

Winter 2020 Classified Excellence Award Recipient: Jennifer Stone



Jennifer Stone. *Photo courtesy of Jennifer Stone*

Congratulations to **Jennifer Stone**, recipient of the 2020 Winter Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award.

As a Program Coordinator for Instructional Design/eLearning, Stone works hard to support the many events her program presents for Clark College and other SBCTC faculty. She is described as someone with strong communication skills that are inclusive, regardless of job or position or role at the college. "Her personal mission is to individualize experiences with kind, non-challenging intentions," wrote a nominator. "She meets with others on campus, creating a personal

connection with each individual. For example, when learning how to submit purchase requisitions, she walked across campus to introduce herself in person to the Purchasing department.”

Stone is also praised for promoting the work of eLearning and the value it brings to students, faculty, and the institution as a whole.

Faculty members shared the following experiences:

- “I especially appreciate Jenny’s personal assistance when I am using the Canvas Lab to prepare my online courses each term. As soon as I sit down at a computer station, especially if the other eLearning instructional designers are busy helping others, she watches to make sure that the hardware and software I am using is working properly. If it is not going well, she works with me until all is functioning efficiently. I never have to ask, as Jenny expertly oversees this computer lab with a positive attitude and uplifting comments. From my encounters with Jenny Stone, she exemplifies the best in terms of her initiative, knowledge, cooperative attitude, and team spirit!”
- “One time when I was coming in for help in setting something up in Canvas (this was probably the very first time I came for private help), Jenny not only welcomed me, but she remembered my name and spoke to me as if I were an insider to eLearning, right when I was feeling so much an outsider that I felt like I could never take myself seriously.”
- “Jenny keeps track of what the other team members are doing and finds ways to be helpful in a very relevant way. If any of us are out or seemingly delayed, she double-checks to make sure all is well. Sometimes when people do this kind of thing, it feels like nagging. Jenny somehow makes it feel like we are cared for, and empowers us to move forward.”
- “Jenny has elevated the Instructional Design Team with

her professionalism, dedication, and resourcefulness. Here is an example: Jenny was always at my training sessions early getting to know the instructors, helping them get logged on, and getting comfortable with the technology. This was especially vital for new instructors who had many questions and oftentimes were unsure who to ask. Jenny would make phone calls and emails during the training session so that, by the end, she would have either an answer for them or a confirmed person to contact. This allowed new instructors to focus their time on their students and getting their classes prepared.”

Congratulations as well to the other Winter 2020 nominees:

- **Connie Anderson**
- **Meleani Bates**
- **Peg Estes**
- **Mira Olenin**
- **Amani Tovar-Brackett**
- **Jennifer Ward**

Connie Anderson, Library & Archives Paraprofessional 4, Library

Connie Anderson has provided quality and dependable Access and Reference services at Clark College Libraries for 10 years. As the Access Services Specialist who has managed the CTC iCommons, she has provided students and faculty with support, which has equipped them to obtain their educational and professional goals. She oversees the networked computers, laptops, and databases in the iCommons that provide access to services and resources. She always keeps library personnel updated on CTC operations. During the recent ctcLink transition, she advocated for increased staffing in the iCommons to make sure all students had access to troubleshooting assistance.

Other comments about Connie Anderson:

- “Connie demonstrates natural leadership abilities and advocates for programming to support student learning including displays, accessible technologies, and staying late to assist in instructional sessions. She has a problem-solving-oriented approach to doing tasks and has a pleasant personality that attracts people who naturally follow her example.”
- “Connie has been a fierce advocate for students at the Columbia Tech Center for more than 10 years. She has always been an employee and coworker you can count on. Connie works to ensure that everyone who walks through the doors of the iCommons feels welcome.”
- “Her work habits are superior; she adheres to organization goals, is punctual, has excellent time management skills, and highly organized. Connie is an individual who sets a goal and gets the job done. Connie has been a great team player, working well with students, staff, and faculty. She possesses excellent people skills. Connie is able to form admirable relationships with diverse groups at Clark College and strives to understand and respect everyone’s viewpoints and opinions in the workplace. ... She works with the right attitude, emanating enthusiasm, leaving a positive impression on students, staff, and faculty.”

