

September 23, 2021

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2021

**OUTSTANDING
STAFF AWARDS**



UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH FLORIDA

OUTSTANDING STAFF AWARDS

Each year, the University of South Florida seeks to acknowledge the most precious resources in our organization – our people. One way is through the Outstanding Staff Awards program which recognizes staff and administrative employees who excelled in their contributions to USF. It is the hard work and dedication of these staff members that greatly contributes to USF's success and upward trajectory.

Presentation of Employee of the Year Awards, Sponsored by Gabor Financial Solutions

Kevin Sokolow, President, Gabor Financial Solutions

Special Acknowledgments

VP Area Selection Committees - Chairs and their members

University Communications & Marketing - Video, event announcing & promotional assets

Human Resources - Program coordination & event facilitation

AWARD CATEGORIES

Individual Awards

Allow for the recognition of a single employee's "above and beyond" performance and contributions.

Team Awards

Allow for the recognition of a team of employees for its execution of a project, plan and/or initiative that demonstrates "above and beyond" performance and contributions.

Employee of the Year Awards

Two recipients are chosen from the winners of the Individual Outstanding Staff Awards. This award is sponsored by Gabor Agency Financial Solutions which was founded in 1947 and specializes in providing insurance and investment services to employees in the public sector.



Executive Services

Maggie Denney, Assistant Director, Office of Compliance & Ethics

Maggie is always searching for the next best way to collaborate with, educate, or involve other offices and individuals on campus. She consistently improves systems and researches best practices to ensure University affiliates are getting the most equitable and efficient Title IX process possible. When the Title IX Coordinator suddenly stepped down with a day's notice in April, Maggie stepped right into the role necessary to continue the work, while also carrying on her own responsibilities. She made the transition smooth for the team as well as other campus partners. Maggie also has an unmatched passion for the work that she does. She knows that Title IX is not just another law to follow but is also a space where affiliates must be their most vulnerable and open after a very private experience.

Beverly Jerry, Human Resources Manager, Central Human Resources

Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit us, Beverly had the added responsibility of reviewing leave requests related to COVID for every USF employee. She worked tirelessly with Human Resources to ensure we were providing the best service to our colleagues through her timely and accurate directions. Her willingness to step up and assist with all employee issues related to emergency sick leave has been a blessing to the staff and faculty who needed her assistance during a horrible time for all of us.

Jeffrey Van Zandt, Title IX Investigator, Office of Compliance & Ethics

Of his own accord Jeff reached out to Stetson Law School, one of the most prestigious law schools in Florida, and engineered an externship program that will ensure USF meets new Title IX requirements for investigators and hearing advisors. This went above and beyond Jeff's normal duties as a Title IX Investigator. As a result, Jeff is voluntarily taking on additional responsibilities to oversee the externs and create an entire curriculum around this externship. He showed amazing initiative and he did it all with his customary enthusiasm and spirit that makes working with Jeff such a pleasure. His endless positive attitude, long hours, and dedication to his work are especially appreciated given the nature of the work we do in Title IX.

Sarasota-Manatee Campus

Denise Davis-Cotton, Program Director, Florida Center for PAInT

As Director of Partnership for Arts Integrated Teaching (PAInT), Dr. Denise Davis-Cotton's job is to create programs for Arts - Integrated teaching; instead, Dr. Cotton has created a vision for PAInT, as a center for excellence in Education, Arts-Integration, and Inclusive Community Building. Driven by her mission to provide opportunities to all children, especially those rendered invisible by society, and her passion for equity, she has transformed USF's Arts and Education presence in the region. She has produced innumerable, inclusive programs and enhanced existing curriculum through robust Arts-integration and engaging activities. She is a selfless leader who is driven in her mission in creating a flagship Center for PAInT at one USF that generates cooperation, collaboration, and creativity, and authentically embodies USF's Principles of Community.

USF Health

Gina Marie Lombardo, Office Manager, Department of Pediatrics

Gina Lombardo is an outstanding staff member that went well beyond her duties during the COVID-19 pandemic exemplifying the USF spirit. Gina promptly reported to work encouraging staff through example despite uncertainties and difficulties. She took on a significant administrative role assisting me as Principal Investigator for the Novavax COVID19 vaccine study and as Division Chief during high demanding hours. The qualities of her personality, her demeanor, her approach to bring solutions to the table benefited the Division of Pediatric Infectious Diseases in all areas creating a seamless process in clinical, research, administration, and service. Gina has been the go-to person for multiple aspects of the Department and Division, always willing to help and bringing joy and positive attitude to the team.

