

## Background

Each year, the Distinguished Employee and Leadership Team Award (DELTA) selection committee, comprised of UA leaders along with two civil service and two academic award winners from the previous year, meet to select new recipients. This award is designed to recognize individual employees and teams for their exceptional accomplishments, service and dedication to the University. Awards for this year were given to three supervisors, three individuals, and two teams. Since the 2008, inauguration of the UA Distinguished Employee Leadership and Team Award (DELTA), 140 UA employees have been recognized as DELTA award recipients. This number includes individual and team awards. Executives from University Administration make the presentations.



### Kayci Bohlen

Kayci Bohlen, a certified public purchasing buyer, is a contract administrator in OBFS. Her contribution is best summed up in a letter sent by a colleague at Governor's State University to her supervisor this past year.

"I have had the opportunity to work on several large strategic bids and awards with Kayci through the Illinois Public Higher Education Cooperative (IPHEC) over the past several years. She exhibits strong

communication skills, is responsive to requests and works well under pressure when multiple projects coincide. I have seen firsthand her ability to negotiate with vendors, to resolve conflict, and to be proactive to prevent difficulties for University departments and IPHEC as a whole."

Kayci is recognized as a detail oriented team member who works on behalf of all of Higher Education when implementing strategic contracts. She has earned the respect of her peers by focusing on solutions which are models of efficiency, ethics and tight timelines. She is kind, hardworking and always willing to assist staff and other institutions to share information and discuss best practices.

Kayci has led multi-departmental implementation initiatives, as well as vendor cost recovery efforts and contract negotiations. The following are examples of her results.

- She reduced pricing on current contracts awarded by the University of Illinois, the Illinois Public Higher Education Consortia (IPHEC), and other consortia. For example through the Computer Peripherals award she negotiated additional 30% discounts for Cisco Smartnets off Global List Price.
- She denied price increases to contracted furniture vendors based on Producer Price Index reported by the Bureau of Labor and Statistics and on electrical supplies due to raw material shortages but not reflected in the Producer Price Index. Prices were to be firm for the first year of the contract.
- She held suppliers to contractual escalation clauses such as timeframes and maximum escalations.



## Vicki Clements

Vicki Clements is Executive Assistant to the University President. Vicki embodies the sentiment of the phrase “grace under fire.” She joined the Office of the President during Dr. White’s term and helped Dr. Ikenberry during his return to the presidency. March of 2012, then President Hogan resigned from the University and Dr. Easter became the President. She also handled the ramping up and ramping down of the Global Campus. During all of these transitions, she was responsible for maintaining

the office, assisting multiple principals, including principal staff to the presidents, during extremely difficult situations.

In addition to scheduling, recording and retrieving information for the President, she also has to be cognizant of many deadlines, prioritization of numerous projects and topics of the moment. She always follows-up, replies to phone calls and emails, and projects a positive attitude in the middle of what most of us would consider chaos.

Vicki is the primary contact for the Board of Trustees and its staff. The importance of accuracy and diplomacy in this role cannot be overstated. Vicki is incredibly organized and professional when requesting information, but also firm on what is expected and when.

Vicki is an extremely hard-working, professional University employee. She has tackled an incredibly demanding and challenging position with intelligence, good will, and positivity. Her work ethic is impeccable which sets a standard for those who regularly interact with her. She is deserving of the DELTA award.



## Kelvin Touchette

Kelvin is a software engineer in OBFS Business Information Systems (BIS). As a software engineer, Kelvin's primary job is programming/coding and data base work.

Kelvin played a key role in maintaining the inner-workings of the ICE program, which serves as the main database for the university's Student Health Insurance Office. We are under strong scrutiny as this is the only insurance office (out of some 500

academic institutions underwritten by United Healthcare) that processes and adjudicates its own medical claims. It is an understatement to say that it is unclear where the unit would be without the sterling efforts of Mr. Touchette.

With just 50% of his time allotted to the Student Insurance unit, Kelvin managed to create solutions for many of its problems. Some of these included: restructuring the Usual & Customary files for claims processing; writing code for new benefits allowed under the Affordable Care Act; creating and implementing a new tracking process for W-9 forms within the database, ensuring compliance with the IRS; helping troubleshoot the processing of checks that are sent to medical providers, to name a few.

Kelvin is customer focused. When someone has a problem, he responds as soon as possible. He is conscientious of compliance issues, production matters, and hardware problems.

Kelvin also keeps up with the fast-changing IT field. He is willing to try new technology that speeds up processing time or makes coding more efficient. He is one of the go to persons for ColdFusion, database administration, database design and use, RSS feeds, and several tools used by BIS software engineers.



