

**Presidential
Employee Excellence
Recognition Program**

2025 Committee Proposal



April 7, 2025

President Jonathan Holloway
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
7 Winants Hall
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

RE: Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program

Dear President Holloway,

On behalf of the Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program Committee, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for the opportunity to contribute to the development and implementation of this distinguished recognition program. We are writing to share a brief report that outlines the committee's timeline for this academic year and to recommend the addition of the Pride of Rutgers in Frontline Service and Pride of Rutgers in Frontline Healthcare awards.

We remain inspired by the many accomplishments and exceptional contributions of our dedicated Rutgers colleagues, many of whom have been recognized through this recognition program. Based on our review of the past two years, the committee has identified elements of the program that should be maintained, along with areas that would benefit from improvement.

We ask that you review and approve the proposed timeline and our recommendation for the inclusion of the refined Pride of Rutgers award categories at your earliest convenience. In order to launch the application and communication campaign by early-May, we kindly request your feedback by April 18. We are enthusiastic about the opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of our colleagues once again this year. Thank you for entrusting us with this important responsibility.

Sincerely,

Ralph Gigliotti
Assistant Vice President for Organizational Leadership, University Academic Affairs

Karen Shapiro
Vice Dean, School of Health Professions

Committee Representatives:

Elizabeth Matto, Eagleton Institute of Politics
Jon Oliver, Office of the Chancellor (New Brunswick)
Ghislaine Darden, Institutional Planning & Operations
Adam Kustka, School of Arts and Sciences (Newark)
Sam Rabinowitz, School of Business (Camden)
Mark Robson, School of Environmental & Biological Sciences
Kyle Warren, School of Nursing & Rutgers Health
Sasha Taner, Institute for Women's Leadership
Gulam Rather, Cancer Institute of New Jersey
Jennifer Bucalo, Rutgers University (Newark)
Brian Schilling, Rutgers Cooperative Extension
Jennifer Williams, University Human Resources (Camden)
Melissa Marrero, University Human Resources
Julie Jain, University Human Resources

Executive Summary

On June 23, 2022, Rutgers University President Jonathan Holloway endorsed the recommendations of the [Future of Work Task Force](#), which called for the establishment of a university-wide Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program. The goal of the recognition program is to strengthen institutional pride and build on the ideal of a beloved community where employees are engaged, productive, valued, and rewarded for their contributions.

To achieve the goals articulated by President Holloway in a collaborative and inclusive manner, the Presidential Employee Excellence Committee was tasked in 2023 with identifying recognition categories and eligibility criteria, establishing tools for online submissions, determining the submission review process and non-monetary incentives for recognition, developing a timeline and communications strategy, and hosting the first annual event.

The program introduced five award categories, aligning with the university's core values of academic excellence, building a beloved community, and serving the common good, welcoming both individual and team nominations. These categories can be found in the Appendix of this report. The inaugural cohort of awardees was selected during the 2023 fall semester and celebrated at [an award ceremony](#) in December.

After a thorough review of the inaugural years, the Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program Committee proposes the following timeline for 2025. We believe this timeline will allow more time to recruit candidates, review applications, communicate with awardees and those nominated, and allow for broader participation at the award ceremony.

Our committee also identified the need for refined awards that celebrate the important contributions of frontline staff and frontline healthcare employees. Accordingly, we propose the addition of the Pride of Rutgers in Frontline Service and Pride of Rutgers in Frontline Healthcare awards.

