

# Winter 2021 Classified Staff Excellence Award recipient: Jenny Shadley



Jenny Shadley. *Photo courtesy of Jenny Shadley.*

Congratulations to **Jenny Shadley, Graphic Designer, Communications and Marketing**, recipient of the 2021 Winter Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award!

Jenny Shadley “is committed to serving students and demonstrates her passion through her daily work to ensure student voices are amplified.”

Other comments about Shadley:

- “Jenny worked on Guided Pathways from its inception.”
- “She is an active participant at the college in professional development and other committees and brings her holistic approach and her passion for equity to everything she does.”
- “Jenny has redesigned the Get Started landing page for prospective students with the student experience in mind, making it far more functional, user-friendly and

attractive for users.”

- “When COVID-19 created scheduling concerns for some of her colleagues, Jenny was the first person to swoop in and offer to tackle projects to help.”

**We would also like to acknowledge the contributions of the other nominees:**

- Damon Grady – Security Sergeant, Safety & Security
- Darci Feider – Program Coordinator, Student Life

## **Damon Grady, Security Sergeant, Safety & Security**

“As a long-term employee, Damon has watched Clark evolve and always lends a kind ear to those who are confused or frustrated and quite often offers calming insight based upon his experiences at the college.”

Other comments about Grady:

- “Damon has been with Clark College’s Security and Safety Department since November of 1997 and served as a Campus Security Officer for 20 years before being promoted to the Sergeant in January 2018.”
- “Damon’s supervisory position requires him to be available to his staff 24/7 and he often adjust his schedule to best support the needs of others and is recognized as a mentor across the campus.”
- “As a member of the security team, Damon has contact with the entire college community and takes the time to listen in the hopes of understanding the needs and resolution for each person he speaks with.”
- “Damon is aware that each interaction with a student or potential student is important, and he always puts his best foot forward to make sure their initial interaction at Clark College is a positive encounter.”

# **Darci Feider, Program Coordinator, Student Life**

“Darci led and organized the Thanksgiving dinners sent out to 170 students and their families by the Penguin Pantry in November 2020. She is passionate about helping our Clark students and community, in every way she can.”

Other comments about Feider:

- “Darci coordinates dozens of programs and clubs that would not function nearly as smoothly without her, especially during remote operations.”
- “Darci shows up every day ready to work with a smile on her face, no matter what the day may have in store for her.”
- “Darci is kind, compassionate, and takes the time to work through projects with patience and support for others.”
- “Students benefit from Darci’s contributions—whether that is through assistance with the Penguin Pantry, help with Archer Gallery and Clark Art Talks programming, or working with any number of things across campus. She is devoted to making an equitable and accessible community at Clark.”

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# **Rosalba Pitkin receives Social Equity Award**



Rosalba Pitkin

**Rosalba Pitkin** was named the recipient of the 2020-2021 Lora Whitfield Social Equity Award, which honors a Clark College employee who has demonstrated a sustained commitment to advancing equity.

“She creates and sustains an inclusive environment for members of the college community in several ways, including advocacy for students and education for colleagues,” said Vice President of Diversity Equity and Inclusion Rashida Willard when she presented the award to Pitkin on Opening Day. “Though she will go above and beyond her role to support any student, her heart lies with immigrants and undocumented students, a particularly vulnerable segment of our student population. Rosalba creates an environment of belonging for these learners by welcoming them to the college, explaining the U.S. education system and how Clark can help them reach their goals, walking them through admission and enrollment processes, and offering consistent academic and personal support throughout their time at the college.”

During her years of working at Clark College, Pitkin has held different job titles, but her work has always centered around serving diverse students, prospective students, and their families. She currently serves as the Diversity Outreach Manager in the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion. In

this role, she also provides employee training on topics that include how to support Dreamer (DACA) students.

Pitkin is a well-known figure for her work around equity and inclusion not just within Clark College, but in the greater Vancouver-Portland metro area. She served two terms on the Washington State Commission for Hispanic Affairs and helped to streamline Mexican Consulate services for Mexicans who live in Southwest Washington. She is also a 2016 graduate of the Social Justice Leadership Institute.

Pitkin often works closely with non-native English speakers. As someone who grew up in Mexico and had to take English as a Second Language classes before earning her bachelor's degree in international business from New Mexico State University, she can relate to the struggles these students can experience.

Pitkin often refers to some advice given to her by her grandmother, whom she credits with instilling the importance of education in her: "It's important to plant good seeds wherever you go. Just take care of them, and they will grow."

"Rosalba Pitkin puts that cherished advice from her grandmother into practice every day," said Willard during the award presentation.

## **About the Lora Whitfield Social Equity Award**

Created in 2019, the Lora Whitfield Social Equity Award recognizes Clark College employees based on their exceptional work in removing systemic barriers for people with systemically non-dominant identities – people of color, people with disabilities and people who identify as LGBTQIA2S+ – in one or more of the following categories:

1. Creating and sustaining an inclusive environment for members of the Clark College community.

2. Improving intercultural competency for members of the Clark College community through diversity, equity and inclusion dialogue and education.
3. Exhibiting leadership in best practices for social equity.
4. Building and sustaining practices that challenge systems of power, privilege and inequity.
5. Making the larger community a more just and equitable place to reside.

Award recipients receive a plaque along with \$1,000 funded by Clark College Foundation. This award is presented at Opening Day before the beginning of fall quarter each year.

Other nominees for the 2020-2021 were **DeGundrea “Dee” Harris** in the Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion and **Zach Lattin** in Disability Support Services.

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# Exceptional Employee Awards

# Classified



Connor Cantrell and Jeff Kaliner

Two outstanding employees were recognized with Exceptional Classified Employee awards at the 2020 Opening Day event.

The annual event, held online this year due to COVID-19, is always held the week before fall term classes begin as a way to help employees get ready for the coming academic year.

This year's recipients were **Library Paraprofessional Connor Cantrell** and **Emergency Program Manager Jeff Kaliner**.

**Connor Cantrell, Library  
Paraprofessional 4**



Connor Cantrell. *Photo courtesy of Connor Cantrell*

Connor Cantrell has worked as a Library Paraprofessional in Cannell Library for almost two years.

When the college shifted to remote operations, Cantrell established new interlibrary loan (ILL) processes to accommodate the need to work from home. She used her organizational skills to ensure all necessary staff had access to digital paperwork when needed and worked with each employee to make sure they had adequate support and the essential tools to perform their work during remote operations.

Other observations from nominators include:

- “Connor has helped the library become a welcoming and inclusive place by making improvements to services, procedures, and processes. The training Connor has done with employees has helped them use equity-based critical thinking when responding to complaints and/or observing biased based incidents.”
- “Connor has shown outstanding customer service by listening to library patrons and adjusting normal procedures as needed to ensure each patron has the support to succeed. She worked with students to make sure they could register when they had fines and extended due dates when they required items longer for assignments. “
- “Connor’s dedication to ensuring our students have the



best Clark College experience is one of the things that makes her a remarkable asset to the library. She listens to students when they are upset, confused, angry, and defeated and ensures that students are connected to needed resources.”

## Jeffrey Kaliner, Emergency Program Manager



Jeff Kaliner. *Photo courtesy of Jeff Kaliner*

Jeff Kaliner joined Clark College as its Emergency Program Manager in 2018. While his position part of Security and Safety, Kaliner’s work is felt across the college community. Former Interim President Sandra Fowler-Hill wrote, “Jeff performed exemplary in managing several crises confronting the college last year. I was very impressed as I saw him quickly rise to the challenge of the COVID-19 crisis. All of his experience and skills were an asset in managing the college community safely through the crisis and onto recovery.”

