

May 2026 Golden Nuggets

Date of submission	Nominee's Name	Nominee's Department	Area #	Reason for nomination
5/7/2026	Teresa Shook	Human Resources	2	Teresa consistently provides clear guidance on all student employment topics. The format of her student coordinator group emails makes them enjoyable to read. They include important items (such as deadline dates) in bold font that draw your attention. Her emails include statistics, instructions, and precise information that is very helpful and keeps us all informed with student employment updates. Teresa is appreciated!
5/12/2026	Buffie Stephens	University Communications	11	Shout out to Buffie Stephens and Andrew James for assisting with a last-minute request! Buffie answered her cell phone on the first ring, took the time to review the request with me, and clearly explained the next steps. Andrew quickly showed up in person and supported the entire process while on campus. Even when we thought everything was finished, he came back without hesitation to help again. I truly appreciate their teamwork and am lucky to have colleagues like them on campus!
5/12/2026	Andrew James	University Communications	11	Shout out to Buffie Stephens and Andrew James for assisting with a last-minute request! Buffie answered her cell phone on the first ring, took the time to review the request with me, and clearly explained the next steps. Andrew quickly showed up in person and supported the entire process while on campus. Even when we thought everything was finished, he came back without hesitation to help again. I truly appreciate their teamwork and am lucky to have colleagues like them on campus!
5/14/2026	Michelle Hypki	Graduate School	1	The new federal regulation for CPoS, which impacts Financial Aid, has been a heavier than expected lift -- especially for staff who support DegreeWorks. Michelle has been the Graduate School's primary representative in this process. She has attended weekly meetings, figured out complicated ramifications to these changes, led the implementation of changes, and developed communication to students and faculty. While she is not the only staff member working on CPoS, this work is far beyond the scope of her duties. Yes, she understands the importance of the work and willing committed to learn about this complicated process. (CPoS means that courses taken outside of a student's plan of study are not eligible for Financial Aid.) She did all of this work with a smile, sometimes a sigh, but always a positive attitude. Her work will make the implementation a little less painful!
5/15/2026	Patrick Lucitt	External Relations & Partnerships	11	<p>Patrick has been an outstanding co-worker and an incredible teammate. He consistently demonstrates professionalism, patience, and a genuine willingness to help others succeed. Patrick is not only a great listener, but also a gifted teacher who takes the time to share his knowledge and support fellow co-workers whenever they need assistance.</p> <p>Working alongside Patrick has been both an honor and a valuable learning experience. His positive attitude, teamwork, and dedication make a meaningful impact on everyone around him. I truly appreciate everything he does and believe he is highly deserving of this Golden Nugget recognition.</p>
5/15/2026	Stephanie Bird	University Career Center	3	<p>Stephanie represents the best of Charlotte in her role leading the Career Center coaching team and serving as one of the Team Leads for the office. As a leader, she cultivates a supportive and growth-oriented environment in both large and small ways - her leadership is not only defined in strategic vision, but in the small, human-centered practices that she brings to every interaction. Stephanie consistently champions personal and team development and creates an environment where ideas are welcomed, questions are encouraged, and voices are valued. One of her most meaningful contributions is bringing back the star award and celebrating wins at our bi-weekly career coaching meeting. Although this is a small example, the impact is large. She encourages us to think through everything we have accomplished whether that is something professionally or personally. Being able to celebrate each others "wins" is one way we as a career coaching team are able to work positively and productively towards our shared purpose.</p> <p>In addition to the work Stephanie does for the Career Center, she also plays an integral role for the training and development of the entire ecosystem of academic advisors across campus. This is such a huge undertaking and Stephanie manages it with grace, positivity, and intentionality. Through her work, Stephanie helps ensure advisors feel valued and a part of the campus community through the large selection of professional and community development initiatives she offers each semester for advisors. This past year, Stephanie worked to create a Professional Development Certificate for advisors complete with various tracks based on an individual's advising experience. This certificate helped encourage professional growth for advisors while also fostering intentional connection and community.</p> <p>Through her commitment to excellence, empathy, and dedication to the Career Center and broader campus community, Stephanie exemplifies the best of Charlotte. Her influence is felt daily, and her work will continue to shape a more stronger and connected Career Center and advising community.</p>
5/18/2026	Kawon Taylor	Cone University Center	17	HR Hosted an event on 5.14.26 and Kawon was amazing as a point of contact to help with multiple set up logistic questions, helping to pivot changes quickly and through it all had amazing customer service attitude. It was a pleasure to work with him and his support helped make our event a rousing success!

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5/26/2026	Denis Vargas	Student Affairs Marketing and Communications	11	I am thrilled to nominate Denis for a Golden Nugget Award. He recently brought my vision to life for the 2026 University Honors & Awards event, managing the design for the new cover, programs, slide decks, and everything in between. No matter how high the stakes or the pressure, he is incredibly patient, communicates with total clarity, and always balances realistic guidance with high-quality results. Working with him is an absolute pleasure because he constantly finds ways to elevate projects beyond expectations. While Denis is someone who naturally stays in the background, his impactful work makes UNC Charlotte sparkle. He absolutely deserves to have his time in the spotlight and shine like gold!
5/28/2026	Jeremy Gristina	Warehouse Operations	9	Jeremy went above and beyond helping with the removing old furniture in our building, so we could get new pieces in place. Thanks so much Jeremy you really make the project so much smoother than expected.
5/28/2026	Jeffrey Williams	Warehouse Operation	9	Jeff worked alongside Jeremy for a week to remove old furniture from our building so we could have new pieces installed, great guy to work with. Thanks so much Jeff.