

## Awards for Excellence honor staff members who go above and beyond

University Communications  
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The contributions of University staff members often reach well beyond job descriptions, and this year, employees are being honored for their work in professional development, diversity, community service and more.

The 2020 Awards for Excellence are recognizing employees working in areas ranging from immunobiology to Indigenous entrepreneurship. The awards recognize achievements of University Staff in four categories: the Billy Joe Varney Award for Excellence, individual, team and department.

The awards are sponsored by the **Classified Staff Council** <sup>[1]</sup>, the **Appointed Professionals Advisory Council** <sup>[2]</sup> and the **President's Cabinet** <sup>[3]</sup>.

This year's winners are below.

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**Billy Joe Varney Award for Excellence** <sup>[4]</sup> | This award recognizes someone with a career of service to the University of Arizona and the community who loves the University and acts in the spirit of Billy Joe Varney, who served as associate vice president emeritus for planning and budgeting and retired in 1988 after 30 years of service to the University in various roles.

### Joan Timeche

Executive Director, Native Nations Institute for Leadership, Management and Policy at the Udall Center for Studies in Public Policy

Timeche joined the **Native Nations Institute** <sup>[5]</sup> in 2001. She focuses her work on strategic economic development training and founded the institute's **Native American Youth Entrepreneur Program** <sup>[6]</sup>. Timeche works at "one of the cutting edges" of the University's efforts to increase awareness of and respect for different cultures, and "to make the University a place where diverse views, backgrounds, perspectives and experiences are valued and validated," one nominator wrote. "She does this better than any university administrator I have encountered in over 40 years in academia." Another wrote, "She embodies – and conveys to those who work with and for her – that you matter, and that she will do everything she can to make sure nothing in the system holds you or the mission of the work back."

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**Individual Awards for Excellence** <sup>[7]</sup> | These awards recognize individual staff members for outstanding achievements.

### Patricia Barcelo Sanders

Senior Program Coordinator, Department of Surgery

Barcelo, who joined the College of Medicine – Tucson in 2016, helps coordinate the department's International Research Fellowship and Surgical Critical Care Fellowship programs. One nominator praised Barcelo's efforts in helping with food and transportation for fellowship candidate visits, noting "none of this is in her job description." Another cited her contributions to the community "through holiday gifts for neglected children and improving Spanish speaking for healthcare workers for the benefit of their patients."

### Nicole Bergier

Prevention Research Coordinator, Department of Health Promotion Sciences

Bergier, who began working at the University in 2001, serves as coordinator of the **Canyon Ranch Center for Prevention and Health Promotion** <sup>[8]</sup> in the **Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health** <sup>[9]</sup>. One nominator called her "an invaluable asset and inspiration to our students and staff" while another praised her leadership of the Healthy 2 B Me summer camp for children in underserved communities.

### Nichole Guard

Senior Program Coordinator, Department of Spanish and Portuguese

Guard, who joined the University in 2008, oversees the Department of Spanish and Portuguese's administrative functions, "embodies the virtue of excellence and is most eager to assume responsibilities beyond her job description in order to make our department, college and University the gold standard in university administration," wrote one nominator. Another called it "impossible to envision how our department would operate without her."

### Angela Hackett

Manager of Administration, School of Government and Public Policy

Hackett, who started at the University in 2008, provides support to six directors and helps manage four undergraduate and four graduate degree programs. "She is a person who gets things done even when others are not aware that something needs to be initiated," said one nominator. Members of her staff said they considered her to be "our example, our strength and our superhero."

#### **Toni Holloway**

Principal Applications Systems Analyst/Developer, Student Admin Systems Group

Holloway, who oversees website and database development for the Student Admin Systems Group, joined the University in 1990. One nominator praised her consistency in "fully committing herself to a project – pulling together representatives from disparate offices to gather information, build consensus and discuss implementation options."