Sandra Kennedy, Senior Biological Scientist, Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences

She is always the first one to arrive and many times the last one to leave. She consistently meets project deadlines, milestones, and implementation of new processes - including the adding of Quartzly, a lab ordering program. Because of her knowledge in the research world, she was able to introduce the college to a new, more efficient way to manage lab ordering which has made an incredible impact on the ordering process. Her extensive knowledge in research, lab procedures and safety, shows her qualification to support and manage multiple labs and principal investigators for the Taneja College of Pharmacy. She is truly a walking encyclopedia of knowledge when it comes to research and is always willing to share educate others. And on top of that, she makes handmade crafts for everyone for the holidays!

Emily R. Kent, Project Manager, College of Nursing

Emily began work with the Office of Faculty Affairs one year ago. With no experience, she transitioned not only seamlessly, but within one month, she was creating processes and bringing insight to each of our ongoing projects. At the same time that she made this transition she continued to serve a critical role in preparing the college for its 10-year accreditation visit. Just as the preparations were made for the visit, the COVID 19 pandemic hit the college. This required a complete re-vamp of all projects and the creation of a virtual platform for all accreditation materials. She designed the new platform, linked materials, created virtual chat rooms, prepared documents for the reviewers and worked individually with faculty, leadership, staff, and external reviewers to produce the first ever CCNE virtual accreditation visit for the college.

Olivia Moon, Student Programs Manager, USF Health Shared Student Services

Her commitment to promoting issues of diversity, inclusion, social justice, and pluralism in her programming is unwavering and the quality of her work is exceptional as evidenced by the success of this year USF Health Multicultural Week Celebration held virtually February 22-26, 2021. This special week included 11 total programs with over 500 attendees. Highlights included the Opening Ceremony featuring Dr. Cheyenne Currall as the featured speaker; Profiles in

Courage Speaker, Feranmi Okanlami, MD who addressed the lack of black male physicians and creating a health system that is accessible and inclusive to both patients and providers with disabilities; and a panel presentation with our current medical residents who shared their practical experiences with cultural competency and challenged us as educators to do.

Emily Pernas, Academic Services Administrator, Office of Educational Affairs

In response to the COVID 19 outbreak, Prometric, the company that is contracted to administer the United States Medical Licensing Exams (USMLE), initiated a nationwide closure of all testing centers. The uncertainty of the COVID-19 virus, along with state and federal social distancing mandates, created a backlog of students needing to reschedule. Fortunately, the USMLE governing board approved select medical schools to serve as regional testing hubs and operate a temporary Prometric center on their campuses. The MCOM site was the first medical school location to go live and the last center to close. Ms. Pernas enthusiastically served as the communication liaison between Prometric and the NBME. She organized and managed testing reservations with all Florida Medical Schools ensuring students received their testing vouchers and logistical information.

Jayne Smith, Staff Assistant, Department of Internal Medicine

Jayne started working in her role right before there were two employee transitions in an office of three and right before COVID-19 started. Throughout this time, Jayme not only had to learn the role that she was hired for but had to take on new assignments that were outside of the scope of her original role. Jayme has proven to be a self-starter and is highly motivated to learn new skills. Currently she helps manage a cohort of 66 imSC students and has stepped up beyond her stated role and works alongside our USF Health International Office and has been instrumental in implementing international virtual programs across USF Health including the Global Health Conversation Series, In Their Words Series, Student Conversation Series, and International Scholar Spotlight Series.

Karolina Veprek, Faculty Services Administrator, College of Pharmacy

Ms. Veprek supported DPS while the Office Manager had been out for an extended period by coordinating the internal department search committee meetings and taking minutes and supporting the department's internal promotion and tenure process. Everyone is very impressed with Karolina Veprek's performance and enjoys working with her. Ms. Veprek organized several Cultural diversity programs and faculty development within the TCOP. She was a great help to faculty council, faculty promotion and tenure applications and faculty development. During the reorganization of faculty committees Ms. Veprek used to provide the minutes of every meeting within 15 minutes and was appreciated by all the committees. She never leaves any stone unturned to help our faculty and staff.

Team Award

Department of Family Medicine

- **Greg Byrd**, Assistant Director
- **Anita Fanelli**, Athletic Trainer
- **Macy Franklin**, Athletic Trainer
- **Mike Guerdan**, Athletic Trainer
- **Amy Herran**, Athletic Trainer
- **Michele Latimer**, Assistant Director
- **Octavio Tobar**, Athletic Trainer
- **Steve Walz**, Director
- **Isabella Wild**, Athletic Trainer

The athletic medicine staff adapted to and executed policies and protocols for COVID-19 pandemic while simultaneously continuing providing excellent health care and support to our student athletes across the university. This staff had to adapt to a situation which proved unconventional and unpredictable when the pandemic began. We took these new roles and job responsibilities in stride to protect our staff and student athletes with the best of our capabilities. This included performing COVID-19 testing for all athletes and the athletic department staff at least once a week. After work, we would go to USF Health and continue testing staff after hours. We were required to be on site and in close contact with many individuals. This increased our risk of exposure but was well worth it knowing we are fulfilling our responsibilities as health care providers.

