TAMU-CC Faculty/Staff Annual

“Excellence in Disability Access and Inclusion Award”

Ralph McFarland
Leadership, Excellence, Administration and Development

LEAD 2014
Purpose
To annually and formally recognize one outstanding faculty and staff member who engage in fostering an inclusive and accessible environment for students with disabilities.
Background

President Killebrew’s memorandum of Reaffirmation of Commitment to Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, & Diversity.
September 2014

“...we are committed to providing equal opportunity without regard to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, age, genetic information, veteran status, or disability.”

“Additionally, Mr. Ramirez is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the University’s equal opportunity, diversity, affirmative action, ethics, and compliance programs, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act...”
Background (Cont’d)
Our University Momentum 2020 Strategic Plan includes the theme and value of “CAMPUS CLIMATE” with the following objective and strategy:

Objective 4: Celebrate university traditions, achievements and success.

Strategy 2: Develop and support new and meaningful ways to recognize students, faculty, staff and alumni achievements.

Momentum 2020 Strategic Plan
Background (cont’d)

The Division of Student Engagement and Success Strategic Plan 2020 also includes the value of “Campus Climate” with the following Objectives and Strategies:

**Objective 1:** Develop an environment of inclusiveness and mutual respect.

**Strategy 1.** Create programs to educate the campus community on inclusion, compassion and respect.

**Strategy 2:** Create programs to encourage and support inclusion.

**Objective 3:** Encourage a culture of excellence and service.

**Strategy 3:** Recognize great performance and achievements.
Background (Cont’d)

TAMU-CC currently has the following annual University Excellence Awards to recognize Faculty achievements:

1. Excellence in Creative Activity
2. Excellence in Librarianship
3. Excellence in Research & Scholarly Activity
4. Excellence in Service
5. Excellence in Teaching
6. Excellence in Teaching Innovation
Background (cont’d)

TAMU-CC Staff Council currently promotes the following annual Employee Excellence Awards to recognize staff achievements:

Excellence

Human excellence is often described as distinction, merit, respect, importance, eminence or status. This Staff Council award recognizes a university staff member who demonstrates leadership, initiative and special contributions to the university and whose actions, deeds and work ethic exemplify outstanding performance.

Engagement

This Staff Council award recognizes a university staff member who promotes and embraces diversity and stresses collaborations and engagement throughout the university. This staff member continually demonstrates a process to include all individuals.

Expansion

This Staff Council award recognizes a university staff member who reaches out to work with others and form relationships to make the University and/or Community a better place. Nominees should exemplify service that mirrors the Spirit of the University and contributes to the growth of the university through the development and/or expansion of programs, services, and initiatives, through creativity and contribution to the overall mission of the university.
“A new event was created this year (2014) to honor faculty members from each college who have surpassed the expectations as online educators. The Outstanding Online Educator Awards and mixer was hosted by the Office of Distance Education and Learning Technologies as part of National Distance Learning Week (NDLW) from November 10-14.”
1. The office of Disability Services (DS) determines eligibility and approves reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments for approximately 200 diverse students with Learning, Attention, Visual, Hearing, Psychological and Health related disabilities each semester. *Disability crosses race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, age, genetic information, and veteran status.

2. DS collaborates and consults with faculty & staff in providing exam accommodations, assistive technology, electronic accessibility, alternative format (e-text), note-taking support, sign language interpreters and other accommodations.

3. DS collaborates and consults with the office of Employee Development and Compliance in addressing and responding to complaints and issues related to disability discrimination.
Assumptions

1. Faculty and staff are not formally recognized for their outstanding efforts in surpassing expectations in promoting and providing disability related accommodations and academic adjustments.

   Examples:
   • Assisting with Exam Accommodations
   • Recruiting Note-takers
   • Captioning audio on Blackboard
   • Use accessible formats
   • Universal Design of Instruction
   • Promoting physical accessibility
   • Referring students to DS
   • Consideration of Disability related absences
   • Incompletes/Extensions as appropriate
   • Use of Disability Accommodation statement in Syllabus

Conversely:

2. Faculty and staff are adversely recognized for not meeting expectations. Biased and or discriminatory behavior and ADA complaints are addressed and are contrary to both the President’s reaffirmation and the Momentum 2020 Strategic Plan. These pose compliance risks with the Office of Civil Rights, and adversely affect students.
**Assumptions (cont’d):**

Formal and positive annual recognition of faculty and staff who exceed expectations in reducing attitudinal, physical, programmatic and/or academic access barriers encountered by people with disabilities will:

1. Increase awareness of our campus commitment to providing equal opportunities for students with disabilities.

2. Enhance the overall university experience of students with disabilities.

3. Encourage faculty and staff to engage in proactively providing reasonable disability related accommodations and academic adjustments.
Facts

SHRM Survey

“Do organizations believe using positive reinforcement or negative reinforcement has a greater impact on improving employee performance?”

