

# 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.”
- “Kaliner’s relationships with the Clark County Public Health Department and Clark County Emergency Management have led to a coordinated response to the pandemic.”

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

## About the Exceptional Classified Employee Award

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

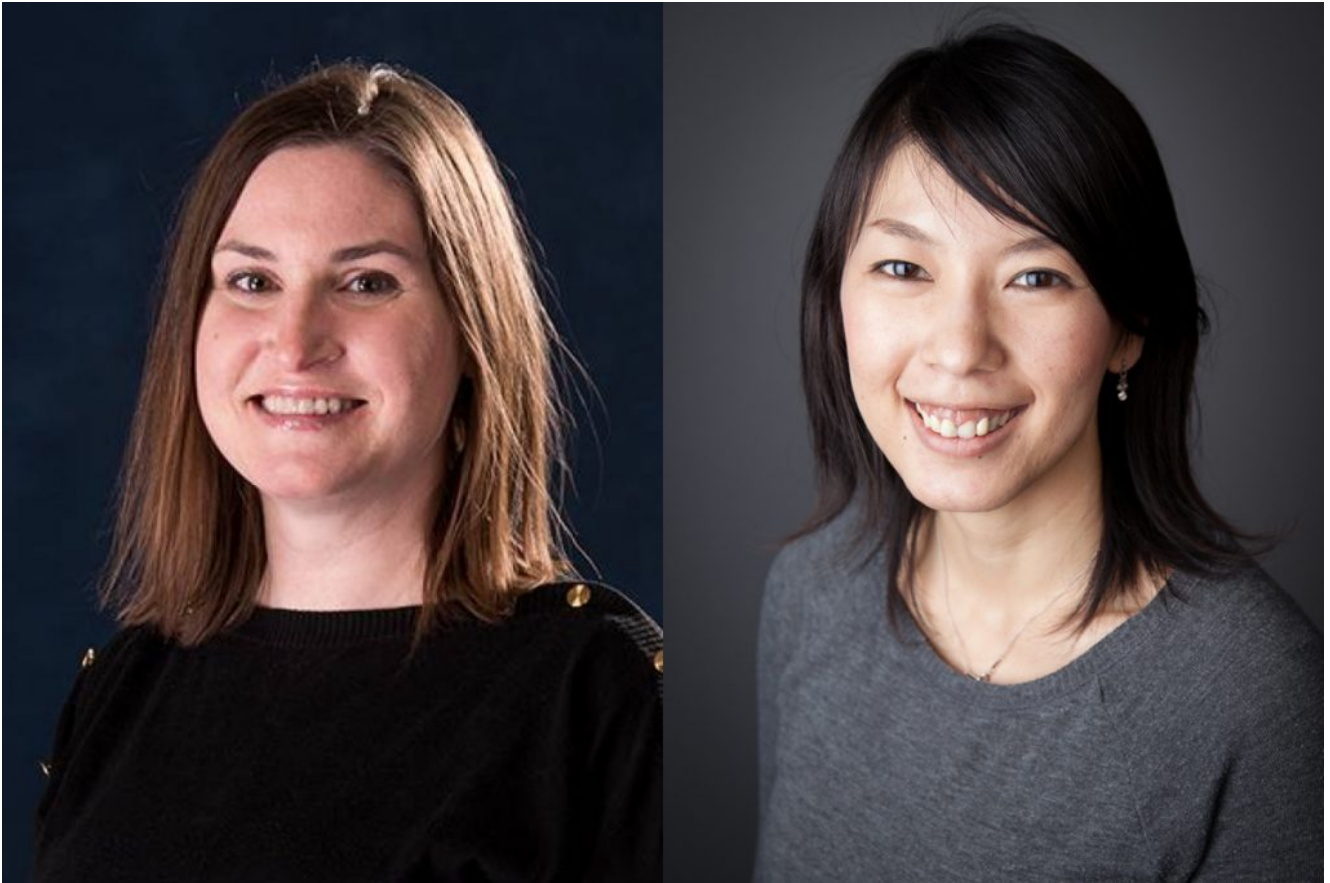
The other finalists for the 2019-2020 awards were:

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

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

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# Administrative Exempt Awards



