



Student Affairs Updates

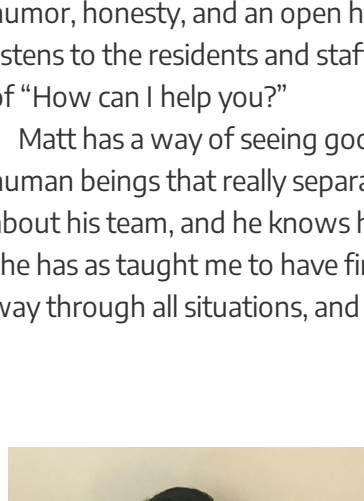
December 18, 2020

## 2020 A Most Unusual Year

Vice President McDonald hosted our Winter Celebration event virtually this year, that featured remarks from President Watkins and a slideshow of members of our amazing Student Affairs Team! You can view the event here:

[Winter Celebration Video](#)

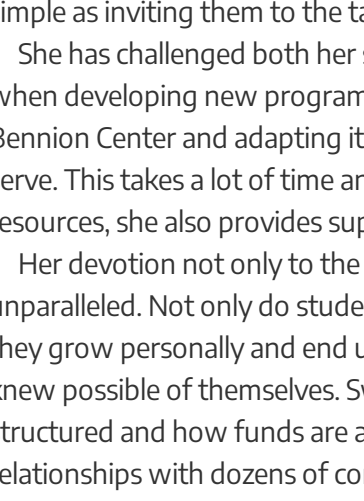
## Vice President's Award for Service Excellence



**Matt Beach**, Housing & Residential Education

Matt is described as the epitome of incredible service with a positive attitude. Several comments from nominators referred to his depth of knowledge, sense of humor, and his dedication to his work for the success of students. He is one of the most cheerful and friendly people in Housing and Residential Education. Even in the bleakest times (like flooding, boiler breaks, etc.) he has something uplifting or jovial to say that makes dealing with the situation a little better. With humor, honesty, and an open heart he navigates his day through various scenarios he listens to the residents and staff, and sometimes even parents with a constant mindset of "How can I help you?"

Matt has a way of seeing good in people and a way of interacting with his fellow human beings that really separates him from the pack. He cares about people, he cares about his team, and he knows how to not sweat the small stuff. One colleague noted, "he has as taught me to have finesse, to take a breath, that you can't just muscle your way through all situations, and that a hammer is not the correct tool for every job."

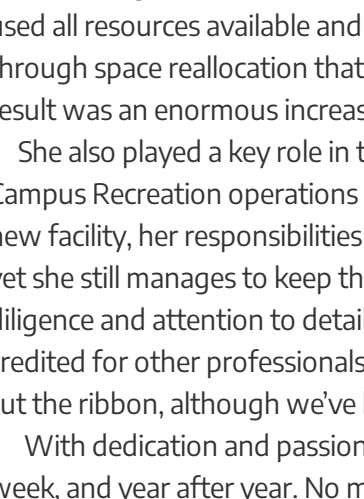


**Bobbijo Kanter**, Bennion Community Center

Bobbijo is described as always having students' best interests in mind and takes the time to talk to every individual while emphasizing the equal importance of their other roles as a student, worker, daughter/son, and etc. She adapts her schedule which includes early mornings or late evenings to best accommodate the student where they are. In terms of inclusion, she looks to see who is not present in decision making and strives to give them an opportunity to be at the table. It is not as simple as inviting them to the table, but a vehicle in which to get to the table.

She has challenged both her staff and student leaders to think outside the box when developing new programming and to take what is currently available at the Bennion Center and adapting it to meet the ever changing needs of the students we serve. This takes a lot of time and energy and she has not only provided guidance and resources, she also provides support in the process.

Her devotion not only to the community but to the student experience is unparalleled. Not only do students flourish in their responsibility working with her, they grow personally and end up achieving much more than they set out to achieve or knew possible of themselves. Switching from critically analyzing the way the center is structured and how funds are awarded to students to maintaining productive relationships with dozens of community partners in the Salt Lake City area to having conversations with individual students about their well-being, she consistently has gone above and beyond not only for the success of the center but for each and every student with whom she interacts.



**Cheri Jenkins**, Campus Recreation Services

The first words that come to mind to describe Cheri are "diligent" and "productive." Although the services she provides are related to facility management, her ultimate goal is delivering a wide range of opportunities for students to participate in recreational activities. Over and above her position duties, she is instrumental in providing those experiences; whether responding to student requests, ensuring the safety of participants, or researching the newest equipment innovations and trends, she is always searching for ways to assist students and keep them active and engaged.

During her tenure with Campus Recreation Services, Cheri was instrumental in transforming the former Field House. With determination and intent, she creatively used all resources available and changed the facility into one that was student-focused through space reallocation that provided novel services that students desired and the result was an enormous increase in student use.

