

Winter 2017 Classified Staff Award: David Sims



David Sims

Congratulations to **David Sims**, recipient of the 2017 Winter Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award.

Sims is an Information Tech Specialist 4 for the IT Service Center and has 35 years with Clark College. He is described as someone who goes “far beyond the call of duty, giving our customers one on one personal attention when they have high severity issues with technology.”

Sims is described as being someone who embraces goals and assists in transitions to improve ITS and the larger college community. His nominator wrote, “David in the past year has stepped up as the technical lead of the service center group, taking on vastly different responsibilities than he has had over the past 35 years and he has absolutely flourished and become a vital leader of the group. His performance and dedication to the college is absolutely the foundation of his worth ethic; he is deeply rooted in making sure the campus faculty and staff have the tools they need to support our students.”

Being “extremely skilled in process and procedure,” Sims is able to provide solutions be the “rock” of his team, especially over the past year. Sims takes on the tough tasks and creatively produces unique solutions to challenges. For instance, “the service center was tasked with bringing in over 200 mobile devices for Windpws 10 upgrades, and David took this task and planned it out, created documentation, and ran scenarios before we went live. He came up with unique ways to make the Win 10 transition for our mobile laptop customers as easy and with the least impact as possible. David also trained all of the other technicians. This made our piece of the Windows 10 upgrade go extremely smooth, and his work ethic to get over 200 devices migrated to Win 10 was nothing short of amazing.”

Congratulations as well to this winter quarter’s other nominees:

Lorraine Browne Leedy is the Faculty Development Program Specialist at the Teaching and Learning Center. In her role, Leedy organizes many training opportunities for the faculty and staff. She is described as someone who is “very efficient in executing her responsibilities” and is “an excellent customer-service ambassador who is willing to listen to someone in need and help.” She is respectful to the faculty, staff and anyone who needs her services. Leedy’s nominator describes her as a good communicator, someone who pays close attention to detail, a leader, respectful and someone who maintains a pleasing personality.

Reesa McAllister is a Secretary Senior for the Computer Technology (CTEC) Division and is described as someone who has an “exemplary” work performance. McAllister is “precise, thorough and efficient in her work” and will not only learn new skills, but goes “above and beyond by teaching her colleagues” in these areas as well. McAllister’s nominator states, “Faculty count on her and she goes out of her way to assist everyone coming into the unit office, calling on the

phone, or emailing with questions and concerns. If Reesa does not know how to answer a question, she seeks out that answer. She does not stop there, however! She then shares that information with others' in the unit who will benefit from having that information as well." McAllister is someone who is honest, organized, and "should be noted for her flexibility and willingness to contribute to the transition with a secretary retiring and being replaced in the past couple of quarters." She is "confident to take on tasks and responsibilities," provides "excellent support," and "engages throughout the campus and across units for the betterment of her division, unit and the college."

Kate Poffenroth works as a Program Coordinator for Disability Support Services (DSS). Poffenroth's nominator describes her as "an excellent, long-term employee who stands out in terms of her superb reliability and efficiency." Poffenroth is said to be someone who is "extraordinary in terms of her ability to multi-task" and "arrives at the office with energy, enthusiasm, and a great sense of humor that she shares with every person that she sees that day." Poffenroth often tracks "hundreds of details that require high-level processing" and understands the importance of being accurate in her reporting. DSS is in the process of implementing a new software and "Kate ... has been a quick, sharp learner, as she easily adopts new software processes and encourages others to make necessary changes." Poffenroth's nominator overall describes her as someone who is grounded in student-entered principles, concise, encourages others, and "builds collegial cohesion and teamwork."

Tia Schmidt is an Administrative Assistant in the Nursing Department and "has been providing excellent service for many years" and "is the glue that keeps the nursing program going." Schmidt is described as "smart and efficient" and "demonstrates her commitment to the college and to students by attending every pinning ceremony to cheer the student's

success and to support the staff who present.” Schmidt is quick to offer “assistance, suggestions, ideas, and empathy, all of which serve to facilitate problem resolution and encourage collaboration. She is respectful and models professional behavior and demeanor.” Through challenges, Schmidt approaches her work with a “realistic, yet optimistic viewpoint” and “is a believer in pro-action versus reaction.” Schmidt assists her group and helps them “deal with many new changes in both ACEN criteria and state regulations.” In assisting, “Tia created resource notebooks for each of us so we would have these references at our fingertips as we moved forward with the adjustment process.” Each day Schmidt “arrives at work she is cheerful, positive and ready to ‘tackle’ whatever task or responsibility we will face throughout the day.” Nominators said, “I see her as very positive about the college and committed to doing all she can to be part of its successful future” and that “her work demonstrates the highest quality both in terms of quality, but also integrity. Tia is an excellent communicator both verbally and in writing. She coordinates several monthly team meetings, stays accurate and timely with minutes and remains calm when meetings become stressful or chaotic. She consistently exhibits calmness and respect for fellow workers and students.”

