

Winter 2018 Classified Staff Excellence Award



Eben Ayers

Congratulations to **Eben Ayers**, recipient of the 2018 Winter Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award!

Eben Ayers is a Campus Security Officer for Security and Safety and is described as someone who “consistently demonstrates a high level of professionalism and compassion for his fellow human beings” and “frequently looks for opportunities to help someone “have a better day.””

Ayers began his career at Clark College more than 15 years ago as an intern from the Clark County Skills Center (now Cascadia Technical Academy). While he has pursued other opportunities over the intervening years, he has spent many years working for Clark Security and Safety, first as a Parking Enforcement Officer and now as a Security Officer. In that role, Ayers serves as a member of the college’s Title IX team. He also has taken the lead on coordinating with leadership within the STEM Building to develop and communicate security protocols and operating hours of the computer labs that are housed within the newest building on campus. Additionally, he serves as advisor for the Clark College Realm Runners Club.

One example of how Ayers applies compassion and professionalism to his daily duties took place last summer, when he helped the owner of a home across the street from the main campus that had caught on fire. Ayers escorted the homeowner to a nearby room where she and her dogs would be safe, then made sure that she had no immediate medical needs and helped her reach out to friends and family.

Another example can be seen in an article published in the Independent (and later republished in the Columbian) last October entitled "Clark after dark: a night with campus security," in which a reporter followed Ayers on his rounds and documented his compassion toward some transient visitors to the campus. One nominator noted, "Eben does not seek the spotlight and was reluctant to give the interview, but he felt that helping a student reporter and representing the security department, and ultimately the college, was a higher priority than his personal comfort."

Below are more comments from nominators about Ayers:

- "Eben is a very reliable, personable and friendly person. When Eben works security for any major events on campus, I find him to be steadfast and committed; always willing to go above and beyond to help with no questions asked. Clark is lucky to have Eben on the Security team!"
- "One of the most distinctive qualities about Mr. Ayers is that while he is very professional at his work, he also connects with people in a compassionate way. He works fervently in order to save the people dignity at the same time that he applies policies that need to be applied."
- "I have known Eben for over 15 years. All of those years have been in association with Clark. Eben first started with our department as an intern through a program he was attending at the Clark County Skills Center. This was in conjunction with his high school course work. Eben has pursued different opportunities over the years, but has always returned to Clark Security. After his time as an intern, he returned as a Parking Enforcement Officer where his attention to detail, willingness to help others, and excellent work ethic, were put on full display. He easily became someone the department could count on."

- “When I first started at Clark College, Eben was an invaluable source of information on both practices in the department, as well as policies and procedures for the College community as a whole. Eben was able to help me answer difficult questions I had about my position and suggest innovative and creative solutions to some of those problems. In particular, his thoughts and insights on crafting a database to track authorized access for students and staff helped me greatly.”
- “Eben ... is quick to follow up with open reports and always conscientious of the multiple departments that may be involved in cases. Eben approaches his work with a calm and clear vision for the potential outcome of a situation. He is thoughtful in his approach and thinks of the student/campus above all. Eben personifies what it means to be a Clark Penguin. He puts customer service at the forefront with the entire campus community including visitors. Eben has a calm sense about him and with that skill, he is able to deescalate situations that have the potential to go awry. In Eben’s role as a security officer and club advisor, he is a great listener, communicator, and role model. As a member of the Title IX team, Eben is thoughtful in his approach to investigations and working with students and staff that may be involved in the situations he is working with.”

Congratulations, as well, to all nominees for the Winter 2018 Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award:

Heather Adams is the Administrative Assistant 4 to the Dean of Student Engagement for Student Affairs, a role that provides administrative coordination for not just the dean, but also for the teams handling Behavioral Intervention and Threat Assessment, Title IX, and conduct areas. Having recently earned her master’s degree in Student Affairs Administration, Ayers has become an integral member of the Title IX team, investigating alleged discrimination and/or harassment. “This

work can be difficult and draining,” wrote her nominator. “She handles it professionally and efficiently.”

