Employees Honored for Service, Creativity, Positive Attitude

University Communications
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Fifteen employees will be honored at this year’s University of Arizona Awards for Excellence ceremony.

"Surprise patrols" notified the winners last month by catching them unawares in their offices and cubicles and presenting them with giant checks as their co-workers many of whom had nominated them watched.

The videos taken during those visits will be played Thursday at a formal ceremony to honor all the recipients.

The awards, formerly called the Staff Awards for Excellence, are presented annually by the UA Staff Advisory Council, the Appointed Professionals Advisory Council, the Shared Governance and Campus Community Advisory Committee and the Office of the President. They are designed to recognize employees who go above and beyond the call of duty in their jobs, whether it’s by putting in extra hours, initiating innovative programs or helping to create a positive environment.

The awards are among the most prestigious that staff or appointed personnel can receive.

Awards are given in three categories, recognizing individual employees and teams on campus. The following people will be honored at this year’s ceremony. (Click here to view a photo gallery of the winners.)

University Awards for Excellence
Awarded to multiple benefits-eligible staff or appointed personnel for outstanding workplace achievements. Winners receive $1,000 each.

Holly B. Brown, senior academic adviser in the Department of Computer Science, has taken on extra duties, including the mentorship of students in the Women in Computer Science club. She also had helped establish a sense of community and home for women starting out in the computer science program, according to one of her nominators. Brown also started a Facebook page to make important deadlines available for students, and she organizes the Ambassadors program, which supports students going into the community to promote the computer science major. In addition, she was the main force behind the "Technology in Art Show," for which she organized advertising, solicited contributions from students and arranged for judging. Her nominators said Brown is a "shining example of what the Award for Excellence is all about."

Gail Browne, executive director of the UA Poetry Center, successfully managed the process of planning, designing and building the award-winning Helen S. Schaefer Building
that houses the Poetry Center and Humanities Seminars programs and is one of only three such centers in the nation. Active in the UA community for more than 10 years, Browne is curator of the poetry offerings for the Tucson Festival of Books and advises on the festival's selection of volunteer coordinators. She also advises on the design of the festival's new Literary Awards and Masters Workshop program. Her nominator says she "has a true gift for seeing an employee's nascent talents and strengths, and then encouraging the employee to develop those strengths through greater responsibilities and specific projects." Browne announced several months ago that is stepping down from her post, effective June 30.

Kim Menezes, administrative associate in the **Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry** [8], has worked at the UA for almost 20 years and is a supportive supervisor and pragmatic manager who is available for help or advice beyond normal working hours, according to one of her nominators. She helped smooth the transition that merged chemistry and biochemistry into one unit and tackles every situation with a positive attitude. Menezes also works as the program coordinator for Regents' Professor Jeanne E. Pemberton, who praised her as a "good citizen" with a "considerable amount of highly personalized attention to detail." He added that Menezes does not seek the spotlight for herself but is content to stay behind the scenes to get a job done. Her nominators say "integrity" is a word often used when describing her character.

Meghan McKenney, program coordinator, senior, in the **Office of Scholarships and Financial Aid** [9], has impressed her co-workers and supervisors with her energy, efficiency, willingness and creativity, according to her nominators, who describe her as having a "cohesive spirit" that brings people around her into her circle and gives her area a sense of connectivity. She mentors staff and supervises and encourages them to learn new tasks and obtain their advanced degrees. One nominator said McKenney is "unencumbered with worries of rank and pay grade, status or recognition. She works beyond and beneath her pay grade with equal aplomb."

Walter Morrow, applications systems analyst/developer, senior, in the **College of Agriculture and Life Sciences** [10], is a well-known "data detective" who has detailed knowledge about UA data in the old and new UAccess systems. But just as important as his knowledge is the way he interacts with others, according to his nominators. He has worked at the UA for 20 years and is always willing and able to help his co-workers, regardless of their level of knowledge or experience. Morrow is a quiet but positive person whose service extends into the community, where he is an election volunteer and children's soccer referee. He also works with "Operation Deep Freeze" â€“ an emergency plan for opening overflow shelters to provide beds for the homeless on nights when the temperature drops to 35 degrees or to 40 degrees with precipitation â€“ and opens his home to international students. His nominators say he is a "consummate gentleman."