Fall 2016 Classified Staff Award: Carmen Roman

Congratulations to **Carmen Roman**, recipient of the 2016 Fall Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award!



Carmen Roman

Roman is a Program Specialist 2 for the Advising Services department. She is someone who is described by her nominators as “giving a consistent high-level of service to the students, the public, the community and to co-workers.”

Nominators had the following to say about Roman:

“Carmen’s unique ability to adjust to all modes and levels of communication is unmatched ... It is quite common for students from all walks of life and experiences to applaud this extra attention Carmen gives them during advising sessions. A recent example was relayed from the BMED department on how a student who met with Carmen spoke highly of her to the BMED department head and said that if it wasn’t for the encouragement she received from Carmen, she may have given up on her aspirations to work in the medical field.”

“Carmen is a consummate professional who combines her advising expertise with genuine care and concern for the best interests of students and of the college. She works actively and diligently to learn about and to provide information about all corners of the campus (important dates, instructional departments, program requirements, pre-reqs, assessment, financial aid, etc., etc.). She exemplifies the team approach that is necessary for effective delivery of student services. Knowing that students often “don’t know what they don’t know,” Carmen seeks to provide the most relevant pieces of information with the understanding that students’ needs change and evolve as they progress through their programs of study. She is outstanding at giving the right service, in the right manner, at the right time – all with seemingly limitless patience and kindness.”

Congratulations as well to this quarter’s other nominees:

Lorraine Browne Leedy is the Faculty Development Program Specialist at the Teaching and Learning Center. Many in the college community are aware of Lorraine’s “high-quality work” and she “seems to always be able to lend a hand when called upon—she consistently finds time to help her coworkers.” Browne Leedy displays creativity and superior communication skills that are invaluable when planning and delivering many professional development activities each year. Her ability to plan, organize and manage events is why she is considered a key member of any new training initiative. Browne Leedy is described as a “valued college employee, excellent team member, subject matter expert, superior communicator, and terrific example of a high-performing employee.”

Kay Martinez works as a Custodian in the Custodial Services Department. Nominators describe Martinez as someone who works hard and always maintains a positive attitude. Though Martinez works tremendously hard to keep the STEM building looking its best, she always takes a moment to be courteous and to greet faculty, staff and students. Many view her as

someone who is excellent at her job, has a strong work ethic, and will go out of her way to assist others. In fact, “Kay’s excellent work ethic and affability” come up in conversations with STEM faculty and staff. A nominator stated that Kay’s “dedication to Clark College should serve as a model for others.”

Hanna Maxwell is a Student Recruitment Specialist for the Enrollment Services Department and is described as an “essential” on the team. Maxwell is seen as someone who provides the best in customer service to students, parents, college partners, and community members while keeping a smile and positive attitude. A nominator stated, “no matter what the issue, she brings a determination to answer questions and find solutions in an accessible way.” Another wrote that she “brings a supreme level of care to her presentation and style. She has explained to hundreds, if not thousands, of students over her six months at Clark the benefits of a college education, and has helped many take the first step to changing their lives.”

Hannah Erickson is a Communications Specialist in the Communications and Marketing Department, but many know her as “the voice of Clark.” Being a steward of the voice requires masterful storytelling, openness, honesty, a caring nature, and the ability to be real and informative—all of which a nominator says Erickson represents. Erickson’s role can be challenging at times, but she always goes above and beyond and brings a “high level of integrity and dedication to her work.” One of her colleagues describes her as the “go-to for all things problem-solving. She is my sounding board from interpersonal work relationships, to navigating a project, to just finding the right word to make an email sound the way I want. She takes my ideas and makes them real with her great writing. I am happy to have her as my collaborator on all the things I do here at Clark.”