Other observations made by Kaliner’s nominators include:

- “Without Kaliner’s guidance and planning, Clark College would have struggled to maintain business operations during COVID-19 while adhering to the Governor’s Directives.”
- “Kaliners relationships with the Clark County Public Health Department and Clark County Emergency Management have led to a coordinated response to the pandemic.”

- “Kaliner kept the college informed regularly on the challenges as well as the progress the Incident Management Team was making concerning quickly changing directives and facts about the coronavirus.”
- “Kaliner revised the college’s Emergency Operations Plan, which was approved by Executive Cabinet in February of 2020.”

## About the Exceptional Classified Employee Award

Established in 1997, this annual award recognizes two classified staff who have demonstrated exemplary work performance, outstanding service to the college, a positive and cooperative spirit, and special achievements or contributions to the college community. (Classified staff is a category of Washington State employees; the majority of non-faculty employees at Clark College are classified.) To be eligible for the award, an employee must have been nominated for the quarterly **Classified Staff Excellence Award** in the past academic year. Award recipients are presented with certificates and, thanks to the generous support of the Clark College Foundation, cash awards during public recognition ceremonies each year.

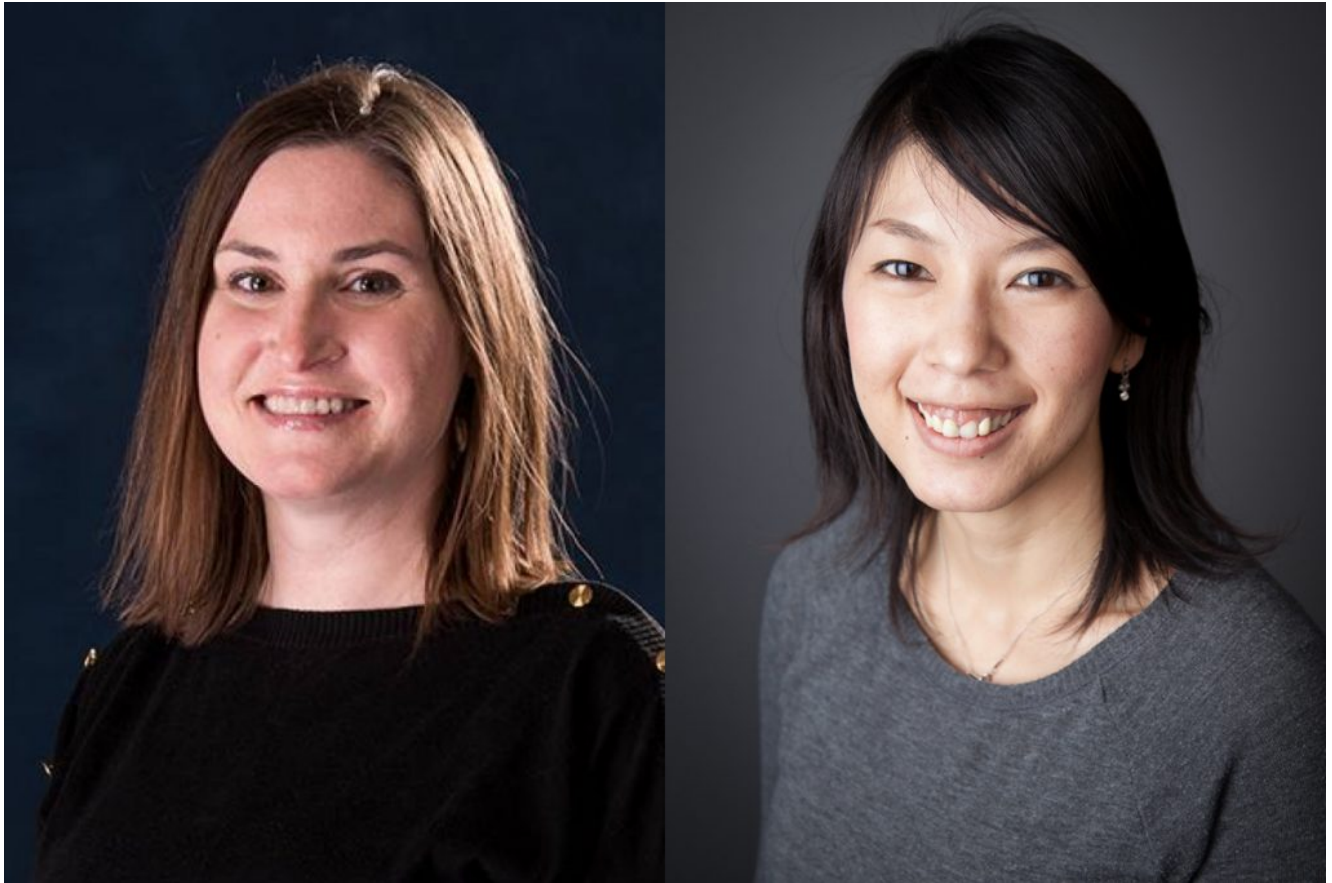
The other finalists for the 2019-2020 awards were:

- Rick Bartz, IT Support Technician 2, Information Technology Services
- Lameleanique (Meleani) Bates, Program Manager A, Career Services
- Emily Castle, Secretary Supervisor, Transitional Studies Division
- Chris Chaffin, Program Coordinator, Student Tutoring Services
- John Condit, Media Technician Lead, Event Services
- Dan Ellertson, Retail Clerk Lead, Bookstore

- Margaret (Peg) Estes, Program Specialist 3, Credential Evaluations
- Neil Fykerud, Program Specialist 2, Transitional Studies Division
- Kate Ireland, Program Specialist 2, Teaching & Learning Center
- ITS GROUP NOMINATION, which includes:
  - Darin Rathbone, IT Customer Support – Journey
  - Brian Riechman, IT Customer Support – Journey
  - Vadim Boligar, IT Customer Support – Journey
  - Lucy Shao, IT Customer Support – Journey
  - Jim Meek, IT Customer Support – Journey
  - Joyce Ho, IT Customer Support – Journey
  - Dennis Davis, Entry – IT Customer Support
  - Foster Nostrand, Senior/Specialist – IT Admin
  - David Sims, IT Support Technician 2
  - Brandon Johnson, IT Support Technician 2
- Brandon Johnson, IT Support Technician 2, Information Technology Services
- Charla Kimball, Fiscal Technician Supervisor, Accounting Services
- Silvia Marinova, Program Specialist 2, Transitional Studies Division
- Mira Olenin, Program Specialist 2, Financial Aid
- Cathy Reynolds, Fiscal Analyst 3, Office of Instruction
- Thao Schmidt, Human Resources Consultant 3, Human Resources
- Brenda Shular, Procurement & Supply Specialist 2, Purchasing and Central Services
- Mike Silva, IT Support Technician 2, Information Technology Services
- Mitch Sott, Engineering Technician 3, Workforce, Professional, & Technical Education
- Jenny Stone, Program Coordinator, e-Learning
- Bryton Williams, Administrative Assistant 3, Business & Health Services

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# Administrative Exempt Awards



Special Projects and Activities Manager Michelle Golder and Senior Software Engineer Eriko Otsuka

Two outstanding employees were recognized with Exceptional Administrative Exempt Employee awards at the 2020 Opening Day event.

The annual event, held online this year due to COVID-19, is always held the week before fall term classes begin as a way to help employees get ready for the coming academic year.

This year's recipients were **Special Projects and Activities Manager Michelle Golder** and **Senior Software Engineer Eriko Otsuka**.

