



May 21, 2019

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

I write this letter asking for your support in consideration of Nicole Schmidt for inclusion in your 2019 Women of Influence class.

As the highest ranking female professional in Des Moines with the Turner Construction Company, Nicole has played an integral role in the planning and completion of Facebook's Altoona data center. Nicole has excelled in her role as Preconstruction lead in a historically male-dominated business. She has thrived in her position to support job creation and economic development in Central Iowa.

In addition to her quick rise professionally, Nicole has shattered the glass ceiling in her volunteer career. As the youngest Board Chair in the history of the Iowa State University Alumni Association (ISUAA), she has blazed a trail not only for women, but for all young professionals by gaining the trust and support of her many colleagues to lead business strategy and financial direction as the Chief Volunteer Officer for one of the premier university alumni organizations nationally.

Nicole has not only passionately represented the communities she serves; at every turn, she has taken it one step further to address issues and give a voice to Iowa State's underrepresented alumni communities. Under Nicole's leadership, the ISUAA has evolved its policies, practices, and outreach to better support alumni of color as well as non-traditional family units. Thanks to Nicole's vision, the ISUAA has become more inclusive of all alumni, an impact that will be felt for generations to come across more than 250,000 members of the Iowa State University alumni family.

Lastly, it is apparent that Nicole is a highly-desirable mentor. She was actively recruited to teach in Iowa State's Department of Construction Engineering, which gave her the platform to impact even more young people positively. Her guidance, particularly for women engineers, has been a welcome addition to the gender imbalance mentoring our next generation of construction engineering professionals.

Very rarely do you find a young professional who has had as much success blazing a trail professionally as she does in her volunteer life. However, those of us who know Nicole best recognize the needs of her family and her faith come first. Nicole's ability to excel as a wife and mother, and actively support her faith community drives her servant approach to leadership.

Vision, compassion, diplomacy, work ethic. It's what we ask for in our leaders, and it's what we know to be true of Nicole. She should be held up as an example of the best our community has to offer. She leads with her heart and her head. She cares deeply in the success of others and has had unparalleled and lasting success as a female professional in her field.

I strongly urge you to include Nicole Schmidt for recognition in you 2019 Women of Influence program.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Cunningham', with a stylized, flowing script.

Lawrence Cunningham  
President/CEO  
Iowa State Daily Media Group