Proposed Timeline, 2025

Date	Project Milestone
April 11, 2025	Finalize website, online submission form, and communication plan
May 2, 2025	President's Universitywide announcement of program
July 11, 2025	Nomination application deadline

October 6, 2025	Committee reviews and proposes award recipients to President Holloway
October 17, 2025	President invites endorsed recipients to reception ceremony
November 14, 2025	Host reception ceremony

Proposed Revised Award Category

ALIGNMENT WITH ALL VALUE PROPOSITIONS	
Award Name:	Pride of Rutgers in Frontline Service
Description:	<p>Recognizes and celebrates the dedication, exceptional performance, and positive impact of frontline staff members at Rutgers University. This award honors both individuals and teams who provide outstanding services that contribute significantly to the effective operation of the university—often behind the scenes—and enhance the overall experience of the Rutgers community.</p> <p>The recipient of this award will demonstrate exceptional professionalism, a steadfast dedication to problem-solving, and an unwavering commitment to fostering a positive, inclusive, and caring university climate. The award highlights the contributions of individuals who ensure the seamless functioning of vital services, maintain high standards of service quality, and consistently go above and beyond to meet the needs of the community.</p>
Eligibility Criteria:	<p>Individuals and/or unit, departmental, interdepartmental, or campus teams can be nominated for this award. Only current full-time staff are eligible. Nominated effort must be within the last 12 months and show lasting positive results in at least one of these areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain a high standard of professionalism in all interactions ▪ Show initiative in solving problems and improving processes ▪ Contribute to a welcoming and supportive environment for everyone ▪ Consistently deliver reliable, high-quality support to the university community ▪ Consistently exceed expectations and contribute to the university's success ▪ Contribute to the seamless functioning of the university and improve the experience of students, staff, and visitors
Required Documentation:	

To complete the nomination form, at least one of the following required documentations must be included:

- A thoughtful summary outlining the impact of the individual or team and the extraordinary effort and accomplishment serving as the basis for nomination
- Letter(s) of support and/or testimonial(s) documenting the individual's or team's contributions from their peers, supervisors, or members of their service population/beneficiaries of their service

Award Name:

Pride of Rutgers in Frontline Healthcare

Description:

Recognizes and celebrates the dedication, exceptional performance, and positive impact of frontline healthcare employees at Rutgers University. This award honors individuals who provide outstanding healthcare support that contributes significantly to the effective operation of the university's healthcare system—often behind the scenes—and enhance the overall experience of Rutgers patients and their loved ones.

The recipient of this award will demonstrate exceptional professionalism, a steadfast dedication to problem-solving, and an unwavering commitment to fostering a positive, inclusive, and compassionate environment. This award highlights the contributions of non-physician providers who ensure the seamless delivery of vital services, maintain high standards of care, and consistently go above and beyond to meet the needs of the university community. The recipient exemplifies a commitment to patient-centered care, teamwork, and high standards of service quality, and consistently goes above and beyond to meet the needs of the community.

Eligibility Criteria:

Individuals and/or unit, departmental, interdepartmental, or campus teams can be nominated for this award. Only current full-time staff are eligible. Nominated effort must be within the last 12 months and show lasting positive results in at least one of these areas:

- Maintain ethical standards and provide respectful, compassionate care
- Prioritize patients' well-being and provide high-quality care
- Actively work to resolve issues and improve healthcare services
- Work effectively with others to ensure quality care
- Consistently meet or exceed healthcare service expectations
- Provide exceptional care and support that exceeds basic requirements
- Contribute to improving patient care and the healthcare system at Rutgers
- Create an empathetic, inclusive environment for patients and colleagues

Required Documentation:

To complete the nomination form, at least one of the following required documentations must be included:

- A thoughtful summary outlining the impact of the individual or team and the extraordinary effort and accomplishment serving as the basis for nomination
- Letter(s) of support and/or testimonial(s) documenting the individual's or team's contributions from their peers, supervisors, or members of their service population/beneficiaries of their service

Based on past experiences, the committee has discussed and outlined an updated nomination and review process, made minor modifications to the Awards Ceremony, and crafted a set of next steps.

