the College, University, and national level. TC Affiliated Scholar Jo Ann Buysse received the CEHD Excellence in Academic Advising Award (2007) and was nominated for the John Tate Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising (2007). Dr. Buysse is also the CEHD's first-ever P&A to receive a one-semester leave which was awarded for Spring 2010, and for which she received strong support from Professor Kane. Rayla Allison, who founded and directs the Sport Business Institute, has numerous national honors and achievements to her credit. For example, she received the President's Award from the Women's Sport Foundation and was named a Distinguished Alumni by her alma mater, the University of Texas at Arlington. Since 2001, she has served on the Board of Directors of the Babe Ruth League, a 54-year-old international not-for-profit youth sport organization.

The achievements and contributions of P&A staff employed directly or affiliated with the Tucker Center have brought enormous distinction to the School of Kinesiology, CEHD, the University of Minnesota, and beyond. They are deeply committed professionals who take seriously their responsibilities as educators, scholars, and administrators. Whether it's leading a path-breaking research initiative, going the "extra mile" for students and support staff, or volunteering their valuable time to be engaged in the often thankless work of governance, TC P&As thrive not only because of who they are as individuals but because they work in an environment that honors the dignity of their efforts, contributions, and achievements.

### **Supporting Examples:**

*Included in above text*

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