“An overwhelming number of organizations (94%) believe positive feedback (reinforcing behaviors or performances that should be repeated) has a greater impact on improving employee performance. Few (6%) believe negative feedback (pointing out specific behaviors or performance that need improvement) has an impact on improving employee performance.”

SHRM/Globoforce Survey: Employee Recognition Programs, Spring 2013. ©SHRM 2013

This March, we surveyed 6,000 HR professionals in organizations with 500 or more employees and asked them to share their experiences and practices” Society of Human Resource Management
Facts (Cont’d):

“In your professional opinion, are employees at your organization more motivated by:

Recognition that includes a reward? 83%
Recognition that does not include a reward? 17%”
N=764

Key Findings:

“Organizations believe that a successful employee recognition program can contribute to achieving an organizations’ goals.”

“Organizations believe recognition programs are key factors for better employee performance and motivation. “

SHRM/Globoforce Survey: Employee Recognition Programs, Spring 2013. ©SHRM 2013
Some more facts:
At Texas State University, San Marcos

“For several years we held a faculty/staff recognition luncheon to which we invited faculty and staff who had been helpful to our students and our office. Each year, we would recognize one faculty member and one staff member who had been outstanding in their service to our students. I don't remember what we gave them--I think it was a plaque or a nice certificate. The faculty and staff who were recognized seemed to be touched and honored.”

Bruce Coonce
General Disability Specialist
Office of Disability Services
Texas State University-San Marcos
“We hold an annual BRASS Day. (Berklee Recognition and Appreciation of Staff Services). As the name indicates, it is for staff only. Faculty have their own awards ceremonies. It has been going on in some form or another for many years. There are numerous categories. A few years ago we added a Diversity & Inclusion award. It has gone over relatively well, unfortunately nominations have been minimal.”

~Gabe

Gabriel Roses
Disability Services Advisor
Berklee College of Music
And, at California State University, Northridge

“Each spring, our department has an annual Recognition Awards Scholarship event for students, who apply and are selected, to receive a monetary award/scholarship from a number of sponsors. At this event, we also recognize an outstanding student worker, as well as a staff and faculty person who has gone above and beyond in supporting students with disabilities. One student, faculty and staff person is selected through a nomination/voting process within our office. These folks receive a plaque and a copy of the tribute detailing what they've done to support students with disabilities. Those who are recognized truly appreciate the recognition and it's a great way to create and foster campus partnerships/alliances to support students. Faculty from many different disciplines and staff in areas from IT to Facilities have been recognized. We also take pictures of each awardee with our director. “


Patrice Wheeler, CSUN
Courses of Action (COA)

COA 1. Status Quo - do nothing:

**Advantage:** No incurred time, effort or monetary resources.

**Disadvantages:** No incurred recognition for staff and faculty excellence; missed opportunity to raise awareness, and foster collaboration in the accommodation process of students.

COA 2. Faculty Excellence in Disability Access and Inclusion Award added to the roster and presented at the Annual Employee Excellence Ceremony:

**Advantage:** Enhanced Disability awareness; engagement of faculty and staff; demonstrated commitment of campus wide efforts for Inclusion and Access.

**Disadvantage:** Perception of “singling out” one diverse group among many; some monetary expense.

COA 3. Faculty and Staff Excellence in Disability Access and Inclusion Award added to the roster and presented at the Annual Employee Excellence Ceremony:

**Advantage:** Enhanced Disability awareness; engagement of faculty and staff; demonstrated commitment of campus wide efforts for Inclusion and Access.

**Disadvantage:** Perception of “singling out” one diverse group among many; some monetary expense.
Courses of Action (Cont’d)

COA 4. Stand alone Disability Services Annual Recognition Awards Ceremony:

**Advantage:** Avoid “singling out” one diverse group among many during the annual Employee faculty & Staff Excellence Awards ceremony.

**Disadvantage:** Perceived as less prestigious than the annual well attended Employee Excellence Awards ceremony; less awareness, duplicated efforts in award planning and ceremony.

While this may avoid “singling out” one diverse group among many during the annual Employee Faculty & Staff Excellence Awards ceremony, it does not highlight the fact that both faculty and staff are essential and excellent in a commitment to provide disability access and inclusion, and, that disability crosses all race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, age, genetic information, and veteran status.
Prior Coordination

Consult with and seek feedback from:

• Director of TAMU-CC Human Resources
• Faculty Senate
• Staff Council
• Disability Services Staff
• VP & Associate VP of Student Engagement and Success
• Executive Vice President of Finance & Administration
• Employee Development & Compliance
• Provost/Vice Provost
Hi Ralph - Would this be another Staff Council Excellence Award? Or would this be outside of that scope? Seems like it would be limited to only those who interact with students, so a subset of our workforce. I am open to the idea but do have questions. What would be the criteria. Who would make the selection? When you say "out of the classroom" do you mean outside the University and in the community or non academic functions. I should be back in the office on Friday if you want to talk further. Thanks Debra

Sent from my iPad
From: Larkin, Patrick  
Sent: Tuesday, December 02, 2014 3:51 PM  
To: Mcfarland, Ralph; Mollick, Joseph  
Subject: Re: Faculty Excellence Award for Inclusion and Disability Access - your feedback

I think its a fine idea Ralph. I will bring it up with provost at our next meeting this Thursday. Let us know if, and when, we can be of any assistance.