Team Award

College of Medicine, HSC Office of Operations & Facilities, and Information Technology

- **Michael Andrews**, Facility Manager
- **Anthony Avila**, Client Support Technician II
- **Shaterra Blocker**, Academic Services Administrator
- **Amy Hart**, Academic Services Administrator
- **Seema Martinez**, Office Manager
- **Andrea Matthews**, Academic Services Administrator
- **Emily Pernas**, Academic Services Administrator

The Morsani College of Medicine (MCOM), like all the other colleges at USF, was significantly impacted by COVID-19. In addition to our academic programming being disrupted, our students' ability to sit for their USMLE Step licensure exams was also affected. Most of the Prometric centers that administer these exams had closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. Only six schools were able to successfully open and operate a center; USF MCOM was one of those locations. The MCOM center operated for 9 weeks; it was open 7 days a week/up to 11 hours a day. The MCOM site was the first medical school location to go live and the last center to close. To make the project a success, many individuals contributed to its execution. These USF employees did all of this while concurrently satisfying their normal job responsibilities.

Team Award

College of Nursing

- **Emily R. Kent**, Project Manager
- **Pranam Parsanlal**, Senior Instructional Designer
- **Vicente O. Saadeh**, Media Technologist
- **Jessica Samaniego**, Communications & Marketing Manager
- **Jean Vaccaro**, Manager, Fiscal & Business Administration

The USF College of Nursing launched an online continuing education program during one of the most challenging times in U.S. history: the COVID-19 pandemic. This resource was developed for healthcare workers around the world battling the global pandemic and available at no cost to them. The program consists of four webinars that focuses on frontline nurses, how to keep themselves safe, and the resources they need to provide safe care for patient populations. The entire team's contributions went "above and beyond" their normal work duties. Because of their can-do attitude, the program was implemented and launched worldwide in under 90 days. This group was so effective because of their strong communication skills and their overall engagement with one another. They put aside the normal bureaucracy and recognized the need to implement this program as soon as possible to save as many lives as possible.

Student Success

Caroline K. Twachtman, Assistant Director, Academic Foundations

UGS has been undergoing strategic reorganization for some time now, and Caroline is often my "go to" person when a new responsibility comes to our unit. During our first reorganization, we combined all academic functions in UGS under one area. In doing so, Caroline acquired a new direct report, became the supervisor for all of our adjuncts, and took on the responsibility of staffing and scheduling all of our courses. None of this was part of her core function. Not only did she take on these new responsibilities, but she also continues to find ways to improve our processes.

Kim Williams, Data Manager, Office of Academic Advocacy

As the Data Manager for the Office of Academic Advocacy (OAA), Kim's primary duties are focused on the development and maintenance of the OAA SMART dashboard, which integrates a range of data points to serve the mission of OAA in identifying students with potential barriers impacting their ability to persist, progress, or graduate on-time. This year she went above and beyond in proposing, creating, supporting, and training on two new dashboards design to provide more equitable access to the data needed to support student success. These were a version of OAA SMART for Advising and a Transfer Student Success dashboard for tracking students from admission to graduation in support of the new transfer metrics.

Sarah Wray, Lead Academic Advocate, Office of Academic Advocacy

Starting in August 2020, Sarah began assisting with the coordination of the Office of Academic Advocacy Intake Team, which is comprised of two graduate assistants and one full-time staff member. This temporary assistance, we intended to be a few weeks while the office went through the hiring process for an Assistant Director. The hire did not occur due to a realignment of budget and priorities. However, Sarah graciously continued working with the Intake team without pay consideration. She trained the new graduate assistant remotely, met with each member of the team weekly, and led bi-weekly meetings for the entire team.

Team Award

New Student Connections

- **Rick Garcia**, Coordinator
- **Jennifer Loh**, Coordinator

Jennifer and Rick's adaptive leadership, dedication to meet current student needs, and forecasting of the future impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student persistence is a clear example of excellence with equity in alignment with the USF Principles of Community. Their coordination and leadership helped USF better understand the needs and concerns of more than 12,000 students, especially students of color and low-income, housing-insecure, and food-insecure students. With each outreach, Jen and Rick helped identify students who were in need of technology support, mental health support, and which students just wanted to have another student to commiserate with during these unprecedented circumstances. Students who needed resources beyond an empathetic listener were referred directly to the right campus resource. Concurrently, Jen and Rick developed innovative ways for USF students to engage with PALs and critical resources available.

