Operating Staff Announces Outstanding Service Award Recipients

Four members of NIU’s Operating Staff have been chosen to receive the Outstanding Service Award for 2015. The recipients are Chris Atherton, administrative assistant, Office of the Provost; Margaret Berg, office manager, Department of Accountancy; Pat Erickson, office administrator, Office of the University Council; and Kathy Zuidema, employer relations specialist, Career Services.

Each year, four employees from NIU’s nearly 1,650 Civil Service staff are selected by a committee of their peers. Award winners receive a plaque and $1,500 award. They will be honored at a banquet Thursday, May 14.

Here’s more about this year’s recipients.

Chris Atherton
Administrative Assistant, Office of the Provost

Chris Atherton rolls with the punches. When things change in the workplace and job responsibilities evolve, she not only adapts, she thrives.

“Those of us that have the pleasure to work with her know how extraordinary she is,” said Celeste Latham, associate vice president for Human Resource Services. “She is organized, focused, and is one of the most amazing people who anticipates needs and plans ahead. Above all, she is a friend and a colleague that people can rely on.”

Lisa Freeman said when she took on the role of interim executive vice president and provost in October, 2013, Atherton helped her “to hit the ground running.”

“She took on additional responsibilities without being asked to ensure that the Provost office continued to run smoothly,” said Freeman, executive vice president and provost. “She has been able to affect change, because she is a trusted colleague and collaborator within the Provost Office and across campus.”

Colleagues praise her for her dedication, professionalism, and strong work ethic. Her numerous contributions are not limited to her department, but expand to the university as a whole. She works well with employees of every level at the university, from students to senior administrators.

Away from work, she is actively involved in the community, as a volunteer for the American Cancer Society Relay For Life of DeKalb County and the DeKalb affiliate of Habitat for Humanity. She also serves on DeKalb’s planning and zoning commission.

“Since she arrived at NIU, her care and concern for students, faculty, staff and the community has been evident,” said Freeman.

Margaret Berg
Office Manager, Department of Accountancy

Margaret Berg is always there to lend a hand. And because of her extensive knowledge of the university, the office manager in the Department of Accountancy does a lot of lending.

“Margaret is a resource to others in the college, willingly sharing her knowledge and wisdom,” said Jim Young, NIU Accountancy Department chair and Crowe Horwath Professor. “She is always willing to pursue new tasks, many self-motivated by seeing a need and working to find a solution.”

Berg joined NIU in 1987 and is conversant in human resources, accounting, budgeting and scheduling issues. Her knowledge of the university,

Wellness Fair
50/50 Winner

The 50/50 winner for the Wellness Fair was Teresa Jacobsen, Senior Library Specialist—University Libraries. Teresa won $115, and our Staff Dependent Scholarship fund is $115 richer too! Congratulations Teresa!
organizational skills and commitment to excellence helps the Department of Accountancy maintain its reputation.

“Margaret goes above and beyond expectations,” said Rebecca Shortridge, professor and assistant chair in the Department of Accountancy. “She is everything an administrator could hope for; she is dependable, efficient, caring, and always sees a task through to completion.”

Berg is known as a team player and respected by faculty and students.

“Her attitude is always, always, ‘how can I help you?’” said Chang Liu, professor and chair in the Department of Operations Management and Information Systems. “Whether she is helping me solve a problem, helping a faculty member jump administrative hurdles across campus, or dealing with a student who comes into the office looking to register for a course, she is respectful and always willing to help.”

She’s an active member of the College of Business Staff Council, where she serves as a mentor to other staff members. In addition, she is involved in giving back to the community through events like Relay for Life and the NIU food drive.

Pat Erickson
Office Administrator, Office of the University Council
Pat Erickson has been described as “exceptional” and the “consummate professional.”

For this office administrator, it’s all in a day’s work.

