

September 2025 Golden Nuggets

Date of submission	Nominee's Name	Nominee's Department	Area #	Reason for nomination
9/4/2025	Katie Adams	Niner Central	2	It is a rare week if I am not trading emails or chat messages with Katie in order to support a student or to resolve an issue. Katie's knowledge of University processes and resources is unmatched. She approaches every situation with the perfect blend of professionalism, determination, and humor. She is my go-to at Niner Central, is always willing to have a student or family member referred to her, and is the kind of staff member I'd hope my student would encounter if they needed assistance. I'm honored to work alongside her and I learn something from her every time we have the opportunity to interact. She routinely goes above and beyond and is certainly deserving of this recognition.
9/8/2025	Stan Smith	BES	12	I'm the building liaison for Kennedy and Stan is our BES supervisor. Stan always makes sure our building is kept up. Presently, with staffing shortages - he routinely handles the housekeeping himself. That means just about everything! Anytime he is called he responds promptly and addresses any BES inquiries. Stan is always cordial, good spirited and a gentleman with everyone. He deserves the Golden Nugget Award for always going the extra mile in serving our campus community.
9/8/2025	Andrea Toliver	COED- Office of School and Community Partnerships	7	Andrea began in OSCP as a temporary worker, and several years later she is our Business Services Coordinator. In her relatively new role, Andrea has worked hard to learn the complex role while maintaining some tasks from her previous role due to the hiring freeze. I can't say enough about how diligently Andrea works and the great job that she does supporting our whole office. She collaborates across departments in the college to grow and improve our work.
9/8/2025	Josh Willis	OneIT Client Engagement	4	Josh always goes above and beyond to make sure our team has what we need and more. He is the key to making our team mesh sooo well. Thanks JOSH!!
9/8/2025	Iris Driver	Employee Relations	2	Iris consistently goes above and beyond in her interactions with colleagues. She listens with intention and empathy, fostering meaningful dialogue and ensuring effective communication across our department. Her diction is consistently clear, precise, and professional—making her a reliable and respected voice within our team. Iris is an invaluable asset to the University, and her contributions elevate the standard of excellence we strive to uphold.
9/8/2025	Katie Franck	Belk College of Business	18	Ms. Franck is the manager of a critical project for our office, New Student Orientation. This summer she lead our team in welcoming over 1500 new students to the college of business. It is a project that takes organization, patience, critical thinking, patience, collaboration, and we can't forget patience. We are so grateful to have Katie on our team and celebrate her success!
9/8/2025	Shayna Shia Long	Annual Giving	11	I am proud to nominate Shayna Long for the Golden Nugget Award. Shayna is not only an exceptional boss but also a remarkable colleague, mentor, and team player. She consistently goes above and beyond - supporting not only her own team but also stepping in to assist other divisions whenever needed. She is always thinking several steps ahead, bringing her strengths of learner, input, individualization, arranger, and futuristic thinking into every project. Whether it's creating inventive segmentation strategies, ensuring data integrity, or finding new ways to streamline processes, Shayna leads with creativity and vision that benefit the entire division. Beyond her expertise, Shayna demonstrates incredible dedication and generosity with her time and energy. She regularly volunteers to support events across the division - even on evenings and weekends - and never hesitates to step in and shoulder extra work during busy or stressful periods. She embodies true leadership by remaining poised under pressure, forming opinions based on facts, and modeling integrity and professionalism in every situation. Her encouragement of team building, mental health, and balance adds another layer to her leadership, creating an environment where others feel valued and supported. Shayna is a role model who inspires respect and admiration from everyone who works with her. Despite the many demands on her as a professional, a wife, and a mother of three, she shows up every day with persistence, patience, and grace. Her dedication to UNC Charlotte reflects the very best of the Niner Spirit, and I feel fortunate to learn from her example. Shayna's work ethic, positivity, and commitment make her more than deserving of this recognition.