## About Michelle Golder

Michelle Golder has worked at Clark College for more than a decade. While many members of the college community have enjoyed the results of her work, they may not have realized it at the time. As the head of the college's Event Services department, Golder oversees the logistics of the college's signature events, which include both cultural events like Sakura or MLK Day, as well as an institutional event like State of the College or Opening Day. Whatever the event, Golder works tirelessly to make sure everything runs according to plan and stays within budget. This year, she had the extraordinary challenge of organizing the college's first-ever virtual Commencement ceremony.

"Whatever the challenge, she rises to meet it," said Vice President of Administrative Services Bob Williamson as he announced the award.

## About Eriko Otsuko

Eriko Otsuko is also a behind-the-scenes person whose work many at the college have benefited from without knowing it. She is praised for her ability to work collaboratively with clients to design software solutions that meet their needs.

"It's due to her hard work that we have an online health screening tool that allows students and employees to come to campus during COVID-19," said Williamson. "She has also logged countless hours rewriting applications so they can work in the ctcLink environment."

## About the Exceptional Administrative Exempt Award

The Clark College Exceptional Administrative-Exempt Award was

announced on Opening Day 2019. The award recognizes the contributions of Administrative Exempt employees, a category that includes employees who work at all levels and in all areas of the college. Each year, it honors an Exempt staff member who contribute in significant ways toward building a positive climate, inclusive environment, and improving the quality of life at Clark.

The full list of 2020 nominees is:

- Michelle Golder
- Ryan O'Meara
- Eriko Otsuka
- Michael See
- Abby Thompson
- Tasaday Turner
- Brenda Walstead
- Melissa Williams

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**Summer 2020 Classified  
Excellence Award recipient:  
Connor Cantrell**



Connor Cantrell. *Photo courtesy of Connor Cantrell*

Congratulations to **Connor Cantrell, Library & Archives Paraprofessional 4, Libraries**, recipient of the 2020 Summer Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award!

One nominator wrote, “Connor has helped the library become a welcoming and inclusive place by making improvements to services, procedures, and processes. The training Connor has done with employees has helped them use equity-based critical thinking when responding to complaints and/or observing biased based incidents.”

When the college shifted to remote operations, Cantrell established new interlibrary loan (ILL) processes to accommodate the need to work from home. She used her organizational skills to ensure all necessary staff had access to digital paperwork when needed and worked with each employee to make sure they had adequate support and the essential tools to perform their work during remote operations.

One colleague wrote: “Connor has shown outstanding customer service by listening to library patrons and adjusting normal procedures as needed to ensure each patron has the support to succeed. She worked with students to make sure they could register when they had fines and extended due dates when they required items longer for assignments.

“Connor’s dedication to ensuring our students have the best Clark College experience is one of the things that makes her a remarkable asset to the library. She listens to students when they are upset, confused, angry, and defeated and ensures that students are connected to needed resources.”

Another comment said: “Connor often leads by example and is always willing to offer a helping hand. Her ability to connect with people and provide clear communication while ensuring staff and patrons feel heard are some of her best attributes. Connor’s history of rising above and stepping into challenging issues while providing others the tools and knowledge to succeed and grow contributes to the best parts of the Clark Community.”

***Congratulations, as well, to all nominees for the 2020 Summer Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award (excerpts of their nomination forms included):***

## **Chris Chaffin, Program Coordinator, Student Tutoring Services**

“Chris has exceeded every expectation. His role has shifted with increased responsibility and duties because of his abilities and his passion for excellence in everything he does. Chris has made it his personal mission to not only excel at his tasks but also to cushion others from being stretched too thin. He works independently and proactively and does everything in his power to solve all problems that come his way, including always looking ahead and problem-solving for the next step. This is no small feat and speaks highly of his ability to prioritize complex problems and situations. Chris is highly active in many aspects of college life, dedicated to social equity on this campus, and is an advocate for all employees and students that seek his council. He always makes time to make everyone feel heard and valued. He faithfully attends speaker luncheons, trainings, festivals,



and other events whenever he can. He regularly donates to college initiatives such as the Backpack Program, Foundation, Penguin Pantry, and more. He is also regularly asked to serve on hiring committees and councils. He bravely accepted the task of being a speaker for the Queer Student Luncheon and bared his soul to all in attendance regarding his struggles, fears, and triumphs. Chris gives of his time, money, heart, and spirit on a daily basis.”

## **Dan Ellertson, Retail Clerk Lead, Bookstore**

“Dan is a valued leadership team member at the Clark College Bookstore. His strong work ethic is consistently and clearly demonstrated on a daily basis. He performs his job with forethought, professionalism and accuracy. Dan’s positive attitude and his willingness to go above and beyond is apparent in all his interactions. There are days when he is pulled left and right; he deals with each situation, good or bad, with the highest degree of professionalism and a positive attitude. In his work, Dan looks for ways to improve efficiencies for the bookstore. Due to COVID-19, the bookstore changed their business model to serve students more efficiently while maintaining a high level of customer service. Dan collaborated with Web Services and management to implement an appointment tool, to schedule individual appointments for students to come into the bookstore for limited services, such as prepaid book pickup. Dan also has the innate ability to prevent difficult situations from intensifying. When a difficult situation arises with a customer, he de-escalates it by listening to their concern, communicating to them in a considerate manner, empathizing with them, and working with them to find a resolution. Dan is well respected, admired, and appreciated by fellow employees.”

## **Jeff Kaliner, Program Specialist 3, Security & Safety Services**

“Since his hiring in August of 2018, Jeff has taken on leadership roles in unanticipated events such as free speech activities and a potential measles outbreak in Clark County. Beginning in March of 2020, Jeff’s knowledge, skills and abilities were tested as he was tasked with leading the college’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Jeff identified the potential for the disease to reach pandemic levels early and convinced college leadership to enter into a planning phase. Jeff revised the college’s Emergency Operations Plan.

“It might be an understatement to call COVID-19 a ‘special project’ but it certainly presented a unique set of challenges for Clark College. For an institution unaccustomed to managing an emergency of this size and complexity, COVID-19 could have been a completely destabilizing event. Fortunately, the College has Jeff Kaliner as our Emergency Program Manager – precisely the right person at the right time to lead us through this crisis.

“Former Interim President Sandra Fowler-Hill had this to say about Jeff: ‘Jeff performed exemplary in managing several crises confronting the college last year. I was very impressed as I saw him quickly rise to the challenge of the COVID-19 crisis. All of his experience and skills were an asset in managing the college community safely through the crisis and onto recovery.’”

## **Charla Kimball, Fiscal Technician Supervisor, Accounting Services**

“Charla is always available and ready to help. It is often difficult for international students to admit that they are

having financial difficulty. It can be difficult for some cultures to ask for help. Charla always has the students' best interests at the forefront and always manages to be kind and understanding. Students often feel relieved and encouraged after speaking with her. She always goes beyond the task, offers alternative suggestions or new ideas on how to improve processes, and always follows-up when issues do not get resolved immediately. Charla has demonstrated exemplary work performance.

"A student wrote: 'Financing college studies is never easy and as a member in this department, she has been instrumental in delivering her duties, understanding, patient, and also prompt in answering questions of any concerns. Despite remote operations and workload, I personally have been helped by Charla in different circumstances making me feel safe and comfortable in seeking advice from her.'"

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**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.”
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## **Exceptional Faculty Awards**



The 2020 Exceptional Faculty Award recipients are, *clockwise from top left*, Dr. Don Appert, Adam Coleman, Molly Lampros, Ken Luchini, Tom Stevenson, and Lauren Zavrel.