“Pat brings a level of professionalism, dedication and creativity to this position that is unprecedented,” said Professor Alan Rosenbaum. “One of the complications of her position is that there is no routine assignment; instead, there are a multitude of activities that are spread across the year, each of which must be tracked and initiated at the proper time.”

Erickson handles the complications with ease, and does so with a smile.

“Her moral compass, good sense of humor, wise perspective and cordiality have made her well respected by all who have the chance to interact with her,” said Professor William Pitney. “She is a joy to work with.”

Her dedication to her work and to NIU is impressive, and so is her commitment to the community. She is an active member of her church and has been a volunteer for Meals on Wheels for more than a decade.

“Pat is fully engaged in her job, within the university, and within the community,” said Pitney.

Kathy Zuidema
Employer Relations Specialist, Career Services
Kathy Zuidema is a champion for NIU students. The Career Services employer relations specialist consistently exhibits an “impassioned level of concern” for students, and not just for those who visit Career Services.

In March 2014, Zuidema founded the Huskies Student Food Pantry after realizing that many NIU students who don’t have a meal plan and don’t qualify for food assistance programs go hungry. Since opening, the pantry has served more than 1,000 NIU students.

“Kathy is the type of employee that everyone wants, not just because she is dependable, timely and hard working, but because she is always in a continuous improvement mindset,” said Cindy Henderson, executive director of Career Services.

Colleagues laud her for her altruism, professionalism, enthusiasm, and consistent student-centered approach.

“Kathy is the kind of colleague you want to serve as a model for an inclusive community,” said Brandon Lagana of Career Services. “She cares deeply about the department, division and NIU; she conducts her work in ways which uplift the spirit of all of those around her; and she is open to new ideas, suggestions for improvement and embraces change.”

Program Prioritization

More than 100 nominations were received for service on two program prioritization task forces. The group charged with picking final task force members has been expanded to include three additional faculty members, one member of the Operating Staff, one member of the Supportive Professional Staff, and one student. These members will aid the provost, chief financial officer, and executive secretary of the University Council in the task force selection.

Once named to the academic and administrative program task forces, members will begin training and conducting some preliminary work that will last well into the summer. The bulk of the task force work will begin in October and last through March of next year.

Program prioritization is an effort to match resources with university mission, vision and priorities. Spurred in part by current budget concerns, the process will be repeated every five years at NIU, regardless of financial climate. Task force members will receive standard data on each identified program, as well as narratives submitted by the programs themselves.

Using criteria established by NIU’s shared governance system, the task forces will make recommendations about each program, ranging from the need to invest more resources and expand current operations to scaling back, merging, or eliminating programs.

See more at: http://www.niutoday.info/2015/04/16/expanded-program-prioritization-committee-to-pick-task-force-members/#sthash.78txD0Oz.dpuf

“Steer Your Career” Brown Bag Series

The Operating Staff Council’s Workplace Issues Committee is sponsoring a brown bag series “Steer Your Career.” All sessions are over the noon hour in the Holmes Student Center – Blackhawk Annex. The “Moving on Up” session will be given by Rhonda Wyboun and Rose Miller of Human Resource Services on Thursday, May 21st. This will focus on the State of Illinois Civil Service System employment and testing rules and procedures. Their final presentation, “How to Expand Your Horizons” which will be held on Wednesday, May 27th, will focus on NIU current benefits for employees to further their education. They will also discuss resources available to employees at this panel discussion. Please register at OSC@niu.edu or call 815-753-9191.
Employment Changes

FEBRUARY 2015

Welcome New Employees
Aaron Brown, Route Driver—Materials Management
Leanne Kulchawik, Intramural & Recreation Coordinator—Campus Recreation
Katie Myers, Waiter/Waitress—Holmes Student Center
Katlyn Ostenson, Child Development Supervisor—Campus Child Care
Mary Riggs, Chief Clerk—Housing & Dining
Lene Scherer, Office Support Specialist—College of Education
Jeremy Shearon, Storekeeper II—Physical Plant