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

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

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

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

## **About Michelle Golder**

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

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

## **About Eriko Otsuko**

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

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

## **About the Exceptional Administrative Exempt Award**

The Clark College Exceptional Administrative-Exempt Award was

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

The full list of 2020 nominees is:

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

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





Connor Cantrell. *Photo courtesy of Connor Cantrell*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**Winter 2020 Classified  
Excellence Award Recipient:  
Jennifer Stone**



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

As a Program Coordinator for Instructional Design/eLearning, Stone works hard to support the many events her program presents for Clark College and other SBCTC faculty. She is described as someone with strong communication skills that are inclusive, regardless of job or position or role at the college. "Her personal mission is to individualize experiences with kind, non-challenging intentions," wrote a nominator. "She meets with others on campus, creating a personal connection with each individual. For example, when learning how to submit purchase requisitions, she walked across campus to introduce herself in person to the Purchasing department."

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

Faculty members shared the following experiences:

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

emails during the training session so that, by the end, she would have either an answer for them or a confirmed person to contact. This allowed new instructors to focus their time on their students and getting their classes prepared.”

**Congratulations as well to the other Winter 2020 nominees:**

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

## **Connie Anderson, Library & Archives Paraprofessional 4, Library**

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

**Other comments about Connie Anderson:**

- “Connie demonstrates natural leadership abilities and advocates for programming to support student learning including displays, accessible technologies, and staying late to assist in instructional sessions. She has a



problem-solving-oriented approach to doing tasks and has a pleasant personality that attracts people who naturally follow her example.”

- “Connie has been a fierce advocate for students at the Columbia Tech Center for more than 10 years. She has always been an employee and coworker you can count on. Connie works to ensure that everyone who walks through the doors of the iCommons feels welcome.”
- “Her work habits are superior; she adheres to organization goals, is punctual, has excellent time management skills, and highly organized. Connie is an individual who sets a goal and gets the job done. Connie has been a great team player, working well with students, staff, and faculty. She possesses excellent people skills. Connie is able to form admirable relationships with diverse groups at Clark College and strives to understand and respect everyone’s viewpoints and opinions in the workplace. ... She works with the right attitude, emanating enthusiasm, leaving a positive impression on students, staff, and faculty.”

## **Meleani Bates, Program Manager A, Career Services**

Meleani Bates is said to be an extremely kind and understanding person whose mature and supportive attitude increases team functionality. Colleagues praise her for setting aside time to check in with each of her employees to ensure they’re happy in life, successful in their classes (in the case of student employees), if they need additional support in any way, and to provide opportunities for students to acquire skills needed for their future. She facilitates many Student Success Workshops on topics involving employment practices and internships. Most recently, she has developed “Identities at Work” to teach how to honor and embrace different identities in the workplace.

Other comments about Meleani Bates include:

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

## **Peg Estes, Program Specialist 2, Credential Evaluations**

Peg Estes is described as someone who shows initiative, positive spirit, adaptability, participation in college activities, and willingness to support not only students, but also the greater college community. She is also known as being highly knowledgeable and accurate in her work evaluating applications for program completion at Clark College. Described as “the rock of the Credentials Department,” Estes has been a key figure in the department’s switch to ctclink—not just learning the new software herself, but teaching it to others in the department.

Other comments about Peg Estes include:

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

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

## **Mira Olenin, Program Specialist 2, Financial Aid**

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

Other comments about Mira Olenin:

- "Mira does far more than what her job requires. She really stepped up when we converted to CTCLink. Whenever there was a question, Mira is there to help. This led to our entire department feeling more confident. Mira is always willing to help. She explains complex financial aid processes with patience. She is clearly an expert in her field, but still manages to explain it in a way anyone can understand. Great communication with staff and students."

# Amani Tovar-Brackett, Program Coordinator, Advising

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

Other comments about Amani Tovar-Brackett include:

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

# Jennifer Ward, Program Manager A, Planning & Effectiveness

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

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

Other comments about Jennifer Ward:

- "Jennifer takes pride in all of the work that she does. Her exemplary work performance is combined with her greatest strength—working with people. Whether it is one-on-one or with a group of people, Jennifer always does her best to provide people with the information they need to do their work. If Jennifer does not know

the answer, she researches and contacts others until she understands the process and can provide that feedback.”

