

# 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.

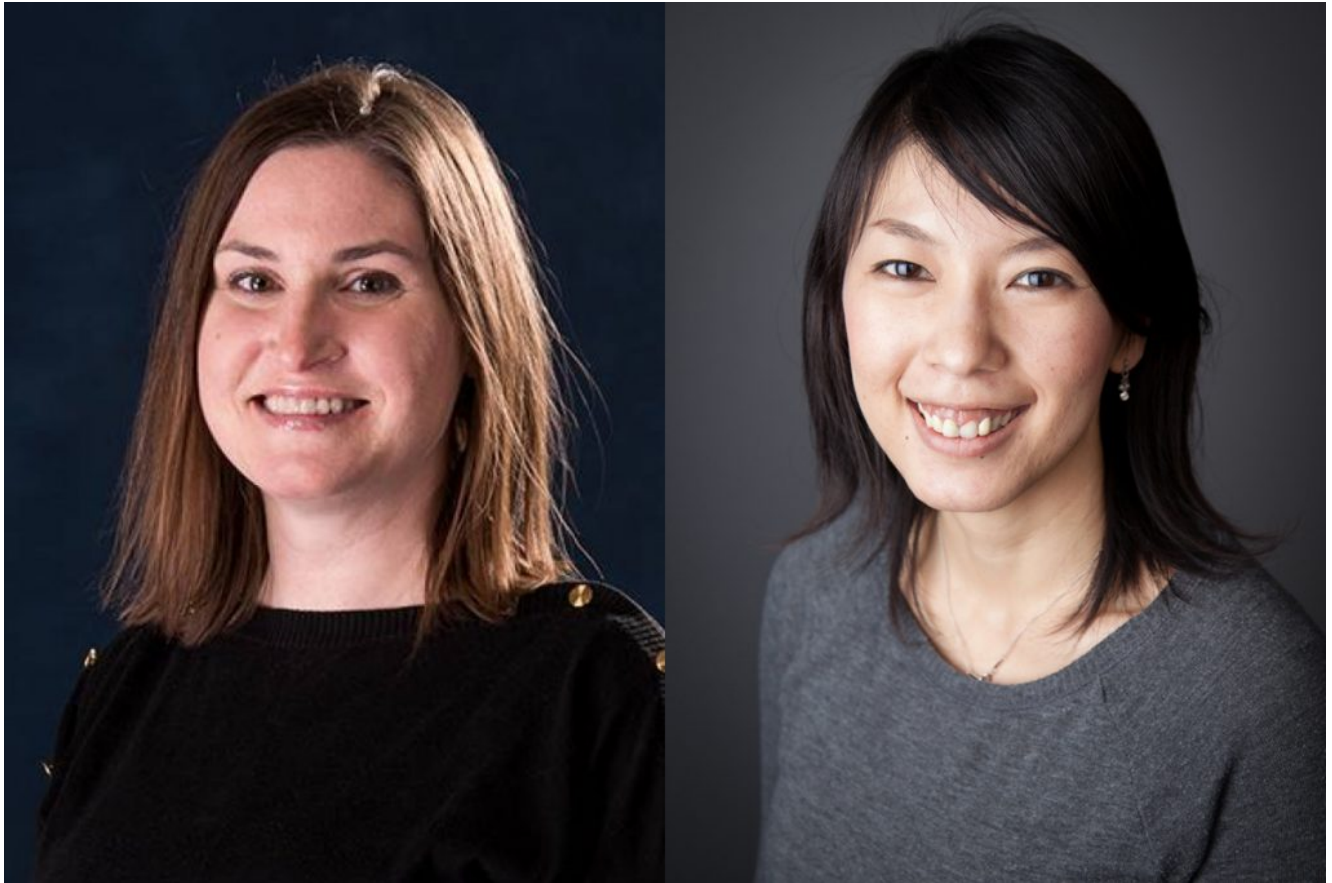
The other finalists for the 2019-2020 awards were:

- 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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## **Sharing their stories**



*Clockwise from top left, Nathan Webster, Rashida Willard, Tyler Monk, and Erykah Weems spoke during an online public forum called "Listen to Learn & Lead: Stories from our Black Community." Photo courtesy of VanTalks.*

Two members of the Clark College community shared their experiences of being Black in Vancouver during a public online event held on July 30. Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion **Rashida Willard** and marketing professor **Nathan Webster** were among four speakers who told their stories during "Listen to Learn & Lead: Stories from our Black Community."

The event was co-presented by VanTalks, Vancouver's version of TED Talks that inspire change, ideas and innovation, and by Ready to Rise, which supports students of color and first-generation college students.