## Laura Curtis

Laura Curtis is a Senior Associate Director for Employee Relations and Human Resources in University HR. Her job description reads in part, “responsible for overseeing, developing, and implementing all human resource processing initiatives and functions for Academic, Civil Service, Graduate, Student, and temporary/hourly personnel for University Administration units in UA.

First, Laura’s approach and guiding principle is that she wants every employee to get paid on time and correctly (all 1,600 of them) – the first time, every time! She sincerely cares about the well-being of employees and will spend hours tracking down staff in campus units

who “own” a piece of the transaction to get them to apply theirs so she can finish her part. Laura cares so much about employee’s getting paid on time that if she is on vacation on a payroll calculation day, she always logs into her laptop to check to make sure everyone approved their payroll so everyone gets paid (even from Disneyworld!).

She genuinely cares about the success of the team beyond her own contributions and recognition. She will go out of her way to make others look good on the team and never expects recognition for it. She has developed countless job aids and step-by-step instructions for staff to help make their jobs easier.

Laura not only goes above and beyond for her team and UA clients, she does so with units who are outside UA. Because of her expertise, she is called upon for advice and ideas from campus HR offices and colleges. She never makes them feel like it is an inconvenience to help them. She treats everyone exactly the same, regardless of who they are, which campus they are on, or which unit. She regularly stays late or comes in on the weekend to do her normal daily work because her work days were spend helping others because that’s just who Laura is – the epitome of an extraordinary employee and supervisor!

Laura gets the big picture. She is focused on doing what is right for the university and the employee. She doesn’t engage in petty politics or build barriers. Quite the opposite, she works diligently to overcome barriers, politics and egos of some to meet the needs of her customers. If there were to be a poster of the exemplary employee, it would be Laura.

Her supervisor said she is a selfless and humble employee whose primary concern is the team and organization. She is consistent in her actions, behavior and performance and that is because of her sincerity and belief that the sum is only as strong as its parts. Laura is someone I can count on in any situation, to jump in and devote her time for the good of the team. In the nine years I have worked with Laura, I have never her tell anyone “no” because this isn’t in her nature. She will do whatever it takes to make a customer happy, regardless of the effort it takes on her part.



## Angela Foster

Angela Foster is an Assistant Director for Employee Relations and Human Resources in University HR where she is primarily responsible for all aspects of talent acquisitions for over 1,500 of the university administration's positions. Her nomination comes from one of her clients, University Student Financial Services (USFSCO). Angela has been particularly helpful with their Illinois College Advising Corps (ICAC) program which requires very short timeframes for recruiting on-boarding as well as the short duration of the job resulting in high turnover.

Angela painstakingly researches hiring options, meets with clients to discuss options and make recommendations while ensuring that all state, University and Civil Service rules and regulations are being followed. USFSCO has a very high degree of confidence in Angela's knowledge and expertise, as well as her integrity. From her client's perspective, this alleviates the stress and pressure associated with "getting it right" in the complicated world of employee relations and human resources.

In her recruitment role, she often juggles 10 to 15 searches at one time, catering to the needs of the unit and remaining compliant with the internal policies and external compliance responsibilities. She is often the first contact with potential new hires. She helps to shape their view of the university and expectations as a potential employee. In this job alone, she can work a full week to coordinate all of the interviews, responses, communications, documentation, etc. Because of Angela, the university administration supervisors have come to expect and demand a high level of customer service and competence in not only searches, but all of the services provided to the clients.

Because of her willingness to drop what she is doing to help someone else, she has naturally become the subject matter expert in several HR functions. This often takes time out of her normal workday so she often spends her evenings reviewing resumes, contacting candidates to pre-screen them and schedule interviews, conducting reference checks, extending offers, and responding to email questions from clients.

Her supervisor says that because of her customer service and expertise, not to mention her friendly personality and work ethic, she has generated positive relationships at the campus and within the university administration. This is consistent with people seeking her out for her expertise and looking for her guidance during searches.



## Ron Miner

Ron Miner, Director of the Accounting Consultants Group (ACG) for University Accounting and Financial Reporting (UAFR) exemplifies excellence and provides outstanding service to the University. ACG provides targeted guidance to units in the performance of their accounting and related business functions. The types of assistance provided to units ranges from providing guidance on applying relevant policy and procedure to the set-up of new accounting structures.

