

# Spring 2021 Classified Staff Excellence Award recipient: Damon Grady



Damon Grady

Congratulations to **Damon Grady, Campus Security Sergeant, Security and Safety Services**, recipient of the 2021 Spring Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award!

Damon Grady has been with Clark College's Security and Safety Department since 1997. He served as a Campus Security Officer for 20 years before being promoted to the sergeant's rank in January of 2018. Comments about Grady include:

- "He frequently takes after-hours calls and adjusts his shifts so that his people get the support they need. Managing the schedule for 17 people, half of whom are part-time, to provide 24-hour coverage is a difficult and complicated endeavor."
- "Damon has gone beyond his role. When he noticed the decrease in on-campus staff presences, he purposefully expanded his knowledge on all the student-facing services and learned how they work to best support Clark

students so he would be prepared to answer students' questions during the COVID-19 pandemic."

- "Damon works closely with his subordinates to ensure they have the training and guidance necessary to be successful in their respective roles."
- "Damon responded to a medical call that involved a person with a life-threatening injury. He was quick to respond while properly assessing the situation and keeping those involved safe and calm until EMS arrived."

Congratulations as well to the other Spring 2021 nominees:

- Christy Lewis- Fiscal Technician, Accounting Services
- Jennifer King- Program Specialist, Financial Aid
- Jordan De Van- Program Specialist, Enrollment Services
- Kayla Escott- Program Manager, Financial Aid
- Malissa Pierce- Program Specialist, Transitional Studies Division

## Christy Lewis

Christy Lewis is a Fiscal Technician in Accounting Services. Comments from her nomination include:

- "Christy has served on the ACE Scholarship Committee multiple times, helping to give funds to college members and their families to help make higher education possible."
- "When Accounting converted to a new system, Christy kept a positive attitude and learned to work through the bumps and challenges of change."
- "Christy works with customers to help them understand their accounting-related issues, no matter who they are or their level of understanding."
- "Christy always treats all people with respect and kindness when serving them and working through their request and issues."

# Jennifer King

Jennifer King is a Program Specialist in the Office of Financial Aid. Comments from her nomination include:

- “Jen awards more than 600 students with emergency funds, each term. This spring term, Jen awarded additional funds to students, which means she made 1200 awards. Jen agreed to this overwhelming task in the midst of preparing financial aid packages for fall term—an enormous undertaking. When we have a student who has a significant emergency, Jen works quickly to award that student immediately.”
- “Jen manages multiple tasks, serves on committees, and prioritizes people first in the work that she does. She leads with kindness and a smile and is always a pleasure to work with.”
- “Weekly, she commits significant time and energy to meet the emergent needs of students during an uncertain and stressful time.”
- “Jen’s commitment to creating an effective, efficient program has made a difference to hundreds of student emergency-grant recipients, many of whom report being homeless or at risk of homelessness.”

# Jordan De Van

Jordan De Van is a Program Specialist in Enrollment Services. Comments from her nomination include:

- “Jordan has one of the strongest senses of customer service and how it should be demonstrated. She not only responds quickly to inquiries from students and other departments, she responds happily despite her busy workload.”
- “Jordan is always helpful and understanding when

assisting others outside of her department. Instead of rushing through issues that arise with tracking student grades in the database system, she takes the time to investigate, and assists instructors to better prepare them if the issue were to arise again in the future.”

- “Jordan’s knowledge, expertise and sense of humor always makes working with her a pleasure.”
- “She assists each individual in a way that they can understand the steps of the process and provides them with direction that helps them along further in the process—all with a smile on her face.”