Team Award

Center for Student Involvement

- **Isabelle Arroyo-Acevedo**, Student Programs Coordinator
- **Monica Lee Miranda**, Director
- **Joshua Wilson**, Associate Director

In the height of the pandemic the staff team worked on the execution of a significant project – transitioning over 100 programs and initiatives coordinated throughout the year, in-person, to remote, virtual formats and spaces. CSI transitioned large-scale programs like Homecoming Week and National Hazing Prevention Week to small-scale programs like an Open Mic Night, to virtual platforms with the strategic use of technology. Instagram, Facebook and Microsoft Teams Live ensured students still had as much tradition as possible in this new, remote world. Two programs uniquely curated were the Homecoming Carni-Bull where participants created their own avatar chatting with each other while listening to a concert and getting personalized items created, as if they were doing so in-person.

St. Petersburg Campus

Susan Prisco Kimbrough, Director, Housing & Residential Education

Throughout the past year, it has been truly remarkable the way in which Susan has led her department locally and collaboratively with colleagues across the Saint Petersburg and Tampa campuses. She gracefully led the opening of our new residence hall, Osprey Suites (375 beds), actively participated in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts by deepening her understanding of Whiteness and privilege and last but not least worked tirelessly to provide timely, effective and caring support for all residential students in response to COVID-19. Unlike any other year, the pandemic has placed an immense challenge for housing professionals nation-wide and it called for leadership, that Susan exemplified to go above and beyond to create a safe environment for all residential students in her charge.

Berrie Watson, Head of Systems, Nelson Poynter Memorial Library

Berrie Watson is the Systems Administrator for the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library (NPML) on the USF St. Petersburg campus. As such, he manages the USF St. Petersburg library systems, web environment, and Student Technology Center. During the COVID-19 pandemic he helped coordinate both student and faculty borrowing of library laptops on the St. Petersburg campus and he transitioned the Student Technology Center to provide online support to students with technology questions. Additionally, he led the St. Petersburg campus library to make a similar transition to continuous service in a remote capacity. Through his efforts, we were able to digitize articles and book chapters for faculty and students in need and increase our interlibrary loan service.

Team Award

Office of Graduate Studies

- **Nicki L. Hannum**, Graduate Admissions Coordinator
- **Michael Slattery**, Assistant Director

As a result of the University's consolidation, Mr. Slattery and Ms. Hannum were asked to assume the responsibility (from Innovative Education) for all USF graduate certificate programs. Within just a few months, this dynamic duo had performed an exhaustive 5-year enrollment and time to completion analysis of 115 graduate certificates and presented what they learned, regarding trends that were feeding top performers and those that were likely contributors to certificate programs with low enrollments. They made presentations to the EGAD (graduate associate deans) and Brown Bag (graduate program personnel and advisors). They developed, recommended, and got passed through Graduate Council a number of new policies that will provide for equitable and consistent decision making to benefit our certificate students, regardless of program.

Academic Affairs

Danielle Boe, Office Manager, School of Theater & Dance

Danielle Boe has been an outstanding office manager from the beginning of her service and has adapted to every new change and challenge. In our year of the pandemic, those changes have been immense. She took charge of preparing all of the studio spaces in both theatre and dance for safe, physically distanced instruction, took charge of acquiring the technology needed to allow hybrid virtual instruction delivery to and from the studios, supervised the students assisting with maintaining those spaces, and served as the school liaison with both the COVID Task Force and Student Health by managing contact tracing as COVID positive cases arose among the students in the school. All of this was on top of her already full list of administrative duties, and all was handled extremely well and in a kind, respectful and appreciative manner.

Terry Hutchings, Assistant Director, USF Libraries

Terry Hutchings is the manager of Library Operations and Facilities. Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic our department was one of the few that was present on campus. Terry worked on many of the plans created to configure our daily operations, oversaw the successful rollout of new programs, procedures, and policies, and ensured staff and student safety. Terry always had a positive attitude and goes above expectations. In addition, he thinks ahead and prevents issues or problems before they happen.

Jennifer Icton, Academic Services Administrator, Mass Communications

As the Academic Services Administrator for the Zimmerman School, she went above and beyond in ensuring the successful operation of the School during the global pandemic. Specifically, she transitioned from working with an interim director to welcoming (remotely!) a new School director unfamiliar with USF operations and in the midst of budget cuts and a hiring freeze. At the same time, she onboarded new faculty, staff, and students; managed payroll and budget processes; supervised an employee and work study students; served as HR liaison for a range of functions (e.g., faculty evaluations/workloads, tenure and promotion processes); directed the distribution of more than \$100,000 in student scholarships; and, importantly, took on new responsibilities related to infrastructure building, long-range planning and strategic initiatives.

