

EA R10: Revision and Renaming of The Opperman Award

Abstract: In 2013, the Employee Assembly established the Opperman Award for Staff Advocacy to extend their appreciation and gratitude to Vice President of Human Resources and Safety Services, Mary George Opperman for fostering a positive environment where staff are valued contributors to the campus community and its mission. The Award for Staff Integrity and Inclusion will replace the Opperman Award but share the same values in recognizing staff who consistently demonstrate their commitment to encouraging and supporting staff integrity and inclusion.

Sponsored by: Ellen T Miller - Research, Tech Transfer & IT Representative At-Large and Vice Chair for Communications; Marin Cherry - Cornell Tech Campus Representative; Kristen Ciferri - Employee Representative Member of Communications, Outreach & Recognition Committee; Brandon Fortenberry - Division of Student and Campus Life Representative; Ashley Miller - Division of Human Resources Representative; Denny Totman - Employee Representative Member of Communications, Outreach & Recognition Committee

Reviewed by: Communications, Outreach & Recognition Committee, 04/27/2021

Whereas, the Cornell University Employee Assembly (Assembly) values and recognizes Vice President Opperman for fostering a positive environment where staff are valued contributors to the campus community and its mission and publicly recognized VP Opperman through the establishment of the Opperman Award; and

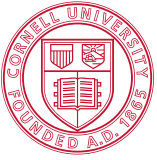
Whereas, the Opperman Award for Staff Advocacy was established in 2013 and has been conferred to two Cornell Employees; and

Whereas, the Opperman Award has been awarded to Cornell staff members who consistently demonstrate their commitment to encouraging and supporting staff excellence; and

Whereas, historically, all Cornell staff, faculty, and academic professionals, have been eligible for consideration for this award; and

Whereas, selection criteria for the Opperman Award has historically included the following:

- Treating their staff members or staff colleagues with fairness, respect and dignity at all times
- Being an extraordinary advocate for the wellbeing of staff with university, division, department or college leadership
- Fostering a positive environment where staff at all levels know they are valued and appreciated contributors to Cornell and its mission
- Fostering an environment where employees can freely express their ideas, opinions, and concerns



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- Creating or encouraging a culture which allows staff to thrive both at home and in the workplace
- Consistently demonstrating commitment to encouraging, advocating for and supporting staff excellence
- Creating or promoting an environment where staff of all backgrounds feel they are valued and belong; and

Whereas, this is a peer-nominated award and nominations may only be submitted by Cornell staff members with direct experience working with the nominee; and

Whereas, historically, the Opperman Award is awarded to one employee at a time and may be awarded up to two times per calendar year; and

Whereas, the Opperman Award was most recently presented in 2018.

Be it therefore resolved, the Assembly continues to recognize the historical importance of the Opperman Award; and

Be it further resolved, the Assembly redefines the award name from the ‘Opperman Award for Staff Advocacy’ to the ‘Award for Staff Integrity and Inclusion’; and

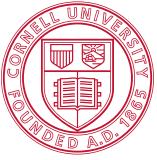
Be it further resolved, the Assembly redefines the staff eligibility from “all Cornell staff, faculty, and academic professionals” to “all exempt and non-exempt Cornell staff members”; and

Be it further resolved, the Assembly redefines the nominator eligibility from “staff only” to “any Cornell employee (staff, faculty, or academic professional)”; and

Be it further resolved, the Assembly updates the selection criteria for the Award to the following:

- Communicating between differences in order to build a collaborative, inclusive and respectful community that engages everyone, no matter their background
- Consistent strong moral principles that coincide with the University’s vision
- Is honest and trustworthy while demonstrating and adhering to high standards of personal conduct
- Demonstrating commitment to encouraging, advocating for, and supporting staff excellence with leadership, while being an advocate for work/life balance, flexible work arrangements, and promoting developmental opportunities
- Have a consistent, positive attitude that see changes or challenges as opportunities and helps others to see things from that perspective; and

Be it further resolved, authority previously granted to the Staff Recognition and Awards Committee to, “develop and maintain criteria for review of nominations ...(and)... coordinates the event where the award is presented to its recipient” shall remain with the Communications, Outreach and Recognition Committee; and



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Be it finally resolved, a copy of this resolution be presented to Martha Pollack, President and Mary Opperman, Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer.

Adopted by Vote of the Assembly (16-0-0), 05/05/2021.