Other comments about Ayers include:

- “She has strong knowledge of not only the college community, but the larger Clark County community. She readily offers this information to coworkers and students who have questions that reach beyond the Dean of Student Engagement’s office. Heather engages students in a meaningful way even when her interactions with them, or theirs with our office, is brief. ... One of my favorite things is when these students take Heather up on her offer to “stop by and say hi” to our office even when they do not have a question or need; it is clear evidence that Heather excels at community building and cares for Clark.”
- “Heather is continually looking for ways to interact with all levels of the Clark College community. She has become a valuable resource with her creative ideas and solid problem solving. Heather has taken on the role of co-presenter on various Student Care presentations – specifically within the areas of BITA, Conduct, and Title IX. Heather is regularly scheduled to co-present at the quarterly New Faculty Orientation meetings and other invitations that arise; she is a competent and engaging presenter who can easily take the reins if the other presenter is unavailable.”

Allison (Allie) Fjeldheim is a Warehouse Operator 2 in Purchasing and Central Services. Her nominator praised Fjeldheim for her attention to detail and commitment to customer service. As an example, they recounted an experience of trying to track down a tool that had not arrived as ordered. “Allie was on the spot, knew exactly what order I was speaking of, and was able to provide specifics on the order,” the nominator wrote. “Allie had already contacted the vendor and tracked the tool for us.”

Other comments about Fjeldheim include:

"Recently, I ordered some student supplies. I received the package, but was short some of the items. In following up with Allie, I was informed that not only had she noted the discrepancy, but had already contacted the vendor and the shorted items were being shipped."

"It is really great to know that we've got Allie on our side when it comes to orders and tracking."

Jennifer Lea is an Administrative Assistant 3 in the Business Division, where, a nominator writes, she "manages an enormous amount of information with accuracy, efficiency, and ease."

"Responding to all requests on time and within the budget, she assists in planning faculty schedules; responds to catalogue requests; provides us with classrooms; oversees requests for book orders, supplies, travel, and equipment, along with any other number of office and managerial responsibilities," the nominator added. "In addition, she supports the Director of the Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Management (BASAM) program, by sending out timely correspondence to students in two cohorts, making sure each term that their classes are accurately represented in the schedule, providing students with appropriate class registration codes, and tracking the students within the program, as they might move from the two-year schedule to the three-year schedule. Orientation letters and materials prove to be accurate, and promotional/informational letters are always completed with expertise and professionalism. Jennifer provides logical and helpful advice in the completion of many of these tasks."

Other comments about Lea include:

- "Jennifer is a central part of the business department. She daily guides us and responds to our needs. Her interactions with the students are always positive."
- "Jennifer is patient and is always pleasant to everyone."

When students go to her with questions, she either has the answer or finds the answer to their questions. This is also true of faculty. When we need accomplish something and we don't know to do so, she figures it out or already knows."

- "Jennifer arranges for BASAM orientations beyond normal work hours. She has everything well organized to include every detail; i.e. name tags, ordering all the food, has the room organized stays into the evening through the event and then cleans up. The first BASAM orientation there was a lot of food left over so she took it to a homeless shelter. In my mind, that is going beyond expectations."

David (Dave) Mott is a Custodian 2 in Custodial Services. He was nominated by members of a department that he helps to maintain. They noted his "positive attitude, great customer service, friendliness, and willingness to help. "Even though we only see Dave a couple of days a week for a short time, he always asks if we need anything else, offers help and always displays a positive attitude," said one nominator. "He takes the time to get to know you while getting his job done."

Other comments from the team include:

- "On days when he has to vacuum and noise may be disruptive to the office, he is considerate and starts on the areas that are less disruptive to our team. He also asks if there are other areas that need vacuuming that may not be part of his regular duties. "
- "Dave does a wonderful job of working quickly and efficiently, while still taking time to get to know his colleagues and build relationships with them. ... I always looked forward to having Dave come through the office in the mornings and having a quick chat with him."
- "Dave always goes above and beyond to provide great customer service. For example, we put in a work order for tables to be delivered on a Friday for a going away

party. Dave saw the work order and offered to take care of it sooner because he would already be in our building and had the right stuff to complete the order while he was also coming through to do his normal work. He always goes the extra step to make sure people are taken care of and get the things they need.”

