

March 24, 2023

Dear AP Contribution Award Committee,

I'd like to nominate Student Media Director Richard Miller for the 2023 AP Contribution Award. I have worked with him for seven years, and in that time, he has shown resourcefulness, creativity and an affable pragmatism that has improved our office, and contributed to bettering the WSU community.

Richard came to us from WSU's Global Campus, where he was Senior Marketing Communication Coordinator for eight years. He brought national attention to that program, helped it transition from Distance Degree Programs to a WSU campus, and won three national CASE awards for his writing and video work.

Productivity and problem solving. In his first year at Student Media, Richard helped convince the S&A funding committee to award us the largest percentage increase of any group. The next year, working in concert with our students, he created and managed a student referendum campaign that brought us a \$5 student fee. Without those initiatives, we would have had to cut all student pay or end a newspaper that's been publishing here since 1895.

He also found new sources of outside revenue. For example, he pioneered a deal to have the Inland 360s included in the Evergreens, a strategy later copied by other area student papers. This is now our largest source of steady ad revenue.

At the same time, he reduced several hundred thousand dollars in spending, eliminating two departments, cutting circulation, changing operations, streamlining everything extraneous. He did this over several years, in a gradual way that was essentially painless -- the things he jettisoned are not missed, and we are now able to better focus on our mission.

In sum, he saw a failing funding model, and through strategic ingenuity made us healthy again. We are now financially sound, which has improved our daily operations while reducing the anxiety levels among staff.

University/Community service. Do you know that expression, "You should stay in your lane"? Richard doesn't. In just the past year, I've seen him forge new relationships with Murrow academic staff, SEB, and the African American Student Center. His goal has always been to help bring WSU together, in ways big and small, to provide a better student experience.

To help our students in Student Media, he's a calm source of solid information—legal, journalistic, and managerial—amid the constant stress and turmoil of newspaper work.

To help other WSU students, he created a webpage that compiles news from other WSU campuses, area student papers, and links to such key information as Regents minutes and institutional research. He also guides the Evergreen toward coverage that benefits all students, ranging from public safety to student fees, from health issues to diversity and inclusion.

To make Black students feel more welcome, he arranged for Spokane's Black Lens newspaper to be shipped to WSU, where he placed them in Evergreen news racks at the front doors of the CUB.

Positive working relationships. Richard makes us all, in and out of this office, feel like we're highly valued and respected members of the same team. That gives us a sense of camaraderie, of esprit de corps, that unifies our efforts and advances our mission.

I'd like to end by noting we are a small office. I'm the only other FTE and much of what we do isn't seen by anyone else. That's fine. We prefer to remain behind the scenes in order to keep the spotlight on our students and their journalism. I know Richard prefers to keep a low profile, to concentrate on the work that matters most to our group and the university as a whole.

But Richard's accomplishments should be brought to the attention of a wider audience. I'm therefore delighted to nominate Richard Miller for the Administrative Professional Contribution Award.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy Milano". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Tracy" and "Milano" being capitalized and prominent.

Tracy Milano
Program Coordinator
Office of Student Media