## Kayla Escott

Kayla Escott is a Program Manager in the Office of Financial Aid. Comments from her nomination include:

- “Every task that Kayla approaches is done with the student’s best interest in mind. She goes above and beyond in all aspects of her position, whether that is intentionally meeting one-on-one with the staff she oversees, taking time to schedule an in-depth appointment with a student, or leading numerous project efforts within our office. Every project she tackles is done efficiently and thoroughly in spite of tight deadlines and competing priorities.”
- “Kayla provides outstanding customer service, both directly and indirectly. She intentionally takes time to meet with students in unique and challenging situations. Beyond this, she ensures that any students who interact with the Financial Aid office receive excellent customer service by equipping front desk staff with effective tools to do so.”
- “To encourage comradery and team spirit, Kayla initiated a virtual ‘Spirit Week’ for staff to help keep team spirits and communication up while working remotely.”
- “Kayla has always shown a strong commitment to equity in

all aspects of her work. One example is how she recently began working with Disability Support Services to convert all Financial Aid documents to a format that is accessible for students using reader devices.

## **Malissa Pierce**

Malissa Pierce is a Program Specialist in Transitional Studies. Comments from her nomination include:

- “Malissa had grown the Open Doors program within one year from 10 students to almost 40. She is trying to volunteer with the Vancouver School District Truancy Board so she can understand her students’ needs better.”
- “Malissa actively engages in campus diversity strategies; supports recruitment, retention, completion efforts of students from diverse backgrounds, participates in equitable hiring practices for Transitional Studies department, and Malissa is learning Spanish so she can better support our Spanish-speaking students.”
- “Malissa is a great communicator and works across multiple departments on campus to make sure that every department has the right information and has the opportunity to discuss with her if they need further clarification.”
- “Malissa loves working one-on-one with her students. She is constantly reaching out to other departments for assistance in making her students’ college experience as smooth as possible.”

**About the Classified Staff**

# Excellence Award

The Classified Staff Excellence Award was established in 2005 and recognizes classified staff who have demonstrated exemplary work performance, outstanding customer service, a positive and cooperative spirit and special achievements or contributions to the college community. Through the support of the Clark College Foundation, the recipient will receive a \$400 cash award.

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## Executive Vice President of Operations named



Galina Burley. Photo courtesy of Galina Burley.

Clark College has announced the hiring of Galina Burley in the role of Executive Vice President of Operations. She will begin at the college on July 8.

Burley was hired through a nationwide search. She will be entering a newly created position which oversees

college operations including facilities, business, finance, security and safety, marketing, communications, and auxiliary services.

“Galina brings a breadth of experience and significant skill in leading complex organizations. Additionally, Galina demonstrated her understanding, appreciation and commitment to social equity and inclusion,” wrote Clark College President Karin Edwards in an email announcing the hire to the college community. “This position serves a crucial role at the college, especially as we recover and plan our post-Covid future.”

Burley (pronouns: she/her/hers) immigrated to Vancouver, Washington from Sochi, Russia with her parents in 1991. Her history at Clark College began soon afterward, when she began taking English as a Second Language classes and then went on to earn her associate degree. Burley also holds a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from Concordia University and a Master of Public Administration from Troy University. In addition, she earned certification in High Performing Organizations from the University of Virginia and is a 2012 alumna of Leadership Clark County.

Burley’s previous work experience includes leadership roles at the City of Norfolk, Clackamas County, and the City of Portland. Most recently before joining Clark College, she served as Clark County Parks and Lands Manager. She has received an award for leadership from the American Association of Public Administrators of Hampton Roads; the Golden Ivan Award for her work with the Slavic refugee communities in Oregon and Southwest Washington; the President’s Recognition Award from the Crime Prevention Association of Oregon; and nomination as a Woman of Achievement by Washington State University Vancouver. Burley identifies as Armenian-Russian-American. In her free time, she enjoys reading, volunteering, and spending time with her family.

“It feels very special to return to the Penguin Nation, where I began my educational journey and learned English,” said Burley. “I look forward to sharing my experience and lifelong commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion with our college community. I also hope that my journey will inspire others to join Clark College, where we will help you discover your greatest potential.”

