

Spring 2018 Classified Excellence Award



Shelly Williams

Congratulations to **Shelly Williams**, recipient of the 2018 Spring Quarter Classified Staff Excellence Award!

Williams is a Program Coordinator in the Fine Art Division and is described as someone who brings “energy, enthusiasm, and dedication” to the Music Department. Her nominators said, “Her dedication to the department and college is an invaluable and immeasurable resource to Clark and the greater Vancouver community. The reputation 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.”

Shelly has many noted accomplishments, one of which is her role as the festival coordinator for the annual Clark College Jazz Festival. The three-day Clark College Jazz Festival is the largest community music event in Southwest Washington during winter. The festival showcases Clark College to over 1,200 middle and high school students as well as over 3,000 community audience members. The festival welcomed Shelly as an official member of the festival administrative team in 2015. One nominator said, “The organization, resourcefulness, and vitality she has added to the festival has helped bring exponential community awareness to Clark College, and her adept management of the student managers and volunteers adds another level of educational resource to the department, one that cannot be taught in the classroom.”

Although scheduling and coordination of Music Department

events and the festival are part of Williams's job, she goes above and beyond her required responsibilities because, nominators say, she sees the viability of this event to Clark College and the community.

Williams brings skills from her prior experience as business manager of the Columbia Symphony which have been invaluable assets when it comes to raising funds for scholarships and to recruiting and retaining students. "From her first month at Clark, Shelly's enthusiasm for raising awareness and funds for the various music programs was apparent," wrote Vivian Cheadle Manning, Director of Development at Clark College Foundation. "She wants the best for the students and is willing to work at making both fundraising and public promotion key to her duties—and fun for those of us who get to work with her. She understands the value of relationships, community involvement, and education."

Below are other supportive statements from faculty, staff, and students:

- "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. Working with her in the department, Shelly has the uncanny ability to see a need, develop strategies to fill the need, present her strategies to fill the need to the department, and successfully implement the strategy for the benefit of everyone. It is a privilege to work with someone of this caliber and I hope the committee will give her the consideration she deserves!" – Rich Inouye, Band and Jazz Festival Director
- "I have worked with Shelly for the last three years and she is wonderful to work with. She is a huge asset to

the music department keeping everyone organized. Shelly assists with the details of the Jazz Festival, ensuring paperwork is submitted in a timely manner so participating folks get their stipends. She organizes the money and verifies that all is correct and accounted for. She is passionate about the students doing what she can to keep them engaged. The music department is honored to have such a wonderful and caring person supporting them.” – Chris Plamondon, Foundation Accounting Manager

- “Shelly goes the extra mile for all of us. Her work with the orchestra in assisting to solicit ads for the program is tireless. She is always glad to help regardless of the request. She has frequently gone beyond the call of duty to assist in organizing such as the Faculty Recital to raise funds for applied lesson scholarships. Her cheerful nature is consistent no matter what the situation! When she is unsure of the answer to a problem or question, she does not hesitate to research for the solution. Her concern for the needs of our students is boundless in nature!” – Don Appert, Orchestra Director
- “Shelly Williams goes the extra mile for students here at Clark, reaches for that extra inch to make sure we have a bearable if not amazing college experience. I am amazed by her desire to help every student with something as simple as a pencil, to a ride to class when something goes wrong, and everything in between.” – band student
- “Shelly Williams is an extraordinary member of the Clark College music program. She goes out of her way and does everything she can to ensure smooth operation of the various bands. Shelly is genuine, and cares for the well-being of the many students here at Clark.” – dental hygiene student
- “Shelly Williams is an incredible individual who has exceedingly aided me in my endeavors, as well as those

of my peers. Whenever you are stressed out, worried, or need somebody to talk to, Shelly is the person to help point you into the right direction.” – orchestra student

- “Shelly approaches every day with a positive outlook and a smile. Shelly is infallibly positive and is able to find the good in any situation. Her presence alone helps to uplift the morale of our team and the sweet treats she regularly shares only further increases our spirits. Shelly has demonstrated an increased awareness and has changed practices to accommodate budget, ethics, and diversity issues, as these are important issues on campus.” – Kate Ireland, SOFA Admin Services Manager
- “She’s always positive! She is the most positive and upbeat person I’ve ever met! She can find the bright side in any situation, and always sees the cup half-full and never half-empty. She genuinely cares for students and puts their needs first! With her, they can share their fears, needs, stories, jokes—the list goes on! Not only has she become their trusted confidant, but their friend, too. She has proved to be an invaluable and extremely dedicated member of the Music Department. It would be lost without her!” – Vanessa Meyer, SOFA Senior Secretary

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

Elizabeth (Beth) Ernst is a Secretary Senior for the Health & Physical Education (HPE) Division and is described as someone who is knowledgeable, involved, supportive, collaborative, and helpful. As the first line of contact with many students, Ernst is always eager to offer assistance. Her positive attitude and smile are contagious to all who come through the HPE department. In her time at Clark, Ernst has been described as “a pillar of strength for the HPE division.”

