Dr. Thorkildsen uses her commitment to developmental science as a means of illustrating why epistemological diversity is essential to promoting human welfare, and how a diverse faculty makes such contributions more likely. These agendas fall into two categories. First, Dr. Thorkildsen continually generates opportunities for early career scholars to receive the recognition needed to find like-minded peers and build research teams. These efforts include nominating and selecting recipients for early career awards, raising awareness of how all nominees have been outstanding contributors to their respective communities, and fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion in decision-making.

A second agenda celebrates the scholarship of senior scholars. As digital fingerprints become increasingly important, it is useful to be reminded of the truly eminent ways in which current scholars benefit from prior scholarship. Dr. Thorkildsen has chaired multiple committees that acknowledge the contributions of scholars who are leaving the field, have humbly promoted the welfare of others, and respond to access and equity biases. This work capitalizes on the interdisciplinary nature of Dr. Thorkildsen’s scholarship and career trajectory.

Dr. Thorkildsen has been engaged in a wide range of “hidden” faculty and staff development work at UIC. This includes teaching and mentoring students who have ultimately been hired as faculty, clinical faculty, or staff. Dr. Thorkildsen shows early career faculty why and how they are responsible for tracking the qualities of their own work, how opportunities come to individuals via the “Mathew Effect” (to those who have, more will be given), why the reliance on evidence is privileged in the world of science, and why scholars sometimes benefit from leaving the places where they earned their degrees, if only for a time. One form of this work was turned into a project, evaluated by junior faculty, tenured professors, and most of UIC’s senior leadership as part of the Provost’s Faculty Administrator Leadership Program. Directing a Career outlines a means of building research teams while pressuring faculty to direct their own research career. Dr. Thorkildsen has also been elected to several leadership roles on standing committees designed to promote faculty and foster wellness within the UIC community. This line of leadership is grounded in Dr. Thorkildsen’s commitment to diversifying the faculty and staff of all higher education organizations.