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Dear Faculty Senate,

I am writing this letter in support of the nomination of Kelly Pitts for the 2025-2026 Faculty Senate Staff Service Award. Kelly Pitts has worked for Austin Peay State University for over 15 years and has dedicated her skills as Assistant Director to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.

Mrs. Pitts has always gone above and beyond for faculty in providing support, resources, services, and advice when applying for grants. She has always made herself available to faculty to answer questions about applying or submitting a grant, even late at night. Mrs. Pitts sends weekly newsletters about potential funding opportunities and lives by the motto "there's a grant for that." She has assisted APSU in receiving a \$100,000 NCAA Academic Success Grant for the third consecutive year to support student success.

Mrs. Pitts also coordinated "Posters at the Capitol," during which students present their research to policymakers. She also serves as the Research Council Coordinator to the Institutional Review Board, ensuring research is ethical by reviewing every proposal. While not only reviewing every proposal to the IRB, Kelly Pitts is also willing to answer questions about research design and ethics pertaining to studies.

As if all of this is not enough, Mrs. Pitts is also the Interim Director of Trio Student Support Services and Trio Educational Opportunity Center. This program is designed to help low-income, first-generation, or disabled students be successful in college. She also willingly teaches a UNIV 1000 course due to her love of teaching and students.

I have personally witnessed Kelly Pitts' willingness to listen to faculty, address faculty needs, and foster collaboration across disciplines. Mrs. Pitts has personally reached out to other faculty to foster collaboration across disciplines to apply for grants and conduct research. Mrs. Pitts is always making sure grants are submitted on time, regardless of the time of day (even if that means midnight).

Kelly Pitts shows compassion when working with faculty and understands that they may not understand the different materials involved in applying for a grant. Mrs. Pitts always maintains a positive attitude at work and is willing to help others succeed. One sees this in the way her coworkers interact with Kelly, in how her student worker feels about working in that environment, and in how her supervisor speaks about Kelly with the utmost respect.

I cannot speak highly enough of Kelly Pitts as a great worker and person. She is an asset not only to her department but to the university. I highly recommend Kelly Pitts for the 2025-2026 Faculty Senate Staff Service Award. Please reach out to me if I can provide any further information.

Best,

Heather Tillewein, PhD, MCHES
Assistant Professor, HHP



02/19/2026

Signatures:

Title	Signature	Date
Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice	<i>Anna Leimberg</i>	2/13/2026
Graduate Research Assistant Office of Research and Sponsored Programs	<i>Ellie Yaegge</i>	2/18/2026
Vice Provost for Research	<i>Chad Brooks</i>	02/19/2026