Nomination Process

- Once again, an online submission form will be developed in Qualtrics.
- In creating the nomination process, attention will be given to making the process mobile friendly to facilitate access.
- The submission form will allow those nominating an individual or team to submit for more than one recognition category at a time.
- Completed forms will be accepted through July 11, 2025. Submissions received after the deadline will not be processed.
- Nominations may be written by a current co-worker, supervisor, or other member of the Rutgers community.
- Nomination materials must identify the name of the award(s) for which the person or team is being nominated and clearly address the award criteria.
- All nominations must include the required documents, with clear instructions and examples of supporting evidence. The committee recommends that the size of nominated teams is limited.

Reviewing and Selecting Awardees

The review committee, comprised of full-time staff and faculty peers, will evaluate each nomination for suitability and eligibility. The committee will make recommendations to the President for final selection. The reviewers will consider the balance of the articulated outcomes and work effort made by the individual or team. The committee has made adjustments to the timeline to provide sufficient review time for nominations. It is also recommended that the committee notifies runners-up and ensures that nominators are also notified.

Recognition Ceremony

The Rutgers Club is confirmed for November 14, 2025, from 11:00 am to 2:00pm. Awardees, nominators, and Cabinet members will be among those invited to the reception. The committee recommends the following:

- Provide more advanced notice to Cabinet members to allow them to attend the ceremony. We also recommend allocating additional time before the ceremony to allow the President to mingle and engage with the attendees.
- For the ceremony itself, the committee recommends first announcing the awardees, followed by an explanation of the award category, a description of the nomination rationale, and then the formal announcement of the recipient(s)' name(s).
- For team recipients, we recommend asking the audience to hold applause until all names are announced.
- To ensure University-wide participation, the committee recommends the coordination of a shuttle to transport Newark and Camden attendees.
- It is recommended that honorees' nametags include department/unit and award category.

Next Steps

The committee will launch a communications plan for the Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program awards on April 5 with the following elements and recommendations:

- The website dedicated to the recognition program on the Office of the President will continue to be utilized.
- An initial University-wide email will come from the President's Office. To underscore its importance and to personalize the launch, the committee requests that President Holloway record another short video announcing the award. The committee will communicate with Mike Meagher and Lara Beise from the President's Office to arrange to film this video.
- Following the President's announcement, follow-up communication by the Chancellor's Offices on all campuses is recommended.
- Targeted communication and follow-up by Ralph Gigliotti and Karen Shapiro will be directed towards Deans, the President's Administrative Council, Department Chairs, and Center and Institute Directors. These communications will include draft language to facilitate their dissemination.
- Award recipients will be featured, with pictures and a narrative, on the recognition program website.

APPENDIX

2024 Award Categories

LIFETIME CONTRIBUTION
<p>Award Name:</p> <p>Rutgers Lifetime Contribution Award- Faculty</p> <p>Rutgers Lifetime Contribution Award- Staff</p>
<p>Description: This award celebrates the extraordinary achievements of faculty and staff who have devoted over two decades of their professional journey to enriching the academic landscape and leaving an indelible mark on the University. This prestigious accolade acknowledges individuals whose tireless commitment has shaped the very essence of our institution and beyond. Their impact transcends generations, shaping the intellectual landscape and nurturing the next wave of visionary leaders.</p> <p>In addition to demonstrating expertise and leadership within their respective disciplines and/or professional domains, recipients of this esteemed award have also served as catalysts for transformative change both within and beyond the institution.</p> <p>In honoring their decades-long dedication and profound influence, the Presidential Lifetime Contribution Award pays homage to a legacy built upon unwavering dedication, boundless passion, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. As stewards of knowledge and champions of progress, these exemplary individuals embody the true spirit of enduring excellence, leaving an indelible imprint on the fabric of our institution and society as a whole.</p>
<p>Eligibility Criteria: Full time Faculty and Staff may be nominated for this award. Rutgers full-time faculty and staff who have retired within the last 12 months are eligible.</p> <p>Nominees must be a university faculty or staff member for a minimum of 20 years. Nominees must have made significant and sustained contributions to the university community throughout their tenure. These contributions may include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Teaching excellence, research achievements, administrative leadership, mentorship, and service to the university and wider community.▪ Demonstrable impact on the academic, professional, and personal lives of students, colleagues, and the broader university community <p>Nominees must have demonstrated exceptional dedication, commitment, and service to the University throughout their tenure. This may include:</p>