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## Exceptional Faculty Awards



Professor Michelle Mallory is all smiles before Clark College's 2021 Commencement ceremony. *Photo: Clark College/Tarek Kanso*

Six outstanding members of Clark College's faculty have been recognized for their contributions to the college with a 2021 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. This year, Commencement was held on June 17 on Christensen Soccer Field.

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.

Below are this year's Exceptional Faculty members, along with quotes from their nominators:

## **Kayoko Barnhill, mathematics**

"I have been taking Math for Elementary Education courses, and her course is very tailored not just to learning the materials, but learning how to teach each others in class. I have struggled with math my whole life, and her course gave me confidence that not only could I learn it, but I could gain deeper understanding and effectively teach it."

## **Tony Chennault, biology**

"He believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. He encouraged me to keep going, he told me I could do it when I didn't think I could do it myself. He teaches in a way that you understand, even if it's not your strongest subject. He is so inspiring, motivating, and encouraging."

## **Nami Inoue, Japanese**

“When I first began at Clark College, I had a very negative outlook on school based on my previous high school experiences. I decided to take some classes for fun and try out a college environment. Inoue Sensei’s passion for teaching and love for her students was so warm compared to any teacher I’ve had before. She helped me rediscover the love I have for learning and school.”

## **Michelle Mallory, early childhood education**

“To know Michelle is to love Michelle! She is a fierce defender of the learner and believes strongly in meeting the learner where they are at and with respect, dignity and recognition of the learner’s culture and style of learning.”

## **Joshua Patrick, English**

“Professor Patrick has taught me that I should never be ashamed to voice my opinion. He made me feel smart, validated, and taught me how to communicate my thoughts and opinions to others in an effective way to make them listen. He also engraved some very useful critical-thinking skills into my brain that I think will be very helpful throughout the rest of my college experience—but most importantly, I’ll be able to apply these skills to my daily life.”

## **Kristi Taylor, dental hygiene**

“Kristi has been incredibly supportive in a time of great financial uncertainty and worked on behalf of all her students to help us figure out a plan, or make contact with those who could offer us answers and help. She worked to provide all of us with an avenue for covid vaccination if we desired it. She

works tirelessly on our behalf and still manages to answer emails in less than an hour. She's basically Wonder Woman!"



Professor Kristi Taylor, *top row second from left*, stands with faculty, staff and graduates from the Dental Hygiene program at Clark College's 2021 Commencement. *Photo: Clark College/Tarek Kanso*

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## New VP of HR named



Clark College has announced the hiring of Brad Avakian in the role of Vice President of Human Resources. He will begin at the college on June 10.

“We are excited to bring someone with Brad’s breadth and depth of knowledge into this crucial leadership position at the college,” said Clark College President Karin Edwards. “His expertise will be crucial as we begin the complex work of returning to campus after more than a year in remote operations.”

Avakian earned his bachelor’s degree from Oregon State University and his doctorate of law from Lewis & Clark University. For many years he worked as a lawyer specializing in civil rights cases. Later, he served in the Oregon House of Representatives and the Oregon Senate representing parts of northeast Washington County. Avakian also served three terms as Oregon’s Commissioner of Labor and Industries, during which time he was a strong advocate for career and technical education programs, as well as for equity for women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ individuals. Since leaving public service, Avakian has taught Politics and Public Policy for Managers in Willamette University’s MBA program and worked in private practice as a mediator and arbitrator.

“Clark College is a historic school with an exciting and bright future,” said Avakian. “I am so grateful for the chance to join the Human Resources team and broader Clark Community. It’s good to be a Penguin.”