#### **Maria Schuchardt**

Senior Program Coordinator, Lunar and Planetary Laboratory

Schuchardt has worked at the Lunar and Planetary Laboratory since 1991. In her position, she manages collection of planetary-related materials and helps those who want to use those materials. One nominator said she "saves the day repeatedly" for researchers and graduate students reporting research results. Others cited her work helping oversee popular events like **Summer Science Saturday**<sup>[10]</sup> and **Science City**<sup>[11]</sup> during the Tucson Festival of Books.

#### **Peter Scorgia**

Enrollment Management Systems and Communication Director, Admissions and New Student Enrollment

Scorgia, who joined the University in 2014, oversees the office's customer relationship management system and communications with prospective and incoming applicants. In one nomination letter, the writer praised Scorgia's "outstanding achievement in the workplace, exceptional contributions toward efficiency and effectiveness of operations, and special efforts in promoting workforce diversity." Another cited the "tremendous effort he exerts to provide opportunities of professional development for his employees."

#### **Mark St. Onge**

Utilities Services Director, Facilities Management

St. Onge was hired at the University in 1996, and currently oversees areas including utilities, facility project management and building automation. "Mark is far and away the best leader, manager and mentor that I have had the opportunity to work with," one nominator said. "He goes to great lengths on a daily basis to instill a positive, supportive, and inclusive culture in our department." Another praised his efforts in starting a Toastmasters club within Facilities Management, saying it has helped improve communication and leadership skills among team members.

#### **Jennifer Uhrlaub**

Associate Research Scientist and Laboratory Manager, Department of Immunobiology

Uhrlaub, who joined the University in 2008, focuses her research on immune determinants of increased susceptibility to acute and chronic viral infection with age. "In addition to her administrative help, she is also a fantastic researcher and a great scientific resource," one of her nominators said. "Her experience, knowledge base and problem-solving skills are a great asset for the whole department." Another wrote, "Over the last 7.5 years, I cannot think of a single time when Jen did not go out of her way to help me or my lab."

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**Team Awards for Excellence**<sup>[12]</sup> | The Team Awards for Excellence recognize outstanding team achievement.

#### **Biosphere 2 Water, Atmosphere, and Life Dynamics Team**

**Members:** Doug Cline, Jason de Leeuw, Jane Fudyma, Jia Hu, Bonnie Hurwitz, Juliana Gil Loaiza, Tim McMullen, Laura Meredith, Wei-Ren Ng, Malak Tfaily, Jana U'Ren, Joost van Haren and Connor Youngerman

The **Biosphere 2**<sup>[13]</sup> team was recognized for a **campaign**<sup>[14]</sup> to understand what will happen to rainforests as global climate change progresses and they are stressed by drought and warmer temperatures. "The months-long campaign worked perfectly" and enormous amounts of data were collected, one nominator said. "The whole process will clearly enhance our understanding of our world and will add to the understanding that the UA is a special place with great teams, students, staff and faculty." Another nominator credited the team with making "a significant contribution to the University by forging new and innovative research pathways."

#### **Office of Budget and Planning Team**

**Members:** Megan Arriaga, Ravindra Bhat, Veronica Chu, Carol Corry, Zachariah Hoffman, Matthew Kennedy, Cindy McHenry, Garth Perry and Adriana Prado

This team member was recognized for its work in implementing new budget and planning systems, tools and processes while continuing to perform normal functions. One nominator said team members have been "more than willing to take on tasks outside their individual expertise" during implementation. Another commended the team for keeping a "positive attitude and sense of humor" throughout the process.

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**Department Award for Excellence** <sup>[15]</sup> | This award recognizes departmental excellence in the management of people and resources.

### **Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology, College of Science**

In nomination letters, the department was praised for diversity of ideas, perspectives and approaches. "We believe faculty, staff and students from diverse backgrounds bring distinctive life experiences and unique perspectives to scholarly inquiry, scientific problems, and interdisciplinary investigation – all of which are crucial to understanding our world and to resolving issues affecting all of humankind," one nominator said. A student nominator wrote, "While a lot of other classes on campus are information-driven, MCB classes teach you how to think logically, and that is an incredible skill to learn both in the pursuit of scientific research but also as an invaluable life skill."

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