- Exemplary performance in their assigned duties, innovative contributions, leadership in their department or unit, and going above and beyond expectations to support the University's mission and goals.
- A significant and positive impact on the university community, whether through their interactions with students, colleagues, or other members of the Rutgers community, or through their contributions to the efficient functioning and success of the university as a whole.

Consistently demonstrated professionalism, respect, and collaboration in their interactions with others, fostering a positive and supportive work environment.

Required Documentation: Nominees must be endorsed by colleagues, supervisor and/or other members of the university who can attest to the nominee's longtime outstanding contributions and impact on the university community. These endorsements may include:

- A thoughtful and substantive summary outlining the extraordinary effort and accomplishment serving as evidence of the nominee's exceptional service and impact.
- Letter(s) of support documenting the individual's achievements (up to 3).
- Artifacts showing qualitative and/or quantitative impacts, such as commendations, letters of appreciation, or other forms of acknowledgment.

COMMITTED TO ACCESS AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Award Name: Rutgers Gateway Award (Service to Students)

Description: Recognizes staff, faculty, or a team of employees who go to exceptional lengths to remove barriers and provide access to those pursuing a Rutgers education. The recipient(s) recognize(s) the value of a diverse student body and the challenges students often face and seek(s) to make education more accessible and attainable.

This award is presented to those who initiated innovative solutions and/or provided extraordinary value or service that led to exceptional outcomes for our students and the Rutgers community.

Eligibility Criteria: Individuals and/or unit, departmental, interdepartmental or campus teams can be nominated for this award. Only current full-time faculty and staff are eligible. Nominations for faculty and/or staff teams that include student participants or part-time faculty or staff participants will also be accepted.

Nominated effort must be within the last 12-months and show lasting positive results in at least one of these areas:

- Student and/or parent satisfaction
- Enhancing the student experience
- Providing access
- Creating a supportive and inclusive environment
- Improving processes for students
- Augmenting safety
- Stewardship of University resources

Individuals or teams selected for this award may be determined ineligible for other Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program awards in the same calendar year. Nominations are encouraged in more than one category, if applicable.

Required Documentation:

- Artifacts showing qualitative and/or quantitative impact on a population of students.
- Letter(s) of support documenting the individual's or team's achievements.
- Nomination letter(s) from a student or group of students highlighting an exceptional impact is strongly encouraged as supporting documentation for this nomination.
- A thoughtful and substantive summary outlining the regular duties of the individual or team and the extraordinary effort and accomplishment serving as the basis for nomination.

COMMITTED TO ACCESS AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Award Name: Rutgers Gateway Award (Service to Employees)

Description: Recognizes staff, faculty, or a team of employees who go to exceptional lengths to remove barriers to build a more positive work environment, improve employee engagement and morale, and create operational efficiencies through forward-thinking process improvements. The recipient(s) recognize(s) the value of a diverse workforce and encourage(s) cross-departmental teamwork to address shared challenges and improve workplace culture. This recognition spotlights complex initiatives or practices that highlight how to enact change, innovate, and navigate institutional barriers to improve everyday work for employees and the Rutgers community. These may include collaborations, cross-unit improvements to systems or processes, clarifying roles and structures, or bringing about broad cultural change to showcase what Rutgers can accomplish when we collaborate to function at our best.

This award is presented to those who initiated innovative solutions and/or provided extraordinary value or service that led to exceptional outcomes for our employees and the Rutgers community.

