

ELAINE BENEDICT
ST. CHARLES COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MISSOURI
NOMINATION FOR PROFESSIONAL BOARD STAFF MEMBER AWARD
2009 ACCT REGIONAL AWARDS

ADDRESSING NOMINATION CRITERIA:

CRITERIA (A) In what ways has this staff member demonstrated a service leadership role toward the members of the board of trustees, administrators, faculty, students and community?

Elaine Benedict, executive assistant to the president, possesses 37 years experience in service to top administrators in both private and public sectors – including 22 years in education. In her work at St. Charles Community College (SCC), she has consistently exceeded expectations in her service to the Board of Trustees, the executive team, and the institution.

Elaine is responsible for providing organizational support to the President and the Board of Trustees by ensuring smooth and efficient office and records administration and by serving as a main point of contact with community leaders, legislators, parents, students, faculty, and staff. She handles every aspect of her responsibilities with tact, discretion, accuracy, and professionalism. In her liaison role between the college and the public, Elaine is a calm presence and a friendly face, promoting a positive image of the college.

Service Through Leadership – In her service to the college and the community, Elaine looks for ways to improve efficiency and reduce red tape and communication barriers. She is a strong, and often silent, behind-the-scenes contributor whose ability to get things done is well known throughout the institution. Totally committed to achieving excellence, Elaine offers broad organizational leadership in many areas. She provides sensible feedback to administration, making the job easier for those she serves. Some examples:

- In April 2009, Elaine organized the Board packet to be sent electronically in .pdf format to all Board members, thereby getting needed information to them in a more timely manner and saving the cost of postage to mail the monthly packets. Bound copies are available for Board members at the start of each Board meeting.
- Initiated and graphically designed a system for the Administrative Cabinet to track action items for future follow-up and reporting. Elaine attends all Cabinet meetings and had noticed that sometimes action items/assignments were either not attended to, or, their final resolution was not shared with the group. The new process is easy to follow and assures that all activities receive follow-up and are reported back to all Cabinet members.
- Assumed leadership role in assuring that the Board of Trustees meets reporting requirements under Missouri Sunshine Law. Having taken the initiative to seek specific training on the law provided by the Missouri Attorney General's Office, she educates the Board of Trustees regarding necessary changes in legal protocol.
- Took the lead in arranging logistics and hosting two major events in 2006-07 on the SCC campus: (1) the annual meeting (with 100 participants) of the Missouri Department of Higher Education, Coordinating Board for Higher Education, state legislators, and the presidents of all Missouri four-year and two-year colleges and universities, and (2) a staff-development meeting of the University of Missouri provost staff.
- Regularly volunteers to assist with after-work college activities such as continuing education festivals/programs and the St. Charles Community College Foundation's fundraising events. Elaine has been a consistent donor to the Foundation's Employee-Sponsored Program to raise money for scholarships, campus projects, and the benevolent fund. Was a community school district "parent volunteer of the year," and a volunteer religious educator in her church.

CRITERIA (B) How does this staff member demonstrate performance in support of the Board/CEO team?

The Board of Trustees and the college administration commend Elaine Benedict for superior performance in all aspects of her job. Furthermore, Elaine is recognized and appreciated for her positive attitude, strong communication skills, and results-oriented approach. She demonstrates performance in support of the Board/CEO team as outlined below:

- Develops Board meeting agenda, gathers supporting documents, attends all Board meetings, transcribes minutes for dissemination to faculty and staff, and serves as custodian of permanent Board records.
- Monitors budget for Board of Trustees and President's Office to ensure compliance.
- Provides organizational support to Administrative Cabinet by developing meeting agendas, taking and transcribing minutes, and tracking action items to completion.
- Arranges travel and professional development activities for Board members and president; prepares and reconciles expense reports; plans meetings with legislators, superintendents, and community members; arranges for retreats, recognition ceremonies, and hospitality at numerous events.
- Safeguards confidentiality of college administration by exercising discretion in communicating information internally and to various external publics.
- Manages comprehensive records of reference and historical data, including budget information, reports, campus construction documentation, and information regarding associations, partnerships, and legal matters.
- Coordinates filings for official college taxpayer elections.
- Coordinates flow of incoming correspondence and information to college president; determines nature and purpose of inquiries to assist in resolution.

Comment From William Pundmann, vice president of the SCC Board of Trustees –

"I have known Elaine well for more than three years. In recent years, I witnessed for three full days her performance as the President, Administrative/Professional Department of Missouri Community College Association ("MCCA") at the MCCA Conference at the Lake of Ozarks, Missouri, which was also attended by Mr. Noah J. Brown, President and CEO of ACCT.

Elaine is the most capable executive secretary of St. Charles Community College ("SCC") I have ever met. Elaine has performed amazingly well for our board of trustees with unbelievable skills in organizing and personal relationships with everyone. She is an expert stenographer, very well grounded in English and correspondence practice. She is quick, accurate, and industrious in her work.

I found she has been completely reliable in the handling of SCC Board of Trustees confidential matters. She is efficient, intelligent, and thoughtful. In addition, she is a pleasant, tactful executive secretary.

Because Elaine combines a high degree of efficiency with such personal attributes as a cheerful disposition during our heated board meetings and high-pressure preparation of Board meetings, MCCA conferences and other activities around the St. Charles Community College campus, and the State of Missouri, Elaine is a worthy person to be recognized nationally.

Without qualification, Elaine deserves the ACCT Central Region Award and ultimately the National Award.

Comment From Billy Collier, former Treasurer of the SCC Board of Trustees –

"During my service on the Board, I have seen the impact of Elaine's professionalism and organizational skills on our ability to have effective meetings. Elaine is very responsive to any requests for additional documentation or information, from any of the Board members.

