



Cougar Health Services

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

27 March 2023

Dear AP Contribution Award Review Committee,

I would like to recommend Dr. Jennifer Ellsworth, PhD, Director of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) as an outstanding candidate for this year's award. Dr. Ellsworth has demonstrated the highest commitment to caring for our students during an exceptionally trying year on the WSU Pullman campus. As the primary responder to provide student mental health services during times of crisis, she selflessly spent many weekends and nights working with students in our community during these times of anguish and loss. I do not need to tell the committee how difficult this last year has been for many in the WSU Pullman community, nor can I even describe the different ways our students have been affected by the multiple recent tragedies and losses. Through each of these incidents, whether they were widely known, or whether they were known but to a few who were affected, Dr. Ellsworth has been there.

One particularly poignant example is how, after the murder of four University of Idaho students last fall, Dr. Ellsworth worked with the counseling staff at the U of I to provide backup support for their counseling services so that their team could grieve and attend a candlelight vigil. I'm also reminded of when, at the end of December, multiple students were displaced by a shooting near campus. Dr. Ellsworth was again there to respond to their needs. Then, a few weeks later, when we learned that a WSU student had been charged in the murder of the U of I students. Dr. Ellsworth personally reached out to hundreds of individual students who were affected by that news, attending listening sessions and meeting with entire classrooms full of those who were traumatized by this troubling news.

While these are high-profile examples that illustrate her ability to rise to a unique challenge and remain calm and caring during a crisis, it is again worth noting how often she has given of herself to meet student needs when more "routine" mental health needs arise for our students. The nature of counseling and mental health work is necessarily very private and confidential, so I cannot share specific examples, but those who have worked with her in the course of other responses, in her work on the Threat Assessment Team, or in the daily operation of CAPS, will attest that she brings an empathetic, caring, and attentive attitude to every encounter she has with another person.

Dr. Ellsworth recently announced her plans to step down as the Director of CAPS; she will remain on the team to focus exclusively on providing individual counseling to students. As Director, she has grown and developed a resilient team to meet the unique mental health needs of students. She helped improve the integrated behavioral health program in the CHS Medical Clinic. She developed the multi-cultural specialist position at CAPS and has advocated for the recruitment and retention of diverse staff who reflect the identities of our students. She proved invaluable in implementing Welltrack/ProtoCall+ last year. Finally, for the first time in anybody's memory, CAPS achieved full staffing this year, a commitment to ensuring that her department will continue to recruit and retain outstanding professionals. I can think of no better person to receive this award, and she comes with my highest recommendation. Thank you for your consideration of Dr. Ellsworth.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joel Schwartzkopf, MBA, MPAS, FACHE
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