With each new unit project Ron and his team identify the root causes of the unit's business-related challenges. He develops plans to efficiently deploy his staff and collaborate with the unit's resources to set the unit on a path to successfully achieve their improvement goals. He has also worked with various state agencies, legal counsel and other units to resolve a variety of complex business matters. Many of the client projects had far reaching or strategic impact. Several of these high-impact projects include critical work at the Energy Resource Center (UIC), Sangamon Auditorium (UIS), Mile Square Health Center (UIC), Krannert Center for the Performing Arts (UIUC) and Prairieland Energy (a University-related organization). In each case, Ron has used his leadership and technical ability to effectively and efficiently promote positive and lasting change.

Since Ron took on the task of leading UAFR's consulting group, he has successfully recruited and mentored a group of uniquely talented staff. Ron manages his team in a manner that recognizes the unique strengths of each team member. He makes himself highly accessible to provide guidance on complex matters and promotes an atmosphere of trust and confidence within his team. Ron extends a high level of support and trust to his staff – something that has yielded a confident team of individuals that are effective in working independently on tough projects. As a result, there is a mutual sense of respect and admiration.



## OTM Share the Vision

The Office of Technology Management (OTM) at UIUC is responsible for protecting and licensing UI Intellectual Property (IP). UIUC innovators usually create IP on the cutting edge of their fields. This means that their IP is very nascent and sometimes is created before a market exists for their IP. Venture Capitalists (VC) can sometimes fill the financial gap to take UIUC's novel IP to market. Most VCs are clustered in a few geographic areas, the SF Bay area, San Diego, Boston and New York. The OTM boldly planned and held an event called "Share

the Vision 2012" that brought about 70 VCs and large company technology scouts to UIUC to listen to 38 distinguished UI innovators make VC-type pitches.

Share the Vision can be considered a capstone to OTM's last 10 years of activity on campus. It was remarkable to bring VCs away from their comfortable venues... into the pearl of the cornfield, to experience truly world caliber innovators who actually understand how to bring their innovations from the lab to the market. The presenters and attendees walked away feeling like they had invested their time wisely by being part of Share the Vision. Part of the success can be measured by the dry statistics of inventors, VCs, technology scouts, speakers from Illinois DCEO and the NSF, Phyllis Wise, Larry Schook. But a big part of the success of Share the Vision was the universal sense that everybody was part of something significant. The team helped to create this extraordinarily valuable feel by creating an event that ran flawlessly, an event where the details had been thought of and addressed, and an event that provided a forum for people to truly network and create partnerships.

The feedback from the attendees and participants at Share the Vision was consistently positive and often exuberant. Because of the success of Share the Vision, OTM is planning Share the Vision 2 for October, 2013.

The team members responsible for this good work are:

Tracy Hunter  
Heather Jones  
Nicole Nair  
Donna Wilm



## USFSCO/ICAC Financial Literacy Bowl Project

On April 13, 2012, the 1st Annual Financial Literacy Bowl was held in Student Center West at the University of Illinois at Chicago. This initiative was an outgrowth of the Illinois College Advising Corps (ICAC), which is a grant-funded program that is housed within University Student Financial Services and Cashier Operations (USFSCO). The purpose of the ICAC program is to increase college attendance and completion for populations of at-risk, first generation and underserved students in Illinois. As part of

college preparedness, ICAC advisers working in 22 Illinois public high schools hold financial literacy workshops designed to teach money management skills and knowledge.

The Financial Literacy Bowl (FLB) was a one-day double elimination competition. Twenty-two teams of 5 seniors from Illinois public high schools competed to demonstrate the financial awareness and knowledge they acquired through the Texas Guarantee Financial Literacy modules that each ICAC adviser taught in their high schools. From the group of seniors who learned the modules, the advisers built a competition team consisting of five members, plus an alternate. The first and second place teams were awarded scholarship dollars that were secured by the ICAC Administrative Team.

### Project Results:

- The high school students who competed in the Bowl learned the material covered in the 10 modules, as evidenced by the competitive nature of each round and their ability to apply basic financial skills to answer scenario-based questions in the later rounds.
- Visibility of ICAC at the local level (a representative of the Chicago Mayor's office served as a moderator).
- The project team compiled a 26-page FLB Manual used to document the entire process as a guide for future FLBs.
- Several stakeholders specifically asked to be included in the next Financial Literacy Bowl.

The team members responsible for this good work are:

Pamela Devitt  
Cesar Diaz  
Catalina Hernandez  
Kathryn Kirrish  
Karen McFarlin  
Earleen Peters  
Lindsay Peters  
JoDee Walsh  
John Palmatier