Changes
Lavere Boyle to Chief Clerk—College of Health & Human Sciences
Kenton Clapsaddle to Director of Purchases—Procurement Services
Ryan Damhoff to Office Support Specialist—Chemistry & Biochemistry
Wade Dueker to Manager of Photographic Lab—Media Services
Shante Humble to Budget Analyst II—Vice President Finance
Patricia Maxwell to Publicity Promotion Specialist—College of Engineering & Engineering Technology
Leslie Pergament-Nenia to Office Support Specialist—Literacy & Elementary Education

Deaths
Lisa Dienst, Internal Auditor—Internal Audit
Belinda Waite, Special Events Facilitator—College of Business

Department Changes
Mollie Montgomery, Administrative Assistant to Human Resource Services
Kevin Osterhout, Cook to Holmes Student Center

Retirements
Randy Cunz, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Robert Rourke, Shipping Receiving Clerk—Holmes Student Center

Separations
Aaron Brown, Route Driver—Materials Management
Nikkita Carrington, Training & Development Specialist I—Human Resource Services
Joan Green, Security Guard—Public Safety
Jodi Heitkamp, Cartographer—Geography
Kathleen Jones, Purchasing Officer III—Procurement Services
Donald Marbut, Building Service Worker—Building Services
Katie Myers, Waiter/Waitress—Holmes Student Center

MARCH 2015

Welcome New Employees
Nicole Braun, Office Support Associate—College of Health & Human Sciences
Jonathan Cook, Business Manager I—Public Safety
Kathleen Finlon, Broadcast News Specialist—Northern Public Radio
Eric Fox, Office Support Specialist—CHANGE Program
LeeAnn Gustafson, Publicity Promotion Specialist—Campus Recreation
Pamela Metcalf, Kitchen Helper—Housing & Dining
Konstadina Pappas, Kitchen Helper—Housing & Dining
Michael Riley, Kitchen Helper—Housing & Dining
Julie Schetley, Office Support Associate—College of Health & Human Sciences
Carl Simonson, Residence Hall Attendant—Public Safety
Nikolaos Tsagiatis, Account Technician II—Vice President Research and Innovation Partnerships
Sherry Wisdom, Staff Nurse I—Health Services

Changes
Michelle Hess to Office Support Associate—Information Technology Services
Valerie Lorruso to Administrative Aide—NIU Outreach P-20
Catina Maxwell to Senior Library Specialist—University Libraries
Wendy Thomas to Office Manager—Family, Consumer & Nutrition

Department Changes
Douglas Ball, Assistant Chief Instructional Media Systems Engineer to Network and Communication Services
John Sherman, Broadcasting Engineer to Network and Communication Services
Pamela Wood, Cooks Helper to Holmes Student Center

Separations
Michael Mattson, IT Technical Associate—Information Services
Tara Mitchell, Human Resource Representative—Human Resource Services
Lawrence Nepodahl, Multimedia Technician—Holmes Student Center
Jorge Sanchez, Police Officer—Public Safety

APRIL 2015

Welcome New Employees
Lauren Belaesco, Office Support Specialist—Electrical Engineering
Cindy Blanchard, Purchasing Officer III—Procurement & Strategic Sourcing
Jennifer Burr, Human Resource Assistant—Human Resource Services
Michael Cobert, Business Manager II—EIGERLab
Teresa Harris, Cook—Housing & Dining
Michele Hunt, Library Assistant—University Libraries
Lisa Johnson, Human Resource Assistant—Harman Resource Services
Jo Ann Lackey, Kitchen Helper—Housing & Dining
Tina Leombruni, Account Technician II—EIGERLab
Jeffrey Metters, Laboratory Mechanic—EIGERLab
Sherry Pritz, Publicity Promotion Specialist—EIGERLab
Joseph Reilly, Library Assistant—University Libraries
Joe Remper, Internal Auditor—University Libraries
Jessica Rodgers, Child Development Supervisor—Family, Consumer & Nutrition
Margaret Thacker, Office Support Associate—Learning Center

