

## **Shining Stars Fall 2012**

### **Bonnie Beam, Honors College**

Bonnie Beam is an outstanding person and worker who does much more than the bare minimum or even her "fair share" in The Honors College. We are quite understaffed at just four employees running a College with roughly 1400 of WCU's brightest students coming and going through our offices throughout the year. In the absence of an adequate database for our student records, Bonnie came onboard and developed her own system for maintaining Honors College data. She also maintains our web site. Thank goodness for her computer know-how and expertise!

I don't know how she does it, but Bonnie keeps an upbeat attitude while multi-tasking in our busy lobby which is usually full of students. She makes all our students in Balsam Hall feel like they are at home away from home with her homemade brownies, candy, cakes, wonderful smelling coffee and other goodies to help them make it through all of their projects and tests. She is a good listener and sharer of sage wisdom and advice. She wears many hats, a few of which I'll mention here: events planner, chef, trip coordinator, budget keeper, reminder of things, gardener, community service volunteer and many more!

A great advocate for our students' and our College's success, Bonnie often unobjectionably arrives before and stays after regular hours end to assist with cookouts, dinners, banquets, award ceremonies, etc. She also attends our students' concerts, art shows, theater productions, etc. She brings a special element of class and prestige to The Honors College, and I firmly believe she deeply cares about our students and her work at WCU. I consider us lucky to have Bonnie working with us, and I KNOW that she is an asset to our community and this campus.

### **Larry Hammer, Registrar's Office**

I nominate Larry Hammer, our university registrar. I can't hope to list all the ways Larry serves our university. He is knowledgeable, organized, and razor-sharp focused on service to faculty, staff, and students. He is meticulous in considering changes to our university systems and how those will interact with current practices and regulations. In addition, he is personable, kind, and generous with his time and knowledge. I urge those making this decision to recognize Larry for his overall excellent and appreciated service to WCU.

### **Rachel Wike, College of Education and Allied Professions**

Rachel is the assistant director of Alternative Licensure. She is wonderful with perspective students, current students, faculty, and other staff. Everyone who deals with her will agree. She maintains contacts across the University in order to help the Alt Cert students/perspective students to the best of her abilities, which is above and beyond. Rachel also acts as an Advisor to BK students, degree and alt cert. She is a pleasure and definitely a Shining Star.

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### **Rick G. Lanning, Undergraduate Studies**

Ricky's sense of professionalism and pride are evident in all he does as a member of Undergraduate Studies. He is committed to doing the very best job he can do and always goes beyond what is required or expected. He was asked to absorb, without extra compensation or reward, the massive duties as the primary staff support for all commencement ceremonies at WCU beginning last May. He not only accomplished a mammoth task willingly and ahead of schedule, but he did it earning the kudos and compliments of all with whom he worked. His quiet, competent, proactive approach was so reassuring to those who have played key roles in commencement previously but who were concerned that with the departure of Dr. Hinson and Dina Towey, the three ceremonies would not be the quality events we had come to expect. He surpassed the expectations and alleviated much concern for the future of our commencements. I am honored to recognize Ricky in this small way for all he continues to do to support WCU, our staff, students, and faculty.

### **Jenny Steward, College of Education and Allied Professions**

I would like to nominate Jenny Stewart for a Shining Star! Jenny exhibits a superior work ethic; works early/late/weekends to meet the needs of students, faculty and programs; she is a dedicated member of our TRACS office which supports ALL professional education programs in the College of Education and Allied Professions and hundreds of students; she serves as an important member of our leadership team providing strong guidance in how to best address student needs; she is consistently positive, supportive, open minded, honest, responsive! Last semester she advised over 300 students when a staff member left the office and smiled through it all! I wouldn't have been able to give the care and attention my SPED majors needed without her generous support! She IS a shining star in my world of work as well as the lives of many students! Please help me acknowledge her multitude of contributions!

### **John Nickel, Information Technology**

As one of many instructors that teach in the computer labs across campus, I have been consistently impressed with Mr. Nickel's quick responsiveness to requests for making the lab in which I teach a more efficient and pleasant learning space. I have submitted requests from students regarding equipment configuration, asked for help and training with installed software for which I am unfamiliar, and reported malfunctions for specific computers in the lab and all of my requests have been resolved by Mr. Nickel and his fellow IT colleagues with promptness and professionalism. In all cases, he goes above and beyond with a focused yet friendly attitude. He is an asset to our campus community and I am asking that you consider John Nickel as a worthy recipient of the Shining Star award.

