



**Presidential
Employee Excellence
Recognition Program**

2023 Committee Proposal



**COMMITTED TO ACCESS AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE,
BUILDING A BELOVED COMMUNITY, AND SERVING THE COMMON GOOD**

This is RUTGERS

**COMMITTED TO ACCESS AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE,
BUILDING A BELOVED COMMUNITY, AND SERVING THE COMMON GOOD**

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Introduction

On June 23, 2022, Rutgers University President Jonathan Holloway endorsed the recommendations of the [Future of Work Task Force](#), which called for the establishment of a university-wide Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program. The goal of the recognition program is to strengthen institutional pride and build on the ideal of a beloved community where employees are engaged, productive, valued, and rewarded for their contributions.

To this end, the Presidential Employee Excellence Committee was charged with two primary areas of focus:

- Determine ways to enhance workplace culture through strategic investments in recognition opportunities.
- Establish an employee excellence program that celebrates teamwork and collaboration across departments and recognizes employees who engage in activities aligned with the value propositions emphasized by President Holloway: *Committed to access and academic excellence, building a beloved community, and serving the common good.*

In many ways, the college campus represents a microcosm of civil society – one in which integrity is the norm, differences are embraced, and members treat each other with mutual respect. It is hoped that the Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program will serve as a vehicle for celebrating those who embody such qualities and who serve as exemplars for the Rutgers community.

Presidential Employee Excellence Committee

To achieve the goals articulated by President Holloway in a collaborative and inclusive manner, the Presidential Employee Excellence Committee was tasked with identifying recognition categories and eligibility criteria, establishing tools for online submissions, determining the submission review process and non-monetary incentives for recognition, developing a timeline and communications strategy, and hosting the first annual event.

The Committee is co-chaired by Jon Oliver, Office of the Chancellor-Provost New Brunswick, and Elizabeth Matto, Eagleton Institute of Politics and supported by Melissa Marrero, University Human Resources. Committee members come from across Rutgers University and include:

- Ghislaine Darden, Institutional Planning & Operations
- Ralph Gigliotti, Center for Organizational Leadership
- Roxanne Huertas, University Human Resources
- Adam Kustka, School of Arts and Sciences-Newark
- Kim Manning, University Communications & Marketing
- Sam Rabinowitz, School of Business-Camden
- Mark Robson, School of Environmental & Biological Sciences
- Karen Shapiro, School of Health Professions
- Nayland Smith, Office of the Chancellor-Provost New Brunswick

- Kyle D. Warren, School of Nursing
- Carolyne J. White, SAS-N Urban Education

Since the announcement of the committee in February, the committee leadership met weekly and established a bi-weekly meeting schedule for the entire committee. In addition, a shared storage space was created for committee members to review and share resources.

Immediate tasks were to establish a timeline for meeting the Committee’s work (see below) and to gather and review benchmarking data of commensurate awards among peer institutions and internally to the university. To ensure the Presidential Employee Excellence Awards are not duplicative of current university recognitions, the committee reached out to representatives from each Chancellor Led Unit to share information regarding their recognition programs to include in our internal benchmarking data. Representatives from Rutgers University-New Brunswick and Rutgers University-Newark shared written details regarding their recognition programs while Meredith Mullane (Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences) and Mike Sepanic (Rutgers University-Camden) both attended our committee meeting to speak about their respective campus employee award and recognition programs.

Using this research as a foundation, the Committee created award categories and drafted preliminary descriptions, eligibility criteria, and nomination process considerations.

Proposed Project Timeline

Date	Project Milestone
February 23, 2023	Committee Kickoff Meeting
May 9, 2023	Socialize awards program at President’s Administrative Council meeting
June 16, 2023	Submit committee proposal to President Holloway
July 31, 2023	Finalize website and online submission form and begin executing communications plan announcing program systemwide
September 1, 2023	Plan first recognition ceremony
September 22, 2023	President’s announcement of program at Senate address
October 16, 2023	Nomination application deadline
November 3, 2023	Committee reviews and proposes award recipients to President Holloway

November 17, 2023	President invites endorsed recipients to reception ceremony
December 2023	Host reception ceremony

Future of Work Task Force Recommendation

Establish one university-wide Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program:

Creating recognition opportunities and events for employees can help to build a more positive work environment and improve employee engagement and morale. Create pride and loyalty in the institution and build on the ideals of a beloved community where employees are engaged, productive, valued, and rewarded for their contributions. Give employees a sense of purpose and belonging and incentivize teamwork and collaboration across departments. Improve employee retention and aid in the recruitment of top talent.

Presidential Employee Excellence Committee Recommendations

To balance the prestige and honor associated with a Presidential Recognition, while ensuring access to employees at all levels of the institution, the committee developed five award categories for consideration. Each award category is aligned to one or more of the President’s value propositions and can accommodate individual and/or team nominations.

Members of the committee agree it is important to acknowledge the work of all nominees via a personalized letter from President Holloway to further support the committee’s charge to enhance workplace culture through strategic investments in recognition opportunities.