Six outstanding members of Clark College's faculty have been recognized for their contributions to the college with a 2020 Clark College Exceptional Faculty Award.

These awards are presented annually to full-time and part-time faculty members. Nominations can be submitted by Clark College students, faculty, classified employees, administrators, alumni, Board members, and Foundation directors. Traditionally, they are announced during Commencement; because this year's ceremony was online and abbreviated due to the COVID-19 outbreak, they were announced at a later date.

The awards are made possible through an endowed trust fund established by the Washington State Legislature and the Clark College Exceptional Faculty Endowment Fund, which was established in 1993. That fund provides recognition of exemplary work performance, positive impact on students, professional commitment, and other contributions to the

college.

This year's Exceptional Faculty members are:

- Dr. Don Appert
- Adam Coleman
- Molly Lampros
- Ken Luchini
- Thomas Stevenson
- Lauren Zavrel

## **Dr. Don Appert, professor of music**



Dr. Don Appert

Dr. Don Appert just celebrated his 30th anniversary of teaching music at Clark College. The director of the Clark College Orchestra and head of the Music Department, Appert has earned many awards over his career, including the prestigious American Prize, the ASCAP Plus, and the Clark County Arts Commission Lifetime Achievement in the Arts Award.

"He doesn't just 'talk the talk,'" wrote one student in nominating Appert. "He truly embodies everything he teaches his students, from being punctual for class to practicing his instrument every day. He puts his students before himself and goes out of his way to create the best learning experience. He expects a lot from his students, but expects even more from himself."

Appert earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in music, specializing in trombone, from the New England Conservatory. He earned his doctorate in orchestral conducting from the University of Kansas. In addition to his 30 years at Clark College, he has teaching experience at Centre College in Kentucky and at Hampton University in Virginia. As a member of ASCAP, most of Dr. Appert's compositions have been performed throughout the world. He has appeared as a guest conductor in Japan, Australia, Central America, and throughout Europe. In the United States, he has appeared as a guest conductor of the Vancouver (Washington) Symphony, the University of Texas – Arlington Symphony Orchestra, the Eastern Washington University Symphony Orchestra, and the University of Central Arkansas Symphony.

## **Adam Coleman, professor of computer technology**



Adam Coleman

Adam Coleman's connection to Clark College goes back to his own student years, when he earned his associate degree with a double major in Data Networking and Computer Networking from the college. He then went on to get his bachelor's degree in Computer Technology at Eastern Washington University. He worked at SEH-America before returning to Clark College to teach, and in 2014 was named a tenured member of the college's computer technology faculty.



Coleman has been active in serving on college committees and creating partnerships with local organizations geared toward helping people build careers. He was central in developing and implementing new courses designed to help students earn their Microsoft Technology Associate certification. An avid bike rider, Coleman represented the college in the American Diabetes Association's annual Tour de Cure for years.

"Professor Coleman has been there for me since the beginning of my degree," wrote one student in nominating Coleman. "He has always been attentive. He will sit down with me and work through questions or concerns. He pushes on. He keeps going no matter what."

## **Molly Lampros, professor of communication studies**



Molly Lampros

Molly Lampros joined Clark College's communication studies faculty in 2010, and over the past decade she has taught classes including Introduction to Mass Media, Interpersonal Communications, and Small Group Communications. She has also given her energy and expertise to enrich the college beyond her classes, serving as a Phi Theta Kappa faculty advisor, giving presentations to colleagues on how to support students in the classroom, serving on scholarship and awards committees, and serving as a faculty mentor for student

interns. Additionally, she has worked to create an Open Educational Resource for her classes—essentially, a free textbook that reduces expenses for her students. She is also certified in eLearning and Quality Matters.

“She’s fun, upbeat and always brings such a positive energy into class,” wrote one student in a nomination for Lampros. “She knows how to engage a class and make people want to participate, and she makes everyone feel included and heard. She makes you excited to come to class.”

Lampros earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in communication studies and psychology and her Master of Science degree in communication studies and conflict resolution from Portland State University. She earned her Master of Arts in Teaching in English language education from Pacific University. In addition to her decade of teaching at Clark College, she has teaching experience at Portland State University and the Oregon Institute of Technology. She also gets to put her communications expertise to work in a practical environment as co-owner of the Helvetia Tavern in Hillsboro, Oregon.

## **Ken Luchini, professor of mechatronics**



Ken Luchini

Kenneth Luchini earned his associate degree in industrial electronics from Diablo Valley College in California. He

earned his Bachelor of Science degree in industrial electronics and computer technology from California State University Chico, and completed Master Studies in instructional processes in vocational education at the University of California Berkeley Extension. His work experience includes more than two decades as an electrical engineer, as well as 10 years as an electronics technician and eight years as a full-time college vocational education instructor in electronics and industrial automation.

Luchini earned tenure at Clark College in 2016. At the college, he serves as the faculty advisor for the MechaNerds, a student club devoted to mechatronics. He was also co-principal investigator for the Clark College Rural Access Mechatronics Program (RAMP), a program that developed “hybrid” (combination online and face-to-face) curriculum to serve rural portions of the college’s service district through a grant from the National Science Foundation’s Advanced Technological Education program.

“The amount of one-on-one time he provides is amazing,” wrote a student. “While he is inexhaustible in the classroom, that is not where his day ends. He’s always available after hours for discussion/clarification, and prides himself on getting you the right (or best!) answer.”

**Thomas Stevenson, professor of communication studies**



Tom Stevenson

Thomas Stevenson has taught in the Communication Studies department of Clark College since 2010, teaching classes that include Interpersonal Communication, Small Group Communication, and Public Speaking. Before he began teaching, he had a long career as a newspaper reporter and editor.

A graduate of Portland State University, Stevenson earned a Bachelor's Degree in Community Development (with additional focus on Communication Studies) and a Master's Degree in Communication Studies (with additional focus on Conflict Resolution), both with honors. In addition to his decade at Clark, he has teaching experience at Portland State University, Portland Community College, and Chemeketa Community College.

"I became a much better communicator after I attended both Interpersonal Communication and Small Group Communication classes from Tom," wrote one student in nomination Stevenson. "His enthusiasm and compassion have a huge impact on students. I am grateful for the conflict-resolving skills I've gained to deal when I work in a group and use these skills in my family. Using perception-checking has helped me understand how to solve misunderstandings and conflicts."

# Lauren Zavrel, professor of adult basic education at Larch Corrections Center



Lauren Zavrel

While academia is full of highly specialized fields, Lauren Zavrel has built a career path that might be considered unusual even by the standards of higher education: For the past decade, she has taught in correctional facilities. She has served on the faculty of Clark College's Adult Basic Education program at Larch Corrections Center since 2016, earning praise from her students for her inclusive, supportive teaching style.

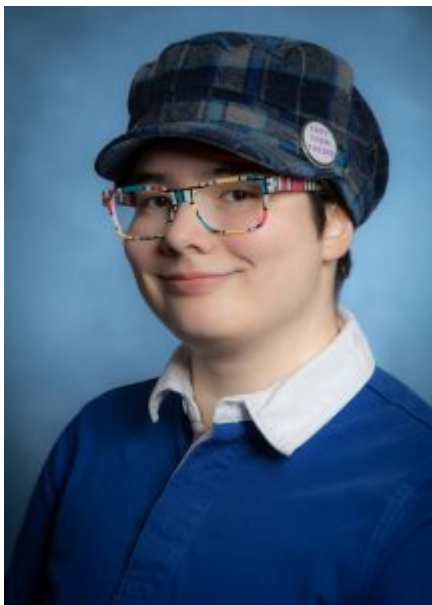
"Ms. Z treats us as students first, not inmates," wrote one student in their nomination. "She works with you on an individual level. She has a lot of respect for cultural differences and is aware of how cultural differences might play out in the classroom. She is accepting of all backgrounds. She actively recruits and hires Teacher Assistants from different backgrounds so that her students see themselves reflected in teacher's assistants."