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



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

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

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

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



college.

This year's Exceptional Faculty members are:

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

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



Dr. Don Appert

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

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

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

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



Adam Coleman

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

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

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

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



Molly Lampros

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

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

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

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

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



Ken Luchini

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

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

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

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

**Thomas Stevenson, professor of communication studies**



Tom Stevenson

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

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

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

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



Lauren Zavrel

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

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

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

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

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## **Welcome, Professors!**



Cuisine professor Aaron Guerra, seen here at the beginning of fall term, was one of eight faculty members to receive tenure



on March 11, 2020.

Eight outstanding educators are the newest members of the tenured faculty at Clark College. Rhea Becke (career and academic preparation), Chris Boucher (diesel technology), Amy Laurel Bratton (communication studies), Alison R. Dolder (professional baking and pastry arts), Becky Engel (American Sign Language), R. Earl Frederick Jr. (cuisine), Aaron Guerra (cuisine), and Dr. Nick Macias (computer science and engineering) were all granted tenure during the Clark College Board of Trustees meeting on March 11. They will be honored at a college reception in fall 2020.

Tenure is awarded by the college's Board of Trustees based on professional excellence and outstanding abilities in their disciplines. The granting of tenure is based on the recommendations of tenure review committees to the vice president of instruction, which are then forwarded to the president, who presents a final recommendation to the Board of Trustees. Recommendations are based on self-evaluations, tenure review committee evaluations, student evaluations, supervisory evaluations, and peer evaluations. The final decision to award or withhold tenure rests with the Board of Trustees.

## **About the faculty members**

### **Rhea Becke, Career and Academic Preparation**

Rhea Becke holds a Bachelor of Science degree in biochemistry and molecular biology from Marquette University and a Master of Arts in Teaching degree from University of Alaska Southeast. Before entering the teaching profession, she worked at the Juneau Alliance for Mental Health. She has experience teaching in public schools in both Alaska and Oregon, teaching English in Japan, teaching chemistry at Clark College, and teaching pre-college courses at both Mt. Hood Community

College and Clark College.

Becke joined the faculty of Clark College in 2012. She currently serves as lead instructor for her department's Math Applications course, a member of the Transitional Studies Standards Committee, and the Transitional Studies' liaison to the Mathematics Department. Additionally, she is part of the first cohort of the college's BUILD program, a yearlong employee development program providing intensive training in power, privilege, and inequity.

Rhea Becke described her teaching philosophy in the following terms: "My classroom is a learning community where students come as they are to actively engage with math in contextualized situations in order to become critical thinkers and problem solvers."

## **Chris Boucher, Diesel Technology**

Chris Boucher earned his associate degree in diesel technology from Bates Technical College in Tacoma, Washington. He also studied criminal justice at Santa Rosa College in Santa Rosa, California. He has industry-specific work experience at Peterson Caterpillar, Cummins Northwest, Pacific Detroit Diesel, Cummins Intermountain, and Smith Detroit Diesel.

"My teaching philosophy is fairly straightforward, in that I believe we learn by doing," said Boucher. "Putting our hands on a task forces our mind to focus on the task at hand. As a teacher you must also demonstrate credibility to the student, which will reinforce their confidence in your qualifications. If the student doubts your experience, it will reduce your effectiveness."

## **Amy Laurel Bratton, Communication Studies**

Amy Laurel Bratton graduated summa cum laude from the

University of Memphis with a bachelor's degree in communication studies. She earned her master's degree in communication from Portland State University. Her teaching experience includes Portland State University, Portland Community College, and Clark College, as well as being a certified yoga instructor who trains other yoga instructors in public speaking and communication skills.

Bratton joined Clark College in 2005 as an adjunct and began a full-time position in 2011. She served as facilitator of the college's Service and Leadership in the Community (SLIC) Club and is currently active in assessment work at the departmental and program level. She regularly engages in professional development opportunities at the college, especially on the topics of eLearning education and power, privilege, and inequity.

"My teaching philosophy highlights the play between theory and practice," Bratton said. "I encourage students to discover new communication concepts and to see how these concepts apply to their daily lives. As an educator, I am continually inspired by the opportunity to empower community college students with their own communication skills."