9/8/2025	Laura Crossley	Graduate School	1	I have had the privilege of working with Laura in the Graduate for 10 years, and it is long overdue that I submit this nomination. Laura is truly the "go-to" person in our group whenever we face complex questions, or need assistance with our daily tasks. No issue is ever too big or small. She always finds a solutions or takes the time to research one. Laura does this with a smile, a joke, patience and an approachable attitude. She is quick to respond, especially when she senses a colleague is stressed or uncertain. Laura's support makes a huge positive difference in our department. Most importantly, she has an exceptional understanding of the needs of our applicants and students ensuring that they feel supported and valued. Laura embodies the true spirit of teamwork. Her dedication strengthens not only our department, but also my own love for my job. She goes above and beyond everyday and I think she deserving of this recognition.

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9/8/2025	Samantha Pfeiffer	Career Center	3	Samantha works on the Employer Engagement team at the Career Center, serving as an Industry Specialist and our Employer Partners program manager. As I have entered a new role in our office, joining the industry specialist team, Samantha has been a huge support and has provided guidance. She stays up to date on industry knowledge, has great strategies for employer outreach and assistance, and, in general, has a great spirit that is both professional and supportive. Samantha's work with our partnership program has helped to ensure we have funding and partners who support our initiatives. The partners she works with have consistently shown their dedication to Niner Nation, and she makes sure those partners align with our center too. The effort it takes to manage those relationships and foster such successful partnerships is huge. She always goes above and beyond with her work. It's inspiring.
9/8/2025	Casey Hurst	SAFC Business Manager	17	Casey is always willing to step in to help with a huge smile. She assisted me with a project that I am working on and the support from her was amazing.
9/8/2025	April Baynes	Alumni Engagement	11	April is a true leader who combines strategic vision with genuine care for others. She strengthens relationships with faculty, staff, and alumni through creative, authentic engagement and consistently goes the extra mile to support colleagues across campus. Her dedication and example have not only elevated our events and initiatives but also inspired the development of a new alumni engagement team.
9/8/2025	Angel Truesdale	J. Murrey Atkins Library	1	Angel provided an excellent presentation on Business Research to our MGMT-3280 Strategic Management (Sections 002 and 003) students on September 2, 2025! I truly appreciated Angel's engaging delivery and the thoughtful way you introduced key concepts in business research. Her passion for student development and your support of fellow faculty in delivering classroom excellence are deeply valued. I also want to highlight a fantastic resource she created: the dedicated course guide for MGMT-3280. It's an incredibly helpful tool for student research and aligns seamlessly with our course objectives. Thank you again for your collaboration and continued support of our students' academic success. I'm looking forward to continuing the partnership.
9/8/2025	Max Rogers	CRES	17	Max created an event summary template for the CRES team a couple of years ago that the department still uses today. Another department that is planning a big upcoming event this fall is trying to improve their organizing in preparations for the event so we offered to share it with them. They said it is absolutely amazing and wanted to extend a huge thank you as it literally has every single thing one can think of when planning for an event- this will help so much and ease a lot of frustration- but a HUGE thank you for creating something so sleek, user-friendly and helpful. It literally made their day!
9/16/2025	Katie Fitzgerald	Office of Academic Affairs	9	Katie excels at all she does. She goes above and beyond in all tasks. In addition to her exemplary work product, she has a lovely personality and everyone truly enjoys working with her. She is by far the best employee I've ever had on my team and I could not do my job nearly as well without her.
9/16/2025	Christopher Walls	First-Year & Transition Programs	3	Chris deserves this golden nugget for helping support our First-Gen Family Mixer during Family Weekend. Chris helped set up, welcomed and greeted families, guided them during activities, and took pictures. Chris chatted with families, creating a welcoming and inviting environment. Chris also helped clean up. Overall Chris played a huge role in making sure the event ran as smooth as possible.
9/17/2025	Dr. Lorenzo Hopper	Department of Epidemiology and Community Health	Faculty	Dr. Hopper deserves this golden nugget for his continuous support of our First-Gen community. Dr. Hopper came in during Family Weekend to help set up for our First-Gen Family Mixer. He helped organize the event's check in and the activities for families. Because of his help the event started right on time and ran very smoothly!