### **Dona Potts, College of Business**

I would like to nominate Dona Potts, administrative assistant for the accounting, finance, information systems & economics department in the College of Business. I have been at WCU for 18 years now, Dona has been admin assistant in my area the entire time (I'm not sure how long ago she started - more than 25 years ago). I have NEVER seen her without a kind word, a smile, a calm countenance, a willingness to do whatever is needed done... she is an unbelievable example of SWEET, CALM,

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COMPETENT, and WONDERFUL! Ask anyone in the department, anyone in the COB, anyone who knows her, and they will say the same thing. There is no more deserving person for some type of recognition. She's amazing.

### **Suzan Melvin, Nursing Graduate Program**

I would like to nominate Suzan Melvin, administrative assistant for the Nursing Graduate Program. She has gone above and beyond the call of duty as we've transitioned from our location in Enka to the new Biltmore Park space. In addition to putting in additional time and energy to get the new location up and running, she has assisted the undergraduate program while the administrative assistant was out on family leave and the administrative assistant position in the nursing office in Cullowhee is vacant. We are functioning today because of her outstanding efforts and high quality of work.

### **Marianne Hollis, Health and Human Sciences**

Dr. Hollis has been a consistent and thoughtful mentor to me. As new faculty I would have been lost without her guidance. She has helped with everything from trivial to the massively important issues, such as:

- where to find paper / how to use the copier
- how to apply for travel funds
- how to counsel a student having brain surgery mid semester– and then
- how to work thru the maze of forms needed for that student so that his GPA was not endangered, and
- simple, daily encouragement.

When I say 'new faculty' I mean really 'new' – I was a computer scientist for 20 years! Teaching is something I did in Sunday school and as at TA/RA in grad school. Seriously, I would have never made it thru my first year without the positive, daily encouragement from Dr. Hollis and the School of Health Sciences team. I'm one lucky chick, and I know it. I keep telling Marianne how much her help has meant to me... maybe you can tell her better.

### **Melissa Allen, Modern Foreign Languages**

Melissa goes above and beyond the call of duty. Not only is she an efficient, capable and hard-working administrative assistant in the Department of Modern Foreign Languages, but, as the person closest to the main entrance of McKee, she serves as the unofficial contact person for anyone needing assistance in the building. She is thorough and conscientious and always willing to help students and faculty who need help.

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### **Patricia Norton, Residential Living**

I want to nominate Patricia for a Shining Star. She has been a great asset to me since I was moved to Albright-Benton this year. She is a very hard worker and does everything she can to help everyone she works with. She makes the job fun and without her, this would be a very dull place to be. I can't tell her thank you enough.

### **Susan Buchanan, School of Teaching and Learning UP Program**

Susan works countless hours and goes above and beyond with the UP Program to make sure all of us get what we need. We are proud to have her as part of our University Participant Program team! Keep up the good work Susan!

### **Jane Buchanan, College of Health and Human Sciences**

For getting down on her hands and knees to light the pilot lights on the new gas stoves in the ND lab at HHS. REALLY above and beyond what an administrative assistant should do! We did the same thing, but she was patient, persistent AND successful!!!

### **Briana Ford, Educational Outreach, Military Student Services**

Briana began work at Educational Outreach as a temporary employee at the front desk. She was always first to come in and one of the last to leave each day. She not only performed all her tasks well and with a good attitude, but also helped staff members whenever she saw a need. When the VA Certifying position opened, she stepped in to figure out how to fill the void until we could advertise and interview for the position. She spent work and home hours researching the various military websites learning what paperwork needed to be submitted, various procedures and the numerous deadlines for each branch. She pulled all the previous year's files and made sure they were in order and created a new filing system to make the job more efficient. She has had numerous military students compliment her on the improved efficiency. She is well-liked and respected by the staff of Educational Outreach and the military student body she serves.

### **John Hawes, Coulter Faculty Commons**

Mr. Hawes deserves to be recognized for this consistent positive attitude when working with customers. The level of customer service that Mr. Hawes uses is beyond outstanding to exemplary. Regardless of what is going on around him, he devotes himself to the client and their specific needs. He does not let a customer take a back seat in the process but lets them know that they are most important thing he needs to be doing at the moment in time. Even after meeting with the client, he will follow-up to ensure that they have what they need to be successful in their endeavors. To use an over-used phrase, if we could bottle Mr. Hawe's customer service attitude to share with everyone, WCU would be a very rich place.