

January 2026 Golden Nuggets

Date of submission	Nominee's Name	Nominee's Department	Area #	Reason for nomination
1/5/2026	Ellie Ivey and Joe Campos	Graduate School- Recruitment Team	1	Throughout the Fall 2025 semester, the Graduate Recruitment team showed up with determination, creativity, and a true sense of ownership during a time of significant enrollment change. While navigating shifting priorities, and doing so while understaffed for much of the term, the team remained flexible, quick to pivot, and deeply committed to the work. They didn't just keep things moving; they took charge of critical enrollment strategies, pushed key projects forward, and found thoughtful, innovative ways to respond to challenges in real time. Their willingness to step up for one another and for the institution made a meaningful difference. This team's resilience, collaboration, and heart truly embody the spirit of the Golden Nugget initiative.
1/7/2026	John Hurley	FM Lock Shop	15B	John had a work request to investigate a camera issue at the Bissell House when he noticed the smell of Natural Gas. The issue was reported to other teams in FM/MO and a gas leak was found and repaired.
1/11/2026	Kawon Taylor	Environmental Tech	17	The building manager shift was over at 2pm. It was 1:30pm and that is when Kawon took the initiative to help move the rotunda furniture out onto the black tile floor. It is always a pleasure working with Mr. Taylor.
1/12/2026	Courtney Burton	CHHS Dean's Office	7	Courtney identified an administrative degreeworks glitch that was causing problems with students' graduation audits, such that students' graduation clearances would be delayed by a term. She identified the problem, advocated with the Registrar's Office, then took the initiative to identify a pattern affecting several students and to create the solution that the Registrar's Office would need to address it. Her willingness to go well above and beyond her usual duties was tremendously impactful.
1/14/2026	Owen Cooks	Facilities Management	15A	<p>I want to take this moment and express my sincere appreciation for the leadership Owen has provided to our department. Prior to his arrival, individual Facilities Management units often operated with separate agendas that didn't always align with the broader mission of Facilities Management or the University. Since Owen joined the organization, I have experienced a level of alignment, collaboration, and teamwork across units that had not existed since my arrival over a year and a half ago.</p> <p>While some units previously worked well together, others struggled to do so. There is still important work ahead, but I am truly grateful for the direction, structure, and mutual respect Owen consistently demonstrates. On a personal level, I have felt valued and respected by Owen, both as an individual and as a professional.</p> <p>With Owen serving as our Associate Vice Chancellor, alongside my Director, Solomon Franklin, and other dedicated leaders, we are creating meaningful, long-lasting change that has the potential to leave a lasting legacy. I would like to formally recognize Owen for his hard work, dedication, and commitment to UNC Charlotte and Facilities Management. Thank you.</p>
1/14/2026	Pamela Duff	OneIT	4	<p>I would like to take a moment to recognize the exceptional work, more importantly, the spirit, of Pam Duff. In my more than 20 years of professional experience, I have met very few individuals who compare to Pam. Her unwavering support, dedication, and work ethic do not go unnoticed.</p> <p>As a recent example, I needed an iPad for an upcoming project. Pam immediately dedicated her time and patience to assist with setting up the device and resolving issues as they arose. This is just one small example that does not fully capture the powerful and positive impact she has on me and on everyone around her.</p> <p>While I understand the weight of the word "always," I can honestly say I have yet to encounter a moment when Pam was not willing to support me or my team. Whether it involves software, printers, computer installations, or system implementations, Pam shows up. She is focused on finding solutions and moving us toward "yes," always with the greater good of UNC Charlotte in mind.</p> <p>I would like to personally thank Pam Duff for her incredible spirit, her pursuit of excellence, and her commitment to collaboration. Thank you, Pam.</p>
1/14/2026	Cristhian Gonzalez De La Fuente	Grounds	15A	This nomination is on behalf of my office. We had the honor of meeting Cristhian last year when he stopped in to ask a question and since then he has made a point to stop by when he can just to say hi. Since meeting Cristhian we have gotten to know him and he is always smiling and welcoming and truly wants to help others. Recently, we reached out to him and asked if he could help another area and without hesitation he said of course. He doesn't do it for the recognition. He just honestly enjoys helping people. He wants nothing in return. Too many times individuals like Cristhian are overlooked and we need to let them know we see them and they are appreciated.
1/16/2026	Cassandra Himes	TEAL office COED	7	Cassandra is a very valuable member of our department. While a colleague was out on leave, Cassandra was able to manage all graduate certificate in teaching inquires, applications, and more while the admissions process was changing. She is a dedicated team member and even plans fun events for our office. Lucky to have her as a co-worker!