9/18/2025	Holly Boyd	The Office of Undergraduate Admissions	2	The new 2025–2026 cycle has brought many changes and challenges, yet Holly has handled them with grace, optimism, and unwavering support. Even in the face of uncertainty, she consistently offers a hopeful outlook and encourages our team to see the bigger picture. Her ability to adapt and guide us through multiple pivots has already shown me the value of strong leadership. What stands out most to me is her positivity. No matter how difficult the circumstances, she greets others with a smile and a reassuring attitude. She makes a conscious effort to uplift and encourage, which has made me feel supported and valued as a newer member of the team. Her resilience and leadership inspire confidence and motivate me to keep moving forward. Through her steady presence, patience, and encouragement, she exemplifies what it means to represent UNC Charlotte with pride and dedication.

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9/19/2025	Christopher Giuliani	University Communications	11	Over the past few months, Chris has been the primary designer for University Advancement, taking on significant new responsibilities. His talent, creativity, and time management were instrumental in creating innovative, thoughtful, and engaging designs for our key stewardship communications. This work has been vital in connecting with the University's most loyal supporters. Additionally, Chris's design for this year's Niner Nation Week: Homecoming t-shirt stands out. He created a campus-inspired design that offers a fresh and unique take on previous years, and we are confident it will be a hit with students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the University. Chris's optimism, professionalism, and willingness to help are appreciated by all who work with him, and I'm excited we can recognize him in this meaningful way.
9/24/2025	Marcus Frazier	BES - Housekeeping	12	Marcus is very efficient in his work and is always very pleasant and courteous. Thank you Marcus for keeping the Reese Building (especially the 3rd Floor) looking neat and clean, we really appreciate you and all you do. Keep smiling and spreading good cheer!
9/25/2025	Susan Messina	University Communications	11	To say "thank you" for the continued above and beyond proofreading services with Student Affairs publications, including but not limited to our division annual report and family magazine. Thank You!!
9/25/2025	Phillip Brown	University Communications	11	To say "thank you" for the continued above and beyond proofreading services with Student Affairs publications, including but not limited to our division annual report and family magazine. Thank You!!
9/26/2025	Karen Grimm	Student Health Center, Immunizations	13	For being a supportive and caring coworker. Karen loves what she does and it shows in her dedication to her work and her patients. She goes above and beyond to help her patients.
9/27/2025	Emily Bray	Charlotte Athletics - 49ers Ventures	14	Emily is one of the kindest and most genuine individuals I have ever worked with; every day, she brings a great deal of positivity and laughter into the workplace. Every person she has interacted with can agree that she makes you feel like you matter, especially when you mess up; she is always the first one to laugh it off. Emily is not just an awesome person to work with, but an asset to the entire athletics department. Even when it is unclear if she's doing okay, Emily takes the time to make sure that everyone around her is alright and lets them know that she's got their back. While she might disagree, Emily thrives when she is thrown into high-pressure environments (also known as chaos). Emily's decision-making skills, accountability, and ambition make her an impressive leader in these complex situations. Emily Bray is truly an outstanding human being and someone that I learn from every day. Her dedication to this department and efforts to create a positive work environment have not gone unnoticed.
9/26/2025	Cheryl Pittman-Buxton	Facilities Management	15A	On Monday, September 22, Cheryl was conducting her usual building audits in the Duke building when she was approached by a BES employee asking for immediate assistance. One of the professors appeared to be experiencing a medical emergency while leading his class of students. Cheryl ran to the aide of the professor, helping him sit after he had collapsed, holding his hands and providing calm words to make him comfortable. The professor began to pray at which time Cheryl also prayed aloud for/with the professor. After several minutes the paramedics arrived. Cheryl was instrumental in not only caring for the professor but in keeping the students in the classroom calm while they awaited first responders. Cheryl later received an email from the professor thanking her for her coming to his aide.