Zavrel first discovered a love of teaching as a motorcycle safety instructor and began her academic teaching career in English as a Second Language. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Romance languages and her Graduate Certificate in

nonprofit management from the University of Oregon and her Master of Education degree in adult and higher education from Oregon State University. In addition to her time at Clark, she has teaching experience with Lane Community College, Lane County Adult Corrections, Clackamas Community College, Clackamas County Jail, the American Red Cross, and Team Oregon Motorcycle Safety Program. At Larch, Zavrel helped develop the first-ever tutoring program in a correctional facility to be certified by the College Reading and Learning Association. She also saw a record number of inmates earn their GEDs in the 2019-2020 academic year.

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## **Fall                      2019                      Classified Excellence Award      Recipient: Bryton Williams**



Bryton Williams

Congratulations to **Bryton Williams**, recipient of the 2019 Fall Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award!

An Administrative Assistant 3 for Business & Health Sciences, Williams is said to be someone who greets every situation with a smile and a positive attitude and who has made many contributions to the college's CCW location.

True to their name, Williams says that they were born to "brighten" everyone's day, joking, "If my mom wanted me to be negative, she would have named me Darken." Nominators say that, puns aside, Williams' consistent positivity and continued relationship-building is appreciated by all at CCW, including the WSUV employees there.

Williams assists staff and faculty with submitting and using Penguin Packs from the Bookstore and helps them to stay under the yearly printing budget. They are consistently going above and beyond for all residents in the building they help manage, responding promptly to requests and providing status updates. They consistently offer suggestions that benefit not only Clark College but WSU as well.

Bryton is managing several equity-minded projects centered on CCW and has engaged in self-education, as well as participated in several events with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Recently, Bryton recently developed a new system for booking time in CCW's new lactation room, which has allowed lactating mothers to remain focused on their studies. Bryton has also made it a point to make sure the CCW space is as welcoming as Clark's main campus is to systemically non-dominant students.

Others had this to say about Bryton:

- "Bryton regularly engages in discussion and clarification around collaborative projects. Bryton is amazingly thorough, allowing others to be more focused and productive in their areas."
- "Bryton participates regularly in college activities and events. Most recently, Bryton was regularly reminding

and encouraging everyone to participate in the Walktober Challenge. Bryton even spurred on a friendly competition between CCW and the WSU Facilities personnel. These sorts of bonds go a long way when we need to collaborate with our WSU partners.”

- A new employee wrote, “Bryton brought me a stuffed penguin for my office, stating, ‘No Clark office is complete without a penguin, welcome to the team.’”
- They are “generous beyond measure.”
- “Bryton regularly is the first to offer assistance to students, staff, and faculty, regardless of the fact that the duties are not required of them.”
- “Bryton’s commitment to collaboration and a positive college environment was evident in one of my first interactions with them. Bryton went out of their way to make three different kinds of muffins (this included vegan and gluten-free options, this illustrates the sheer thoughtfulness of Bryton in making sure everyone was included) which they brought in to share with the staff and faculty of all the programs at CCW, the students, our iTech partners, *and* the WSU Facilities personnel. While this already seems thoughtful, let me clarify that these muffins were not purchased, they were handmade with care and with a mindset that included every individual they come into contact during the day (this included people who they don’t come into contact with as well). Not only did Bryton make these extremely thoughtful snacks but they also hauled them on a one-hour public-transit ride to CCW. If that isn’t an example of caring above and beyond, then I don’t know what is.”
- “Bryton is amazingly thorough, allowing others to be more focused and productive in their areas.”

**Congratulations, as well, to all nominees for the 2019 Fall Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award:**



## **Brenda Shular, Procurement & Supply Spec 2, Purchasing & Central Services**

Brenda is described as someone who is a helpful resource in the Purchasing and Central Services area. A nominator wrote, "Brenda has provided me with direct training and she helped me feel like I had someone to reach out to when I needed an answer. She always maintains a positive presence, is professional, and solution-oriented. I'm sure Brenda has been integral to our switch to the new ctcLink system, taking on an inordinate amount of work. When there are issues or questions, Brenda makes herself available to investigate and explain. Brenda has answered countless questions on the spot over the phone."

Other comments about Brenda:

- "[Our department] requires a lot of supplies, and a fair amount of equipment. No matter how many requisitions we send over, I have faith that Brenda will get them turned into orders."

## **Everett Yu, Equipment Technician 3 for Grounds**

Everett Yu is someone who demonstrates exemplary work performance on a daily basis. Overall, Everett is responsible for maintaining all the vehicles and riding equipment at Facilities Services used by custodial, maintenance, and grounds. He is consistently working to keep vehicles and equipment (some built the 1980s and 1990s) operating at a high level. For instance, Yu just finished installing a hydraulic lift kit into the back of the F-250 (manufacture year 1995) so that staff can dump debris with the flip of a switch and get right back to work. Yu recently utilized scrap metal to custom-build a new trailer for transporting small grounds equipment.

A nominator wrote, "When something breaks down, we don't panic, because we know Everett will be able to troubleshoot the problem and successfully complete the repair in a timely manner."

Other comments about Everett:

- "Everett has completed many special project work orders. If a co-worker encounters a complicated problem Everett will likely have a solution and be willing to help complete the job."
- "Security and Events rely on Everett to maintain their vehicles regularly."
- "Completing the majority of work orders on time and staying under budget is a special achievement."Page Break

## **Group Nomination for Brandon Johnson, IT Support Technician 2 for Information Technology Services; John Condit, Media Technician Lead for Event Services; Mike Silva, IT Support Technician 2, Information Technology Services; Richard (Rick) Bartz, IT Support Technician 2 for Information Technology Services**

The following is the nominator's comments about this team:

"A recent recruitment was unusual in nature due to unforeseen circumstances. At a moment's notice we found out that we needed media assistance for a couple of upcoming campus events. Normally, we try to be considerate and notify the media team when we need their assistance at least 48 hours prior to the event. This certain situation was less than 24 hours. I thought for sure the media team was going to tell me, 'No way, not with that short of notice.'

**"Mike Silva** was contacted and was so kind and provided exceptional service in some many ways. He reassured me that the request was not impossible and that he was certain they could assist. After my repeated thank you's and apologies, he spoke with his staff and quickly called me back and said, Okay, everything is lined up and it's a go!' The media team had quickly organized all that was needed of them and organized coverage for said activities.

**"Rick Bartz** assisted in setting up one room for Skype and then quickly ran to set up the next room for the next activity, and so on until all activities were completed.

**"Brandon Johnson and John Condit** provided back of the scene assistance to make our request successful.

**"The media team** from the very beginning gave exceptional customer service! From reassuring that the request wasn't that big of deal. Mike repeatedly stated that it was 'no problem' when I thanked him for his last-minute help.

**"Rick** was sure to get each activity started via Skype and then he was on to the next location—not skipping a beat.

"This isn't the first time that this group has been phenomenal and extremely helpful! The customer service provided was appreciated by so many: HR, the hiring department, and the candidate.

