

Outstanding Manager



Nicki Croly, Student Organizations and Leadership

I am honored to nominate my supervisor and mentor, Nicki Croly, Assistant Dean of Students/Director, Student Organizations & Leadership, for the Outstanding Manager Award. Nicki's exceptional guidance has had a profound impact on my professional and personal growth, and I know I am not alone in feeling this way. She embodies the true spirit of mentorship and management, consistently going above and beyond to support others, foster potential, and cultivate leadership in all those she works with.

Nicki's management is rooted in a deep commitment to developing the strengths of others. She has a unique ability to identify individual talents and create opportunities for growth, while simultaneously offering the support and feedback necessary to overcome challenges. She challenges her mentees to think critically, take initiative, and pursue excellence, all while providing the encouragement needed to build confidence. Nicki's thoughtful approach is never one-size-fits-all; she tailors her guidance to meet the needs of each person, ensuring they feel seen, heard, and empowered.

Her leadership style is both inspiring and empowering. Nicki leads with compassion, transparency, and a remarkable ability to listen, making everyone around her feel valued. Under her mentorship, I have learned not only about leadership but also about how to be a supportive and authentic mentor myself. Nicki's unwavering belief in the

potential of others and her dedication to their success is what makes her truly deserving of the Outstanding Manager Award.

Nicki Croly has gone above and beyond in her role as Assistant Dean of Students/Director of SO&L for these last 10 years. Not only is she a fantastic manager, who always shows care for her team of staff, but she is a fierce advocate for ALL students, regardless of identity or background. She consistently goes above and beyond, without question, for our Sac State students. Not only does she manage the entire SO&L department, but up until recently she was the sole person in charge of Time, Place and Manner on campus. This past year with the encampment on campus, she worked early mornings and late nights, going above and beyond to care for our students and make sure that their rights and safety were protected. She truly makes this campus a better place with her extensive knowledge and big heart. She is an invaluable asset of Sac State, and I really don't know where this university would be without her leadership. She does not get nearly enough credit or acknowledgement for the work she does.

Nicki Croly is a remarkable higher education professional whose contributions to Sacramento State have shaped the student involvement experience at this institution in profound ways over the past 10 years. Starting as the Associate Director of Student Organizations & Leadership (SO&L), she quickly rose to Interim Director and is now serving as the Assistant Dean of Students/Director of SO&L. Nicki's journey at Sac State has been one of deep passion, exceptional leadership, and unwavering dedication to the students at Sac State.

A proud product of Sac State herself, Nicki has always exemplified the values of engagement, commitment, and service to the campus community. As both a student and staff member, she has been a passionate advocate for our team members and the programs we manage within our department. She has adeptly navigated countless crises, steering our team and the students we serve through the challenges of the pandemic, responding to vacancies and loss of funding for critical staff roles within our space, and most importantly enforcing our Time Place and Manner policy first as an individual and now as a founding member of CART.

Nicki is more than just a manager or colleague; she is a friend, a mentor, and a constant source of support to those around her. Her leadership has been pivotal to not only the growth and visibility of the SO&L office, but to the resilience of our clubs in times of hardship. Her impact has truly been transformative, and she is deeply deserving of this recognition.

You would be hard pressed to find a better manager on this campus than Nicki Croly. Nicki is not only a fierce advocate for our students and staff, but a true believer in the power of the student involvement experience which motivates her to work tirelessly to evolve the services we provide to better suit the changing needs of the students we represent. Despite being down staff, Nicki somehow always makes time to be available for the members of this team, to continue, to support each of our category areas in innovating new ways to engage and adapt our programs through a DEI and wellness lens, and to ensure we are always doing what we can to support our students as developing leaders and individuals. As a professional who was made at Sac State, she is not only deeply knowledgeable about our campus community, but also someone who has fostered many positive professional and personal relationships which she readily dispenses to assist our team and students in addressing barriers and accomplishing our goals. Although it can be challenging with the pace we keep in this industry, Nicki always ensures we find the levity on the long days, the silver lining on the hard days, and stay rooted in our purpose and vision for what this work can be when done well. Nicki is not only deserving of this award but an embodiment of the caliber of student affairs professional we should all aspire to be. I know I do.

Nicki Croly is the heart and soul of the Office of Student Organizations & Leadership (SO&L). She's not just a director—she's a true advocate, mentor, and supporter. Nicki goes above and beyond to make sure our team feels valued, cared for, and balanced. She's always encouraging us to take care of ourselves, reminding us to prioritize family and well-being, which makes all the difference in a demanding work environment while also ensuring that we prioritize our students.

One thing that makes Nicki exceptional is how fiercely she advocates for her staff. She doesn't just listen—she acts. She consistently acts on our needs, ensuring that our voices are heard at every level. She's constantly looking out for our growth, bringing in creative training opportunities and finding ways for us to shine. Whether it's recognizing our accomplishments or helping us leverage our talents to better serve the Hornet community, Nicki is our biggest supporter.

Her dedication to SO&L's mission shows in everything she does. She's all about creating a student-centered environment that reflects diversity, equity, and inclusion, and she sets a high bar that we all want to meet. Even with a packed schedule, Nicki makes time to help us design DEI-focused and wellness-centered programs that truly serve students and help them grow as leaders.

Nicki Croly embodies what student affairs is all about—advocacy, connection, and purpose. She's an incredible director, and we're so lucky to have her leading our team. Without a doubt, she deserves this award.

Outstanding Manager Nominees

Brian Dulgar, ASI Aquatic Center

Dr. Ron Lutz, Student Health, Counseling & Wellness Services

Dr. Melissa Rep, Career Center

Jessica Swart, The WELL

Dr. Chao Vang, SASEEP

Dr. Marcellene Watson-Derbigny, SASEEP

Miesha Williams, Academic Advising Center