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1/20/2026	Josh Jones	Housing and Residence Life	5	<p>I would like to nominate Josh for The Golden Nugget Award in recognition of his leadership and impact as our new Business Services Director. Since stepping into the role, Josh has brought clarity, consistency, and a solutions-focused approach to business operations that has benefited the entire department.</p> <p>He is proactive in addressing complex financial and operational matters, ensures processes such as reconciliations and reporting stay on track, and is always willing to explain details so others feel informed and supported. Josh approaches his work with accountability and professionalism, while also being approachable and responsive to staff needs.</p> <p>His commitment to accuracy, collaboration, and continuous improvement has made a noticeable difference in how our team operates, and his contributions reflect the values of excellence and service we strive for every day.</p>
1/20/2026	Jermel Wiggins	OneIT	4	Jermel Wiggins provided excellent service when setting up my computer and software on my first day of work in UGE! He is knowledge, professional, and kind. He represents OneIT and UNC Charlotte in a wonderful light and we are lucky to have him.
1/27/2026	Sabrina Rodriguez	Renovation Trades, Facilities Operations	15B	For her outstanding work , She's incredibly diligent while navigating around my office with a lot of staff which has not been an easy task , I also want to highlight the communication , which has gone above and beyond expectation, I'm truly proud of her effort and greatly appreciate the work she is doing to ensure everything is taken care
1/27/2026	Brien Clapton	Renovation Trades , Facilities Operations	15B	For his outstanding work , He's incredibly diligent while navigating around my office with a lot of staff which has not been an easy task . I also want to highlight the communication , which has gone above and beyond expectation . I'm truly proud of his effort and greatly appreciate the work he's doing to ensure everything is taken care of
1/29/2026	Kara Barnette	Budget Office	9	<p>During AFB season, Kara has been a gem to work with during what can be a stressful process. Her willingness to step in for extra guidance and help is deeply appreciated and noticed by those she encounters. Having someone like Kara to help explain the nuances of AFB makes it a much better holistic experience. Thank you Kara for all that you do in support of the Budget office and those that work with the Budgets for AFB!</p>
1/29/2026	Elina Hoyle	Facilities Management - Building Environmental Services	12	Elina Hoyle deserves recognition for her outstanding dedication and exceptional work ethic. She consistently goes above and beyond to ensure the Foundation Building and Foundation Annex are impeccably clean, both inside and out. She is always friendly, professional, and willing to help with any request, no matter how big or small. Visitors frequently comment on how clean and welcoming our buildings are, which is a direct reflection of her hard work and pride in what she does. She is truly a valuable asset to our team, and we would greatly miss her if she ever moved to another area on campus. Her efforts do not go unnoticed, and we sincerely appreciate all that she does.
1/29/2026	Chuck Foard	ITS Infrastructure	4	<p>I want to express my sincere thanks to Chuck Foard for everything he does for the Controller's Office. He consistently goes above and beyond for us. He takes the time to explain how everything works, how systems connect to our processes, and what new guidelines mean for our team. He offers suggestions, helps us find solutions, and always looks for ways to support our needs.</p> <p>Since November, with the new Endpoint Computers guidelines, we've needed a lot of extra assistance to keep our payroll employees on physical phones. We receive so many calls, and we never want to miss anyone who needs help — payroll is important to all of us. Chuck has stepped in every time, making sure we stay up and running. And when a phone goes bad, they always look for practical solutions instead of pushing us toward an expensive replacement.</p> <p>Chuck is truly a great asset to the University. Chuck you have excellent Customer service. Your support makes a real difference. Thanks Lora Bassett and Controller's Office</p>
1/29/2026	Antonio Walker	ITS Infrastructure	4	<p>I want to express my sincere thanks to Antonio Walker for everything he does for the Controller's Office. He consistently goes above and beyond for us. He takes the time to explain how everything works, how systems connect to our processes, and what new guidelines mean for our team. He offers suggestions, helps us find solutions, and always looks for ways to support our needs.</p> <p>Since November, with the new Endpoint Computers guidelines, we've needed a lot of extra assistance to keep our payroll employees on physical phones. We receive so many calls, and we never want to miss anyone who needs help — payroll is important to all of us. Antonio has stepped in every time, making sure we stay up and running. And when a phone goes bad, they always look for practical solutions instead of pushing us toward an expensive replacement.</p> <p>Antonio is truly a great asset to the University. Your support makes a real difference. Thanks Lora and The Controller's Office</p>

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1/30/2026	Aeryn Jackson	OneIT - Student Affairs	4	I would like to nominate Aeryn for their outstanding work in implementing our new webform. They built the form entirely from scratch and were extremely collaborative throughout the process, giving the team ample opportunity to review, test, and suggest changes before it went live. Their flexibility, technical skill, and commitment to getting it right ensured a smooth rollout and a final product that truly met our needs.