Sharon Johnson-Hamilton, Administrative Specialist, College of Arts & Sciences

Ms. Sharon is amazing at what she does, and she always goes beyond her position to support everyone in the areas when they struggle. She never hesitated to call to provide them support (beyond work hours). Ms. Johnson-Hamilton, in addition to being a Faculty Affairs Coordinator responsible for numerous aspects of faculty affairs, also provides invaluable support to all faculty going for tenure and/or promotion. Although she has no vote in the process, Sharon reads every single CAS faculty member's tenure and/or promotion materials and assists them with curating their information, making sure their accomplishments are visible to other faculty evaluators and generally helps ease the stress of the T&P process, helping all faculty to feel that they are the best prepared for the T&P process.

Kristen Kusek, Assistant Director, College of Marine Science

Kristen Kusek uses every interaction to share her passion for science communication, inspiring scientists to step into the communications world. I have learned more from Kristen about communication over the past few years than I have from anyone else throughout my career – and she shares this knowledge freely with everyone regardless of their position within USF (e.g., offering workshops for graduate students in storytelling that are not required of her position). She answers every email, phone call, and request for advice – even the frantic ones late at night and over the weekend when we're freaking out about something a reporter got wrong. Most importantly, Kristen has endless enthusiasm and gives much needed encouragement and positive reinforcement, providing constructive feedback after interviews.

Stephanie Lewis, Manager, Instructional/Multimedia Projects, Center for Urban Transportation Research

Stephanie is consistently volunteering to help in many extracurricular activities that are beyond the scope of her required assignments, and her passion for student advancement is inspiring. In the past, Stephanie Lewis has volunteered to be the CUTR area representative for the University Faculty and Staff Campaign and succeeded by excelling past the set participation goals. Stephanie made us all feel as though we are contributing to the success of the university and her passion for continuous improvement is contagious. Mrs. Lewis has assisted in several conferences, workshops, meetings, and professional development training courses, often arriving early and staying late to ensure all organizational work is completed and seamless, offering a helping hand at every opportunity.

Clara Ohannes, Academic Services Administrator, Medical Engineering

Clara Ohannes, PhD, accomplishments, and workload (quality/quantity) regularly exceeds her core job functions. We have a small but impactful department, and much of our success is due to the drive, positive attitude, and extraordinary talents of Dr. Ohannes. For instance, our faculty have submitted over \$60 million of external grant support and dozens of patent disclosures in the past few years. Dr. Ohannes is the only administrator in our dept. supporting those extensive efforts. Recently we had a turnover in our APS position and our Undergraduate Advising position. During gap times, without being asked, Dr. Ohannes ably stepped up and majorly assisted in performing these key duties, in some cases for months.

Jannine Palmer, Fiscal & Business Analyst, College of Arts & Sciences

Jannine's invaluable contributions to the success of "One USF" have been more "behind the scenes," but no less important to our collective success. Hers is one of the finest examples I know of going "above and beyond" in ways that have helped many successes. Following consolidation and with the resulting merger of two colleges into the new SAR-College of Arts and Sciences, and due to the overwhelming workload created by the sheer size of the new college and an unanticipated loss of other staff; in her role as the Office Manager, Jannine did what was best for the successful operation of the newly merged college: She reset her individual professional priorities to focus on meeting the pressing business needs of the unit.

Team Award

Innovative Education and College of Arts & Sciences

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- **David Brodosi**, Associate Director
 - **Christine Brown**, Assistant Vice President
 - **Timi Hager**, Associate Director
 - **Tim Henkel**, Director
 - **Lindsey Mercer**, Associate Director
 - **Christie Nicholas**, Director
 - **Erin Bryan Sutliff**, Academic Services Administrator
 - **Dennis Walpole**, Director

An advisory committee of instructional design/faculty success lead from across the University of South Florida (Tampa including Health, St. Petersburg, and Sarasota-Manatee) designed and implemented a multilayered approach to support faculty in transitioning courses to remote delivery. The approach provided faculty with a variety of options to leverage Canvas to fit their pedagogical strategies in a short time period. On many occasions throughout the pandemic, this team worked round the clock, night and day to provide assistance and hands-on workshops for our faculty. They led their internal teams with grace, empathy, and professionalism. This was a team effort across all digital learning and faculty support units. They went above and beyond to serve our students and faculty, adapting to new ways of support for teaching at very short notice and had to deal with challenges they have never faced before.