Carmen Ortiz, assistant director for finance and administration in the self-supporting **Center for English as a Second Language** [11], is responsible for the business side of CESL, leading all efforts relating to admissions, room scheduling, identifying and setting up funding structures for specialized programs, and managing the abundant flow of paperwork and day-to-day operational challenges. She ensures everyone around her receives adequate attention. One nominator said Ortiz "will drop everything, smile, and give that person her full attention and deal with their request immediately." She offers students guidance and support and is sensitive to the anxiety international students often feel when they first start their studies in the United States.
Elizabeth Sandoval-Marchand has worked as an academic adviser for five years in the Department of Psychology, where colleagues characterize her as a helping professional. She advises a large number of psychology majors but always makes time to help when someone needs it, according to her nominators. Sandoval-Marchand created the Minorities in Psychology program in partnership with a graduate student to promote diversity and inclusion in psychology, and she mentors an Arizona Assurance scholar, an American Indian Alumni Club member and a YWCA/Pima Community College Partnership mentee. She is described as organized, determined, warm and funny and "a gift to the University of Arizona."

Liz Sawyer, administrative assistant in the English department’s undergraduate advising office, is described in her nomination as a community builder who "does a supremely outstanding job in all aspects of a very complex and far-ranging program." Her nominators describe her as an unassuming person who goes about her work without fuss or drama, and say students respect her willingness to help even when it's not in her job description. She works well beyond normal hours to ensure that students can register for classes within a complex system of prerequisites, resulting in an office that is a "calm, efficiently run haven of academic integrity and diversity where students and faculty alike feel welcome."

Maria Aguayo Telles, program coordinator for the Confluencenter for Creative Inquiry, supervises, coordinates and enhances the work of subordinates, board members and other University colleagues. She developed and coordinates the Confluence Innovation Campus Lecture Series and serves on the Hispanic Women's Council and the National Latino Children's Institute. During the 26 years she has worked at the University, Aguayo Telles has earned bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. "As a first-generation, nontraditional, underrepresented student working full time and keeping a family, this speaks to her commitment, dedication and perseverance," said her supervisor, Javier Duran, director of the Confluencenter.

The Billy Joe Varney Award for Excellence
Awarded to one benefits-eligible employee with at least 15 cumulative years of employment at the UA to recognize a career of dedicated service. The winner receives $1,500.

Leo Enfield, principal IT manager in the College of Engineering, is described as one of the most collaborative employees in the college and is considered the go-to guy for any University-related computing effort. He is "truly an exceptional example of an individual committed to working with and supporting others," according to his nominators, who added that he "guides a highly skilled team of computer technology gurus and keeps abreast of all technological advances in computing software and hardware." Because of this, the college is usually one of the early adopters for any campus IT initiative. He "never misses the forest for the trees; he has a wonderful talent for perceiving both at once," one of his nominators said. Enfield helps people get their basic job tasks completed and provides professional development support to the IT team. Outside work, Enfield has been a volunteer for more than 20 years for Top Dog, an organization dedicated to teaching people with physical disabilities how to train their own service dogs. (Click here to read a story about the selection of Enfield for this honor.)

The University Team Award for Excellence
Awarded to teams of three or more people committed to a common purpose or goal at the UA. Each team receives a $1,500 prize to share among its members.
The Arizona Health Sciences Library Exhibits Committee â€“ Mikel Bates, Nga Nguyen, Mary Riordan, Jeanette Ryan and Jose Solorzano â€“ wins a team award for its contribution to the educational mission of the University through its use of educational exhibits that also explore issues of diversity and ethics. The committee is responsible for identifying, planning, creating and publicizing a variety of educational exhibits in the Arizona Health Sciences Library [17]. Team members are noted for bringing a variety of thought-provoking and challenging exhibits to the campus, publicizing them in the community and exposing local middle school and high school students to the interesting and educational exhibits. For example, to enhance the learning opportunities surrounding “Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race” [18],” the Exhibits Committee partnered with the College of Medicine Program in Medical Humanities [19] and the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona to sponsor the exhibit. At its opening reception, Tucson Mayor Jonathan Rothschild spoke, as well as Holocaust survivor Klara Swimmer. The team also invited Norman Fost, a medical ethicist from the University of Wisconsin, to give a seminar. “Thus the team is not only providing an educational opportunity to the campus,” the nominators wrote, “but also reaching out to the community.”

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