

2023 Models of Excellence Program Awards

Models of Excellence

Honoree: The Admissions Visitor Center Team

The Admissions Visitor Center Team embraced the pressures and uncertainties of COVID by developing new applications of existing technology to continue to give virtual real-time, student-led tours throughout the pandemic. They navigated the many protocols and challenges related to COVID by creating an on-campus, best-in-class, welcoming atmosphere that is consistently rated by visitors as among the best college visits they have experienced.

First Name	Last Name	School or Center
Thomas	Bergstrom	Provost's Center
Maya	Smith	Provost's Center
Andrea	Zaleski	Provost's Center

Honoree: Brian Bayes, Perelman School of Medicine

Brian Bayes, Sr. Data Manager at the Palliative and Advanced Illness Research Center, is critical to the scientific development, implementation, and success of every trial and study conducted at the Center. He has pioneered new ways for Perelman School of Medicine researchers to partner with Penn Medicine to use electronic health record data for research.

Honoree: Krista Cortes, Student Services

Krista Cortes, Director of LaCasa Latina: The Center for Hispanic Excellence, goes above and beyond their assigned responsibilities to further connect with students, staff, faculty, and community members. Their approach to analyzing problems and willingness to provide constructive feedback, coupled with their constant desire for learning, inspire staff to reach beyond expectations. They teach to lead and motivate with love – honoring students along their journeys.

Honoree: Division of Finance Racial Justice and Inclusivity Working Group

The Division of Finance Racial Justice and Inclusivity Working Group focuses on developing a culture of anti-racism, inclusion, and belonging, which has become an integral part of the daily culture within the Division of Finance. From staff programming and training to a diversity, equity, and inclusivity book club, this group aims to actively dismantle racism and provide a culture of acceptance and belonging for employees at Penn.

First Name	Last Name	School or Center
Patrice	Allen	Division of Finance
Sarah	Boyer	Division of Finance
Maria	DeOliveira	Division of Finance
Russell	DiLeo	Division of Finance
Evelyn	Ford	Division of Finance
Joseph	Gibbs	Division of Finance
Amy	Hooper	Division of Finance (continued)

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Honoree: Division of Finance Racial Justice and Inclusivity Working Group		
First Name	Last Name	School or Center
Margaret	Kip	Division of Finance
Richard	Le	Division of Finance
Jeff	McCray	Division of Finance
Elizabeth	McNamara	Division of Finance
LaNeeshia	Morman	Division of Finance
Kristy	Owen	Division of Finance
Michelle	Presbury	Division of Finance
Imani	Price	Division of Finance
Yuri	Rayford	Division of Finance
Paul	Richards	Division of Finance
Sherell	Rutland	Division of Finance
Bethany	Schell	Division of Finance
Heather	Seitz	Division of Finance
Celestine	Silverman	Division of Finance
Travis	Smale	Division of Finance
Eric	Soto	Division of Finance
Hillary	Stein	Division of Finance
Eric	Stewart	Division of Finance
Raina	Stewart	Division of Finance
Paul	Weidner	Division of Finance
DeAnna	Weise	Division of Finance
Amanda	Yeager	Division of Finance

Honoree: Hoag Levins, Wharton School
 Hoag Levins, Managing Editor at the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics, consistently demonstrates a deep commitment to elevating the Institute. He amplifies the work of Penn faculty and trainees through his exemplary skills as a writer, videographer, and photographer. He approaches his work with curiosity, energy, and integrity.

Honoree: Safiya Shabazz-Evans, Perelman School of Medicine
 Safiya Shabazz-Evans, Manager of Administration and Finance for the Division of Hematology and Oncology, courageously and generously stepped forward to take a leadership role in organizing and executing a strategic plan to address structural racism in our community. She facilitated town halls, created an ongoing forum for discussion regarding clinical and professional encounters with racism, and started a mentoring program for staff.

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Honorable Mention: Accommodated Testing Center Team		
The Accommodated Testing Center Team worked collaboratively, mid-pandemic, to advocate and develop a state-of-the-art, 21 st -century academic testing center equipped to support a diverse range of learning accommodations and student needs.		
First Name	Last Name	School or Center
Monica	Alexander	Facilities and Real Estate Services
Casey	Boss	Provost's Center
Robert	Butler	Student Services
Barbara	Cavanaugh	University Library
Amy	Collins	Provost's Center
Mark	Dingfield	Division of Finance
Sharon	Douglass	Student Services
Laurie	Hall	Student Services
Jane	Holahan	Student Services
David	Maute	Facilities and Real Estate Services
Douglas	Mcgee	University Library
David	Nerenberg	University Library
Jillian	Powell	Provost's Center
Hannah	Rutledge	University Library
Robert	Sadoff	Provost's Center
Shawmeron	Seal	Provost's Center
Sharon	Smith	Student Services
Aaron	Spector	Student Services
Yuan	Yao	Development and Alumni Relations

