

2012 DELTA Recipients



Janet Ayers

In 2011, Janet Ayers lead her staff in Property Accounting through a major upgrade in the FABweb system, the web based system used by all University units to update and maintain information for their departmental equipment inventory. Janet managed to do all this while maintaining her own high standards of customer service for current operations

Janet's depth of understanding of operations has allowed her to identify and prioritize the work and tasks needed to be completed to maintain operations with decreased staff. She achieved this by assigning staff to tasks based on the urgency and importance of tasks needing to be performed. Janet is a role model to staff in taking the extra effort to meet customer needs. Her tireless and tenacious attitude is evidenced in her daily work and it's an attitude she shares with everyone that

she works with. Janet works well with individuals and teams from Property and throughout the University.

Janet is able to empower employees to solve their own problems. She is reassuring regarding their abilities and allows sufficient space to employees to brainstorm, evaluate, and make their own decisions when appropriate. Janet is always willing to share the credit for work well done and provides employees with positive feedback.

Janet is a great supervisor and employee and I'm very thankful to have her on staff in Property Accounting. I appreciate the opportunity to nominate Janet Ayers as she would be a very deserving recipient of the DELTA award.



Kevin Fair

Kevin Fair led the department during a very difficult period of turmoil when the Director of Purchasing left the University along with three Assistant Directors. He led the department when most of the leadership team suddenly left their positions. His poise in the midst of enormous difficulties and stress has been remarkable. The transition was seamless to the end users, the many departments of the University and the Medical Center. Kevin helped to ensure the new Senate Bill 51 requirements were met and procurement could proceed unaltered.

Kevin encourages his staff members on a daily basis through helping them through a wide variety of projects. Kevin encourages his staff to obtain professional procurement training and many of his staff members are nationally certified public buyers. He is nationally certified in public procurement as a supervisor and encourages others to pursue certification as well. Kevin participates very positively in MAFBE events to help the University and Medical Center work with more minority and female owned businesses.

Kevin is one of the unsung heroes of the University and Medical Center. He helps a multitude of people to do their research and important work on a daily basis by enabling the complicated procurement process to run well. He is a great leader and mentor to many people in our department and across the campus.



Amanda Akers

Amanda Akers has worked for the Alumni Association for 15 years in the Accounting and Finance area where she handles all payables (she pays all of the bills for the organization) and until recently, all receivables. Amanda excels at making sure the rules are followed while also providing high quality customer service.

Amanda is instrumental in developing new employee's knowledge of the office and helping with their transition. She is the "go-to-person" and she also provides coaching to the new hires.

This year, Amanda cross trained with a retiring employee to make sure their duties would be covered until the position was filled and a new person was trained. This required extra time and effort in addition to her regular job duties. Amanda also covered the duties of another position for a year and four months after a coworker left the university.

During her years of service at the Alumni Association, Amanda advanced from an Account Tech I to the Assistant Controller. During this time, she balanced completing a bachelor's degree while working full time and caring for her family. Amanda completed this degree specifically to advance in her position at the Alumni Association and enhance her skills as an employee.



Shih-Yu (Eddie) Tsai

Eddie Tsai was part of a two-person team who took on the work of updating Banner modifications instead of contracting the work out to the vendor for the testing phase of the November 2011 Banner upgrade. This resulted in a cost savings to the university of approximately \$500,000. Because of Eddie's phenomenal turn-around time and his accuracy in making code changes he saved everyone involved a lot of time from testing and retesting.

Eddie also took an active role in developing Proxy Access, a new SunGard community source initiative, which allows constituents to set up access to designated Self-Service Banner pages and specify what activities a proxy user can perform. In this capacity Eddie worked with developers from other higher education institutions as well as with representatives from the vendor, SunGard and AITS staff. This was the first project of this nature that AITS has been involved in and it was a learning experience for all involved.

Eddie attended SunGard Summit 2011 (Banner vendor conference) as a panel member for a Proxy Access session. During this session, Eddie was able to share his knowledge of Proxy Access with the higher education community.