One nominator said, “Beth regularly goes beyond the call of duty to perform her daily responsibilities; she does so

graciously while making HPE faculty feel supported and while being present and attentive to the needs of students and community members. Her consistency in excellence has been a tremendous addition to our work and student learning. Not only is Beth present and always in a good mood, she goes well beyond what is expected of her. We can think of numerous occasions when Beth has gone the extra mile to respond to community member or prospective student questions; when Beth has personally worked with individual students to help them navigate the college system; and when Beth has supported faculty/staff with quick proofreading, printing support, computer assistance, and project completion. In taking the time to recognize Beth's outstanding customer service to the college, her support and dedication serve as an integral function in the day-to-day and long-term operation of the HPE Division and the college as a whole."

Other comments about Beth include:

- "Beth has been a wonderful addition to our department since her very first day here. She has a calm and joyful manner when meeting and greeting students, faculty, and anyone else who comes through her office door. She has become very knowledgeable with procedures, processes, and paperwork not only for our department but also across campus, with students needing enrollment paperwork, etc."
- "An example of her excellent skill-set in dealing with people is exemplified in this student testimonial: 'I was confused about what paperwork I needed to enroll in a class. I ended up in Beth's office asking for help. Beth took the time to help me, asked me what I was trying to do, came from behind her desk, and showed me where the paperwork to do that was. She then gave me the proper form and gave me directions as to where to find the instructor who was teaching that class.'"
- "Her willingness to be committed to the many activities

that we are involved in within the HPE Division, give us a central person who has a handle on supplies needed, supporting paperwork, and or the proper budget from which to access funds. This makes our lives as faculty easier, allowing our focus on teaching and the delivery of the information to the students.”

- “Her timeliness, her quality of work, her willingness to help faculty who are not as familiar with software, computers, and the like, has also been appreciated by staff members. They feel like her guidance has always been one that is positive, helpful and without judgement. This creates a peaceful, collaborative work environment, which has made the HPE Division more productive, friendlier and responsive to the college and the students served here.”

Thao Schmidt is a Human Resources Consultant 2 for the Human Resources Department and is described as someone who “consistently performs with a high degree of accuracy and professionalism. Often, Thao is quick to offer help, volunteer for projects and she contributes suggestions for improvement. She also helps the Human Resources department in maintaining a positive, professional and service-oriented atmosphere.

Her nominator said, “One example of Thao’s excellent work performance is the most recent seniority list. Due to some College Bargaining Agreement (CBA) changes, the format of the seniority list changed and it required extensive research on conversion from hours worked to dates and notification to employees. Thao sought clarification on the CBA language and followed guidelines provided by the appropriate parties, partnered with Information Technology Services (ITS) and oversaw the conversion from hours to dates. She documented changes to dates, resolved discrepancies, and provided a comprehensive, clear and accurate seniority list. In addition, she was efficient and conducted several meetings with ITS and HR Management to provide updates on the progress

of the project and requested feedback. After several weeks of work, she conducted a detailed revision of the final seniority dates and submitted a comprehensive, clear and accurate seniority list.”

Other comments about Thao include:

- “The new process that Thao developed has saved the department many work hours, and provides an effective way to produce the seniority list in years to come.”

Sherry Smith is the Admin Services Manager B for Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) and is described as someone who is respectful, positive, helpful, professional, collegial, and always ready and willing to assist. While fostering a welcoming atmosphere, she shows a genuine interest and ability in helping students with a multitude of issues. One nominator said, “On a couple of occasions on the way to meetings, I have watched her notice students struggling or looking lost and then immediately stop and help them or make sure they were okay. Sometimes when students were lost, she had even walked them to their classrooms.”

Smith is also known as someone to ask if you need to learn about the proper college procedure to accomplish a task. No matter how busy she is, Smith is always willing to share her in-depth knowledge about how the college works.