The other two featured speakers were Tyler Monk, Clark County director of Ready to Rise, and Erykah Weems, who grew up in Vancouver and recently graduated from Central Washington University. She is passionate about supporting and elevating the voices of girls and young women of color who have been impacted by adverse childhood experiences.

At the start of the forum, emcee Monk reminded the audience: “We have four Black folks sharing our experience. We do not speak for all Black folks.”

## **Nathan Webster**

Webster, who grew up in Vancouver and graduated from Mountain View High School, talked about how it felt growing up in a sea of white people. During his presentation, he shared class photos in which he is the only Black person.

“I’ve always been that ink spot in that bottle of milk,” he said. “I don’t see enough Black males in leadership roles in Vancouver. Can we show some love to our Black males? So many of my students at Clark have never had a Black male teacher until they took my class.”

Webster also addressed how he feels being a Black male during an era when police brutality toward Black males is rampant. Too often, white people encounter a law-abiding Black male who is doing nothing illegal and minding his own business, but the white person calls the police.

He said, “White folks, please don’t be scared of Black men. I don’t want to be an endangered species.”

## **Rashida Willard**

Willard says she grew up in pre-gentrified Northeast Portland in a close-knit Black community that included “cookouts, church ladies and aunties sitting on the porch watching out.” Later, she and her husband and their growing family were priced out of their Portland community. After moving to Vancouver, where housing prices were more affordable, she started looking around for other Blacks and asked herself: “Where are they?”

Willard spoke about the need to pay attention to her actions

and words in Vancouver's stores, medical offices, restaurants and her workplace. She talked out her internal monologue when she's in a store: Keep your hands out of your pockets or people will think you're stealing. Her list of "don'ts" was long and included paying attention to her clothing and hair.

She told a story about a time she was grocery shopping when a white stranger asked her to control her child. The woman was pointing to someone else's Black child.

She told the audience, "I don't own all the Black kids in Vancouver!"

On another trip to the grocery store, the cashier asked Willard whether she was going to use her EBT card to pay for her groceries. Willard told the audience that she doubted the cashier asked white shoppers that same question.

After many negative encounters in Vancouver, she said, "I started to wonder where I belong."

She spoke about the need for more local leaders who are not white: "In Vancouver students need to see people of color in leadership positions."

During the Q&A after the presentations, an audience member asked: What's the biggest mistake white allies make?

Willard answered: "Be an ally when the cameras aren't rolling. True allyship is what you are doing when nobody is watching."

She added, "If you're a white person called out by a person of color, listen to them. Believe Black folks."

The event is viewable on the VanTalks YouTube channel.

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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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## **Equity work in action: Work-It Wednesdays**



Members of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion take a moment with the Office of Instruction's Karen Foster and Dr. Sachi Horback at a college event.

The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) is reaching out to programs and departments at Clark College to offer equity development support and training every Wednesday, calling the program **"Work-It Wednesday."** It's open to all college employees, departments and groups that want help with ongoing equity work. The program is designed to be flexible to help employees infuse equity principles into a program, project, initiative, or effort at any stage in the process.

To better understand the program, we asked early adopters at Clark on their experience with Work-It Wednesday.

# At the Library: Connor Cantrell, Interim Resource Supervisor Sharing

**Clark College:** *Can you provide information on the program, project, initiative, or effort that needed ODEI's guidance/input?*

**Connor:** We met with ODEI multiple times during Summer and Fall 2019 to organize social equity training for our department in the library. All four of the FTEs in our department (Connor Cantrell, Amanda Brown, Tasha Robertson, and Connie Anderson) in the planning and the entire department (including FTEs, 1050s, and student employees) have participated in the training program. It consists of weekly reading and reflection activities and occasional presentations.

**Clark College:** *What was the process? How did it impact your project? What did you learn?*

**Connor:** We originally had planned on a one-time presentation, but quickly realized the program needed to be integrated more closely into our department's operations. By our second meeting, we had drafted an outline of a presentation designed to set up a weekly reading and reflection activity. Rosalba [Pitkin] attended our October 2019 presentation and provided feedback that informed our future training. Since then, we have met with ODEI several times as we encountered roadblocks. We always left with an equitable solution. As a result, we were empowered to implement a program that fits our department's needs and connects to the college's equity initiatives.

**Clark College:** *Did your time with ODEI staff impact your outlook or decision-making for future work?*

**Connor:** Our WiW sessions equipped us with the tools to begin

making changes in our workplace. Although we are classified staff, we realized we essentially would be “teaching” our department coworkers and student employees we supervise about equitable practices. We did not feel qualified to take on this teaching role. However, ODEI taught us how to prepare our department for these sometimes-difficult conversations by creating shared norms and how to incorporate active learning principles with our student employees by creating feedback channels during our activities. We have utilized the strategies ODEI gave us to help us engage coworkers in conversations about equitable practices.