Eligibility Criteria: Individuals and/or unit, departmental, interdepartmental or campus teams can be nominated for this award. Only current full-time faculty and staff are eligible. Nominations for faculty and/or staff teams that include student participants or part-time faculty or staff participants will also be accepted.

Individuals or teams selected for this award may be determined ineligible for other Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program awards in the same calendar year. Nominations are encouraged in more than one category, if applicable.

Nominated effort must be within the last 12-months and show lasting positive results in at least one of these areas:

- Prospective and/or current employee satisfaction
- Enhancing workplace culture or the patient experience
- Promoting healthy working relationships and a supportive work environment
- Improving processes that result in significantly more effective and efficient department or university operations
- Augmenting safety
- Stewardship of University resources

Required Documentation:

- Artifacts showing qualitative and/or quantitative impact on Rutgers employees and workplace culture.
- Letter(s) of support documenting the individual's or team's achievements.
- Nomination letter(s) from an employee or group of employees highlighting an exceptional impact is strongly encouraged as supporting documentation for this nomination.
- A thoughtful and substantive summary outlining the regular duties of the individual or team and the extraordinary effort and accomplishment serving as the basis for nomination.

BUILDING A BELOVED COMMUNITY

Award Name: Rutgers University Spirit Award

Description: This award celebrates differences and recognizes significant contributions to cultivating a beloved community—one in which all members work together and are heard—at Rutgers University. This individual or team exemplifies this commitment by promoting and advancing dialogue, mutual respect, and a spirit of belonging to create a healthy Rutgers ecosystem.

The recipient(s) of this award embody the principles of a beloved community and model an exceptional commitment to the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

Eligibility Criteria: Individuals and/or unit, departmental, interdepartmental or campus teams can be nominated for this award. Only current full-time faculty and staff are eligible. Nominations for faculty and/or staff teams that include student participants or part-time faculty or staff participants will also be accepted.

Individuals selected for this award may be determined ineligible for other Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program awards in the same calendar year. Nominations are encouraged in more than one category, if applicable.

Nominated effort must be within the last 12-months and show lasting positive results in at least one of these areas:

- Community building and collaboration
- Enhancing workplace culture in line with the spirit of this award
- Advancing Rutgers University's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion

Required Documentation:

- Artifacts showing qualitative and/or quantitative impact.
- Letter(s) of support documenting the individual's or team's achievements.
- A thoughtful and substantive summary outlining the regular duties of the individual or team and the extraordinary effort and accomplishment serving as the basis for nomination.

SERVING THE COMMON GOOD

Award Name: Rutgers Outstanding Service Award

Description: Rutgers is committed to serving the common good and to making a difference in the worlds of ideas, politics, social justice, innovation, invention, business, health, local need, national discourse, and of global priorities.

This award recognizes faculty, staff, and/or a team that demonstrate a relentless determination to make a lasting difference beyond the university's borders. The recipient(s) display(s) a demonstrated commitment to moving society towards a greater common good and encourage(s) constructive collaboration in service to our local and global communities.

Eligibility Criteria: Individuals and/or unit, departmental, interdepartmental or campus teams can be nominated for this award. Only current full-time faculty and staff are eligible. Nominations for faculty and/or staff teams that include student participants or part-time faculty or staff participants will also be accepted.

Individuals selected for this award may be determined ineligible for other Presidential Employee Excellence Recognition Program awards in the same calendar year. Nominations are encouraged in more than one category, if applicable.

Nominated effort must be within the last 12-months and show lasting positive results in at least one of these areas:

- Work outcome results in meaningful positive impact in communities in New Jersey and/or beyond
- Demonstrate constructive collaboration with internal and/or external communities
- Achievement of environmental, health, and/or well-being goals

Required Documentation:

- Artifacts showing qualitative and/or quantitative impacts.
 - Letter(s) of support documenting the individual's or team's achievements.
- A thoughtful and substantive summary outlining the regular duties of the individual or team and the extraordinary effort and accomplishment serving as the basis for nomination.