Other comments about Smith include:

- “Sherry consistently shines in her attitude, teamwork, and support of others. She is the key employee for making sure that all operational aspects of the STEM Unit, the largest instructional unit at Clark College, runs smoothly. For example, she provides in-depth counsel and assistance to the deans, division chairs, department heads, adjunct coordinators, directors, and program managers in the areas of a) appropriate personnel practices and adherence to AHE and WPEA

contracts, b) institutional policies and procedures, c) appropriate uses of the many different funding sources that support the STEM Unit, and d) STEM Unit procedures, practices, and history. The high level of work she provides goes above and beyond the call of duty. I often have a need with a short timeline turn-around, and she is always able to accommodate those requests. Lastly, she is creative and efficient in accomplishing tasks. Much of the last year we have been short-staffed for one reason or another, and she has managed these staffing shortages creatively and efficiently.”

- “Sherry Smith has been an employee at Clark College for 15-plus years. I have had the good fortune of working closely with her these past few years, which has given me the opportunity of witnessing her exemplary work ethic. One way that is evident is through her continued commitment to supporting students. While fostering a welcoming atmosphere, she shows a genuine interest and ability in helping them with a multitude of issues. As a result, they are compelled to reach out to her. It is not out of the ordinary for Sherry to step out of the office for one purpose and then return with another; many times when she returned, she would have students who needed assistance in tow. On a couple of occasions on the way to meetings, I have watched her notice students struggling or looking lost and then immediately stop and help them or make sure they were okay. Sometimes when students were lost, she had even walked them to their classrooms. It seems that when students cross her path with an issue, she makes the time to ensure their needs are met rather than delegate the task to her staff, even though her schedule is always seemingly very hectic. Sherry understands that students are a very important element of her job, and I believe she really does care about them. She knows that they are also a critical component to the success of Clark College.”

- “Sherry goes above and beyond the call of duty by taking the time to meet with each support staff on a weekly basis to enable them time to discuss projects, concerns and feel connected. She is a good listener, very supportive, and a team builder!”
- “Sherry has been my supervisor for 12 ½ years. She is absolutely AWESOME to work with. I can’t imagine working for anyone else on campus. If I ever need assistance in resolving an issue, she is always there for guidance. She isn’t a micro-manager. She has always been approachable and will always listen. She also leads by setting a good example and has a great work ethic. I admire and respect her as a person and a great supervisor.”
- “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. Then once moved in, she made sure to address any issues that came up and always checked in with us, caring about how everything was working. Sherry has strong ethics and is extremely well respected for her diligence and hard work. In one statement, the STEM unit would not function smoothly without Sherry.”
- “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.”

Peggy Sweesy is a Program Assistant for Transitional Studies/BEECH Unit and is described as someone who “willingly tackles any task I hand to her, finding the best approach to complete it while continuing to provide a high level of

service with her regular tasks.” Peggy is also known to be pleasant to work with as well as encouraging and caring. One nominator said, “I know if you were to ask anyone who knows her, Peggy’s positive demeanor and sunny disposition would be the first things they would mention. If I am having a tough day, she can help me see the positive side of things and make me laugh. She is truly one of the things that make Clark a great place to work for me!”

Other comments about Peggy include:

- “Peggy cares deeply about doing a good job. We know we can count on her stability and dedication, everyone feels safe and comfortable with her. She helps to create a positive atmosphere here.” – Jeri Kemmer, BEECH Unit Operations Manager
- “I wish I had more time to write all the things I appreciate about Peggy. I think foremost is her cheerfulness and willingness to listen to requests (even if they aren’t necessarily in her purview). I always feel comfortable communicating with Peggy. She listens with care/caring. On short notice and with many many requests for help, she came through in a timely manner recently. This has happened on numerous occasions. She was careful about using a cardboard box she needed for moving things around from a classroom. Checking first to see if anyone needed it, and afterwards promptly replacing it. (she is very thoughtful and considerate)” – Jackie Allen-Bond, Transitional Studies Faculty
- “Great choice. Peggy is an amazing team player dedicated to supporting each of us so that we can serve our students well. I appreciate her dedication and support.” – Sam May-Varas, Transitional Studies Faculty
- “Peggy is the most positive, upbeat, always-a-smile, willing-to-help staff person I have ever worked with. She has excellent follow-through and always goes the extra mile. She is both very professional and very

personable. Everyone loves her and she is an absolute joy to work with. She is a wonderful listener. “ – Les Rivera, Transitional Studies Faculty

- “Peggy always displays a high degree of integrity, responsibility, and positive energy. She is an inspiration to others and you always feel better after spending time with her. She is truly a ray of sunshine and a joy to work with.” – Gayle Lee, Transitional Studies Staff
- “I just want to say that Peggy is one of the most amazing ladies I have ever met. She is dedicated, respectful, and very friendly. It is simply a joy to work with her!!!” – Marilú DeYoung, Transitional Studies Office Assistant