Tia Schmidt is an Administrative Assistant in the Nursing

Department and sees things from an optimistic viewpoint. Her nominators describe her as “professional, respectful, thoughtful, mindful, and intentional in the way she approaches her job and her coworkers.” Unfailingly polite is how many view Schmidt’s interactions with faculty, staff and students, and she always seems to keep her eye on “the big picture.” A nominator wrote, “I have called on Tia repeatedly for assistance with a wide variety of needs/problems/challenges, and each time she has come through with information, guidance, resources, clarification, and direct help. She doesn’t complain or ask for any special acknowledgement—she just does her job to the best of her ability every day.”

Mitch Sott works in WPTE as a Maintenance Mechanic and is described as “indispensable” to the department—someone who “goes above and beyond the call of duty” to accomplish tasks. Students know Sott and the question isn’t, “What has Mitch fixed for us?” but rather, “What *hasn’t* he fixed for us?” Sott is described as positive role model, friendly, and a valuable asset to Clark College. Nominators said his incredible work ethic is something for them to aspire to. “When we need something done, Mitch spends the time discussing it with us so that he knows exactly what we want and is able to accommodate our needs.”

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Outstanding Employees



President Knight congratulates Linda Healy, *left*, and Vanessa Meyer on receiving the 2016 Exceptional Classified Staff Award.

Opening Day on Sept. 12 marked several celebrations of employee contributions to the college. Employees were recognized for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 years of service to the college. Four employees—Facilities Services Maintenance Mechanic Michael Conder, ITS Specialist David Sims, Business Professor Patti Serrano, and eLearning ITS Specialist Scott Coffie—earned recognition for 35 years of service to the college.

Additionally, the recipients of the annual Exceptional Faculty Awards and quarterly Classified Staff Excellence Awards were recognized. The faculty awards are announced at Commencement and the quarterly Classified staff awards are announced each quarter. Additionally, two Classified Excellence Award recipients were announced to be recipients of the annual Exceptional Classified Staff Awards: Linda Healy and Vanessa

Meyer.

Six Clark College employees received Presidential Coins during Opening Day. Introduced in 2007 by President Bob Knight, the coin is given to faculty and staff members who provide exemplary service to Clark students, the college and the community. The honorees are decided by the president and are kept secret until the names are announced—generally on Opening Day in the fall or during the annual State of the College address. The newest coin recipients are:



Prof. Adnan Hamideh at Opening Day.

Adnan Hamideh

Originally joining Clark College in 2001 as a temporary business instructor, Dr. Hamideh received tenure in 2005 and now serves as the division chair of the Business Department. He holds a Doctorate of Education from Portland State University. President Knight called Dr. Hamideh a “tireless proponent” of the new Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management degree that Clark will begin offering this academic year. In addition, Dr. Hamideh has led the development of the Business Core classes that help students prepare for business majors.



Rebecca Kleiva receives a Presidential Coin.

Rebecca Kleiva

After graduating from Clark College in 2010, Kleiva was hired as a program coordinator in Eligibility Programs (now Workforce Education). She was promoted to her current position of program specialist in 2011. In this position, she has managed the Worker Retraining Financial Aid program, which helps support students as they transition into new career paths, and developed partnerships and strategies that have helped the program exceed its target enrollment every year.

“She has consistently performed her job duties with the highest degree of integrity and professionalism,” said President Knight. “She is an innovative thinker who continues to evaluate how she can improve processes and procedures to better serve her students. ... Her knowledge and eagerness to learn things that are outside of her normal job responsibilities help to ensure that the customer service that she provides to the public, community partners, co-workers and students is exemplary.”



Felisciana Peralta
receives a Presidential
Coin.

Felisciana Peralta

Felisciana “Felis” Peralta joined Clark College in 2008 as a Multicultural Retention Manager and was recently promoted to Director of the Office of Diversity and Equity.

“In her eight years at the college, she has been a strong advocate and partner on issues related to diversity and social justice, helping to create and support a supportive learning environment for our students,” said President Knight. “She is a champion of equity and inclusion and has played a vital role in the development of the college’s Diversity Plan, Social Equity Plan, and Diversity Center.”

Peralta sits on the Cultural Pluralism Committee, Academic Early Warning Committee, and the Incident Response Team at Clark. On the state level, she has been a leader of the Multicultural Student Services Directors’ Council and its annual Students of Color Conference. In June, she received the 2016 Val Joshua Award, recognizing her leadership in working towards eliminating racism and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all people.