Eddie has a positive outlook on his job and life. He works very well within a team environment, respectfully listening to others' opinions and suggestions, as well as adding to the conversation by making his own suggestions. He takes on each new project and task with a smile and sees it through to successful completion.



Lynn Spencer

Lynn Spencer is the Office Support Specialist for University Office of Planning and Budgeting. This past year Lynn provided critical assistance on several high intensity projects for the President's Office and Board of Trustees. These include the Three Year Accelerated Program Report, Campus Report Card, Diversity Dashboard, Moody's and Standard & Poor's Rating Agency presentation, Insurance Underwriters' presentation, President's testimony to the House Higher Education Appropriation Hearing, and Board of Trustees Dashboard presentation. These projects are highly visible and of extreme importance to the

University leadership as well as the Board of Trustees. Lynn has shown excellence in her ability to handle pressure with ease and aplomb while never failing to meet work product deadlines. Often, there is an expectation of short timelines; with Lynn's help, we are able to meet the demands of the President's Office and Board of Trustees.

She handles such projects efficiently, completing them in a timely manner. Her attention to detail and superb editing skills have helped us produced documents that receive praise and positive remarks from the President's Office and Board of Trustees. She insures that each of us remains on task to meet deadlines and deliver an exemplary product be it for the President's Office or the Board of Trustees



Kathy Sullivan

Kathy Sullivan manages special projects and develops programming for IGPA's extensive public engagement agenda. Kathy went beyond her role as coordinator to strengthen and grow the New Leadership Illinois program. She has ramped up recruitment, traveling across the state to build relationships with other universities and community colleges. Kathy also sought ways to make the program more sustainable in the long-term. She is developing an alumni network to help strengthen the program financially, and is finding ways to do more on an increasingly tight budget.

When the statewide debate about pension policy began last year, the university called upon IGPA to host informative panels to help the communities on all three campuses better understand the issue and policy implications. Kathy took on this massive project in earnest. In a few short weeks, Kathy coordinated the panels on all three campuses, incorporating the planning into her workload with enthusiasm. More than 4,000 individuals attended the panels—a record number for IGPA events.

Over the same time period, IGPA was hosting speeches on all three campuses by Christopher Kennedy, Chair of the University Board of Trustees. These speeches were also successful, drawing large crowds and demonstrating the excellent quality of university programming to the highest level of university leadership.



Outreach Information Sessions: Health Care Crisis Illinois

On April 6, 2011, Benefits Services received notification from the Department of Central Management Services (CMS) that the State of Illinois health insurance plan bid process was completed. This decision would leave employees in Central Illinois without HMO coverage for the upcoming fiscal year . The estimated number of UI employees/customers affected by this change was 9,300 with the majority

living in Champaign and Sangamon Counties. The continual release of information by the news media, health insurance plans, unions, legislators and CMS would add fuel to the confusion and emotional well-being of our customers. It was commonplace for our customers to hear rumors or read articles that were slanted or not necessarily the whole story.

The Team’s vision statement “is to create a high quality, integrated organization that focuses on satisfying the Payroll, Benefits and Student Insurance needs of employees, departments, students and vendors in a convenient and effective manner.”

There were many challenges that the team met successfully, for example, outreach sessions were held from 7:00 am through 11:30 pm. Team members worked long days and weekends to meet there day to day work and the extraordinary work presented to them during this benefits choice period.

The team successfully met unexpected challenges by considering what would be in the best interest of our customers. One outreach session was listed on two non-University websites at the incorrect time. UPB was informed that over 200 people, mostly retirees and a local news crew had been waiting 30 minutes for the outreach session to begin. The audience was very upset and refused to leave without hearing a presentation. Two team members walked over to the location, did the presentation and answered many questions from retirees and other non-UI State agency employees. This was a difficult situation, which was handled with grace, understanding and patience.

The team members responsible for this good work are:

Zachary Becker
Deanna Boyer
Brenda Butts
Carole Devaney
Gayle Dunahee
Annie Harris Buford
Pamela Kennie
Dennis McGiles
Jennifer Steiling
Susan Vergara