

INDIVIDUAL RECIPIENTS OF THE STAFF COVID-19 RESPONSE AWARDS ARE:

Patricia Badillo-Salas, Department of Asian Languages and Cultures

Since joining the department in 2018, Patricia has been a very professional and reliable part of the department. When the pandemic struck, Patricia showed another, truly impressive side of herself as she took on a new set of what are described as duties above and beyond the call of duty. Some examples are her coming to campus to meet with a Visiting Scholar about a tricky healthcare payment issue, assisting a new faculty member with visa issues, onboarding, moving reimbursements, and particularly challenging arrangements she made throughout the summer to meet with Facilities and vendors when deliveries of furniture for offices newly assigned to the department. Patricia truly stepped up to the challenge and showed herself to be a compassionate, caring, and committed steward of the Department of Asian Languages and Cultures.

Leandra Cain, Department of English

With the hiring freeze leaving the department unable to replace a staff member who left just as the pandemic hit, Leandra took up the slack in order to keep the administrative operations humming. The transition to remote learning in English, as for everyone, involved a great deal of administrative juggling – but the sheer number of courses that had to be reimaged for remote instruction was daunting. Leandra managed to coordinate the transition for well over eighty classes with fifty different instructors. Quietly, meticulously, compassionately – all while doing the work of two people -- she has simply made undergraduate instruction during COVID possible in the department.

Sean O'Leary, Department of Cell Biology and Neuroscience/Keck Center

The abrupt shut-down required swift action in order to protect valuable research. While others packed up supplies to work from home, Sean headed to the animal care facility. As some staff and faculty of the Keck Center professors have underlying conditions or family situations that made it impossible for them to come back to campus, Sean willingly took on the additional responsibility for their animals to enable his co-workers to stay safe. In addition to his already added responsibilities, Sean saw missing links and went to work on them. He took emails for those people off-site and placed orders for them, he received and distributed packages, and even figured out the erratic mail system so he could pick up correspondence and get it to the right people. Sean came into the Center, day after day after day, never missing a beat.

Anabell Williams, Division of Life Sciences

Praised for leading a valiant effort to maintain a sense of community and connection in the Division of Life Sciences, Anabell is recognized for her demonstrated professionalism and compassion throughout this difficult time. She routinely called her colleagues just to check in, always mindful of the stress isolation can bring. All the while, she effectively communicated the myriad changes the pandemic has forced on the division's operations and working with the staff with patience and resolve. For example, With the advent of COVID and the University budget concerns, a new policy was instituted requiring an ERF for all graduate student hires that were new to division's program. It was an onerous process and Anabell was an effective advocate for the eventual changes made to streamline the process. Her coworkers still cannot imagine how she managed all of these emergency procedures and keeping them all together while still fully occupied with all of her regular duties.

THE TEAM RECIPIENTS OF THE STAFF COVID-19 RESPONSE AWARDS ARE:

English Department Graduate Program Support Team: Courtney Borack and Cheryl Robinson

Often described as being in many ways “the heart of the graduate program,” Courtney and Cheryl proved that without a doubt when the pandemic hit us in March. From facilitating the graduate program’s transition to remote instruction, to compiling a “virtual tour” of the campus for prospective graduate students, and keeping everyone informed of the safety protocols, this duo has provided key operational and social support in this time of crisis and maintained a vital sense of community despite our physical separation.

SAS Human Resources Team: Bonnie Gordon, Rosemary Lane and Dale Koznecki

This trio is responsible for the day-to-day operational management of all SAS-HR functions, serving the needs of our faculty, staff and students in a wide range of areas. When we were forced to leave campus, the flood of new processes, policies and procedures that started raining down was daunting, yet this team pivoted quickly to adapt to the restrictions of the hiring freeze, the short turn-around time for reports on the furlough programs, and other important tasks such as providing guidance to those who fell ill with COVID or had members of their family who did. They have weathered the storm, helped many of us navigate truly difficult times, and are now focusing some of their time on laying the groundwork for when we can eventually return to campus.

SAS Office of Advising and Academic Services: Melissa Amaral, Erica Anderson, Milagros Arroyo, Jessica Beuthe, Angeline Bishop Thomas, Patricia Bonell-Piani (Arteaga), Christine Bonny, Carol Borrmann-Begg, Adrian Bruning, Neeta Chandrashekhar, Vanessa Chiamonte, Vanessa Coleman, Victor Cubero, Diane DeLauro, Robin Diamond, Lauren Dudzak, Madison Edwards-Bednar, Shaheen Fatima, Catrina Gallo, Fred Giliberti, Kathleen Gill, Rosalie Green, Kristy Haar, Brian Hart, Eric Himsel, Wei Huang, Emily Kaminski, Sabrina Laudent, Frankie Lewis, Jie (Jenny) Li, Erin Melillo, Christin Nassar, Lenore Neigeborn, Mya Nester-Watt, Michelle Neumyer, Janice Nygard, Vanessa Ortiz-Tepedino, Gary Panetta, Garth Patterson, Emily Pereira, Rosanna Puntiel, Mary Kate Schiff, Renee Schiffman, Rebecca Shaffer, Courtney Stanzione, Jennifer Trancucci, Tanya Washington, Nicola Wyatt, Alicia Regina Yetka and Iris Zipkin

In mid-March, this team found itself, like the rest of Rutgers, having to devise new ways conduct business from home on short notice. 20,000 undergraduate students looked to this team for guidance and support as they adjusted to a remote-learning environment, often under less-than-ideal conditions for living and learning. The staff had to quickly get up to speed on different modes of virtual communication and reinvent all the administrative processes that were reliant on paper. Through it all our undergraduate students were supported and advised, new students received their orientation, and countless frayed nerves were calmed. They rose to the challenge and their professionalism, grace and compassion have shown through.