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# 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:

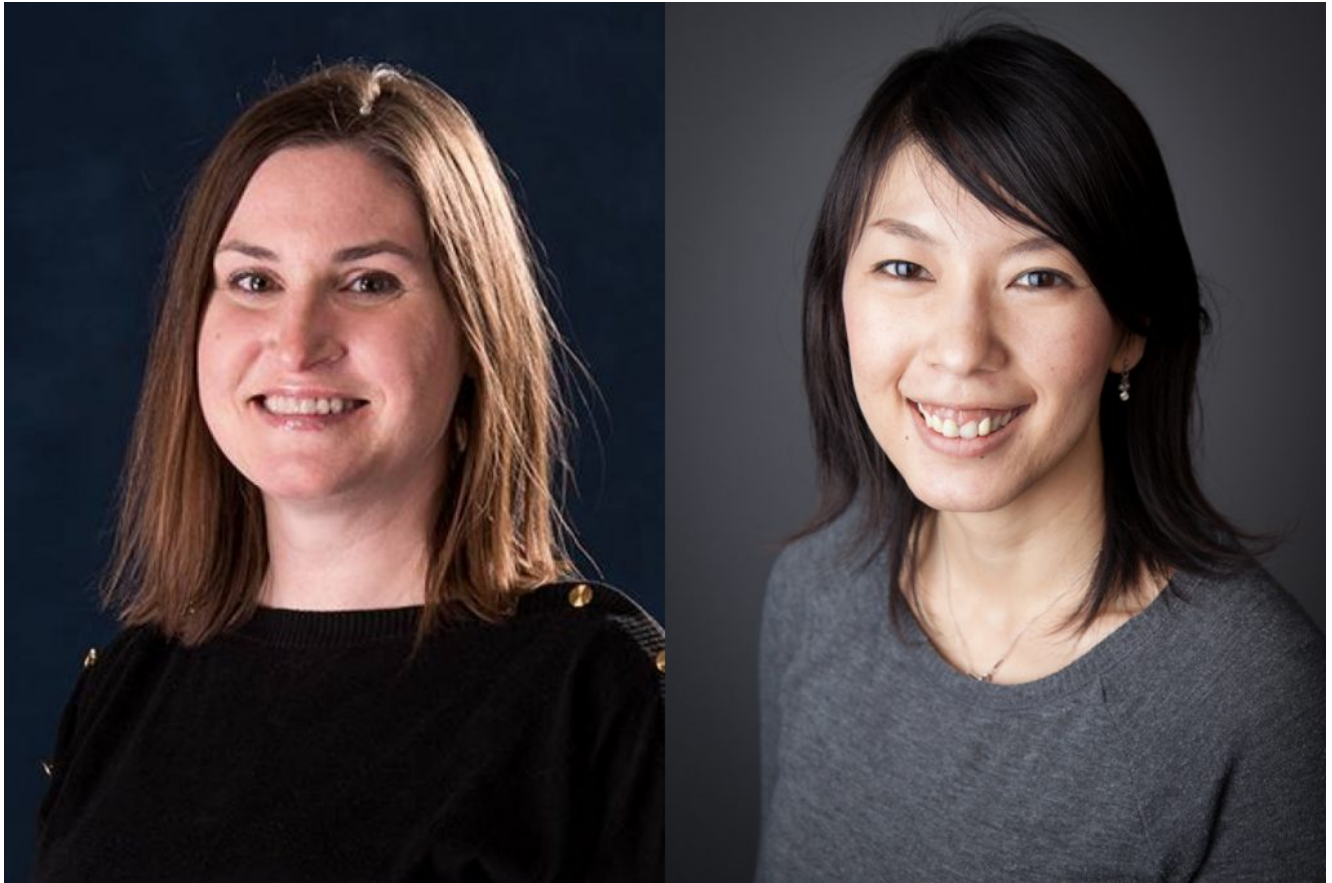
- Rick Bartz, IT Support Technician 2, Information Technology Services
- Lameleanique (Meleani) Bates, Program Manager A, Career Services
- Emily Castle, Secretary Supervisor, Transitional Studies Division
- Chris Chaffin, Program Coordinator, Student Tutoring Services
- John Condit, Media Technician 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.”