## **Alison R. Dolder, Professional Baking and Pastry Arts**

Alison R. Dolder is an alumna of Clark College, where she earned her associate degree in baking management. She has a long professional career in the baking industry, including positions at multiple bakeries in Massachusetts and New Hampshire as well as the award-winning Pearl Bakery in Portland, Oregon.

Since joining the faculty at Clark College, Dolder has become active in the local community, participating on the Fort Vancouver High School Advisory Committee and teaching cooking and baking skills at the Boys and Girls Club of Vancouver. In

2015, she was received the college's prestigious Exceptional Faculty Award.

Dolder says she strives to “engage, encourage, and support” her students: “I try to get the students excited about what they are learning and encourage them to dig right in and get their hands wet. I observe their learning styles and tailor my instruction to suit each students' style.”

## **Becky Engel, American Sign Language**

Becky Engel holds a Bachelor of Science degree in sociology from Oregon State University and a Master of Education degree in Deaf education from Western Oregon University. Prior to joining Clark College as an ASL instructor, she taught at the Washington School for the Deaf.

Since coming to Clark College, Engel has served as the advisor to the ASL/Signing Penguins student club, ASL Advisory Committee for Southwest Washington high schools, a judge for the Washington School for the Deaf's Flying Hands ASL Literature Competition, the Emergency Building Coordinator Committee, and the Social Equity Task Force. Additionally, she participated in the creation of the college's 2015-2020 Social Equity Plan and is a member of the first cohort of the college's BUILD program, a yearlong employee development program providing intensive training in power, privilege, and inequity. In 2017, she received the college's prestigious Exceptional Faculty Award.

“Due to my background in Deaf Education, I'm fortunate to have experience working with students from a wide background,” said Engel. “As a result, I adapt my teaching style to fit students' needs. I am always willing to stop, circle back, and try a different teaching approach, knowing the other students would most likely benefit as well.”

## **R. Earl Frederick Jr., Cuisine Management**

R. Earl Frederick Jr. earned his Associate in Applied Science degree in culinary arts from Johnson & Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island, his Associate in Applied Science degree in baking and pastry arts from the Oregon Culinary Institute, and his Bachelor of Science in business administration from Warner Pacific College in Oregon. A Certified Executive Chef through the American Culinary Federation, he has held chef positions in the culinary services of Walt Disney World, Club Med, Job Corps, Nike, and Intel.

Since coming to Clark College, Frederick has helped launch the college's Cuisine Management program and provided input on the design of its new McClaskey Culinary Institute. He serves as the program's ServSafe Certified Instructor and Registered Proctor, ensuring students meet the rigorous requirements of this national food-safety program.

"I lead by example and lecture from facts," Frederick said. "I tell my students that you'll receive exactly what you put into the class. My motto: Don't talk about it, *be* about it!"

## **Aaron Guerra, Cuisine Management**

Aaron Guerra has decades of experience as an executive chef, instructor, and education and restaurant consultant. After graduating from the Western Culinary Institute with an associate degree in culinary arts, he worked as an executive chef at Portland's Harvest Grill and The Restaurant at the Historic Reserve in Vancouver, Washington. He was nominated for the American Culinary Federation's "Chef of the Year" in 2007, 2011, and 2014, and was named ACF Pro Chef Oregon's Chef of the Year in 2014. His teaching experience includes Le Cordon Bleu/Western Culinary Institute in Portland, Oregon;

Northwest Culinary Institute in Vancouver, Washington; and Clark College.

At Clark, Guerra helped launch the college's Cuisine Management program and provided input on the design of its new McClaskey Culinary Institute. He serves as department chair and is active in his community, founding a nonprofit called the Culinary Champions for Charity that raises money for local organizations. He also participates in a national group of leaders in higher education called the Deans and Directors Retreat.

"My teaching philosophy and approach is simple," said Guerra. "I am a conduit of my experience, skills and knowledge from 30 years of being a chef to my students, fellow instructors and campus. My job is to help prepare the next generation of cooks and chefs and to help make myself, my coworkers and those I interact with on campus better with every opportunity."