Meleani Bates, Program Manager A, Career Services

Meleani Bates is said to be an extremely kind and understanding person whose mature and supportive attitude increases team functionality. Colleagues praise her for setting aside time to check in with each of her employees to ensure they’re happy in life, successful in their classes (in the case of student employees), if they need additional

support in any way, and to provide opportunities for students to acquire skills needed for their future. She facilitates many Student Success Workshops on topics involving employment practices and internships. Most recently, she has developed “Identities at Work” to teach how to honor and embrace different identities in the workplace.

Other comments about Meleani Bates include:

- “Meleani brings constant open-minded thinking to assist the department in increasing equitable practices; some ideas that are so fresh and outside-of-the-box and brings forth an opportunity to teach other perspectives not yet considered. She challenges the staff to be the best they can be and reach all students with its resources. Career Services and Clark College is so lucky to have her on board.”
- “Meleani constantly shows incredible support and compassion to everyone who walks through her door—whether it be students, community members, staff, and faculty. The way she helps clients demonstrates a genuine care for the livelihood and success of them. She is willing to take on new things, despite her ever-growing pile of responsibilities with a “can do” attitude. No matter how busy she is, she’s always happy to help. She is never too busy to help anyone who walks through her office door and is easily-approachable and understanding. Meleani’s key phrase is, ‘How can I support you?’”

Peg Estes, Program Specialist 2, Credential Evaluations

Peg Estes is described as someone who shows initiative, positive spirit, adaptability, participation in college activities, and willingness to support not only students, but also the greater college community. She is also known as

being highly knowledgeable and accurate in her work evaluating applications for program completion at Clark College. Described as “the rock of the Credentials Department,” Estes has been a key figure in the department’s switch to ctcLink—not just learning the new software herself, but teaching it to others in the department.

Other comments about Peg Estes include:

- “I have worked with Peg for about four years now and I am grateful to work with such an outstanding employee. I have never witnessed such tireless dedication to doing a job and doing it exceptionally. She has supported other’s work without question, she has thoroughly examined policies and procedures to ensure best practice for employees and students alike, and she has done it all with a smile on her face. Her commitment and positive attitude throughout endless campus changes and stepping up during times of high turnover is a prime example of Peg’s exemplary work performance. She is creative and efficient in everything that she does. I am honored to work with her and I could not think of a more respected and deserving person to receive such an award. #teampeg.”
- “Throughout continuous college changes, Peg has been unflinching in her forward-thinking and positive spirit. Credentialing work is endless; the deadlines are tight, and the stakes are very high. Peg can have stacks of work in front of her and yet she’s still the first in the office to pick up the phone to help a student out. She has always been very student-focused and I know I never have to worry about Peg giving insufficient or inaccurate guidance. Each students she works with gets exceptional individualized support. Peg displays an empathetic and understanding perspective, while still adhering to college and departmental policies and procedures. She is a great mentor to me and consistently

shows leadership qualities in all that she does. She sets a positive example of how to delicately problem-solve with students under mounting daily tasks. I cannot say enough how happy and grateful I am that she is part of the Credentials team.”

- “Peg has been so helpful to our office with all of the training that she has provided not only to new staff, but helping with the training of staff in new business processes in the new People Soft environment. She is always so patient, courteous and helpful even though she is constantly interrupted with questions both from within our department, and while assisting other departments. Peg goes above and beyond to help solve problems no matter how busy she is at that time. She always has such a positive attitude even during these trying times with having to learn a new computer system, learning new business processes and dealing with staffing shortages. Our office wouldn’t be so functional without Peg’s great knowledge of the department and the willingness to help others.”