Team Award

College of Arts & Sciences

- **Fransheska Andaluz**, Academic Program Specialist
- **Bianca Johnson**, Academic Services Administrator
- **Brandon Kroll**, Senior Academic Advisor

Consolidating any department across three campuses was a daunting task, but this was complicated by a number of factors. While the ISS Interdisciplinary Social Sciences Program (ISS) existed on all three campuses, only the Tampa campus had a Department of Sociology. In addition, the complicated curriculum for ISS had evolved in quite different ways on the three campuses. Faculty and students suddenly found themselves in an entirely new department, not just a consolidated one, with an entirely new curriculum. This situation could have produced resentments and an unhealthy working environment for faculty, staff, and students. Our team of staff worked tirelessly and creatively throughout the year to help us develop a sense of community that is inclusive and welcoming for all.

Team Award

Student Services and Muma College of Business

- **Stacey Bender**, Academic Services Administrator
- **Karen Carlin**, Academic Services Administrator
- **Le'Shelle Davis**, Academic Program Specialist
- **Brandon Hernandez**, Senior Academic Program Specialist
- **Ashley Lora**, Office Manager
- **Janie Malson**, Assistant Director
- **Aaron Reeher**, Academic Advisor
- **Sebnem Tigin**, Academic Services Administrator
- **Lisa Marie Yacso**, Academic Services Administrator

This team has an attitude that no challenge is too great. The team is solution oriented and willing to do what it takes to not only get the job done, but to exceed standards. A perfect example is efforts around graduate recruitment. When the reality of the pandemic hit in March of 2020, there was ample concern for what impact it would have on graduate recruitment and enrollment come Fall 2020. The team set a course to provide multiple virtual engagement opportunities for prospective students. This had never been done before and had to be built from scratch. It was a major risk given how much time had to be committed for planning, but the payoff would be worth it if it helped us retain the admitted cohorts going into the Fall 2020 semester.

Team Award

Center for Cybersecurity and Florida Center for Instructional Technology

- **Evelyn Curry**, Assistant Director
- **Ernie Ferrarresso**, Associate Director
- **Jordan Gravlee**, Program Planner
- **Candi Ring**, Cybersecurity Curriculum Developer
- **Shannon Ward**, Fiscal & Business Specialist
- **James Welsh**, Program Director
- **Kate Whitaker**, Assistant Director
- **Rex Wilson**, Publication & Digital Producer

Cyber Florida's team has excelled in not one project, but in several, and in so doing, has brought great credit to the University. Among other things, the Cyber Florida team developed the Center's comprehensive new three-year Strategic Plan, socialized it with key and USF and external stakeholders—including USF Deans, the Center's new Governing Council of Deans and equivalents from other SUS institutions, and a subcommittee of the state's Cybersecurity Task Force, led by the Lieutenant Governor—and brought them all together in support of its execution, even during the state's difficult budget. In so doing, the staff put USF 'on the map' by advocating, arranging, and giving dozens of national and local media interviews, both print and broadcast, highlighting the work of Cyber Florida and USF.

Business & Finance

Aaron Diller, Manager, Fiscal & Business Administration, Housing & Residential Education

With a reduction in staff due to the pandemic and very little additional assistance, Aaron 'took the bull by the horns' handling responsibilities for both fiscal analyst and specialist. In addition to the monthly financial and budget reporting, revenue projections and analyses, he added billing, reconciliations, assisting with procurement tasks and contributed in countless other ways to the success of both students and the department. He continues to save the department tens of thousands of dollars each year by analyzing inconsistencies in waste, utilities, and other expenses. Aaron believes in teamwork, empowering his direct reports and serving as a mentor to his staff & student employees.

Becky Merritt, Accounting Specialist, University Controller's Office

Since the pandemic started, Becky has been coming to campus every single workday to ensure USF students and staff had the opportunity to reach someone within the Controller's Office. Our department needed to have a presence on campus at all times given our central procedures to the university. Becky volunteered to be on campus everyday so that those who are immunocompromised or have family members within those parameters could continue to work from home. Additionally, she took it upon herself to conduct most of the physical office move that our department had to undergo during the pandemic (hiring movers was restricted in order to avoid further contact).

University Communications & Marketing

Adam Freeman, Assistant Vice President, Communications & Public Relations

Over the past year, Adam went above and beyond his current role to assure USF communicated effectively in its pandemic response. Adam chaired the university-wide Joint Information Center for a critical period while both a senior colleague and key staff person were on FMLA leave. There was a significant amount of communication requirements during this timeframe and Adam rose to the occasion. He coordinated the 40+ USF-wide team of professionals expertly. In addition, Adam helped spearhead efforts to dashboard Coronavirus case data for media and public consumption, providing for transparency as USF responded to this unprecedented event. This required not only his usual initiative and autonomy, but an immense level of mental endurance, team-building skills, organization, and mindfulness.