## **Dr. Nick Macias, Computer Science & Engineering**

Dr. Nick Macias earned both a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and a master's degree in computer science from George Washington University in Washington, D.C.; a master's degree in mathematics from Duke University in Durham, North Carolina; and a doctorate degree in electrical engineering from Virginia Polytechnic University. Along with his industry-specific work experience in both the private sector and as a civil

servant, he has teaching experience at Duke, George Washington, Virginia Tech, Northwest Academy, Portland State University, Washington State University, and Clark College.

Dr. Macias joined Clark College in 2011. Within his department, he is actively involved in Guided Pathways, course assessment, community outreach, and student advising. He

serves as faculty advisor for the Computer Science and Engineering Club; outside of Clark College, he volunteers with the Regional Arts and Culture Council. In 2017, he earned Clark College's prestigious Exceptional Faculty Award.

"I believe learning happens through the search for answers, so I teach by raising questions in the material, in the subject, in ourselves," said Dr. Macias. "I encourage students to make and embrace mistakes, as these raise the exact questions best suited to one's own learning."

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



Bryton Williams

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

An Administrative Assistant 3 for Business & Health Sciences,

Williams is said to be someone who greets every situation with a smile and a positive attitude and who has made many contributions to the college's CCW location.

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

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

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

Others had this to say about Bryton:

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



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

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

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

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

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

Other comments about Brenda:

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

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

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

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

Other comments about Everett:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**“Hands down the media team took the initiative to assist us**

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

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

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

Peg Estes is described as someone who shows initiative, positive spirit, participation in college activities, and willingness to support not only students, but also the greater college community. She is also known as being highly knowledgeable and accurate in her work evaluating applications for program completion at Clark College.

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

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

Other comments about Peg Estes:

- “Based on the positive impact that she has had with regard to communicating proactively, it resulted in the Credentials Department adopting and adapting Peg’s communication timeline as the departmental standard. This resulted in the department workflow being more proactive in communicating with students and within a much shorter window of time. Students are also proactively provided evaluation results, and then provided with updates each term, whereas before it was only in the term they planned to complete and subsequent terms afterwards. I appreciate Peg’s willingness to try new things in the name of supporting students to achieve their educational and career goals.”
- “I have worked in the same office as Peg for about three years now and I am grateful to work with such an outstanding employee. Within the last three years, I have never witnessed such tireless dedication to doing a job and doing it well, such as I have seen with Peg. She has picked up other’s work without question, she has thoroughly examined policy and procedure to ensure best practice for employee and students alike, and she has done it all with a smile on her face. Her commitment and positive attitude throughout endless change and turnover in this department has been a prime example of what an ideal employee looks like. I am honored to work with her and I could not think of a more respected and deserving person to receive such an award. #teampeg”
- “Prior to going live in the new system, Peg was given the ‘Jill of all Trades’ certificate of appreciation by Susan Maxwell to recognize her for all the hard work that she put into data validation. According to Susan, ‘Peg spent many hours in the lab, was always willing to

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

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

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

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

Other comments about Mitch Sott:

- “Mitch is a master fabricator and effortlessly creates

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

few.

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

Other comments about Neil Fykerud:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## Penguins are champion walkers



Oswald and some Clark College Walktober participants pose with their 2020 trophy.

For the first time, Clark College has won Walktober, a 31-day walking challenge between Clark College, Lower Columbia College, and Washington State University Vancouver.

Participants used fitness trackers and mobile apps to track steps and entered their daily activity on a Walktober log. The school with the most steps, Clark College, is presented with a trophy (and bragging rights).

The following three

Clark winners will be awarded prizes for taking the most steps:

- **1<sup>st</sup> place: Sydney Brahmavar from Environmental Science** with 843,756 total logged steps
- **2<sup>nd</sup> place: Aaron McPherson from Facilities** with 826,264 total logged steps
- **3<sup>rd</sup> place: Travis Kibota from Biology** with 720,732 total logged steps

The **Departmental Walktober Challenge Winner** was Environmental Science, with an average daily total of 27,218 logged steps.

## **Official Walktober results**

- **1<sup>st</sup> place: Clark College** with an average daily total of 9,694 logged steps (based on 68 participants).
- **2<sup>nd</sup> place: Washington State University – Vancouver** with an average daily total of 9,399 logged steps (based on 48 participants).
- **3<sup>rd</sup> place: Lower Columbia College** with an average daily total of 8,391 logged steps (based on 57 participants).

