



## Outstanding Employees Honored With Awards for Excellence

By University Relations – Communications  
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There are many employees at the UA who are consistently willing to go above and beyond their normal work duties. Some of these employees were recognized yesterday at the UA Awards for Excellence ceremony, sponsored by the [Classified Staff Council](#), the [Appointed Professionals Advisory Council](#) and the [President's Cabinet](#).

Awards were given in several categories.

### University Awards for Excellence

These awards are given to classified staff and appointed professionals for outstanding achievements, regardless of employees' length of service, classification or pay grade. They recognize those who have performed



Gisela Telis

extra duties outside of their normal work responsibilities and have worked to improve their team through encouraging other team members or working on special projects.

There were 11 winners this year.

**Gisela Telis** was recognized for making her mark – online, on the radio and on television – as a content producer for [Arizona Public Media](#). Telis has received Emmy Awards for her work bringing attention to mental health issues. In her nomination letter, **Jack Gibson**, director and general manager of Arizona Public Media, wrote that Telis' work "exemplifies



**Pamela Wagner**

the best and most meaningful aspects of the public service and outreach missions shared by Arizona Public Media and the University of Arizona." Telis also recently received an Honorable Mention from the National Press Association for her story on the lack of mental health services in rural communities.

**Patricia Sousa**, assistant dean of the **Eller College of Management**, is known among her colleagues for her dedication to her department. Her nominating letter – by **Jean Vock**, assistant dean of finance and administration at Eller – described her as a "'hidden wonder' in terms of her contributions to the college, University and community." The letter continued: "Pat is a rock upon which entire

foundations are built, and her expertise can be felt and observed in everything she does. Pat has helped streamline and simplify systems that have maximized the resources to provide the best possible environment for research and teaching."

**Pamela Wagner**, administrative associate with the Department of **Family and Community Medicine**, lives out her work exemplifying health and wellness, according to her nominator **Julie Croteau**, program coordinator in her department. Besides working on Camp Wellness, a program that promotes the health of adults with mental illness, Wagner also brings quality service and positivity to everyone around her, according to Croteau. Wagner's



**Prisca Zimmerman**

nomination letter said that her "attention to diversity and cultural competency is also a testament to her dedication to the principles of our program and the University at large." Said Wagner: "Being nominated for this award by the awesome team I get the privilege to work with every day was very humbling. Knowing I was selected as a winner from across the entire University has left me speechless – and that's really hard to do!"



Rozanne Canizales

**Prisca Zimmerman**, a lab manager and veterinary technician for the Gothard Lab in the [Department of Physiology](#), has demonstrated overwhelming dedication, ethical standards and professional practice, according to her nominators. "After 11 years, she has become the most trusted and relied-upon member of our team," **Katalin Gothard**, professor of physiology, wrote in the nomination letter. "Prisca perfected all the steps involved in our work by paying close attention to detail and not being satisfied with anything less than outstanding. This is the most defining feature of her work ethic."

**Rozanne Canizales** is an administrative manager for the [Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering](#), where

she has worked for more than 30 years. She was nominated by **Tamal Bose**, head of the department, who wrote in her nomination letter that Canizales creates a good rapport with everyone with whom she works and is welcoming to everyone who comes into the building and those with whom she interacts over phone or email. "Working at the University of Arizona was one of the best decisions I've ever made," Canizales said. "As a native Tucsonan, I am passionate about the UA and, in particular, Arizona Athletics. I take pride in assisting others and truly enjoy coming to work each day."

**Linda Chu**, assistant director for global programs in the [Center for English as a Second Language](#), is dedicated to

creating a center that diversifies the UA campus. She was nominated by **Jenny Merritt**, the center's content development coordinator, who writes that Chu's efforts have drawn students from countries that were previously underrepresented at the UA, like Brazil, Mexico, Columbia and Angola. Chu also recognizes that diversity can come from the LGBTQ community and actively seeks to increase her knowledge and understanding on issues related to



Colin Deeds



Cara Lazazzera

that community.

**Colin Deeds**, assistant director of the [School of Anthropology](#), has engaged in outreach efforts in the Tucson community that have been recognized throughout the University and surrounding area. He volunteers for projects related to his work and collaborates with his colleagues and students on and off campus, connecting them to professional workshops, discussions and other activities. "I am humbled to be chosen from a group of so many dedicated employees across campus, and am honored by the nomination from my wonderful colleagues," Deeds said.

**Wendy Remencus-Halstead**, custodial area supervisor for [Facilities](#)

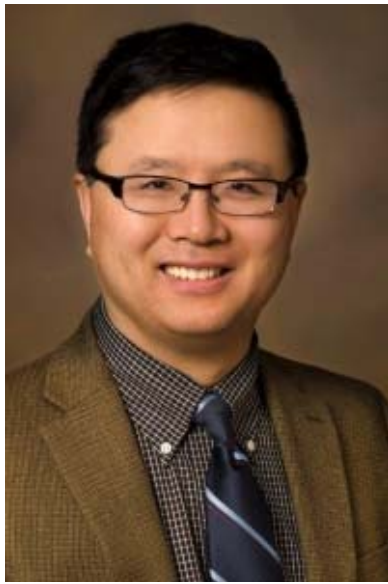
[Management](#), puts in extra hours to ensure that her job is done right. Nominator **Chris Adams**, custodial area supervisor, writes that even though Remencus-Halstead instills a work ethic in her employees to do a job well, she also makes sure that they have enough time to be at home with their families. She also strives to be a better employee and supervisor by taking advantage of professional development opportunities. "Her positive energy and smile brings joy to the people around her, and I take great pride in calling her my friend," read a quote in the awards program from **Dusty Nielsen**, custodial area supervisor.



