Employee Excellence Awards

Recognizing the achievements of staff who excel in their roles, both in skills and performance.

Recipients will receive a monetary award, and all nominees will be invited to a luncheon with President Pollack and Vice President Mary Opperman.

Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion

In recognition of those who advance diversity through their exemplary work.

[accordion]

Overview and criteria

The university is committed to increasing the demographic diversity of its workforce and creating an inclusive workplace where each person is able to contribute fully to the mission and objectives of the university. The successful awardee will be an employee -- staff member or manager/supervisor -- who has demonstrated the University commitment to diversity and inclusion as reflected in the Toward New Destinations diversity framework and
the values of inclusion outlined in Cornell's [Skills for Success](#).

The individual must demonstrate:

- Exceptional efforts to promote a workplace environment of engagement and inclusion, free from bias and discrimination, where all individuals are valued.
- Development and implementation of clear diversity and inclusion goals addressing documented areas of need, and is monitoring progress or achievement using data/metrics.
- Meets or exceeds job expectations.

[accordion]

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**Excellence in Innovation**

In recognition of those who bring fresh ideas to their work, inspire a spirit of innovation, or are willing to take a calculated risk even if it fails.

[accordion]

**Overview and criteria**

Innovation and a bold, creative approach are vital to an institution of research – so it’s imperative to recognize and reward innovation throughout the organization. This award has been created to recognize staff – whether they’ve been at Cornell for six months or sixteen years – who bring fresh ideas to their work, inspire a spirit of innovation, or are willing to take a calculated risk even if it fails.

Nominees can work in any position or area on campus. They can be a colleague, a manager, an employee, someone you’ve worked with on a project or team – or even yourself. We hope to show that innovation is everywhere at Cornell!
Here are some characteristics to consider – the nominee could meet one or all of these attributes:

- **RECEPTIVE**: Appreciative of other’s ideas; values diversity of perspective; curious about people, concepts and issues, and on the lookout for new ideas.
- **RESILIENT**: See failures and setbacks as temporary and important learning opportunities; does not take failure personally.
- **SUPPORTS INNOVATION IN OTHERS**: Creates environments in which employees have the freedom, tools, or resources to challenge the status quo, push boundaries and achieve growth; uses mistakes as opportunities for learning.
- **WILLING TO TAKE RISKS**: Not afraid to break with the norm and push past conventional ways of doing things.
- **CREATIVE**: Finds innovative solutions; sees new possibilities; takes new ideas from concept to reality.

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**Individual Excellence Award**

In recognition of those who positively influence their colleagues and make great contributions, regardless of their title or role.

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**Overview and criteria**

The Individual Excellence Award is presented to Cornell staff members who consistently demonstrate a high level of commitment and dedication to their colleagues and workplace. They excel in the performance of their job duties, have a positive and influential impact on
their work environment, and foster cooperation and collaboration among their peers and supervisors while carrying out their responsibilities. These individuals also “live” the values of Cornell University.

Characteristics to consider – the nominee could meet one or all of these attributes:

- **MODELS SKILLS FOR SUCCESS**: exemplifies the majority of the Skills for Success (i.e. job skills, inclusiveness, adaptability, self-development, communication, teamwork); positively impacts colleagues and workgroups.
- **HIGH PERFORMING**: shows a strong work ethic and stays focused on what’s important; takes on the tough challenges; looks for opportunities to take initiative and/or exceed expectations; produces results under challenging circumstances and changing environments.
- **SHOWS CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**: prioritizes professional development; looks for opportunities to grow their skills and knowledge; strives to do work more efficiently and effectively; sets stretch goals for themselves.
- **ENGAGED**: invested in the university’s success; a team player in the department or work group; volunteers and/or takes part in university events and programs; an ambassador for the university as an employer.

**Management Excellence Award**

In recognition of leaders in the supervisor, manager, director or senior/executive role who bring out the best in their colleagues and teams, and create an environment that promotes excellence in their staff.

**Overview and criteria**

The Management Award is presented to Cornell supervisors, managers, directors or senior/executive directors who consistently demonstrate a high level of commitment and
dedication to their employees and the Cornell workplace. Strong nominees create an environment that develops, empowers, engages, challenges and motivates their staff and colleagues with a result of greater productivity, effectiveness, and a sense of belonging. They are problem-solvers and act with foresight and professionalism. These individuals also “live” the values of Cornell University.

Characteristics to consider – the nominee could meet one or all of these attributes:

- **MODELS LEADERSHIP**: exemplifies the majority of the Leadership Skills for Success; positively impacts colleagues, staff, and workgroups and sets up employees to be successful; a good campus citizen.

- **HIGH PERFORMING**: shows a strong work ethic and helps employees to strategize and determine priorities; takes on the tough challenges; looks for opportunities to take initiative and/or exceed expectations; produces results under challenging circumstances and changing environments.

- **VALUES CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**: prioritizes professional development for self and staff; looks for opportunities to grow employees’ skills and knowledge; strives to do work more efficiently and effectively; appreciates the value of feedback.

- **SUPPORTS EMPLOYEES’ SENSE OF BELONGING**: promotes an inclusive work environment; supportive of work/life integration for all employees; supports participation in university events and programs; an ambassador for the university as a great workplace.

The President’s Award for Excellence, “Far Above Cayuga’s Waters”

Each year, one employee will be chosen from all of the nominees to receive The President’s Award for Excellence. This individual stands out above the rest. They live the university values, demonstrate inclusiveness, collaboration, and respect, and furthers the mission of Cornell University through their strategic planning and leadership.