COMMITTED TO ACCESS AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Award Name: Rutgers Gateway Award (Service to Students)

Description: Recognizes staff, faculty, or a team of employees who go to exceptional lengths to remove barriers and provide access to those pursuing a Rutgers education. The recipient(s) recognize(s) the value of a diverse student body and the challenges students often face and seek(s) to make education more accessible and attainable.

This award is presented to those who initiated innovative solutions and/or provided extraordinary value or service that led to exceptional outcomes for our students and the Rutgers community.

Eligibility Criteria: Individuals and/or unit, departmental, interdepartmental or campus teams can be nominated for this award. Only current full-time faculty and staff are eligible. Nominations for faculty and/or staff teams that include student participants or part-time faculty or staff participants will also be accepted.

Nominated effort must be within the last 12-months and show lasting positive results in at least one of these areas:

- Student and/or parent satisfaction
- Enhancing the student experience
- Providing access
- Creating a supportive and inclusive environment
- Improving processes for students
- Augmenting safety
- Stewardship of University resources

Individuals or teams selected for this award may be determined ineligible for other Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program awards in the same calendar year. Nominations are encouraged in more than one category, if applicable.

Required Documentation:

- Artifacts showing qualitative and/or quantitative impact on a population of students.
- Letter(s) of support documenting the individual's or team's achievements.
- Nomination letter(s) from a student or group of students highlighting an exceptional impact is strongly encouraged as supporting documentation for this nomination.
- A thoughtful and substantive summary outlining the regular duties of the individual or team and the extraordinary effort and accomplishment serving as the basis for nomination.

COMMITTED TO ACCESS AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Award Name: Rutgers Gateway Award (Service to Employees)

Description: Recognizes staff, faculty, or a team of employees who go to exceptional lengths to remove barriers to build a more positive work environment, improve employee engagement and morale, and create operational efficiencies through forward-thinking process improvements. The recipient(s) recognize(s) the value of a diverse workforce and encourage(s) cross-departmental teamwork to address shared challenges and improve workplace culture. This recognition spotlights complex initiatives or practices that highlight how to enact change, innovate, and navigate institutional barriers to improve everyday work for employees and the Rutgers community. These may include collaborations, cross-unit improvements to systems or processes, clarifying roles and structures, or bringing about broad cultural change to showcase what Rutgers can accomplish when we collaborate to function at our best.

This award is presented to those who initiated innovative solutions and/or provided extraordinary value or service that led to exceptional outcomes for our employees and the Rutgers community.

Eligibility Criteria: Individuals and/or unit, departmental, interdepartmental or campus teams can be nominated for this award. Only current full-time faculty and staff are eligible. Nominations for faculty and/or staff teams that include student participants or part-time faculty or staff participants will also be accepted.

Individuals or teams selected for this award may be determined ineligible for other Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program awards in the same calendar year. Nominations are encouraged in more than one category, if applicable.

Nominated effort must be within the last 12-months and show lasting positive results in at least one of these areas:

- Prospective and/or current employee satisfaction
- Enhancing workplace culture or the patient experience
- Promoting healthy working relationships and a supportive work environment
- Improving processes that result in significantly more effective and efficient department or university operations
- Augmenting safety
- Stewardship of University resources

Required Documentation:

- Artifacts showing qualitative and/or quantitative impact on Rutgers employees and workplace culture.
- Letter(s) of support documenting the individual’s or team’s achievements.
- Nomination letter(s) from an employee or group of employees highlighting an exceptional impact is strongly encouraged as supporting documentation for this nomination.
- A thoughtful and substantive summary outlining the regular duties of the individual or team and the extraordinary effort and accomplishment serving as the basis for nomination.

BUILDING A BELOVED COMMUNITY

Award Name: Rutgers University Spirit Award

Description: This award celebrates differences and recognizes significant contributions to cultivating a beloved community—one in which all members work together and are heard—at Rutgers University. This individual or team exemplifies this commitment by promoting and advancing dialogue, mutual respect, and a spirit of belonging to create a healthy Rutgers ecosystem.

The recipient(s) of this award embody the principles of a beloved community and model an exceptional commitment to the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

Eligibility Criteria: Individuals and/or unit, departmental, interdepartmental or campus teams can be nominated for this award. Only current full-time faculty and staff are eligible. Nominations for faculty and/or staff teams that include student participants or part-time faculty or staff participants will also be accepted.

Individuals selected for this award may be determined ineligible for other Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program awards in the same calendar year. Nominations are encouraged in more than one category, if applicable.

Nominated effort must be within the last 12-months and show lasting positive results in at least one of these areas:

- Community building and collaboration
- Enhancing workplace culture in line with the spirit of this award
- Advancing Rutgers University’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion

Required Documentation:

- Artifacts showing qualitative and/or quantitative impact.
- Letter(s) of support documenting the individual's or team's achievements.
- A thoughtful and substantive summary outlining the regular duties of the individual or team and the extraordinary effort and accomplishment serving as the basis for nomination.

SERVING THE COMMON GOOD

Award Name: Rutgers Outstanding Service Award

Description: Rutgers is committed to serving the common good and to making a difference in the worlds of ideas, politics, social justice, innovation, invention, business, health, local need, national discourse, and of global priorities.