## Now What?

- **Consider participating in the Free Fall Fitness Fun Run or Walk** on Tuesday, November 26 at 1:15 p.m. in front of Cannell Library.
  - **Keep up with your activity levels** by setting Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, and Timely (S.M.A.R.T.) goals, scheduling time on your calendar to move, and finding an accountability partner.
  - **Come to an event.** You can find upcoming events by visiting the **TLC Event Schedule**. Remember, we follow a more holistic model of wellness, so there are various ways to engage throughout the year. Check out the **Six Dimensions of Wellness** for more information.
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## VP for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion announced



Rashida Willard

Clark College announced today November 14, 2019 that Rashida

Willard has accepted the position of Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the college effective immediately.

“Rashida has earned the respect of her peers, our students and the community as a strong and effective leader,” said Clark College Interim President Sandra Fowler-Hill who made the appointment. “She has created and developed structures, spaces and programs to help remove barriers for students and she’s leading the effort to create a culturally competent campus to help students succeed. The college is thrilled to make this announcement.”

Willard joined Clark College four years ago as Operations Manager of Administrative Services. She has taught as an adjunct professor, has served as Director of Operations and Risk Manager, and for the past 17 months has served as Interim Associate Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

During that time, she has developed, aligned and integrated new and existing initiatives and procedures into a cohesive platform to foster a more inclusive, welcoming and diverse college community.

“I am deeply invested in this work, and am passionate about creating inclusive, safe and welcoming environments where *all* students have maximum opportunities to succeed,” Willard said. “I am eager to move forward in community and collaboration, building on our team’s momentum of the last several months.”

Willard was a participant and graduate of the Social Justice Leadership Institute for the Washington State Community College System in 2017-2018 and was nominated as a Real Hero by the Learn Here Project in 2018. She is also a part of the Vancouver Police Chief's Diversity Advisory Team.

Willard holds a master's degree in Business Administration, a bachelor's degree in Business Administration, and an associate degree in Organizational Dynamics. She is currently attending Concordia University, pursuing a doctorate in Education with a concentration in Professional Leadership, Inquiry and Transformation. Her current research explores strategies that faculty and staff employ to create culturally engaging spaces for students of color attending predominantly white institutions and how campus racial climate affects their persistence and completion rates. This research will be used to examine and identify strategies to close the equity gap among students of color in higher education.

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# Clark College names new Athletic Director



Clark College recently announced that Laura LeMasters has accepted the position of athletic director at the college.

LeMasters joined Clark College as assistant athletic director in 2016 and most recently served as interim athletic director since June. She has a master's degree in Kinesiology with an option in Sport Management from California State University – Long Beach and a bachelor's degree in Sport Management with an emphasis in Communication from WSU Pullman.

LeMasters brings a wealth of experience in student success, college athletics, marketing, operations, and recreation from her prior roles at Occidental College, Central Wyoming College, and Lewis & Clark College.

“Laura is a strong student advocate and has played an important role in ensuring our compliance with state, federal and NWAC regulations,” said Vice President of Student Affairs Bill Belden. “Laura is committed to continuing our focus on academic and athletic excellence in our athletic department.”

“I am grateful and honored to be selected for the role of athletic director at Clark College,” said LeMasters. “I hope to continue to build the level of commitment to academic and athletic excellence as well as create a student experience for athletes, coaches, staff and the entire student body, that will enhance the pride of Penguin Nation.”

## **About Clark College Athletics**

Penguin Athletics has a proud tradition of competitive success within the Northwest Athletic Conference (NWAC). The department offers 11 intercollegiate sports programs: Baseball; Men’s and Women’s Basketball; Men’s and Women’s Cross Country; Men’s and Women’s Soccer; Softball; Men’s and Women’s Track & Field; and Women’s Volleyball.

Penguin Athletics places great emphasis on academic performance as well as athletic achievement. The program offers student athletes the opportunity to reach their educational goals, as well to pursue meaningful athletic accomplishments. For more information, visit [www.clarkpenguins.com](http://www.clarkpenguins.com).

*Photo: Clark College/Jenny Shadley*