Brenda Shular receives a Presidential Coin.

Brenda Shular

Brenda Shular graduated from Clark College in 1996 and was hired the following year as a purchasing assistant. She currently serves as a procurement and supply specialist in the college's Office of Purchasing and Central Services.

"She is a rock-solid employee who manages an enormous amount of orders in Purchasing in a timely way and with great customer service," said President Knight. "She's played a key role in getting the STEM Building orders processed in time to ensure furniture and equipment is ready for the building's opening."



Mike Silva receives a Presidential Coin.

Mike Silva

Mike Silva graduated from Clark College in 2001 and was hired

as a computer maintenance technician later that same year. He was promoted to an Information Technology Systems Specialist in 2002 and now serves as the supervisor of the Multimedia Department.

Last year, Silva led a collegewide effort to redesign the college's standard classroom technology configuration. Working with faculty and staff, he developed a new design that not only provides additional teaching tools for faculty, but saves nearly \$10,000 per classroom in equipment costs. He has also been part of the effort to make the college's new STEM Building ready for students and faculty.

"Over the past 14 years, he has been in a variety of technical roles providing outstanding customer service and a calm, reassuring voice able to solve the thorniest technical problems," President Knight said. "As the labs supervisor, he hired and mentored hundreds of student workers, preparing many for jobs and life after their graduation from Clark College. In mentoring these students, he clearly demonstrates that we all have a role to play in student success. ... He is an outstanding supervisor, technician, and friend to many on campus."



Prof. Caleb White receives a

Caleb White

Caleb White joined Clark College as a tenure-track welding instructor in 2013 and received tenure in 2016. He holds an associate degree in automotive and diesel technology from Universal Technical Institute and previously worked at Christensen Yachts, where he helped build some of the biggest luxury yachts in the world.

“He has not been at the college for a long time, but he has already made an impact,” said President Knight.

White has worked to redesign the welding curriculum to include more hands-on learning that can be translated directly into the workplace. Each quarter, his students use their skills to create a project. Projects have included aluminum stools for students to use in the welding lab, a large pressure vessel that can be used on job sites, and an aluminum fishing boat that was a star attraction of the college’s display at the 2016 Clark County Fair.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Summer 2016 Classified Staff Excellence Award: Joanne Emel



Joanne Emel

Congratulations to **Joanne Emel**, recipient of the 2016 Summer Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award!

First hired at Clark in 1997, Emel is the Program Specialist 2 for the Office of Instruction (OOI). She is known for her positive demeanor and her outstanding knowledge of Clark. In addition to her regular duties, Emel is an active member of the Emergency Response and Safety Team as well as part of the team preparing the college for the ctcLink transition. In addition, she recently assisted with the R25 conversion to 25Live.

Some of the following comments submitted on Emel's behalf by her colleagues reflect her positive spirit and team mentality:

"Joanne takes a moment to greet each and every person who comes through the door, helping to ensure that the OOI is a welcoming space for the entire Clark community."

"New staff members are enormously grateful for the way in which Joanne is always ready and able to assist when something is unknown or unfamiliar—she has been a huge help in the transition to Clark for new department members. We know we are able to approach her with questions, no matter how seemingly trivial, and she is consistently able to help even if the

question falls outside of her work.”

“[She] is a cheerleader for Clark: She has encouraged new staff members to get involved with campus activities and is always able to provide positive anecdotes about the College.”

“Joanne’s long commitment to Clark, stellar work ethic and excellent level of service are inspiring to her colleagues, and this award is an ideal opportunity for these strengths to be recognized.”

Exceptional Faculty



The 2016 Exceptional Faculty Award recipients are, *left to right*, Joseph Cavalli, Dr. Kathleen Chatfield, Heather McAfee, and Doug Mrazek.

During the 2016 Commencement ceremony, President Robert K. Knight announced the names of the recipients of the 2016 Clark College Exceptional Faculty Awards. The 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.

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:

- Joseph Cavalli, instructor of history
- Dr. Kathleen Chatfield, instructor of business technology
- Heather McAfee, professor of geography
- Doug Mrazek, professor of French

Joe Cavalli, History

Joseph Cavalli has taught history at schools in Croatia, Italy, and Bahrain. He began teaching at Clark shortly after returning to the Pacific Northwest in 2006. For the past five years, he has also served as the director of Clark's award-winning Model United Nations program. He also teaches history through Clark College's non-credit Mature Learning program and at Mt. Hood Community College.

