



## Staff Appreciation Awards: Part I

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Each year we solicit nominations for three different categories of professional staff awards—Performance Excellence Awards, Extra Mile Awards, and Star Heel Awards. One of our strategic planning priorities for this year was the development of recognition and monetary awards for EPA professionals. For the first time we have expanded the number of awards in each category to include them. The nominations closed a couple of weeks ago and we had a record number. Many thanks for taking the time to nominate one or more of your colleagues. The selection committee has finished its work and the award winners will be announced at a **luncheon from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Monday, April 12**. Special thanks to the committee members: Tom Thornburg, Jennifer Henderson, Cindy Lee, Jill Moore, Brian Newport, Bill Rivenbark, Jan Simmons, Anna Terry, and Faith Thompson.

I had a chance to read all of the nominations. They were so inspiring that I wanted to share some excerpts from the nominations with you, which I will do here and in my next blog post. I'm not identifying the nominees for a variety of reasons, and the following passages are drawn both from award winners and from many who were not selected this year. I was struck by the fact that the following descriptions apply to so many of our employees, and not just the person who was nominated. Read them and you will see what I mean.

“ . . . understands and promotes our mission, bringing enthusiasm, curiosity, intelligence, and humor to her work.”

“She encourages teamwork on projects and considers the needs of clients, faculty and staff in the process.”

“ . . . is open to new ideas and suggestions and prides herself on being efficient and effective. She carries a substantial workload with grace.”

“We are blessed at the School with a top notch staff full of overachievers and highly talented individuals.”

“ . . . has brought enormous energy and creativity to the School's strategic planning process in a variety of ways.”

“ . . . is not content with the status quo. She strives to identify things that need fixing or can be done better, and then goes above and beyond the norm to make improvements happen.”

“ . . . is approachable yet professional, sweet yet commands respect, and is easy-going yet utterly efficient.”

“ . . . exemplary work habits in his attention to detail, his follow-through on assignments, and his ability to go beyond normal expectations.”



“ . . . is always prompt, accurate, and organized and her attention to detail is outstanding and definitely helps me complete my job better.”

“ . . . is always open to discuss how to implement the out of the ordinary when the School has the opportunity to take advantage of an innovative idea (i.e. “if this is what you want to do, we will do our best to make it happen” instead of “I have never heard of this happening before so I doubt it is possible”).

“ . . . an amazing person, and, to me, makes work a better place simply because he's here. He's always in good spirits, he's always doing everything he can to help us meet the needs of our customers and clients, and he's always striving to learn more that we can do to not only meet those needs, but consistently exceed them.”

“One would be hard-pressed to find an individual at the School who takes to heart the concept of teamwork more than . . .”

“ . . . provides thoughtful, prompt feedback and is willing to dedicate time to problem-solving should that be necessary. . . . has an amazing work ethic.”

“ . . . professionalism, positive attitude, and kind nature illustrates what is best about the School of Government.”

“ . . . positive approach not only helps his coworkers feel personally successful, but also saves time and consequently money for the School through excellent resource management.”

“ . . . has boundless energy and does a great job tapping into outside funding sources for his spectrum of initiatives.”

“I often ask her about tasks that I think may be looming ahead only to discover that she has already completed them.”

“ . . . a strong communicator, a cheerful and passionate School supporter, and a dependable colleague. We should strive to be more like her.”

“ . . . listening and offering ideas, helping with tasks when someone is overwhelmed, offering improvements, and filling in for others.”

“ . . . has an uncanny ability to get to the root of the issue on all projects that come his way and effortlessly navigates any issues he faces.”

“ . . . is highly respected by her peers. She has a great can-do attitude when dealing with new or difficult situations when they arise. All of this with a smile on her face.”



“ . . . is quite willing to share credit for her accomplishments and is generous in acknowledging contributions made by others. And while modesty is a virtue, I have seen . . . allow others to accept praise that she rightly deserves—and with a smile.”

“ . . . has taken to the project with energy, good humor, and creativity.”

“ . . . work product is impeccable, she never misses a meeting or a deadline, and she keeps all of us on track.”

“ . . . is not the program manager assigned to help me, but she is unfailingly helpful if I need to make an ‘emergency’ request for assistance. She is also always friendly and cheerful—a welcome plus!”

“One reason it is a pleasure to work with . . . is her strong commitment to our mission and her strong sense of responsibility to make the best contribution she can to that mission. I see how deeply she cares that our clients are treated well before, during, and after events. I have never heard her complain, though I know at times it would be justified.”

“ . . . has had to use many creative problem-solving skills for assisting on developing the curriculum, organizing presenters, responding to unusual needs of participants, and coordinating with faculty mid-course changes.”