Sherry Smith is an Administrative Services Manager B in the Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) Division. She was instrumental in overseeing the move of the STEM Division into its new location at the STEM Building, which opened in 2016.

Comments about Smith include:

- “Sherry is the ‘go-to’ person in STEM for everything. Most importantly, when we were preparing to move into the STEM Building, Sherry took the lead. Sherry was the liaison for faculty and staff, making sure we had what we needed to make the processes as smooth as possible. This was an immense relief to faculty, as we knew with Sherry in charge nothing would get overlooked.”
- “If I have what seems to me to be a complex issue or question and pose it to Sherry, she graciously says she’ll look into it and get back to me. I am always surprised by a prompt and thorough response where she gets an answer and further helps me out by filling out necessary paperwork if needed. Usually all I have to do is sign something and what seemed like a daunting problem to me is solved.”
- “In the years I have worked with Sherry, both when she was my supervisor, and also as a colleague, I’ve observed her professionalism and integrity to be accurate, resourceful and consistent in her work performance at the college. She is creative with finding ways to solve problems and presents workable solutions for her staff and department. She wants people to be successful and can simplify tasks so that they happen accurately and timely.”

- “Sherry is a real asset to the college and the unit. Her willingness to solve problems and her extensive knowledge of Clark College has been critical to our ability to do our jobs. She is always positive and a pleasure to work with.”

Mitchell (Mitch) Sott is an Engineering Technician 3 in Workforce, Professional and Technical Education. He was commended by a nominator for his work in setting up the new McClaskey Culinary Institute kitchens, noting that often he had to design and fabricate elements like shelving, splash guards, and stands himself.

“He has been a key player in creating a safer work environment,” they wrote. “Mitch checks on his work, making sure items are functioning safely and properly.”

Other comments about Sott include:

- “Mitch is a valuable member of the WPTE team – interacting positively with faculty, students and staff in the kitchens.”
- “He communicates clearly with faculty and staff in the problem solving and design stages of custom fabricated solutions.”

Victoria Walters (Ong) is a Program Coordinator in Advising. Comments about her include:

- “Victoria is always asking questions, and listens to student with an open mind. She is excellent at prodding our students for additional information to ensure she is using a holistic mindset to help our students navigate college life. She tries to connect with other staff outside her department in an effort to avoid pinging students. She consistently provides outstanding service and always has the student’s best interest in mind. She has contacted me on multiple occasions to confirm what the student needs in regards to appealing or requesting

reinstatement. She has also provided students with my contact information directly in order to help the student navigate the complexities of financial aid.”

- “I feel Victoria is consistent in providing excellent service to our students and goes above and beyond expectations by not pinging students and taking that extra time to evaluate the needs of our students and guide them in the right direction.”

Shelly Williams is a Program Coordinator for the Music department. Her duties are wide-ranging, from ordering sheet music to handling much of the organization of the college’s annual jazz festival, and from supporting faculty to promoting concerts. Outgoing band director Rich Inouye said, “Shelly is one of the most generous and uplifting people I have had the pleasure to work with, but she is also a true professional in her ability to take care of business. After running the jazz festival for a couple of years by myself, bringing Shelly on board as the coordinator was a blessing and her contributions have been integral to the festival’s success.”

Other comments about Williams include:

- “Her dedication to the department and college is an invaluable and immeasurable resource to Clark and the greater Vancouver community. The reputation of the Clark Music Department and Clark College Jazz Festival holds throughout the nation clearly demonstrates the excellence Shelly demonstrates in her execution of her duties.”
- From a student: “In all my four years at Clark College, Shelly is the most kindhearted and joyful staff member I have ever met. Her attentive spirit keeps music students (and faculty) organized and she develops a healthy and professional relationship with each student. With no favorites and a heart for music, she always finds a way to brighten up the music department and give weary music majors the tools to succeed.”

- “She is the most positive and upbeat person I’ve ever met! ... She genuinely cares for students and puts their needs first. With her, they can share their fears, needs, stories, jokes—the list goes on!”