Regards,  
Patrick

From: Larkin, Patrick  
Sent: Thursday, December 04, 2014 3:52 PM  
To: Mcfarland, Ralph  
Cc: Mollick, Joseph  
Subject: Re: Faculty Excellence Award for Inclusion and Disability Access - your feedback

Ralph,

I spoke with the provost this afternoon about your proposal. He is open to the idea but any new award would have to be approved up through the President's Cabinet. One of the ideas discussed was the possibility of including this award in a more general "inclusive excellence" award. He should be at the meeting in January to see your presentation. Regards,  
Patrick
Thank you, Ralph, for this wonderful and noble idea of recognizing and rewarding excellence in accommodating the needs of disabled students.
I will send my comments after I see your PP presentation.

Joseph
“Ralph,
Your PP slides convinced me and it will probably convince most people on campus but a few people from the staff side raised some issues such as overlapping with other awards and singling out a specific group of students' needs. I am convinced that your recommendation will be embraced by most faculty and most members of the faculty senate. I support the idea.

It might be a good idea to also come up with some specific criteria and nomination and selection process so that the proposal will be more concrete and acceptable. For example, who should be able to nominate a member of the faculty? Only disabled students or any student? What kind of supporting evidence can be used by the ABE committee to judge the candidates? For other Excellence awards, we are asking for nominations from almost any campus setting including self-nominations. However, since the purpose of this award is to raise awareness about accommodating the needs of disabled students--the nomination process may need to be different--such as only registered disabled students can nominate a member of the faculty. The criteria should be consistent with the purpose and goals of the award and your office can contribute greatly in developing the criteria.

Joseph”
Ralph,
“I’ve been thinking about the subject and want to play a bit of Devil’s Advocate...because often it seems that the most valuable feedback is pointing out what a naysayer would say. I also have a few questions/comments for your consideration.
1. Would this award come from Disability Services? If not, it seems like it might overlap with the Employee Excellence, Engagement and Expansion awards given by the Employee Excellence Committee.
2. I am chair of that committee and would love for you to come and speak to us about this at our next meeting, which will probably be scheduled for January. Let me know if you are interested.
3. Why and how is this different that the Staff Council award, besides the obvious-especially in Engagement? Why is it important to implement?
4. I’ve become aware, especially in the last year the lack of general awareness (and sensitivity) to things like the deficiency of parking for handicap, etc. Do you think that this award could become a vehicle for educating campus? (I do!) I would be interested as Employee Excellence chair to learn how you would decide criteria and happy to offer feedback as you continue this quest.”
Prior Coordination (Cont’d)

Staff Council, Historian
Dr. Rachel Kirk, Transfer Advisor, Islander Transition Center

“...regarding the idea of having an employee award for excellence in working with students with disabilities, an access and inclusion award. My initial reaction was “wow! What a great idea!” but then as I started to think about it, questions did arise. What is the purpose in singling out work with this group of students? Is there a specific reason to focus on work with this population? We have multiple groups, or populations, of students that could be classified in a variety of ways, each with their own unique differences, requiring perhaps slightly different ways of working with them. For instance, working with the veterans is a little different than working with first generation students which is a little different than working with transfer students which is a little different than working with early college high school students which is a little different than... So why this specific award? I realize that this is not so much feedback, as questions and I apologize for that, as it may not be what you had in mind. “
Recommendation

COA #3

Faculty & Staff Excellence in Disability Access and Inclusion Award added to the roster and presented at the Annual Employee Excellence Ceremony.

*Criteria and Nomination process to be determined by further coordination with Faculty Senate, Staff Council, Human Resources, Disability Services, and President’s Cabinet. And, with consideration to be as consistent as reasonably possible with existing Excellence Awards nomination processes.*
Where do we go from here?

1. Form an Ad hoc group?
2. Determine course of action.
3. Determine Awards criteria, nomination process and selection committee.
4. Present to President’s Cabinet.

“Compliance to avoid the negative merely addresses and mitigates the negative, it does not necessarily assure positive results.”
Sam Ramirez, Director of Employee Development and Compliance

Let’s catch our Faculty and Staff doing something good, and then, reward them together.
Questions?