This award recognizes faculty, staff, and/or a team that demonstrate a relentless determination to make a lasting difference beyond the university's borders. The recipient(s) display(s) a demonstrated commitment to moving society towards a greater common good and encourage(s) constructive collaboration in service to our local and global communities.

Eligibility Criteria: Individuals and/or unit, departmental, interdepartmental or campus teams can be nominated for this award. Only current full-time faculty and staff are eligible. Nominations for faculty and/or staff teams that include student participants or part-time faculty or staff participants will also be accepted.

Individuals selected for this award may be determined ineligible for other Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program awards in the same calendar year. Nominations are encouraged in more than one category, if applicable.

Nominated effort must be within the last 12-months and show lasting positive results in at least one of these areas:

- Work outcome results in meaningful positive impact in communities in New Jersey and/or beyond
- Demonstrate constructive collaboration with internal and/or external communities
- Achievement of environmental, health, and/or well-being goals

Required Documentation:

- Artifacts showing qualitative and/or quantitative impacts.
- Letter(s) of support documenting the individual's or team's achievements.
- A thoughtful and substantive summary outlining the regular duties of the individual or team and the extraordinary effort and accomplishment serving as the basis for nomination.

ALL VALUE PROPOSITIONS

Award Name: Pride of Rutgers Award

Description: The Pride of Rutgers Award is given to those who exemplify the University's value propositions through their day-to-day actions.

This award recognizes university staff members who:

- exceed the expectations of their day-to-day tasks;
- provide exceptional customer service taking the time to understand the needs of our students, staff, patients, and/or visitors to meet their needs consistently and effectively;
- serve as problem solvers and find innovative ways to save time, money, or other resources; and
- demonstrate a consistency in getting the job done right and on time.

Eligibility Criteria: Individuals and/or unit, departmental, interdepartmental or campus teams can be nominated for this award. Full-time staff are eligible. Nominations for staff teams that include student or part-time staff participants will also be accepted.

Individuals selected for this award may be determined ineligible for other Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program awards in the same calendar year. Nominations are encouraged in more than one category, if applicable.

Nominated effort must be within the last 12-months and show a true alignment to one of the following categories:

- Exceed Expectations
- Customer Service
- Initiative
- Reliability

Required Documentation:

- Letter(s) of support documenting the individual's or team's achievements.
- A thoughtful summary outlining the regular duties of the individual or team and the extraordinary effort and accomplishment serving as the basis for nomination.

Nomination and Review Process

- An online submission form will be developed in Qualtrics.
- In creating the nomination process, attention will be given to making the process mobile friendly to facilitate access.
- The submission form will allow those nominating an individual or team to submit for more than one recognition category at a time.
- Completed forms will be accepted via the Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program website through October 16, 2023.
- Submissions received after the deadline will not be processed.
- Nominations may be written by a current co-worker, supervisor, or other member of the Rutgers community.
- Nomination materials must identify the name of the award(s) for which the person or team is being nominated, and clearly address the award criteria.
- All nominations must include the required documents as outlined in each award category to be considered by the Review Committee.

The Review Committee, comprised of full-time staff and faculty peers, will evaluate each nomination for suitability and eligibility. The Committee will make recommendations to President Holloway for final selection. The reviewers will consider the balance of the articulated outcomes and work effort made by the individual or team.

Recognition Ceremony

The committee recommends that a reception be held by President Holloway at the Rutgers Club, the President's residence, or a comparable on-campus location, in the Fall. Awardees, their families, supervisors, and nominators should be among those invited to the reception.

Next Steps

The Committee will launch a communications plan for the Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program awards on July 31st (estimated) with the following elements and recommendations:

- A website dedicated to the recognition program will be created and housed on the Office of the President's website. The website will include a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page.
- An initial University-wide email will come from the President's Office. To underscore its importance and to personalize the launch, the Committee

requests that President Holloway record a short video announcing the award. The Committee will communicate with Mike Meagher and Lara Beise from the President's Office to arrange to film this video.

- Following the President's announcement, follow-up communication by the Chancellor's Offices on all campuses is recommended.
- Targeted communication and follow-up by Jon Oliver and Elizabeth Matto will be directed towards Deans, the President's Administrative Council, Department Chairs, and Center and Institute Directors. These communications will include draft language to facilitate their dissemination.
- To enhance its reception, the Committee recommends that the communications strategy and release date is attentive to updates from University Human Resources on the Future of Work and flexible work arrangements, ideally after the communications regarding the status of the FlexWork@RU Pilot Program ending on August 31 are distributed to provide clarity to those currently engaged in a flexible work arrangement.
- To ensure accessibility and impact, the Committee will engage with Elizabeth Crann for Institutional Planning and Operations (IP&O) communications strategies.
- For the rollout in early September, the Committee recommends announcing in a *Rutgers Today* article and in coordination with President Holloway's Senate address on September 22nd.
- The Committee will communicate with Ellen Law for myRutgers portal reminder prompts in early Fall.
- It is recommended that we celebrate honorees widely on social media and that we determine, in September, whether a social media rollout is appropriate.
- Award recipients will be featured, with pictures and a narrative, on the recognition program website.