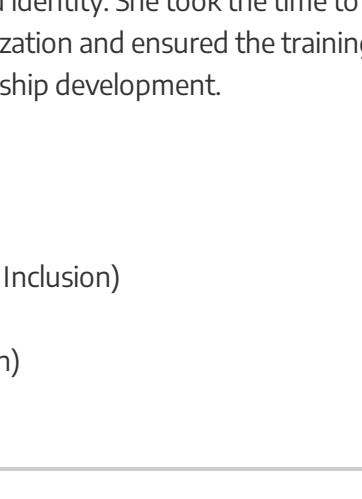
She also played a key role in the monumental and complicated task of moving all Campus Recreation operations into the Eccles Student Life Center (ESLC). With this new facility, her responsibilities have become infinitely more complex and challenging, yet she still manages to keep things running smoothly each day with her tenacity, diligence and attention to detail. It is her commitment to excellence that can be credited for other professionals walk in to the building and tell us it looks as if we just cut the ribbon, although we've been open for nearly six years.

With dedication and passion, she puts in long hours, day after day, week after week, and year after year. No matter what is asked of her, she will find a creative way to make the most of the challenges and opportunities presented.

## Pursuit of Inclusion Award

**Sig Ferguson** (*She/Her/Hers*) Resident Director, Housing & Residential Education

Sig Ferguson has served as a Resident Director in Housing & Residential Education at the University of Utah since June 2018. Sig goes beyond considering "cultural competencies" in her work. She actively works to change policy, advocate for underserved and marginalized students, and creates communities of staff, faculty, and students dedicated to growth and change related to EDI. Sig works within systems to create change; Sig is dedicated to higher education and student success, and has found thoughtful, passionate ways to be part of EDI growth. For example, after the murder of George Floyd, Sig curated a list of higher ed specific readings and resources and compiled the list as an auto-reply for their email. Sig also prioritizes student and staff anti-racist education and has found ways to provide this education over Zoom while still providing the day-to-day support to her HRE community. Sig created a thoughtful and customized training for our peer educators. Her training was bold, vulnerable and engaging and continues to be our students' favorite training of the entire year. Sig focused her training (delivered on Canvas modules and live via Zoom) on antiracism, allyship, and identity. She took the time to get to know our needs as an office and student organization and ensured the training was a perfect blend of self-growth and student leadership development.



SADC Pursuit of Inclusion Honorable Mentions:

- **Samantha Eldridge** (Student Development & Inclusion)
- **Gabriella Blanchard** (Inclusive Excellence)
- **Jimmy Thren** (Housing & Residential Education)

## Student Affairs Staff Partner Award

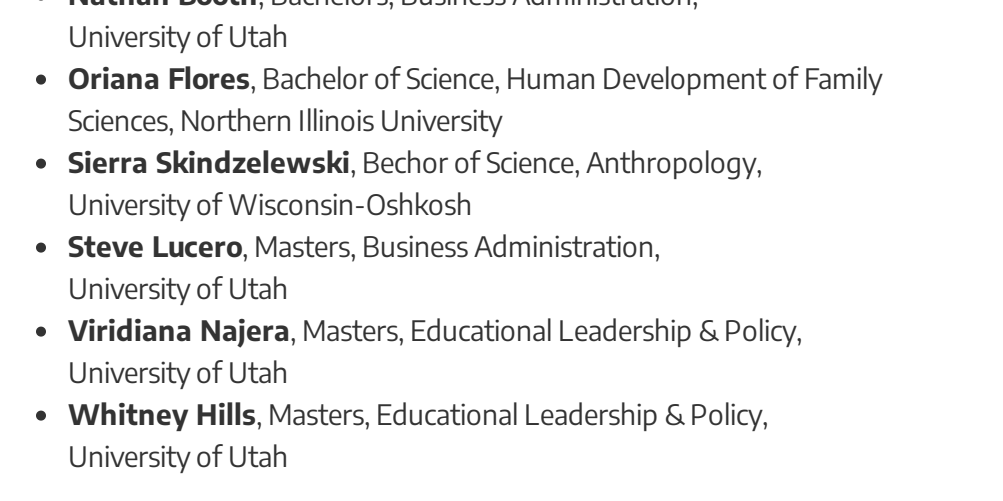


**Shawn Wood**, Marketing and Communications

Shawn Wood has gone above and beyond in his service to Student Affairs. He was instrumental in our All-Staff meetings by educating himself about Student Affairs and facilitating conversations to engage staff. He keeps the pulse on Student Affairs and supports our goal of improving communication by ensuring the work of our departments and programs are included in @theU. He has been an inspiration to us to consider the bigger picture with our communication efforts and has helped us with the tools we need.

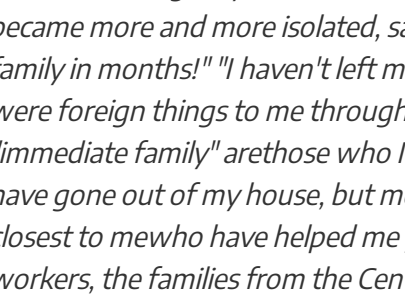
Shawn has also developed the core identity for the new University of Utah visual campaign, "I am U Thriving" which encourages us to embrace the unique and diverse experiences that makes our One U identity. He is a bridge builder! As a connected person on campus, he sees opportunities for campus partners to collaborate and facilitates a conversation, so we work truly as One University.