Administrative Services, Information Technology, and University Police

Jen Fleischman, Director, Emergency Management

Jen's leadership has been instrumental in the University's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Her knowledge, skill, and commitment to the University made sure we were fully prepared before the pandemic. When the emergency began, she was ready to deploy the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and immediately accommodated the infectious disease aspect of this particular emergency. Through direct consultation with President Currall and Dean Donna Petersen, lead of Covid-19 Task Force, Jen made sure we had a solid framework, procedures and plans to enable an effective response. She made sure every member of our community was supported, that all mitigation measures needed were designed and employed, and coordinated myriad resources from across the University.

Symone Griffin, Administrative Specialist, Administrative Service Business Center

Mrs. Griffin did everything in her power to help an individual receive the check owed to him; due to an error on his payroll. He can pay his mortgage on time because of her competency and responsiveness. Mrs. Griffin put the needs of the employee above hers as she coordinated her efforts with her manager, the department director, the Payroll department, the Cashier's office, and the employee's supervisor to make sure this employee's pay was made whole. She is competent, is well trained, and she knew the individuals she needed get this employee his pay quickly. Mrs. Griffin did all of this on her scheduled day off, which is a testament to her dedication to USF, the employees, and being an excellence service provider.

Patrick McClain, ERP Architect, Information Technology

What was exceptional this year is that Patrick stepped up to help the teams who manage the Student Information and Document Imaging systems as well as the ERP systems for our hosted schools execute these projects when the demands of covid and consolidation began to demand their focus and endangered these critical projects. It was his stepping up that enabled the Azure moves to be coordinated and executed as planned, despite those other demands, and he did so happily, providing steady leadership, support, a willingness to dive in to learn and solve problems along the way, and just enough drive to keep things moving towards the goal. He did all this while continuing to perform his regular work at an exceptional level.

Team Award

University Police Department

- **Mark Bittrich**, Police Communications Specialist
- **Lisa Brummett**, Police Communications Specialist
- **John Carlo**, Police Communications Supervisor
- **Melissa Forcella**, Police Communications Specialist
- **Kaylan Franks**, Police Communications Specialist
- **Milinda Koman**, Police Communications Specialist
- **Tranae Robinson**, Police Communications Specialist
- **Steven Van Meter**, Police Communications Specialist
- **Ronald R. Wright**, Police Communications Specialist

Police Communications Specialist team members are of high moral character, and tenacity, which includes a certification by the State of Florida. During the COVID pandemic, the team members worked 24/7 with no remote days short staffed in a small, confined space. Other departments of the University were able to work remotely. Team members continued keeping the community safe by dispatching law enforcement that arrested suspects in crimes such as burglaries, lewd behavior to name just a few.

Team Award

Information Technology

- **Stephanie Martinez Alejandro**, Scrum Master I
- **Tim Brumgard**, Solutions Architect
- **John Burgett**, Systems Administrator III
- **Joe Cunningham**, Systems Administrator I
- **James Kline**, Systems Administrator III
- **Chris Kunkel**, Cloud Engineer
- **Randolph Mothershed**, Systems Administrator III
- **Miguel Pereira**, Systems Administrator II
- **Curran "CT" Thomas**, Cloud Engineer
- **Markus Vogel**, Strategic Product Owner III

This small team of ten (10) staff members were instrumental in 2020 to provide cloud-based technology solutions that became the foundation for not only allowing an entire university system to continuously function in a pandemic, but also helped to advance USF in the midst of change. Nearly every critical application or system is now cloud-based; providing the agility, scalability and resiliency required at a top-tier university. And when it was time to reduce costs, this team made cost reduction activities a standard practice in every project or contract renewal decision, saving nearly \$1 million dollars in support/contract costs by the elimination of redundancy, rearchitecting of infrastructure, and monthly governance processes to reduce or control costs for Azure services.

Team Award

Building Services & Vending

- **Amber Cross**, Senior Custodial Worker
- **Chin C. Yang**, Custodial Worker
- **Nestor Reyes**, Custodial Worker

After Storm Eta hit the Tampa area in mid-November of 2020, a group of Building Services employees responded to the emergency call and arrived on campus early in the morning with the best attitude. These employees were assigned to several work requests throughout campus. These work requests consisted of flooding in the library, classrooms, offices with wet carpets, and wet desks from leaky roofs. After receiving the established expectations, the Custodian Team used its good judgment to follow the instructions, comply with the procedures and use all the tools at its disposal to help the university community to have a good return to campus. Thanks to the talent of these employees and their resources, they demonstrated that they are part of the culture that cares for the well-being of the community.