"Because of the customer service that the media team provided, the candidate experience was amazing and the candidate expressed his appreciation for all involved. This is what we want here at Clark. I can't thank this team enough. Without them, this wouldn't have happened.

"Hands down the media team took the initiative to assist us

with our request. Without their assistance, the Skype activities wouldn't have happened, as it took multiple arrangements to make it successful. The team was helpful, super-efficient, accommodating, and so cooperative in completing the request. This was going on while the college was bearing down to the final days of ctcLink preparation...

"Working with coworkers who provide exceptional customer service, positive demeanor, and have the 'no worries' attitude not only provides myself an example that I can learn from but also makes me proud when interacting with the candidates. When a candidate thanks me for all the organization and assistance and provides so many words of appreciation, I can't take all the credit—and for that reason I nominate this team for acknowledgement."

## **Margaret (Peg) Estes, Program Specialist 2 for Credential Evaluations**

Peg Estes is described as someone who shows initiative, positive spirit, 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.

This past year has marked a time of significant change for the Credential Evaluations team. In addition to new programs coming on board, a significant amount of workflow changes, changes to the graduation-application database, and the expectations around communication with students, there has also been a significant amount of work to prepare for ctcLink implementation. Estes responded positively and prioritized her work tasks to meet the needs of the department. She is said to have a positive attitude and show adaptability during times of rapid change. This has been a significant undertaking and has required substantial

effort to review work tasks and provide regular and consistent feedback.

Other comments about Peg Estes:

- “Based on the positive impact that she has had with regard to communicating proactively, it resulted in the Credentials Department adopting and adapting Peg’s communication timeline as the departmental standard. This resulted in the department workflow being more proactive in communicating with students and within a much shorter window of time. Students are also proactively provided evaluation results, and then provided with updates each term, whereas before it was only in the term they planned to complete and subsequent terms afterwards. I appreciate Peg’s willingness to try new things in the name of supporting students to achieve their educational and career goals.”
- “I have worked in the same office as Peg for about three years now and I am grateful to work with such an outstanding employee. Within the last three years, I have never witnessed such tireless dedication to doing a job and doing it well, such as I have seen with Peg. She has picked up other’s work without question, she has thoroughly examined policy and procedure to ensure best practice for employee and students alike, and she has done it all with a smile on her face. Her commitment and positive attitude throughout endless change and turnover in this department has been a prime example of what an ideal employee looks like. 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”
- “Prior to going live in the new system, Peg was given the ‘Jill of all Trades’ certificate of appreciation by Susan Maxwell to recognize her for all the hard work that she put into data validation. According to Susan, ‘Peg spent many hours in the lab, was always willing to

help other staff who were validating, helped Ryan to understand where to find information in SMS, and was willing to validate data she had never seen before.'"

- "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."

## **Mitch Sott, Engineering Technician 3 for Workforce, Professional & Tech Ed**

Mitch is described as someone who is extremely conscious of the deep level of support the McClaskey Culinary Institute and its programs need. He is constantly proactive in clarifying needs and trouble-shooting issues before they become major issues. Sott applies both knowledge and creativity to fixing and maintaining the facility. One nominator said, "In my opinion, Mitch is not only an asset to this college campus, but a long-standing employee that makes our Prof Tech unit better and he is always willing to help anyway he can. He deserves to be acknowledged for his positive spirit and his service."

Other comments about Mitch Sott:

- "Mitch is a master fabricator and effortlessly creates

solutions that would otherwise take major time and money if we went through equipment companies. A specific example is our steam-jacketed kettles that we make soups, sauces, etc. The factory draining system was ridiculously inefficient and was a potential cause of injury to students and staff. In a couple short hours, he fabricated an insert that completely solved the problem with minimal cost to college both in materials and time.”

- “Mitch is a joy to work with and we enjoy seeing him in the bakery. He has fixed mixer attachments that were broken accidentally by students, put wheels on racks for easier movement, fabricated many cutters and cake frames, made a specific rack for cooling angel food cakes (which must hang upside-down while cooling), created a wall -length hanger for the cookie cutters in the bakery, and so much more. Mitch has made our jobs smoother by all the various things he has done and continues to do for us.”
- “Often Mitch will come to the bakery simply to check on us, say hello, and see if we have anything that needs fixing. He is always happy to help, and I honestly can’t remember a time he has said no. If Mitch does collegewide what he does for us in the baking program, I cannot imagine a better example of cooperative spirit than that of Mitch.”
- “Mitch recognizes the importance of what we do, and that we couldn’t do it without his help. He always has anything he is fixing for us done and back to us the very next day. Mitch will always walk it back to the bakery when he could easily have us come and get it.”
- “Mitch was directly responsible in helping solve what could have been a serious issue with our air handlers on the roof of the cuisine kitchen. Without his diligent efforts, potentially very costly issues with the

equipment could have occurred, as well as the impact of the air handlers to properly filter internal kiosk and kitchen airflow.”

- “Even when not called to help on something happening in kitchen, Mitch when available, comes to the kitchen facility and checks on equipment, with the Chefs, or items he has worked on to ensure equipment is running smoothly, that the staff isn’t in need of something, and handles minor tweaks on on-going equipment maintenance. Specifically, our smoker, which is quite old, he has maintained in working order so it is always available for our students and FSO needs.”

## **Neil Fykerud, Program Specialist 2 for Transitional Studies Division**

Neil Fykerud is described as a colleague who goes above and beyond to positively impact student learning and who has served both the college and the community for decades. He is praised for his breadth of knowledge, constant professionalism, and ability to turn data into productive information. Co-workers, supervisors, community partners and the WorkFirst/BFET (Basic Food Employment and Training) state board office have appreciated Fykerud’s hard work and consistent accuracy. He is willing to take on demanding projects that others would find overwhelming and completes them in a timely, precise, and proactive way.

Fykerud has participated on many college committees, including safety committees, the Climate Committee, and hiring committees. He makes sure the college’s community partners are informed about what is happening at Clark College and how it may affect students who are also clients of external organizations. He has made many important connections with agencies such as the Department of Social and Health Services, WorkSource, and Partners in Careers, to name a



few.

Fykerud also knows the importance of making connections within the campus community to ensure Transitional Studies students get the support and valid information they need. He strives to help the students become successful in their school lives, as well as in their family lives and in the community. He readily attends college trainings as well as WorkFirst and BFET trainings and informational sessions.

Other comments about Neil Fykerud:

- “He collaborates often with advising staff to provide multiple layers of connection and relationship building necessary for their success. If he is unsure how to help a student with a particular issue or resource, he connects with colleagues who can help and continues to utilize these connections with other students as relevant. His attitude is always positive and one of integrity that is infectious to students and staff.”
- “Neil always comes to work with a smile and leaves with a smile. His positive attitude is infectious and he never waivers from this positivity, even when the work gets challenging—as it can be with students who have a lot of barriers to success and/or living in crisis. He relays this positivity to students and they leave his office feeling capable and supported.”
- “Neil’s work with our ESL, HS+, CAP, and GED students is always exceptional. He will take time to make sure the student is not only advised on what is expected of them as a Clark College student, but also what is required of them as a student who is receiving support through one of our community partners. He will go over the information as often as the student requires, find support services to help make sure the student is successful, as well as provide a contact figure that the

student can rely on during their college life. He follows up with advisors within the Transitional Studies and WES (Workforce Educational Services) departments to ensure students are engaging with these supports. This is a level of support most college students do not get, but most desperately need. He recognizes that students with the types of barriers we see need a compassionate connection to the college community in order to be successful and he takes explicit and intentional steps in his work to ensure students make these connections.”

