

Nomination of Jessica Laramie for AAPL Accredited Program Director of the Year Award

Submitted by Veronica Wilde, External Communications for Energy Management at Western Colorado University

Climate of Western Statement:

As someone who has had the opportunity to experience various areas of employment at Western, including the Admissions Department, Business Department, MBA Program, and now Energy Management, I feel luckiest having gotten to work alongside Jessica, a Lecturer in Business and Director of the Energy Management Program at Western. Throughout my time here, I have not encountered anyone who dedicates as much one-on-one time assisting students with their broader professional development, being a mentor and ultimately to preparing students for their careers as Jessica does. In fact, her dedication almost had a negative impact on enrollment, while simultaneously increasing industry demand for highly reputable graduates from our program.

Despite the challenges low enrollment posed, Jessica refused to compromise the quality of education promised to our students. She worked with the External Advisory Board to develop and implement a five-year Strategic Plan for the Energy Management Program. The Strategic Plan was aimed at increasing enrollment, increasing external communications, and ultimately saving the program. She independently reached out to industry to pitch her plan, and it worked. Industry answered, and gave her the support needed to expand program resources at a time when that wasn't an option internally given university budget and staffing constraints.

I understand our program is unique at Western in that we have the ability to look externally, and as such, our students have more resources available to them than other programs on our campus. However, I believe that Jessica's adaptability and her commitment to maintaining the reputation of the program externally amidst internal shifts at Western deserve recognition. The Strategic Plan mentioned above helped us achieve the five-year targets set by the External Advisory Board in just three years (one metric being a 4X in enrollment), and we are currently working on a new plan with industry partners to reflect our recent program successes.

Jessica is modest and does not seek out accolades, but she has quietly played a crucial role in saving a program at Western that could have otherwise been lost. When I accepted my position here two years ago, I asked Jessica what her top priority was as an educator. She replied, "If my students don't at least have the option to accept a job when they walk across that stage, I haven't done my work properly." If more educators shared this mentality and also actively recruited students, the possibilities for higher education would be endless.

Jessica's Contributions to Broader Energy Education:

Jessica has made an exceptional contribution to the field of energy education, both at Western and on a global scale. She has consistently demonstrated a dedication to maintaining a 100% placement rate for both graduating seniors and students pursuing internships, and has worked closely with industry partners to develop and refine the curriculum to ensure that our students are well-prepared for careers in the energy sector. In addition to her work with companies to package and distribute resumes and coordinate interviews, Jessica also places a strong emphasis on aligning students with company cultures by getting to know each company's team dynamics in various positions.

In addition to her efforts to support student success, Jessica has also made a significant impact on the field of energy education through her dedication to student enrichment initiatives. She leads the Energy Management Workshop Series, which covers professional development and program expectations during the first week of school, and has implemented a system to pair students with industry partners for mock interviews in the absence of a Career Services representative for the Business Department. She has also coordinated the development of a resume revision system with industry partners to ensure that our students' resumes are up-to-date and reflective of the latest developments in the energy sector.

Beyond the classroom, Jessica has also been instrumental in organizing and coordinating a trip for students to install solar panels in Peru. This trip not only provided students with valuable hands-on experience in renewable energy, but also allowed them to make a positive impact on a global scale. Jessica's efforts to connect students with real-world experiences and opportunities have contributed significantly to their professional development and have helped to advance the field of energy education on a global level.

Overall, Jessica's contributions to energy education have been extraordinary and far-reaching. Through her hard work, dedication, and commitment to student success, she has made a significant impact at Western and beyond, and has played a vital role in preparing students for successful careers in the energy sector.

Jessica's Bio:

Jessica Laramie is the Director of the Energy Management Program at Western Colorado University. Prior to her role as Director, Jessica served as Energy Management Program faculty. Her teaching load has included many different oil and gas land management focused courses including strategic negotiations, oil and gas law, property and contracts, federal land management, energy regulation and policy, oil and gas agreements, title and business law. Jessica also served as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law where she developed and taught Oil & Gas Agreements and Contemporary Issues in Oil & Gas. Before transitioning into academia full-time, Jessica enjoyed over a decade of work in various land and land administration roles for exploration and production companies located in Denver, Colorado, including roles at Encana Corporation, Noble Energy Inc., Jonah Energy LLC and Whetstone Resources LLC.

Jessica co-authored "Social License to Operate: Hydraulic Fracturing Related Challenges Facing the Oil & Gas Industry" presented at the Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation Institute in Cartagena, Colombia, and "Where 'Shale' We Go From Here: Opportunities and Challenges in Shale Plays Located Outside the United States" presented at the RMMLF Institute in Quito, Ecuador. In Fall 2019, Jessica participated in a RMMLF panel discussion on Communication in Title and Due Diligence, and she currently serves as the Landman Chair for the RMMLF Annual Institute.

Jessica is a native of Homer Glen, Illinois. She earned undergraduate degrees in History and Politics and Government from Illinois State University, a Masters in Natural Resources Law from the University of Denver and a J.D. from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law. She is currently admitted to practice law in Colorado and is a member of the American Association of Professional Landmen, the Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation, the Denver Association of Professional Landmen, the Colorado Bar Association and Whetstone Resources LLC. Most recently, Jessica received the "Education Award" at a local chapter awards banquet hosted by the DAPL. This recognition reflects her dedication and commitment to Energy Education.