Team Award

Information Technology

- **Rudy Diaz**, Systems Administrator II
- **Gary Hernon**, Senior Scrum Master
- **Nate Jaber**, Systems Administrator II
- **Jody Kender**, Voice & Data Communication Specialist
- **Ted Netterfield**, Director
- **Orlando Nunez**, Network Administrator
- **Joe Pribil**, Voice & Data Communication Specialist
- **Nora Santiago**, Telecom Operations Manager
- **Tori Trujeque**, Voice & Data Communications Specialist

Many long hours and thoughtful dialog/experimentation with our faculty led to a very rapid adoption of this digital transformation (the transition to soft phones via teams across the university), that took other similar organizations multiple years. We brought telecom resources from St. Pete campus into the team to help deploy this experience across all of USF. Faculty that teach on multiple campuses now can have 1 phone number and be reached on any campus or even when working remotely. Location now doesn't matter for videoconferencing or telephony services. The merging of teams into the telephony system now makes it easier for the USF community to stay in contact with one another, phone calls, text messaging or video calls are now all in one easy to use platform.

Team Award

Administrative Services Business Center

- **Clifton James**, Fiscal & Business Specialist
- **Greg Williams**, Fiscal & Business Specialist

The Accounts Payable team positively reacted to the change, adapted, and committed to continued exceeding of expectations and creating WOW moments in day-to-day operations. The AP team went above and beyond to not miss any accounting deadlines and exceeding customer expectations. The workload increase equivalent to a 1.00 FTE is immense given the high volume of transactions that are processed in this business center. They collectively worked together as a team to resolve customer issues and process all requests timely. Overtime and extended work hours were no issue as they realized we must remain accountable to our clients and stakeholders.

Team Award

Information Technology

- **Juan Almonte**, Applications Developer I
- **Sunitha Balasubramanian**, Business Analyst
- **Walker Carr**, Applications Developer II
- **Tara Connolly**, Senior Business Analyst
- **Miguel Gonzalez**, Applications Developer III
- **Kautuk Gupta**, Senior Data Management Analyst
- **Sridevi Molleti**, Solutions Architect
- **Praveen Partheepan**, Senior Data Management Analyst
- **Alex Ross**, Application Developer III
- **Ivan Vazquez**, Director

This team set aside their own predicaments and losses caused by the pandemic, to create a multi-step project that would permit faculty, staff, and students to resume their lives and continue to learn in a safe environment. They collaborated using video conferencing via teams that was a new challenge for all, and developed clear, concise ideas that had a massive, positive impact on USF as a whole. This team partnered with Appian to develop a daily symptom checker service for all faculty, staff, and students. At least 20,000 individuals of the population utilized SMS reminders for completing this screening. Additionally, the team met with leadership each evening after hours during the initial phase in order to accommodate the everchanging requirements.

USF Research & Innovation

Judi Dorn, Research Services Administrator, Office of the Vice President of Research & Innovation

Through one of our university's most challenging years, Judi has been the linchpin in two of the university's most ambitious faculty research programs responding to the dual crises faced in 2020: the COVID-19 pandemic and the national reckoning on social justice. By working tirelessly behind the scenes, Judi's efforts made possible USF's \$1.5 million investment in seed funding for faculty research projects that have gone on to attract considerable external support and raised the visibility of USF research on a national level. She navigated these unprecedented and stressful duties with professionalism, selflessness and dedication that underscores her service as a research services administrator for more than a decade, working behind the scenes and with great dedication to ensure USF faculty are at their best when it comes to research.

Dena-Rose M. Wilson, Associate Director, Sponsored Research

Dena always makes time - in an already busy schedule in which she routinely works well over a standard business day - to speak with anyone who needs help understanding and applying policy changes which increases the institutional knowledge of the university abroad. The role that she has excelled in has become magnified with the importance the government is placing on grant administration. In the last six years USF has had no fines or findings due to material weakness; this commitment to excellence directly impacts the University's reputation, standing, and financial bottom-line. This is a testament to Dena's direct impact in her oversight of the research enterprise at USF.

University Advancement

Travis Miller, Associate Director of Commencement, University Advancement

Travis worked tirelessly to seamlessly transition our graduation ceremonies virtually, making sure the ceremony was executed with excellence. He consistently dealt with upset students, but always treated them with respect. As we transitioned to virtual ceremonies for the summer and fall of 2020, Travis continued to develop innovative ways to celebrate and recognize our graduates, including virtual name reading, personalized messages from university deans, unique social media campaigns, and photo opportunities— consistently receiving high levels of appreciation from our graduates for making the experience meaningful under the unique circumstances. Finally, there was a reorganization in September of 2020 which caused Travis to transition to a new department – all while a shift to One USF ceremony was underway. Ultimately, there was no lapse in execution and delivery of Commencement during the transition under Travis' leadership.