Changes
Rebekka Ayres to Admissions/Records Representative—Admissions
Justin Caballero to Cook—Housing & Dining
Rachel Geske to Storekeeper II—Housing & Dining
Jacqueline Miller to Admissions/Records Representative—Registration & Records
Angelique Page to Office Manager—Allied Health & Communicative Disorders
Rebecca Rahe to Admissions/Records Officer—Registration & Records
Carl Simonson to IT Support Associate—Information Security & Operations
Vicki Wronkowski to Human Resource Representative—Human Resource Services

Department Changes
Christine Abt, Nurse Practitioner to Health Services
Kathleen Carey, Administrative Assistant II to Presidents Office
Gregg Fieffer, Budget Analyst to AVP Finance
Shante Humble, Budget Analyst II to AVP Finance
Susan Lietz, Office Manager to Management
Alice Pileski to Office Manager—Engineering Technology
Vicky Ripberger, Administrative Assistant to Administration & Finance
Crystal Slaughter, Office Support Specialist to Center for Black Studies
Retirement
Brent Macleod, Purchasing Officer III—Procurement Services

Separations
Amanda Berkes, Space Administrator II—Facilities Planning & Operations
Anthony Chatman, IT Support Specialist—Information Security & Operations
Naomi Graham, Kitchen Helper—Housing & Dining
Raynaldo Hernandez, Police Officer—Public Safety
Joshua Kroesch, IT Support Associate—Network & Communication Service
Agina Nelson, Senior Events Administrator—Convocation Center
Todd Schlosser, IT Support Associate—Network & Communication Services
Jeff Yarger, Grounds Worker—Grounds

Service Awards

FEBRUARY 2015
5 Years
Adam Baie—Physical Plant
10 Years
Christopher, Becker—Physical Plant
Daniel Mojica—Public Safety
Mercedita Sawyer—Building Services
15 Years
Michael Crase—Building Services
Linda Gahlbeck—Building Services
Joseph Pasteris—Housing & Dining
Tammie Pulak—Building Services
Rhonda Richards—Building Services
20 Years
Patricia Adams—Customer Support Services
Nancy Ondera—Housing & Dining
25 Years
Tammy Stevens—College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Laura Wagner—Holmes Student Center

MARCH 2015
10 Years
Angelina Dybas—Political Science
Adam Kuhn—Information Services
Robert Olle—Registration & Records
Kenneth Whitney—Housing & Dining
15 Years
Jeffrey Anderson—Physical Plant
Christin Berg—Housing & Dining
Deirdre Davis—Grounds
Gregg Fieffer—Vice President Finance

Jeffrey Lang—Building Services
Tara Mitchell—Human Resource Services
Patrick Sanchez—University Libraries
Lori Vierecki—Building Services
20 Years
Victoria Ortega—Holmes Student Center
25 Years
Debra Thompson—Counseling, Adult & Higher Education
Joseph Safranek—Building Services
35 Years
Freyja Rasmussen-Johns—Biological Sciences

APRIL 2015
5 Years
Andrzej Stolarski—Campus Parking
15 Years
Patricia Arndt—College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Jeffrey Askins—Building Services
Carolyn Grzywa—Health Services
Rebecca Martin—Student Financial Aid
Jeffrey McCarthy—Network & Communication Services
Kevin Nodurft—Building Services
Heidi Rudolph—Materials Management
Ernest Williams—Building Services
20 Years
Loris Anderson—Bursar
Suzanne Hogan—College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
30 Years
Vance Moore—Information Security & Operations

New at the NIU Website
Have you seen the new “Virtual Suggestion Box” for Faculty and Staff? Go to the NIU home site. Click on “Faculty & Staff” in the tool bar. The suggestion box is down the left side of the page. Your questions and comments will be forwarded to the appropriate person/department.