**Clark College:** *Would you like to add anything else about Work-It Wednesday?*

**Connor:** We are grateful to ODEI for all their assistance and guidance. Everyone in our department (and many other employees and library patrons) have benefited directly from ODEI’s guidance. Since we started discussing this project in August 2019, both the college and the library have experienced significant and often stressful changes. Leading our discussions and decision-making processes with racial equity has provided clarity and has minimized harm as we navigate these changes and everyday systemic barriers. Additionally, we feel that explicitly affirming our commitment to racial equity and to serving systemically non-dominant folks significantly has improved our workplace, and especially for our student employees.

## **At Child and Family Studies: Michele Volk, Director**

**Clark College:** *Can you provide info on the program, project, initiative, or effort that needed ODEI’s guidance/input?*

**Michele:** We are revising our department’s communication and conflict resolution policy and process for our staff and

family handbooks at Child and Family Studies, for accreditation and practical application. Of course, we encourage direct, open and respectful communication. However, like all departments, we often work with people who have many perspectives, a range of experiences, different views and even conflicts. It is important to have a model that encourages a safe space where all voices are heard, valued and respected during a potentially emotional situation.

We started asking for interest and input within our department. Using that input, I reviewed mission and values, researching about conflict resolution and social justice, and began developing our model. Our goal is a conflict resolution modeled that honors all parties and has the potential to repair relationships. I hoped that working with WiW would reduce communication barriers, examine whose voices are heard, and to consider other views and lived experiences. We realized the value in having another lens examine our language. Words matter.

**Clark College:** *What was the process? How did it impact your project? What did you learn?*

**Michele:** ODEI staff are excellent at helping you tease out your goals, the intent, how the policy, procedure or process may be perceived, to consider how it impacts others and possible ways to make it equitable and accessible for all employees. The team asked insightful, reflective questions that spurred us to think more deeply, both individually and collectively. It made me look for systemic barriers within this model and process. And also, to reflect on other policies to consider revisiting, and to seek input from stakeholders. To have three to four people, very knowledgeable, with rich collective experience helped me slow down and work toward a meaningful and equitable policy and process. I look forward to our department's next step in Fall: rolling out our new communication and conflict

resolution policy that supports the values of being in relationship in the early care education setting.

**Clark College:** *Did your time with ODEI staff impact your outlook or decision-making for future work?*

**Michele:** Yes. WiW and the BUILD program have helped me to reflect and to consider how and when my own bias and systemic roots might come into play. This intentional planning helped me put aside the sense of urgency and to focus on being intentional and to consider many more layers than I would have previously. After meeting with ODEI, I also found myself examining language with more curiosity and intent. Going forward, I will use Clark's equitable decision-making tool as a routine part of my work and decision making at CFS.

**Clark College:** *Anything else you'd like to add about Work-It Wednesday?*

**Michele:** ODEI is a place of learning. They meet you where you are with warmth and genuine care for our work and our impact on students and employees. WiW is a comfortable place to dig into uncomfortable conversations—and to grow our skills and knowledge as staff, instructors, and leaders. Many thanks to **Alyssa, Rosalba, D, Melissa, and Rashida** for bringing this vital program to campus!

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## **In support of social justice**



**Clark College is responsible to identify and dismantle systemic racist systems and build equity into everything we do.**

Message from Clark College Board of Trustees:

In recent weeks, a long overdue awakening and acknowledgement has taken place across the country. We have witnessed the senseless murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and others who have lost their lives to racism. The cumulative trauma of these and hundreds of years of overt and systemic racism weighs heavily on communities of color and hold us all back as a society.

As the board of Trustees:

- We are in solidarity with the College in standing with those who stand up against hate, state violence, and racial inequities; and we affirm our commitment to social justice and equity.
- We acknowledge the disproportionate impact of this trauma on our faculty, staff, and students of color. We hear you; you matter and you belong here.
- We hear the voices of Clark's students when they say



“Let our Voices Be Heard”, when they declare “Racism is Alive”; and we share in their hopefulness for the future. We hear you; you matter and you belong here.

- We recognize that words can initiate change but action is what secures change. With that recognition we acknowledge our unique governance, policy, and fiduciary role and commit to listening, identifying and dismantling racist systems and policies, and ensuring that the *Policies and Procedures of the Board of Trustees* are consistently performed with an equity lens.

In solidarity, Clark College Board of Trustees

Approved and Adopted June 10, 2020