- “In his role as a WorkFirst Program Specialist II and working with our English as a Second Language students who are on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, he was able to find a way to provide them with translated forms that they are required to read and agree to. He has served as a Liaison for the WorkForce Education Office by attending Local Planning Agency meetings as needed. Neil is an amazing representative of any office, unit or committee he is on. He always seeks out the information needed to be present at the meetings he is attending. I honestly believe he is often overlooked for the amazing spokesperson he is, when it comes to making Clark College a better place to work and a true contributor to our community.”

## **Thao Schmidt, Human Resource Consultant 2, Human Resources**

Thao Schmidt is described as someone who has won the confidence of her peers and colleagues and the college community in general. She is not only knowledgeable about her area of specialty, but shows deep connection to the work she does every day.

Thao corresponds with many people on a daily basis and pays careful attention to the details and thoroughness in her work.

She is very efficient in executing her responsibilities, including the posting of shared-leave requests, in a timely manner.

Her nominator said, "Several years ago she took a real interest to help me when I became suddenly ill, and worked with my son to clarify things and take the necessary steps within her purview. I have observed her polite manners and the friendly disposition of treating others too. Moreover, she takes initiatives to inform and remind the college community members about their benefits, deadlines, etc."

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## Summer 2019 Classified Excellence Award



Heather Adams

Congratulations to **Heather Adams**, recipient of the 2019 Summer Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award!

Adams is an Administrative Services Manager A for Student Affairs and is described as someone who creates a positive, welcoming atmosphere for students and colleagues to stop by and ask questions, or to wait with before meeting with another

Student Affairs staff member. She has strong knowledge of not only the college community, but of the larger Clark County community as well. She readily offers this information to coworkers and students who have questions that reach beyond the Dean of Student Engagement's office. Adams engages students in a meaningful way even when her interactions with them are brief. She continually provides information to students about how the Dean of Student Engagement, and the Office of Student Affairs, can be of assistance to the student's individual success.

Below are additional comments about Adams:

- "One of my favorite things is when students take Heather up on her offer to 'stop by and say hi' to our office even when they do not have a question or need; it is clear evidence that Heather excels at community-building and cares for Clark."
- "Heather has provided administrative coordination for my office, as well as for the BITA, Title IX, and Conduct areas. She tracks budgets, makes travel arrangements, facilitates communication via email, phone and in-person with students and community partners, and has coordinated team meetings and special projects on behalf of the Dean."
- "Heather is continually looking for ways to interact with all levels of the Clark College community. She has become a valuable resource with her creative ideas and solid problem-solving. Heather has taken on the role of co-presenter on various Student Care presentations – specifically within the areas of BITA, Conduct, and Title IX. Heather is regularly scheduled to co-present at the quarterly New Faculty Orientation meetings and other invitations that arise; she is a competent and engaging presenter who can easily take the reins if the other presenter is unavailable."
- "Heather recently graduated with a master's degree in

Student Affairs Administration. To help Clark College and to utilize her training, she has become an integral member of the Title IX team. Heather serves as investigator for student-related Title IX cases by investigating alleged discrimination and/or harassment. In addition, she interviews complainants, respondents, and material witnesses; and obtains and reviews documents and other relevant materials. This work can be difficult and draining; she handles it professionally and efficiently.”

**Congratulations, as well, to all nominees for the 2019 Summer Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award:**

**Tavish Bell’s** role as a Program Specialist 2 for Student Affairs was primarily to implement and track the programs related to the federal Office on Violence Against Women grant that Clark College received in 2017. (She recently took another position at the college in Workforce Education Services.) Bell has been tirelessly working with federal programmers to bring innovative training, promotion and support programs for prevention of sexual assault to the Clark College campus.

“This work is not easy or comfortable,” wrote one nominator. “Tavish has a grasp on the sensitivity of the work and the support that is needed for the continuation of the grant work here in our community. Tavish is quick to outreach to support services for students in need of that approach, [and] she is willing to connect with other campus departments to provide training and information around sexual assault topics.”

In her short time with Clark, Tavish has integrated the Bystander Intervention program into the Student Leadership Summit; worked with IT and Library to develop three “Defense Against the Dark Arts” workshops to provide tips on cyberstalking/surveillance prevention, digital bystander intervention, and understanding the impact of digital violence

on the brain; and led many outreach efforts to students, clubs, Safety and Security, employees, and outside support groups.

Additional comments about Tavish Bell:

- “Tavish goes above and beyond in all aspects of her work. She maintains a presence on campus working with students, departments, and also managing community partners to spread the importance of this work. All of the work Tavish does is directly in place to support our students in prevention and survival of sexual assault, stalking, and dating/domestic violence.”
- “I wish I had this training in high school, the information is so useful and the peer educators showed that there is a way to talk about these things in a way that isn’t uncomfortable.” – a student participant in one of Bell’s workshops
- “After this class I feel like I understand consent much more clearly and also know how to help if I see someone who is uncomfortable/may need help.” – a student participant in one of Bell’s workshops

**Layla Otey** is a Budget Analyst 4 for Information Technology Services. She is described as someone who always keeps people smiling with her great sense of humor. In addition to spreading joy, Layla has completely revamped the department’s budget tracking and improvement process, using her expertise to help the team understand the budget expenses and better manage the department’s funds. She is creative in identifying numerous opportunities to save resources and has renegotiated contracts with ITS’s major suppliers and develops excellent relationships with key vendors, making connections with sales reps and consultants to ensure that the college is well represented to the outside business community.

Otey also has demonstrated her commitment to customer service as a member of the Tech Fee Committee, constantly advocating for student technology improvements and ensuring that the Tech

Fee is spent to maximize the benefit to students. She has reviewed the expenses and the budget thoroughly to ensure that the focus is on student achievement.

Other comments about Otey:

- “In addition to her humor, Layla introduced the ITS Project Management team to the ‘Affirmators’ cards, which encourages each of us to bring our best selves to the job and to constantly ‘use our power for good.’”
- “Whenever I request data, software, or information, Layla always gets back to me promptly and provides me with what I need. Layla is very creative and uses different software tools and methods to get what I and other people are looking for or need help with. With so many requests coming from different directions, she is prompt and professional in all her interactions, going above and beyond to ensure excellent technology service.”
- “One of the best things that Layla has done to demonstrate initiative is to act as a mentor to one of the ASCC Student Government leaders. This relationship has strengthened ties between the department and students and has demonstrated an excellence in collaborative and cooperative work.”
- “Layla has completely revamped the department’s budget tracking and improvement process, using her expertise to help the team understand the budget expenses and better manage the department’s funds.”

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## **Spring 2019 Classified Staff**

# Excellence Award



Amanda Brown

Congratulations to **Amanda Brown**, recipient of the 2019 Spring Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award!

Brown is a Library and Archives Paraprofessional 3 for Cannell Library. During her career at Clark College, she was promoted to a part-time supervisory position and then to her current full-time role. Colleagues say that few people know Clark Libraries operations as well as Brown does. Focused on customer service and students, she is committed to encouraging students whenever possible.

“From hiring to graduation, Amanda is an active participant in our student workers’ success,” wrote a nominator. “She organized our department’s participation in the Winter 2019 student job fair to broaden the applicant pool for the position. She spends weeks collecting nominations for OSWALDs for students because she is committed to encouraging them at every level possible. Amanda also makes sure to promote students to more-advanced jobs when there are openings in our department.”

In addition to being student-focused, Amanda is someone who is seen as a resource in the library. “Many people pass through her office every day to ask her questions, which she patiently and thoughtfully answers,” observed a colleague.



