

TO: Undergraduate Research Center
FROM: Camille McNabb
RE: Nomination for 2012 Undergraduate Research Mentor of the Year

Nominee: Dr. Elizabeth Sandell: Assistant Professor, Early Childhood Education
Nominator: Camille McNabb: Camille.McNabb@mnsu.edu

I am writing this letter to nominate Dr. Elizabeth Sandell for the Outstanding Undergraduate Mentor Award because I feel it is extremely important that a mentor this dedicated and supportive be recognized. This is my second year working with Dr. Sandell, and throughout the past two years she has consistently guided and supported me through each step of the research process. She is always available if I have any questions or need to meet to discuss my research, even if this means commenting on my NCUR PowerPoint when she is overseas in Turkey. Dr. Sandell is so dedicated to my team that she has gone through and explained each concept in our research so we could fully understand our participants, testing, statistical analysis, and the implications.

Dr. Sandell is a great supporter of undergraduate research in many ways. The first being because she took the time to explain the steps of successfully submitting an IRB proposal, grant applications, and applications to the National Conference on Undergraduate Research as well as the Undergraduate Research Symposium and the MN Conference of Undergraduate Scholarly and Creative Activity. She went the extra mile to help me prepare for my conference presentations, and she helped my partner and I to apply for a training opportunity for research in New Orleans. Another way she promoted undergraduate research is by inviting us to speak at a luncheon/panel for undergraduate research, and suggesting that we speak at a MSU Foundation luncheon. With this process my partner and I got to meet many professors at MSU, and had a chance to explain our research to them, which ended with many faculty members offering their support to help us gain a larger research sample.

Dr. Sandell promoted scholarships by encouraging my partner and I to apply for grants. Last year we received \$2,000 from the Minnesota State University, Mankato Foundation Grant, and this year we received a small foundation grant. Dr. Sandell also helped my team to apply and receive a travel grant to be able to attend the NCUR last year. This year she helped to find funding opportunities through the Education department which helped fund our research team's trip to Utah for the NCUR this year.

Dr. Sandell has constantly encouraged me to be creative and taught me ways to make my presentation more appealing. She has not only showed me technical extras in PowerPoint, but has helped me understand how to create tables, charts, and graphs for our data. Dr. Sandell has also helped me to think creatively, at the start of this year she encouraged each research team member to determine different aspects of research to study, possible research questions in the future, and to think of what we can do differently. Dr. Sandell is always encouraging us to see things from different views and think in creative and innovative ways.

Had I not worked with Dr. Sandell I would not have had the opportunity to become so invested in and proud of my research. I also would not have had the chance to present at five undergraduate research conferences, and be published in two journals. Because of this experience, I not only encourage my peers to participate in undergraduate research; but I explain to everyone I know, what a great opportunity this has been for me.