Cavalli says he sees history more as a context for understanding the world than as a rote memorization of names and dates. "It's not about me giving students information," he says. "What I want to impart is the love of learning and the need to be curious."

Students appreciate Cavalli's efforts to make history relevant to their current lives. "I had no interest in history whatsoever until I took his class," wrote one student. "After my first class with him, I was enthralled. Now, history is my

favorite subject and my current major.”

Dr. Kathleen Chatfield, Business Technology and Management

Over the course of her 21 years at Clark, Dr. Kathleen Chatfield has taught a variety of courses, including keyboarding, microcomputer applications, Microsoft Excel, e-commerce, and project management. In truth, however, her influence goes far beyond those subjects. In fact, she has been a part of every online class offered at Clark College through her work as the senior instructional designer for the college’s eLearning Department, where she helps Clark faculty learn how to develop online classes.

“It is a daunting task to guide so many full-time and part-time instructors through all the different learning systems, while also helping them to maintain their unique styles and philosophies of teaching,” wrote one nominator. “Yet Dr. Chatfield manages to accomplish this task.”

Dr. Chatfield continues to teach classes to students as well, saying that this experience helps her better understand the needs and challenges of faculty. This adds up to more than a full-time workload, but Dr. Chatfield says, “I’m doing what I love. I’ve never woken up in the morning and said, ‘Oh no, I have to go to work.’”

Heather McAfee, Geography

Heather McAfee first became interested in geography while working for the U.S. Department of Defense, doing cultural analysis of Iraq that included mapping the civilian population there. “I love geography because it is the most interdisciplinary subject you can study,” she says. “It touches everything, even health—we have medical geography. Recently in my classes, we’ve looked at and mapped the spread of the Zika virus.”

McAfee serves as chair of the Geography Department at Clark;

she also serves on the college's AA Transfer Committee, the Library of the Future Taskforce, and the Learning Communities Taskforce. Additionally, McAfee has worked to create connections between Clark and community organizations, including the Water Resources Education Center and the Vanport Mosaic.

"She made her classroom a comfortable area where every person's opinion and outlook was highly valued," wrote one student. "Her teachings went much deeper than the textbook material. She wanted us to dig deep and relate every lesson to our personal lives and experiences, and it taught all of us so much about the world around us."

Doug Mrazek, French

When Doug Mrazek was job-hunting after receiving his master's degree in French from the University of Illinois in 1978, one of his professors told him that the Pacific Northwest was so beautiful that if he took a job there, "you'll never want to leave."

Those words turned out to be prophetic; Mrazek has devoted 38 years to teaching French at Clark. He has taught generations of Clark students how to conjugate *être*, led dozens of them on trips through France and Quebec, and helped the French Club put on countless events as its academic advisor.

Small surprise, then, that Mrazek received more than 30 nominations for this award this year. "I'm in amazement," he says. "It's a tremendous sense of closure. After a career of 40 years, it's a nice way to move on."

Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley

Spring 2016 Classified Staff Award: Linda Healy



Linda Healy

Congratulations to **Linda Healy**, recipient of the 2016 Spring Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award!

Nominated with input from seven Clark employees, the Advising Program Support Supervisor is described as someone who exhibits an exceptional work ethic and flexibility, as well as the willingness to do whatever needs to be done. She has worked in the Advising Services Department for 10 years, and is commended for bringing a student-centered approach to the front-desk team, as well as a powerful combination of “clear personal investment, professionalism, and heart.” She actively engages in campus-wide events, leadership meetings and discussions, and Advising Services and Student Affairs activities – demonstrating excellence in her own performance and inspiring it in others. She is regarded for her responsiveness and follow through, and is known for her ability to make people feel noticed, valued, and welcomed. As one nominator explains it, “Linda is truly an ambassador for the Penguin Nation, demonstrating consistent, tireless

commitment to the success of students, positive communication, collaboration, and personal investment in Clark College.”