Katie Van Renterghem

**Cara Lazazzera** is a business manager for the Center for English as a Second

language. With a flexible and patient mindset, she works with students who are learning English. "Her cultural competence and patience in helping students who often have different cultural expectations with respect to service transactions is essential in making our center run smoothly," writes **Steven Randall**, Intensive English Program coordinator and Lazazzera's nominator. "Despite the stress inherent to such



Ed Xia

interactions, I have yet to see Cara flustered."

**Denielle Swartz**, database specialist in the [Office of the Registrar](#), is known and admired in her office for her positivity, support and all-around excellence. She started as a student worker and has worked with Room and Course Scheduling for 10 years. "Receiving this award fills me with gratitude for the amazing people I work with in Room and Course Scheduling, as well as the wonderful and kind academic department representatives I have the pleasure of interacting with on a daily basis," Swartz said.

**Katie Van Renterghem**, institutional analyst in the [Office of Academic](#)

[Affairs](#), does work that is crucial to the successful development of the new Responsibility Centered Management budgeting system on campus. With her people skills, she also helps lead University committees that are making tough decisions and streamlining UA processes. "I am extremely honored to be receiving the Award for Excellence," Van



University Animal Care

Renterghem said. "I am incredibly fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with some of the best people on campus, and it's with their support and encouragement that I've been able to achieve the success I've had. I love what I do and I'm excited to continue helping the University move forward."

**Ed Xia**, director of information



**UA RISE Health and Wellness Center**

technologies in the [College of Social and Behavioral Sciences](#), was nominated by **Monica Casper**, associate dean for academic affairs in the college.

She wrote in her nomination that Xia is a prime example of how a good team starts with its head. "He has managed to develop and cultivate a team that is efficient, organized, responsive and forward-thinking." Said Xia: "I am stunned and feel considerably honored to receive this prestigious Award for Excellence. I would also like to recognize the other 20 members of my office, who have put in their time and efforts to support faculty, students and staff at SBS and earned an incredible reputation for SBS Tech IT support."



Hope Dang

### Department Award for Excellence

The Department Award for Excellence is awarded to a single department that displays excellence in the management of its people and resources.

This year's award was given to [University Animal Care](#), which has the responsibility of caring for more than 20,000 animals a day. The department works to ensure the welfare of animals and researchers.

**David Besselsen**, director and attending veterinarian of University Animal Care, submitted the nomination. "The UAC team has worked tirelessly to complete a broad array of projects to benefit both the employees and users of the UA Animal Care program," Besselsen said. "Their vibrant departmental culture and use of resources to improve team knowledge and skills has generated elevated status and integration within the scientific community."

### Team Award for Excellence

The Team Award for Excellence is awarded to a team tasked with a specific project or function. Team members should also have established means by which to hold each other accountable.

The award went to UA Health Sciences' UA RISE (Recovery Through Integration, Support and Empowerment) Health and Wellness Center, also known as Camp Wellness. The program helps families and communities by promoting the health of adults with mental illness through education, training and peer support. After a loss of funding, the team worked together to create a new program model, putting in extra hours of work, with new attitudes and new schedules. Nominator **Andy Bernstein**, clinical director of the center, wrote that "this team's work, in all of its demonstrated success for those with psychiatric disabilities, should stand as a model for health; proof that people who suffer from mental illness can become an effective and viable part of society's workforce."

## The Bill Joe Varney Award

The Bill Joe Varney Award was established 24 years ago and is named for a past director of the Student Union who dedicated his time at the UA to meeting the needs of hundreds of students and employees. The award is given to a University employee who has at least 15 years service.

This year's award was given to **Hope Dang**, assistant staff scientist in the [Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology](#), whose colleagues say she shows the same commitment to her work today that she did when she started the job 15 years ago. She is dedicated to mentoring undergraduate students every year and to making sure that the laboratory where she works is as efficient as it can be. She is also a volunteer at the Humane Society. "Knowing that there are so many qualified applicants, I truly appreciate being nominated and chosen for the Billy Joe Varney Award," Dang said. "It is a tremendous honor. Today, I am even more committed to continue supporting the students and community that have brought me so much joy and purpose. I am so fortunate to love what I do; it doesn't feel like work to me."

Additional awards presented at the ceremony were:

- The Classified Staff Council Special Award recognizes an individual for outstanding support of and impact on classified staff. The award went to **Allison Vaillancourt**, vice president of human resources and institutional effectiveness.
- The Eugene Sander Shared Governance Awards provides recognition to UA leaders who embrace and embody the ideals of shared governance and recognize the importance of appointed professionals and their contributions. There were two awardees: **Melissa Vito**, senior vice president of student affairs and enrollment management, and **Mika Galilee-Belfer**, director of faculty affairs and strategic planning in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.
- The Sandra Taylor University Citizen Staff Award, named for retired Senior Vice President for Campus Life Sandra Taylor, recognizes those who work for the good of the University and its students. It was given to **Jill Ramirez**, senior coordinator for sustainability education in Residence Life.

# UA@Work

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