Elaine always made sure that we had the information needed to make informed decisions prior to the Board meeting discussions . . . The draft minutes from the meetings were always forwarded in a timely manner, and seldom required amendment. Elaine ensured that we followed the requirements under state statute for legal board meetings, and provided support for any board member who requires additional help to actively participate in our meetings.

In addition, Elaine has helped coordinate several of the Board members participation in both local and national ACCT sessions, which allowed us to have a more clear understanding of our responsibilities and to share ideas and input with other board members from around the country. She made the planning and implementation of these trips very convenient and comfortable for all concerned.

Elaine always presents herself very well, and while being an active supporter of any meeting in which she is involved, is very satisfied to be in the background, ensuring that things run on schedule and within the objective of the meeting. Elaine is a true asset to the Board, and to St. Charles Community College."

CRITERIA (C) How has this staff member assisted the Board/CEO team in developing or initiating innovative or special projects for your institution?

- Elaine was selected to serve permanently on a special five-member Policy Review Committee tasked with completely rewriting and reorganizing all college/Board of Trustees policies and procedures. Her contributions have helped convey to the entire institution and the public a clear understanding of the college's mission and its operational functions.
- Elaine initiated and carried out a membership campaign to solicit new campus memberships in the Missouri Community College Association (MCCA). She organized a team, developed promotional materials, solicited prizes, and communicated the benefits of joining to more than 600 SCC employees. Her efforts resulted in increased SCC employee membership of 74% in our state organization – providing more professional development opportunities for dozens of new members!!
- Elaine organized and planned a regional community college Classified Staff Workshop on our campus that attracted 80 participants – the largest ever.

CRITERIA (D) What professional development activities at the national and/or state level has this staff member pursued?

Elaine Benedict has served on the Board of Directors of the Missouri Community College Association (MCCA) since 2004. She was elected as vice president in 2005 and later advanced to the office of president of the Administrative/Professional Department of MCCA, the organization that advocates for and provides professional development for employees of the state's 12 community college districts.

As the president, Elaine also co-chaired and facilitated the MCCA Administrative/Professional Spring Conference in May 2007, with 80 statewide participants. In addition, she served as MCCA Membership Committee liaison for St. Charles Community College from 1991-2006. In 2005, she ran the membership campaign that increased SCC campus membership in MCCA by 74%. She has attended many workshops at the MCCA annual conferences to advance her own skills.

Through her activities and leadership in our state community college organization, Elaine not only enhances her project management abilities but also presents a positive image in representing her college and supporting the mission of community colleges across the state.

CRITERIA (E) What other continuing educational activity has this staff member pursued?

A seasoned professional, Elaine is committed to continuous learning to broaden her knowledge and skills through coursework, seminars, and workshops. To keep up with technology, she has taken courses in Advanced Web Page Design, Microsoft Word Graphics, Outlook 2000, PowerPoint Sounds and Animation, Office XP Upgrade, and Microsoft Word – A More Professional Appearance. To educate the Board of Trustees on Missouri Sunshine Law requirements, Elaine attended a workshop provided by the Attorney General’s Office. Elaine also has updated herself on communication and personnel issues by taking courses in Effective Communications, Staff Performance Evaluations, Making Meetings Worthwhile, Anti-Harassment Training, Dealing With Difficult and Diverse People, Working Within Multi-Generational Teams, and Safety on Campus.

CRITERIA (F) What recognition has this staff member received for his/her leadership or involvement in the college or community?

- The Missouri Department of Higher Education (DHE) recognized Elaine for her assistance with planning and hosting an important statewide meeting on campus that included all two-year and four-year college presidents, DHE leadership and staff, and members of the State Coordinating Board for Higher Education (CBHE).

“ . . . We extend our sincere appreciation for your kindness and hospitality during the Coordinating Board meetings held at St. Charles Community College on October 11 and 12, 2006. . . . You made sure that our every need was met . . . the St. Charles Community College family has been an absolute pleasure to work with during the entire process of coordinating these meetings. Thank you for all of your planning efforts.” – Robert Stein, Commissioner, DHE

- Elaine was elected by her peers from 12 community college districts throughout Missouri as vice president of the Administrative/Professional Department of the Missouri Community College Association (MCCA). She then advanced to the presidency.

CRITERIA (G) What outstanding characteristics motivated you to nominate this staff member?

Elaine Benedict is highly regarded for her integrity, honesty, and credibility both within the college community and with the external public. She does not seek attention, but works quietly and effectively behind the scenes, always showing appreciation for the contributions and achievements of others. A friendly and affable person, Elaine has a calm, even temperament and is cordial, polished, and poised in her everyday interactions as well as with special guests and audiences.

Elaine can always be depended upon to promote harmony and teamwork, to be receptive to new ideas and alert to new learning opportunities. She has also shown strong leadership qualities and has stepped up to initiate projects and follow them through to successful completion. A problem solver, Elaine is practical in her approach, following businesslike procedures to accomplish objectives. She is cooperative and can be relied upon with complete confidence in any assignment she undertakes. A dedicated, loyal, and talented employee, Elaine is deserving of this high honor and recognition.

Comments From Dr. Donald D. Shook, First President of St. Charles Community College 1986-1996:

“The Executive Assistant to the President is a key position in the overall effectiveness of the Board/CEO team. I have had very capable assistants, but Elaine Benedict was among the best in my 32 years as President of St. Charles, East Central, and Crowder Colleges, all of which are in Missouri.

Elaine was very professional in all phases of the work she did for the college. Her work was always neat and on time. She was outstanding in her efforts to help keep the Board informed in a timely manner. She was considerate and courteous to faculty, staff, students, and the general public.

Elaine is deserving of recognition, and I strongly recommend her for the ACCT (Professional Board Staff Member) award.