Made for this film: a fictional practice proposal, never submitted.

Prairie Ridge State University, Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering (fictional)

July 6, 2027

To the CAREER Program, National Science Foundation

Re: Departmental Letter for the CAREER proposal of Dr. Wren Castellano, "CAREER: Wet–Dry Cycles, Soil Redox, and the Methane–Nitrous Oxide Trade-off in Mid-South Rice"

Eligibility. Dr. Wren Castellano holds a full-time, tenure-track appointment as Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, which she began on August 16, 2023. She is untenured, and her appointment and duties meet the eligibility requirements of the CAREER program as of the annual deadline.

Support of the department's goals. Dr. Castellano's proposed research and education activities are supported by the department and advance its educational and research goals. The department's strategic plan names water and nutrient management in the state's row-crop systems as a research priority and hands-on measurement as a teaching priority, and the project serves both. The department is committed to Dr. Castellano's support and professional development: it will keep the course laboratory fee for BAE 3413 at a level that sustains the node kits used in the course module, continue her access to the Rice Research Farm plots on the terms described in the proposal, and support her attendance at teaching development workshops.

Relationship to her career goals, responsibilities and our mission. Dr. Castellano's appointment is 60% research and 40% teaching, and she teaches BAE 3413, Environmental Measurements, each fall. The CAREER project builds her research program on the methane–nitrous oxide trade-off in rice water management, the core of her research responsibility, and places her teaching of measurement at the center of its education plan. The department's mission is to develop engineering solutions for agriculture and the environment in our state and to educate the engineers who apply them; the project serves that mission through its field research with growers and through its course module and teacher institute.

Mentoring of the PI. I will ensure Dr. Castellano's mentoring through the department's program for early-career faculty. I meet with her each semester to review her research, teaching and service against her goals, and a senior colleague in crop, soil and environmental sciences meets with her each month during the academic year. Through the period of the award we will review her integration of research and education each year, protect her time for the field seasons by limiting her committee service, and support her preparation for promotion and tenure.

Sincerely,

Marisol Penner
Marisol Penner, Ph.D.
Professor and Head, Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering
Prairie Ridge State University (fictional)