Congratulations as well to this quarter’s other nominees:

Haley Gordon works as the Program Coordinator for the Event Services Department, juggling thousands of reservation requests every year with “ease and precision,” according to her nominator. Gordon is very involved in college activities, works closely with other areas of the college, and has been a key contributor in implementing several process improvements that have benefited the department and increased services to meet the needs of faculty and staff. Her nominator explains that Gordon “continues to impress students, staff and faculty” with her knowledge of campus space and features, allowing her to assist others in finding the right space for their needs. She is described as “gracious and kind,” with a driven and motivated work ethic that is unwavering. Gordon is praised by her nominator for going above and beyond the call of duty, and for her “hands-on” approach, tackling every challenge with a “positive, can-do attitude.”

Manda Levie provides the sole staff support for the Communications and Humanities Division, which comprises nine separate departments. In addition, she supports the College Essentials Department, which serves faculty and students campuswide. Levie is commended for being a “strong and dependable addition to our staff team, who has made great contributions to process improvement and overall team workflow.” Described as a problem-solver, Levie is known for her collaboration, creativity, friendliness and efficiency.

According to one nominator, “Manda deals with issues promptly, professionally and with a spirit that can only be described as positive. She is keenly aware of what’s going on and repeatedly demonstrates her commitment to a good educational environment.” Another nominator sums it up like this: “Manda’s amazing!”

Winter 2016 Classified Staff Award: Rebecca Kleiva



Rebecca Kleiva

Congratulations to **Rebecca Kleiva**, recipient of the 2016 Winter Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award!

Kleiva has provided outstanding services to the college community for the past seven years. She manages the Worker Retraining Financial Aid program, positively impacting the lives of students, and has been a superb contributor to the Workforce Education Services team. She is regarded by her nominators as an “innovative thinker who always goes above and beyond the call of duty to support students.”

Nominators added that, due to Kleiva’s efforts and excellent work performance, Clark College has exceeded its Worker Retraining FTE target, which has resulted in the State Board allocating additional Worker Retraining funding to support the college and students. It has been Kleiva’s knowledge and

eagerness to learn things outside her normal job responsibilities that have ensured the customer service she provides to the public, community and her co-workers is exemplary. One of her Worker Retraining students said, "Rebecca is an amazing agent who goes above and beyond. She made enrolling in your program a piece of cake. She is very professional and has incredible patience and understanding. We are all very fortunate to have her."

Congratulations as well to this quarter's other nominees:

Sherry Smith has been an employee at Clark College for 13 years. She is described as thorough, patient and understanding; working hard behind the scenes to go above and beyond in order to fulfill faculty requests or tasks that at times can seem unattainable. While fostering a welcoming atmosphere, Sherry shows a genuine interest and ability in helping with a multitude of issues. Not only do the students look to her as a mentor, but staff do also. As one nominator explains it, "The STEM unit would not function without Sherry Smith. She is the heart of the unit. She is professional, collegial, and above all always ready and willing to assist. She knows the answer to any question, and keeps track of a plethora of information. I am so very thankful for Sherry Smith, and I know no one more deserving of this honor."

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and repeatedly demonstrates her commitment to a good educational environment.” Another nominator sums it up like this: “Manda’s amazing!”

Presidential Coins



Prof. Kathleen Perillo receives a Presidential Coin from President Knight at the 2016 State of the College address.

In 2007, Clark College President Bob Knight introduced a new honor at Clark College: the presidential coin.

The coin is given to faculty and staff members who provide exemplary service to Clark students, the college and the

community. The honorees are decided by the president and are kept secret until the names are announced—generally on Opening Day in the fall or during the annual State of the College address.

Five Clark College employees received Presidential Coins during his 2016 State of the College address on January 21. They were:



Karen Driscoll, *left*, was congratulated by her colleagues from Economic & Community Development, Tracy Reilly Kelly and Bonnie Peterson. President Knight praised Driscoll as “a great mentor to so many people both inside and outside the Financial Aid Office.”

Karen Driscoll

President Knight characterized Financial Aid Director Karen Driscoll as “the best financial aid director in the state of Washington.”

Driscoll has earned praised as a leader not only at Clark College, but in the state. She has served as the president, vice president, treasurer, and legislative representative of the Washington Financial Aid Association; represented the

state of Washington as the Western Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators board president; served as president and treasurer of the state's Financial Aid Council; and is an active member of the State Need Grant Legislative Group representing community colleges.

"She is an approachable and genuine leader and probably the only person I know who likes to read federal financial aid updates over her morning cup of coffee," said Knight.

