

## **Lee Vierling (faculty) - Associate Dean of Research**

8 April 2025

I invited Lee Vierling to speak about his experience being awarded a M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust grant to a team of PIs looking to submit for the 2025 cycle. Despite his VERY busy schedule and the less-than-ideal time slot for this meeting, Lee went above and beyond to share insights from the proposal-writing process and imparting expert strategies and best practice advice to the PI team to guide them toward success. I cannot stress enough how much it meant for Lee to share his wisdom, especially since I was lucky enough to work with him on his own proposal. It really meant a lot that he took the time to answer PI questions and share the challenges he faced from his own Murdock experience. When I think about strong research leadership among UI faculty, Lee's name is the first that comes to mind. Lee, thank you so much for your contributions.

## **Skye Swoboda-Colberg - Technical Product Manager**

11 April 2025

Skye has put in countless hours working with HR to developing an online workflow for U of I employees to use when requesting flexible work arrangements, to replace an outdated and burdensome system of paper forms. The process has many moving parts, and Skye has been endlessly patient and persistent in working out solutions. Even after launching the form and moving on to other projects, he continues to responsively make updates in response to feedback from testers. His hard work, professionalism and attitude of customer service are greatly appreciated!

## **Sophie Becker - Lead Academic Advisor**

18 April 2025

Sophie is, without a doubt, one of the most inspirational leaders we have on our UAS team that is filled with amazing leaders. Her calm and determined demeanor is not only appreciated by her students, but by all of us on the team. We all know we can turn to Sophie for a compassionate, yet realistic appraisal of a situation. Her knowledge and skill in advising are invaluable. No matter the complexity of a problem, Sophie can either help us directly or point us in the right direction. All the while, she is as calm as can be. She is, however, by no means somber. Sophie has one of the quickest and funniest wits on the team--again something we do not lack for. She can make us all smile with a well-timed comment. It has been such a pleasure to get to learn from and be supported by such an amazing person. I, the team and the whole university are better because Sophie is here!

## **Lauren Smith - Executive Assistant I**

18 April 2025

Lauren is truly one of the biggest reasons why working at the University of Idaho is so special. There is never a task that she is not ready to help out with, a clarification that she is not willing to provide or just supporting our entire department in any way she can. She is always cheerful and ready to ready to help. Her organization and attention to detail are second to none. For example, she handled so much of the logistics for UI Bound and had everything, down to the smallest detail, expertly prepared. Getting to work with Lauren has been one of the biggest rewards of working at U of I and we are so lucky she is part of our university! Thank you for everything you do Lauren!

## **Office of the Registrar Staff - Office of the Registrar**

18 April 2025

One of the most unsung teams on the campus is our amazing Office of the Registrar team. From the top on down, they have some of the most difficult responsibilities on campus. Yet, they are always so quick to respond to questions, clear up any issues and a million other small things. Our UAS team works with them constantly and relies on them for everything from guidance on policy, technical issues, Degree Audit troubleshooting and so much more. They make our work run so much more smoothly because of their dedication and professionalism. Their jobs are complex, stressful and far too often celebrated enough. It is a pleasure to get to work with each and every one of them. Their team, truly, keeps UAS and the university running. Thank you!

## **Mercedes Frausto - Associate Director**

18 April 2025

There is no one more dedicated to the success of their students than Mercedes. She is always willing to go above and beyond to support all of her students. This often means working with and supporting some of the most challenging student situations on campus. Her students not only often need academic support, but support navigating the university system, economic hardships, food insecurity and so much more. Mercedes not only is there to personally help her students, but does so much to lead the entire Trio team. From writing grants to organizing events and everything inbetween she does it all. In addition to all of that she models professional growth by working on her doctorate as well. Mercedes is truly an inspiration in her modeling of what it means to be a professional educator.

## **Emilie McLarnan - Case Manager**

18 April 2025

Emilie is such an amazing advocate for her students. She works tirelessly to support students going through some of the most challenging situations on campus. No matter the situation, she is always calm, supportive and, most importantly, an advocate for her students. The stress of her job must be very high and she must be flooded with tons of emails, phone calls and Care Reports, yet she is always able to find time to meaningfully interact with her students. As a colleague, it is so reassuring to know that when I reach out to her for support with a student that I know she will work collaboratively and consciously with me. Whenever Emilie emails that she is a case manager for one of my students, I always breathe a little easier knowing that the student will get amazing support and care. Emilie is truly awesome!

## **Shawna Bertlin - Director of University Advising Services**

26 April 2025

Shawna is an inspiration to students, the team she leads and everyone at the University of Idaho. She tirelessly sacrifices to ensure that every student at the university receives the highest quality advising experience possible, while also selflessly devoting her self to her team. Her passion both to serve students and advance academic advising at U of I are evident not only in her many success but her team's accomplishments as well. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Herculean effort she puts into making sure UI Bound functions smoothly. Her careful planning, coordination of various entities, quick thinking and ability to lead make the event the success that it is. This is only one example of the many, many things Shawna does for the university. As an educator, as a leader and as a person Shawna exemplifies excellence. The University of Idaho is an amazing school and place to work because of her.