Mira Olenin, Program Specialist 2, Financial Aid

Mira Olenin has worked in the Office of Financial Aid since 2004. During the office’s conversion to ctcLink, she served as a leader in helping manage the change to new software and processes.

Other comments about Mira Olenin:

- “Mira does far more than what her job requires. She really stepped up when we converted to CTCLink. Whenever there was a question, Mira is there to help. This led to our entire department feeling more confident. Mira is always willing to help. She explains complex financial aid processes with patience. She is clearly an expert in

her field, but still manages to explain it in a way anyone can understand. Great communication with staff and students.”

Amani Tovar-Brackett, Program Coordinator, Advising

While Amani Tovar-Brackett has been an Advising employee for just a few years, already she has gathered so much knowledge about her work that a nominator wrote, “She has an understanding of every system we work with, to such a level that it means [that] no matter what question someone might have about ctcLink, Insight, or anything obscure in our day-to-day duties, she will have an answer or a way to get an answer.”

Other comments about Amani Tovar-Brackett include:

- “I have tears in my eyes as I think about how much Amani has done for the students here at Clark, the number of times that students have gone out of their way to thank her for her amazing efforts to aid them through anything and everything. ... Oftentimes, when answering phone calls, I am told that people want to speak with Amani directly because of her wonderful character and helpful demeanor; other times people just love telling me how much they loved talking to her the last time they were here and how much she helped them. She is invaluable to the campus community and is one of the main reasons some students leave our offices feeling taken care of and pleased.”
- “She functions to such a level that she could have multiple tasks to complete, but will always know what is going on and have her ears peeled to help anyone else, she always gets things done on time and is always able to teach others what she knows. ... Even in the midst of troubling news or complicated technical matters and

switch overs, Amani keeps her calm and cool and ensures everyone around her feels the same way.”

Jennifer Ward, Program Manager A, Planning & Effectiveness

Jennifer Ward has been instrumental in Clark College’s conversion to ctcLink. She currently leads the ctcLink Stabilization Advisory Committee, a group dedicated to identifying strategies to improve the transition to ctcLink (change management) and empowering people with the tools and information to learn to do their jobs differently. At the state level, she is serving on a group that is researching and pursuing alternatives for the continuing education platform within ctcLink. She is also working with a small team to redesign the ctcLink website to make it more useful for students and employees.

As part of her work, Ward has coordinated all of the ctcLink labs for faculty, staff, and students to provide assistance for navigation of the new system, a supportive environment to ask questions, and solution-oriented approaches to addressing problems. As she hosted open labs, she gathered feedback and then modified documentation as needed. To ensure that all members of the college community receive one-on-one support to navigate the new ctcLink system, Ward collaborates with subject-matter experts who have knowledge in specific areas, such as advisors and enrollment staff, to help in student labs, and ctcLink security administrators to help in employee labs. She ensures that labs are available outside of typical “business day” hours, and at CCW and CTC.

Other comments about Jennifer Ward:

- “Jennifer takes pride in all of the work that she does. Her exemplary work performance is combined with her greatest strength—working with people. Whether it is

one-on-one or with a group of people, Jennifer always does her best to provide people with the information they need to do their work. If Jennifer does not know the answer, she researches and contacts others until she understands the process and can provide that feedback.”

- “When Enrollment Services did not have the resources to provide staff for open student labs, Jennifer coordinated with them to have staff available via Skype.”
- “Jennifer Ward came up to assist me with fixing some of the issues that I was having and things are going much better. She really has a way with fixing the default issues that I was having!”
- “Again, I appreciate all you have done, Jennifer, to organize, create and plan to communicate the upcoming registration labs.”
- “Especially during the ctcLink GoLive, Jennifer maintained a positive, solutions-oriented approach to navigating the system. While recognizing the frustration of individuals, her positive attitude ensured that individuals felt that there was someone who was researching, advocating, and helping to find solutions to their problems.”