Driscoll, who has led Clark's Financial Aid Department for eight years, is retiring later this year.



Maria Masson receives a round of applause with her Presidential Coin.

Maria Masson

Maria Masson joined Clark College in 2014 as Assistant Director of Human Resources and, in the words of President Knight, "hit the ground running."

Masson's role has included providing human resources services to the college community and leading the college's benefits team's efforts to comply with complex and ever-changing regulations. Recently, she was also named the college's Title IX Coordinator. She has also served the college as an adjunct

instructor teaching Spanish.

“She is always willing to help where she is needed and approaches her work with a problem-solving attitude,” said Knight.



Ken Pacheco, *right*, has served as Director of Security & Safety for 12 years.

Ken Pacheco

After a distinguished career in law enforcement in Portland, Ken Pacheco was hired in 2004 as Director of Security & Safety. Pacheco also serves on Clark’s Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment Team, its Emergency Management and Planning Committee, as a Title IX investigator, and as the college’s representative on the statewide Safety, Security and Emergency Management Council.

“He can always be counted on to respond quickly to any incident, day or night, and even on weekends,” said Knight. “He is known for his calm, ‘just the facts ma’am’ approach to his job, as well as for being fair-minded in enforcing the College’s policies and regulations.”



Prof. Kathleen Perillo, center, with STEM Coordinator and biology professor Erin Harwood and Dean of STEM Dr. Peter Williams.

Kathleen Perillo

Biology professor Kathleen Perillo began teaching at Clark in 1999 and was awarded tenure in 2002. She presented on biodiversity in 2008 as part of the college's respected Faculty Speaker Series. She has worked with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in support of western pond turtle recovery activities in the Columbia River Gorge and she is the co-founder and president of the Center for Eco-dynamic Agriculture, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting biodiversity in agriculture.

More recently, Perillo has been leading efforts on native-plant restoration on the main campus, as well as the development of a new environmental science degree.

"Most importantly, with members of the college and Ridgefield communities, she is leading the visioning for sustainability efforts at the North County site," said Knight.

Fall 2015 Classified Staff Award: Vanessa Meyer



Vanessa Meyer

Congratulations to **Vanessa Meyer**, recipient of the 2015 Fall Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award.

Meyer is the Secretary Senior in the Behavioral and Social Sciences unit, and is the sole support for both divisions, which encompasses 10 departments, 21 full-time faculty, and 35 adjunct faculty. Vanessa was nominated with input from 23 Clark employees.

Meyer is described by her nominators as “friendly, helpful, efficient, knowledgeable, innovative and committed.” She is known to be a natural collaborator who lends her talents and skill sets to develop strategies that can replace outdated modalities and allow departments to function smoothly.

Nominators commend Meyer for treating everyone with the utmost

respect and taking on challenges with humor and grace. As one colleague describes it, "I've worked with Vanessa Meyer for over 10 years and her exemplary work ethic has always impressed me. She's organized, knowledgeable, and very efficient. She effectively meets the goals that are set for her, and completes all tasks in a timely manner. It appears that nothing is beyond her ability to accomplish."

Congratulations as well to this quarter's other nominees:

Linda Healy works as Program Support Supervisor for Advising Services and is called the "glue that keeps the office together." Linda is a caring and compassionate leader who leads by example and is the first to support new projects and initiatives. She engages colleagues and staff in sometimes difficult but important conversations; addresses challenges instead of ignoring them, and is a firm believer in continuous improvement. Healy acts as liaison between departments because she is highly respected and well-liked by her fellow colleagues. As one nominator explains it, "She has a way of bringing people together to get a job done. Linda isn't just a cooperative spirit, she is the spirit of compassion and good will and she is a pleasure to work with."

Dan Simonson works for Facilities Services as a Maintenance Mechanic, and is described as an "outstanding team leader for Facilities." He has a strong work ethic; is committed to whatever job he is assigned to; is never without his tools, and is always willing to help when he can. His nominators admire the quality of his work; his calm, steady demeanor, and find his cost-saving suggestions helpful. Simonson is considered to be efficient, knowledgeable and a pleasure to work with. One nominator wrote, "He has a kind heart and it shows in his everyday interactions with everyone."