Amanda is also committed to advancing Clark College's mission and values by serving on various teams and committees such as the User Experience Committee for Clark Libraries, the Clark Art Committee, and the Clark College Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). One person said, "No matter the committee on which she serves, Amanda is quite simply a leader. Our department is lucky to have her, and so is Clark."

Below are additional comments about Amanda:

- "As an alumna as well as an employee of Clark, Amanda always looks for ways to contribute her time and skills to the community. In addition to her work on the User Experience Committee for Clark Libraries, Amanda also serves on the Clark Art Committee, CERT, and has been working with the administration on a comprehensive Libraries policy review. Her work on CERT especially has made her coworkers feel safer and more prepared to protect ourselves and our patrons in case of an emergency. As an advocate for Clark Libraries in these committees, Amanda makes sure that our department aligns itself with collegewide initiatives."
- "I also want to highlight how Amanda's creativity has specifically benefited the library. The Clark Libraries Marketing Committee (on which she served for several quarters) recently designed an extensive set of templates to use for signs that are in line with the Brand Guide. Amanda was one of the lead creators of this project, and we print new signs from her templates almost every week. Additionally, every time I create promotional materials using the templates, I always check in with her because she knows just the expressive pop to make the sign really stand out, such as using the bold rather than standard font."
- "Amanda actively looks for ways to go above and beyond to serve Clark students. Last week, a student came to the Check Out Desk to check out a course reserve and was

clearly upset. Amanda asked them about their day, and they told her that they were checking out the reserve because they had left their backpack on the bus an hour ago. Amanda was able to find the right numbers for them to call and even offered to get in touch with her own contacts at C-TRAN to make sure they were checking in all the right places.”

**Congratulations, as well, to all nominees for the 2019 Spring Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award:**

**Margaret (Peg) Estes** is a Program Specialist 2 in Credential Evaluations. Among her other duties, she does all the diploma printing for Commencement.

Estes is described as someone who is not only good at her job, but is said to go above and beyond every day. One person said, “She not only does her job duties but she takes on new project whenever asked. Peg is amazing about just getting the work done, no excuses. Peg will stay overtime if asked, she has been helping with the build for the new CTC systems. Even when she has a lot on her plate, she still is very helpful with training and positive in giving directions. I really enjoy learning from Peg as a new employee. I think she is an amazing person and I look up to her work ethic!”

**Additional comments about Peg:**

- “Peg has saved a lot of students from having to take extra classes or having to move their files. She is very in touch with her students and helps them stay on top of graduation requirements. Peg puts the students first even if she has a lot of other projects to work on, she always make sure students question are answered or problem gets taken care of right away.”
- “Peg has great communication skills, she is very interactive with the faculty, staff, students and the public. She has shown me what a positive, hard-working

employee looks like and she definitely goes above expectations on all her work.”

**Darci Feider** is a Program Coordinator for Student Life. She is described as someone who consistently goes above and beyond and is said to be a great team player. One person even said, “Darci is the best team player that I have ever had the joy of working with.”

Feider regularly manages the entire Student Life office on her own during the coffee rush, helps students fill out purchasing paperwork, and even sometimes puts together entire one-time funding request packets together on the student’s behalf when they are unable to do so on their own. Taking a student-centered approach, she is always helping with events, representing Student Life, and is said to be the “backbone” of any successful event that is sponsored by Student Life. It is said that “students (and the Student Leaders) always feel comfortable coming to Darci with questions because she never wavers with her helpful and cheerful nature.”

Additional Comments about Darci:

- “Recently, Darci has taken on the project of planning a new floorplan for Student Life that is more inviting for students, because some students think the front desk and double doors are intimidating. This was a huge undertaking and she wasn’t asked to take it on, but it looks like, thanks to her, we are working on getting a quote to see how much a remodel might cost. Since this is a huge obstacle for Student Life, this project is a game-changer for the office.”
- “If ASCC or APB is shorthanded and she can catch a break from her 1000 other responsibilities, she will be there to lend a hand, especially with preparation and set-up which is the backbone of any successful event. Darci makes every student in the office, in clubs, or visiting Student Life feel welcome, respected, and valued.”

- “Her door is always open so students involved in clubs and programs always have access to her wealth of knowledge. She always helps students navigate through the treacherous sea that is purchasing, travel, and one-time funding request paperwork.”

**Karina Gress** is an Instruction and Classroom Support Tech 2 for Chemistry who colleagues say is a key contributor to the success of the Chemistry department. One person said, “She strives to ensure that students have the materials they need, that faculty are happy with the set-up, and that errors are corrected quickly.”

Gress’ work has a positive impact not just on her direct department, but on STEM as a whole. A nominator wrote that she “was a key contributor to the design and planning of the STEM Building. Karina learned how to read blue prints and schematic diagrams, and spent hours poring over them, ensuring that our labs and prep spaces had adequate power, storage, and experimentation space. She worked with movers and Facilities to coordinate moving equipment, chemicals, and materials while classes were in session during the summer 2016 term, to ensure that everything was ready for a busy Fall term in the new building.” One person said, “Karina has been an important liaison between the chemistry department and Facilities Services, ensuring that our students are experimenting in a safe and supportive environment.”

Additional comments about Karina:

- “Karina has stepped up again in the spring term, as the other lab technician has left Clark College for other opportunities. Although this time, she was able to transition into the additional workload, Karina is still facing similar challenges as before. As she had some warning, Karina has worked diligently to prepare materials for her main job early, to carve out time for the additional workload. This has benefitted many of our

students, as they have been able to work on experiments early, allowing the students to manage their time and workload heading towards some large, culminating projects in their science lecture courses.”

- “During the winter 2019 term, Karina’s increased workload came with an additional challenge – the other technician was set to prepare equipment and materials for the Regional Science Olympiad (RSO). Again, with only few weeks to prepare, while performing regular fulltime duties of her own and of the other lab technician, Karina worked with the RSO coordinators and faculty to prepare chemical materials and equipment for this event, which is attended by middle and high school students across southwest Washington. This event is important to attract the next generation of Penguins to STEM at Clark College!”
- Another faculty member writes: “She is quick to respond to faculty needs when equipment fails, is ready to lend a helping hand, and replaces broken equipment and empty stock bottles when we call. She’s like the Batwoman of the chemistry lab – always there to answer the call.”

**Jennifer King** is a Program Coordinator in Advising Services. Jennifer is praised for her high commitment to the college, exemplary customer service, and great value to Advising Services. Her contributions to the Clark College community include not just her technical ability, but also her customer service skills and her commitment to making Clark a welcoming environment.

One person said, “Recently we have been tasked with getting Insight, a new scheduling tool, up and running for Advising Services to pilot. This has been a daunting task and Jen has been instrumental in moving us to a place where we can be assured of a smooth roll-out. This took many hours of combing through the program, investigating all the options, syncing issues, and more. Jen developed a detailed training guide for

advisors and another for support staff, making it easier to acclimate to this new program.”

Additional comments about Jennifer:

- “Jen has been observed showing empathy for a student that was faced with personal difficulties that affected their education. She was caring and empathetic to the need and, as always, went the extra mile to facilitate a solution. This same attention is given to each student that Jen works with.”
- “Jen is not shy to give feedback or ask questions, both in our office or in meetings. She seeks clarity and understanding. The college benefits from her willingness to do so.”
- “Jen’s previous experience working with Running Start students and parents has been a benefit to Advising since the move of that area to our shared offices. She has a vast knowledge and is very helpful to both parents and front staff who have Running Start questions. Support staff are appreciative of her willingness to assist.”