He admits to not knowing everything and asks for help. Asking for help is difficult because it is a moment of vulnerability, and that can be a great risk for anyone to take. In these moments we get to be more human and build trust. Thanks, Shawn, for trusting us.



## Congratulations to our graduates!

- **Greg Reinhardt**, Doctorate of Education, Educational Leadership and Policy, University of Utah
- **Jacob Myers**, Master of Science, Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, University of Utah
- **Katie Thompson**, Bachelor of Science, Nursing, Weber State University
- **Maraya Wiesenberger**, Masters, Library Science, Emporia State University
- **Marissa Questereit**, Masters, Education Leadership & Policy, Marissa of Uesteh
- **Maya Jolley**, Masters, Public Administration, University of Utah
- **Nathan Booth**, Bachelors, Business Administration, University of Utah
- **Oriana Flores**, Bachelor of Science, Human Development of Family Sciences, Northern Illinois University
- **Sierra Skindzelewski**, Bachelor of Science, Anthropology, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh
- **Steve Lucero**, Masters, Business Administration, University of Utah
- **Viridiana Najera**, Masters, Educational Leadership & Policy, University of Utah
- **Whitney Hills**, Masters, Educational Leadership & Policy, University of Utah



## Silver Linings

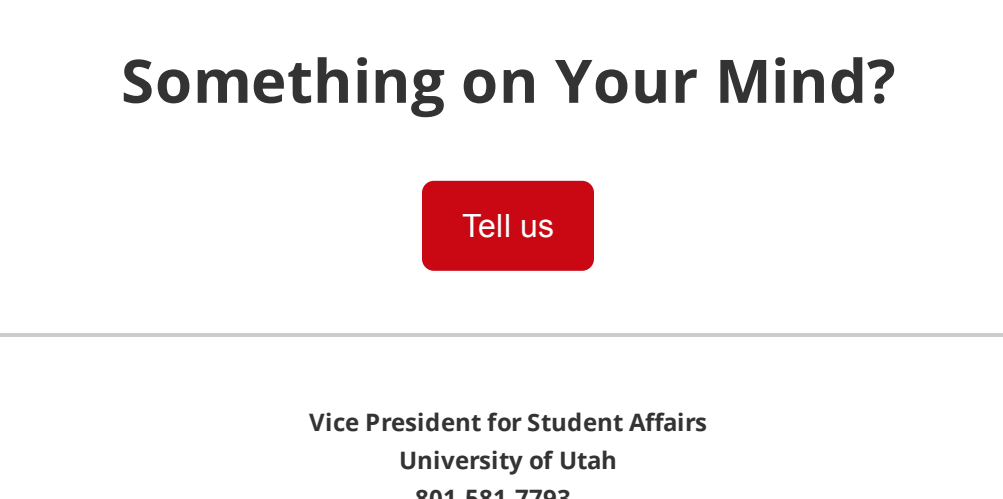
Last week we asked you to share any silver linings, professional and personal, that you have experienced during this challenging and unusual year.

Kara Hinson shared the following about Child Care and Family Resources:

*I work for Child Care & Family Resources on campus and we have unfortunately not been able to work remotely due to our expertise throughout COVID-19. This has been a blessing and a curse. I found myself in the later months of the pandemic feeling resentful that I couldn't stay home with my own child and had to continue to commute to campus unlike so many others around me, not only on campus but off, as well. I found myself thinking that the grass was greener on the other side, and would have preferred to work remotely while also grappling with a preschooler at home if it meant I got to spend that time with her too. Our job in child care through a pandemic has been strenuous to say the least. New obstacles seemed to arise every single day that people who had been in the field had never seen in 30+ years of experience. It has been discouraging to come to campus week after week through the pandemic to feel beaten down and abused by so many people around us. However, in the last month, I started to change my mindset. More and more, I watched as people around me became more and more isolated, saying things like "I have only seen my immediate family in months!" "I haven't left my house except to go to the grocery store!" These were foreign things to me through the pandemic. I have come to realize that my "immediate family" are those who I work with in my child care center on campus. I have gone out of my house, but mostly just to work. "My family" has been those closest to me who have helped me get through the pandemic, which are my co-workers, the families from the Center, and the children I get to see smile every day. My family has just been a bit different than others would say through all of this. I'm blessed because I get in-person interaction for work when many others don't. We do our best to keep everyone around us safe while also providing a desperate service for our health workers and others on campus who need care through the pandemic. I am so proud to be in child care during this critical time. I wouldn't be anything without my family that surrounds me!*

Please share what your pandemic positives have been. What have you learned? How have you changed your practice? What improvements have you made with the ever changing situation? What are some small wins that you've had either personally or professionally. We'd like to share your stories and will review the entries submitted below.

[Pandemic Positives](#)



**We'll see you next year!  
Here's to a great 2021!**

## Something on Your Mind?

[Tell us](#)

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