As Maintenance Mechanic in Manufacturing Technology, **Mitch Sott** is termed "Resident Mr. Fix It" in the bakery. He is accessible and responsive to their needs, and deemed

“indispensable” to the department. Sott is known for quality work and a consistently quick turnaround time for projects. He has saved the department money by being creative and willing to tackle anything asked of him. The tag line in the bakery is “Don’t throw it out, call Mitch. If he can’t fix it, he’ll make a new one.” Sott’s work is not only functional, but also artistic. He is always pleasant and friendly, and he makes his customers feel valued.

Exceptional Classified Staff Awards

Opening Day is traditionally the occasion for announcing the yearly Exceptional Classified Staff Awards, which recognize two classified employees for their contributions to Clark College. Recipients receive a glass plaque and \$1,000, funded through an anonymous donor’s contributions to the Clark College Foundation.

For their “exemplary work performance, outstanding service to the college, a positive and cooperative spirit, and/or special achievements or contributions to the college,” BEECH Unit Operations Supervisor Jeri Kemmer and Facilities Services Maintenance Mechanic Thor Tesdale were named the winners of the 2015-2016 Clark College Exceptional Classified Staff Awards.



Jeri Kemmer

Jeri Kemmer, BEECH Unit Operations Supervisor

Jeri Kemmer is the Unit Operations Supervisor for Basic Education, English, Communication & Humanities (BEECH) at Clark.

The following comment from one of her Secretary Seniors best summarizes Kemmer's exemplary work performance: "Jeri really does go above and beyond when it comes to working at Clark College. She doesn't just do her job. She is constantly exploring ways to make everyone's job easier and she's been instrumental in many changes that have happened within our unit and across campus. She won't simply accept the status quo. If there is a problem, she wants to find a solution that benefits everybody."

In her 19 years of working at Clark, Kemmer has served on numerous committees at Clark and has attended over 300 hours of professional development training in order to benefit herself, her job, and everyone at Clark. One office assistant wrote, "Jeri's work ethics are exemplary and she always has Clark's best interest in mind. She makes all of us better employees. I love working with her."

In addition to her work here at Clark, Kemmer runs an

international nonprofit called Strong Harvest International with her husband, Rick.



Thor Tesdale

Thor Tesdale, Facilities Services Maintenance Mechanic

Thor Tesdale is a Maintenance Mechanic in Facilities Services and has been with Clark College for more than 15 years.

Nominated with input from 10 Clark employees, Tesdale is described as someone who is “always smiling and willing to problem-solve.” One of his nominators remarked, “One of the things I admire most about Thor is his respect for all individuals. Thor’s personality is inclusive and he desires to work together to achieve the necessary job-related outcomes.”

Another nominator wrote, “His energy and enthusiasm are contagious. He creates a positive work climate.”

Other characteristics attributed to Tesdale’s outstanding work performance include responsiveness, collaboration, efficiency, creativity and communications skills. Nominators describe a colleague who responds promptly to all phone and email messages, is always on time for scheduled meetings, and makes

sure all involved individuals understand the decisions that have been made. They say his communication skills are critical to making sure jobs are completed correctly and on time. As one nominator explains, "Even when deadlines loom and tensions mount, Thor's calm and respectful personality is a beneficial addition to Facilities Services."

Other finalists for the award were:

- **Karmel Baldwin**, Secretary Senior, Life Science
- **Guisela Eberle**, Human Resource Consultant 1, Human Resources
- **Ernie Hafso**, Custodian 1, Facilities Services
- **Jeri Kemmer**, Admin Service Manager, BEECH
- **Marianne Luther**, Secretary Senior, Counseling & Health Center
- **Vanessa Meyer**, Secretary Senior, Behavioral & Social Sciences
- **Gail Robinson**, Secretary Senior, eLearning
- **Carmen Roman**, Program Specialist 2, Advising
- **Tia Schmidt**, Administrative Assistant 3, Nursing
- **Susan Taylor**, Program Manager A, International Programs
- **Thor Tesdale**, Maintenance Mechanic 2, Facilities Services
- **Lynn VanHoomissen**, Program Support Supervisor 1, Security & Safety
- **Heather White**, Program Support Supervisor 2, Disability Support Services

The Clark College Foundation instituted the yearly Exceptional Classified Staff and quarterly Classified Staff Excellence awards in 1997 to recognize exceptional staff members. Nominations may be submitted by classified, administrative and exempt staff; faculty; students; alumni; retirees; college trustees; and Foundation directors.