Respectfully Submitted,

Employee Assembly Communications, Outreach & Recognition Committee:

Marin Cherry - Voting Member, Employee Assembly Representative

Kristen Ciferri - Voting Member, Employee Representative

Jackie Creque - Voting Member, Employee Assembly Representative

Ashley Miller - Voting Member, Employee Assembly Representative

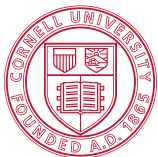
Ellen T Miller - Chair & Vice Chair for Communications, EA

Kate Supron - Voting Member, Employee Assembly Representative

Denny Totman - Voting Member, Employee Representative

Jessica Withers - Observer, Employee Assembly Representative

Addendum 1: Award for Staff Integrity and Inclusion Overview



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Addendum 1: Award for Staff Integrity and Inclusion Overview

Background:

In 2013, the Employee Assembly established the Opperman Award to extend their appreciation and gratitude to Vice President of Human Resources and Safety Services, Mary George Opperman for fostering a positive environment where staff are valued contributors to the campus community and its mission. Furthermore, VP Opperman has supported the engagement and inclusion of staff across campus in response to the Employee Engagement Survey, fostering an environment where employees can express their opinions and share experiences while working to create recommendations on core issues of concern discovered in the survey. Therefore, the Employee Assembly passed Resolution 5 on May 31, 2013 to publicly recognize VP Opperman for her continued efforts in creating a culture that allows staff to thrive at home and in the workplace.

In 2021, the Employee Assembly Communications, Outreach and Recognition Committee (CORC) launched the new Award for Staff Integrity and Inclusion in place of the Opperman Award for Staff Advocacy per resolution [R10: Revision and Renaming of The Opperman Award](#).

Overview:

The Award for Staff Integrity and Inclusion will be given up to two times a calendar year by the Assembly to an employee who consistently demonstrates their commitment to encouraging and supporting staff integrity and inclusion.

Award recipients will be recognized at an EA recognition event and will receive a monetary award funded through the Office of the President.

Since its inception, the Opperman Award has been received by several employees who have gone above and beyond to be exemplars of the University's mission and core values. (See [past recipients](#)).

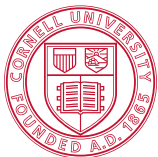
Eligibility:

All exempt and non-exempt Cornell staff members are eligible for consideration for this award. Nominations can be submitted by any Cornell employee (staff, faculty, or academic professional).

Selection Criteria:

Nominees must have a demonstrable history at Cornell of:

1. Communicating between differences in order to build a collaborative, inclusive and respectful community that engages everyone, no matter their background.
2. Consistent strong moral principles that coincide with the University's vision.
3. Is honest and trustworthy while demonstrating and adhering to high standards of personal conduct.



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4. Demonstrating commitment to encouraging, advocating for, and supporting staff excellence with leadership, while being an advocate for work/life balance, flexible work arrangements, and promoting developmental opportunities.
5. Have a consistent, positive attitude that see changes or challenges as opportunities and helps others to see things from that perspective.

****Examples of activities are listed in the rubric.**

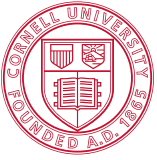
Nominations:

Any employee wishing to nominate a colleague should have direct experience with the nominee and must submit a completed nomination packet. The nomination packet is a **single PDF document** consisting of:

- Cover sheet
- Nomination letter explaining why the nominee deserves this award by providing answers to the questions below, citing relevant criteria and examples wherever possible. This can be co-signed by multiple employees.
 1. How does the nominee foster a positive environment where staff at all levels know they are valued and appreciated contributors to Cornell and its mission?
 2. How does the nominee's personal moral principles coincide with the University's vision?
 3. How does this nominee demonstrate high standards of personal conduct, honesty, and trustworthy behavior?
 4. How does the nominee show their commitment to encouraging, advocating for, and supporting staff excellence through promoting developmental opportunities, supporting flexible work arrangements, and/or advocating for a work/life balance?
 5. What examples can be provided to show how this nominee sees changes or challenges as opportunities and helps others to see things from that perspective?
- Up to three brief letters of support from other members of the Cornell community (direct supervisor, staff, faculty, students, administrators, alumni)

Selection Process:

1. The Staff Recognition and Awards Sub-Committee (SRAC) members will use the approved rubric to grade each nominee and then submit the top three highest ranking nominees to the SRAC chair.
2. SRAC chair and the Events and Outreach Manager for HR or a designee from Human Resources will review and compile all the nomination votes to determine the top three candidates.
3. SRAC chair will share the top three candidates with the CORC Chair to share with CORC member prior to next CORC meeting.
4. The CORC will cast a final vote of the top three candidates at the next CORC meeting.
5. University Human Resources will review the final candidate in the same process as the George Peter Award and President's Excellence Award.



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6. Once the final candidate has been vetted and approved by HR, the SRAC chair will notify the nominee's supervisor.
7. After approval is received from the nominee's supervisor, SRAC chair will notify the nominator and then the nominee of the award.
8. The SRAC will coordinate and execute the recognition event with the nominee's supervisor and VP Opperman's office.