Honorable Mention: Eating Concerns Team		
The Eating Concerns Team, an interdisciplinary treatment team of specialists from Student Health and Counseling (SHAC), works tirelessly to address eating issues and body image concerns facing students across the Penn campus and community. The team regularly treats countless students who present with a wide array of concerns.		
First Name	Last Name	School or Center
Isra	Abuyounis	Health and Wellness
William	Adelman	Health and Wellness
Diana	Bainbridge	Health and Wellness
Yuliis	Bell	Health and Wellness
Mary	Brennan	Health and Wellness
Batsirai	Bvunzawabaya	Health and Wellness
Margarita Clara	Capistrano	Health and Wellness
Brittan	Davis	Health and Wellness (continued)

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Honorable Mention: Eating Concerns Team		
First Name	Last Name	School or Center
Heather	Frost	Health and Wellness
Bramble	Heidt	Health and Wellness
Phil	Meilman	Health and Wellness
Sonya	Meora	Health and Wellness
Julie	Mullany	Health and Wellness
Nicole	Nardone	Health and Wellness
Elizabeth	Nobis	Division of Recreation & Intercollegiate Athletics
Nicole	Otto	Health and Wellness
Maria	Pellecchia	Health and Wellness
Rachel	Reis	Health and Wellness
Vanessa	Stoloff	Health and Wellness
Yacob	Tekie	Health and Wellness
Leslie	Thompson	Health and Wellness
Deborah	Westerling	Health and Wellness
Derik	Yager-Elorriaga	Health and Wellness

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Pillars of Excellence

Honoree: Samantha Fromm, School of Veterinary Medicine

Samantha Fromm, Supervisor and Technician in the Veterinary Clinical Laboratory, is the lead technician extraordinaire who can troubleshoot and handle all doctor, student, and technician questions with alacrity. She cheers up a room with her playful quips and bright personality. Her work ethic and joy are infectious. Her colleagues seek to emulate her dedication to ensuring quality results, excellence in patient care, problem-solving abilities, tenacity, scrupulous work ethic, and outstanding character.

Honoree: Rebecca Tamayo, Student Services

Rebecca Tamayo, Administrative Coordinator for the Graduate and Professional School Advising Team at Career Services, sets the standard for excellence in a student-facing role through her responsiveness, resourcefulness, unflagging kindness, and professionalism. With exceptional efficiency and attention to detail, she manages letters of recommendation for medical and dental school applicants, provides prompt, friendly, and clear communication, and proactively makes improvements to address issues.

Honorable Mention: Lauren Swain, Student Services

Lauren Swain, Operations Support Coordinator at the Weingarten Center, plays a central role in the delivery of academic support and disability services. She supported a rebranding process, the adoption of an online scheduling and data management platform, a move to a new campus location, the onboarding of new staff members, and DEI discussions that resulted in updated team standards. Lauren was also the point person facilitating the successful transition of the Weingarten Center Annual Disability Symposium to a virtual platform.

Honorable Mention: Shennell Tyndell, Residential and Hospitality Services

Shennell Tyndell, Customer Service Assistant Residential Operations, possesses an enthusiasm and focus that allow her to create constructive solutions. She streamlined move-in processes and communication between conference managers and trades staff, guaranteeing summer maintenance in her fully occupied residential community without delay. Her empathy and dedication to producing positive outcomes through selflessness are inspirational.

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Model Supervisor

Honoree: Sheila Pierson, Perelman School of Medicine

Sheila Pierson, Associate Director, Department of Translational Medicine and Human Genetics, is the backbone of the research team and a dedicated, supportive leader. She leads in the front and supports from the back, as well as fostering a collaborative and safe environment. She pushes forward lifesaving research for rare disease patients every day while bringing opportunities for personal growth and development to her team members.

Honoree: Charles Rejonis, Wharton School

Charles Rejonis, Chief Products Officer at Wharton Research Data Services (WRDS), is a compassionate, creative, wise, and inspirational leader. He founded and leads the WRDS Advanced Initiatives team. He fosters an environment of open and honest communication, inspiring trust among his team and everyone he works with. Charles breaks down silos at the University and is consistently calm under pressure, which spurs confidence not only among his direct reports but across all the teams he is a member of.

Honoree: Sage Rush, Perelman School of Medicine

Sage Rush, Supervisor, Clinical Research Coordinator in the Department of Neuropsychiatry, embodies the features of a successful, dedicated, and well-balanced leader who, collaboratively and positively, guides and inspires her supervisees and trainees to excel in their roles. She oversees a team of clinical research coordinators, working closely with staff to promote a manageable workload, competency, and progress while ensuring that staff feel supported and heard. In addition, Sage led weekly social hours during various stages of the pandemic to boost morale and stay connected.