# Employee Awards & Recognition

September 10, 2025

# Spot Award

Spot awards recognize a special contribution for a specific project or task over a relatively short time.

# Eric Brown

For his role in ensuring the resolution of this spring's connectivity issues to the Zoom failover datacenter in San Jose.

# Shane Kemp, Andrew Cole, Jonathan Taylor, Cody Lilly, Gary Kinder, Jacob Kwak, Blake Brown, Aidan O'Neil, Cody Akers, Wayland Lilly, Charles Gilmore, Randy Steele, Colin Rainer

For the setup and support of unique telecommunications infrastructure and services pivotal to the Metallica concert at Lane Stadium. The team received accolades from VT Athletics, Live Nation, and Metallica's production team.

# Morgan Allen
# Sara Morris
# Brad Clark
# Doreya Jones
# Jeff Boling

For the collaboration with university groups to ensure that on-campus emergency location data stays current. The team's dedication to service has had a direct positive impact on every university member, ensuring that first responders can report to the correct locations for every 911 call.

Chris Bateson,
Georgiy Kolomiyets
Doug Edmonds
Steve Warrick
Travis Franklin
Lee Whitteker
Pranav Baitule

For their work on the critical infrastructure upgrade of migrating from a WatchGuard firewall to a Fortinet firewall.

# Gary Kendall

For his strong troubleshooting skills and determination to resolve issues, most recently addressing a problem with the latest upgrade to the IFEP system, which resulted in long hours of research into the issue.

# Jason Clemons
# Michael Schulte

A change to the vendor-provided Vault docker image that all ES deployments rely upon broke our ability to redeploy services to ITCP. They overhauled the basic-webapp helm chart at the heart of the deployments and updated each tenant repository within one business day. As a result of their efforts, very few services encountered user-facing disruptions.

SPOT AWARD
YOU'VE MADE A DIFFERENCE

Tim Belew, Shane Carpenter, Stephen Carpenter, Jason Heron, Mandy Herrington, Andrea Pitt, Michael Slate

For their role as a team laying the foundation for the Student Information System migration by developing and implementing reusable standards, automation, and streamlined workflows; as well as sharing knowledge and cultivating a culture of collaboration.

# Molly Arnold

Faced with the challenge of integrating student and employee data from separate on-premises and cloud-based databases, Molly independently identified a solution with minimal guidance. She leveraged the Boomi API to access on-premises employee data, enabling the successful conversion of the Banner to GobblerConnect data feed into a Data Connect Pipeline. Her innovative approach not only met project needs but also laid the groundwork for future integrations involving on-premises data in SaaS environments.

# Sonam Shah

For her role in integrating numerous departments into the EMS platform, a complex undertaking that required both strategic planning and hands-on troubleshooting.

# Bethany Elmore
# Wail Abbo

For their role in converting the feed from Banner Accounts Receivable to Banner Finance back to baseline accrual accounting with a hard deadline of July 1$^{st}$.

# Ben Sandbrook

For his dedication to implementing Open OnDemand, a web platform that lowers the access barriers to research computing, empowering non-traditional users.
And for making the extremely difficult seem easy.

# Catherine Winfrey

For her outstanding contributions working on Identity First, and always being constructive, positive, and ever striving for better ways to serve our team, our partners, and the VT Community

# Ting Ting Jiang

For her contribution to advancing information security awareness and compliance at the university. Within a remarkably short time frame, she designed and implemented a series of dynamic metric dashboards that have proven instrumental in supporting university leadership.

# Mary Stewart
# Michael Surratt

For their role as principal architects, implementers, and help-desk of the 2025 University-wide Isora Risk Assessment. The data collected by the team will be integral to helping us manage our cybersecurity risk.

# Rhiannon Kenny

For her role leading the Cyber Range customer support team through a major transition following the launch of a new user interface for our exercise area.

# Julez Slomin

For her role leading the automation of the billing process for the US Cyber Range.

# Victoria Ratcliffe
# Maureen Lawrence-Keuther
# Ellen Crowder
# Thomas Weeks
# Angela Smith
# Luke Mertes

For their work as the planning team for the Eighth Annual Virginia Cybersecurity Education Conference (VACyberEduCon), which drew 120 attendees and the largest vendor participation in conference history.

# Kristin Copenhaver
# Debbie McElroy
# Ashley Dunn
# Amber Pifer
# Ryan Naff

For their collaborative work to redesign and implement Banner orgs and funds to reflect the updated Division of IT organization.

# Len Comaratta
# Carol Hurley
# Andy Ratliff
# Jennifer Reed
# Seth Coburn

For their work to design and set up the ServiceNow Walk-Up Experience.

Randolph Minter
Lindsey Cutler, Anthony Vargas
Ryan Wesdock, Deya Gagot
Taylor Selvey, Gwen Moore
Veronica Youngman

For their rapid response, exceptional dedication under pressure, and user-focused problem-solving during the major service disruption on July 7, 2025.

Matt Poor
Lucas Carter
Doug Hylton
Kenny Berry
Greg Campbell
Barry Browning

For their efforts supporting the remediation of the most recent IT
audit on endpoint devices.

# Jason Zeckoski

His timely critical review of a support email that was to go out to the university community identified that crucial information was missing. By taking time to review the message thoroughly, anticipate issues, and provide feedback, he prevented problems for our users and 4Help by improving our communication.

# Enabling the Future Award

Enabling the Future awards are given to groups of up to 10 team members in recognition of a project, initiative, or service enhancement that directly enables the achievement of Virginia Tech's mission.

Zeynep Ondin
Josh Causin
David Ryan
Joyce Landreth

For their work to create and implement a comprehensive customer feedback process with ServiceNow.

# Neil Bradish
# Alex Currier
# Erik Finlayson
# Andrea Gobourne
# Idiris Hagi

For their work to decommission the Northern Virginia Center in Falls Church and to open the Academic Building One in Alexandria.

# Danny Wright
# Huadu Xiao
# Imogen Giles

For their work to expand the functionality of VT alerts for Academic Building One in Alexandria.

Chris McNabb,
Clara Stone-Henry
Shane L'Amoreaux
Anna Barch, Arsalan Qureshi
Julian Kim, Shoaib Hassan
Venkata Akula

For their work to implement Snowflake as the new data lake solution.

# Chris Shively, Justin Hendrix, Chris Mullins, Hunter Lane, Matt Hart, Angela Correa, Kit Hays Paige Ghra, Steve Cox

In response to Microsoft's shift to a consumption-based storage model, the team transitioned university users to the new university-wide storage service model. Their innovative, user-centered approach—marked by technical expertise, proactive communication, and collaborative problem-solving—ensured a smooth transition and set a foundation for future cloud integrations. This reflects their professionalism, adaptability, and commitment to service.

# Living Core Values Award

Living Core Values awards are given to individuals in recognition of modeling the behaviors associated with Trust, Inclusion, Care, Service, and Striving for Excellence over an extended period.

# Paige Ghra

Paige embodies care, service, and excellence. Her empathy, positivity, and "woo" strength make her a motivating presence and connector of people. She improves user experiences by monitoring support requests and creating clear, accessible resources. Her dedication to collaboration shines through her work across teams, where she bridges communication and fosters open dialogue. Whether leading or supporting, Paige consistently goes the extra mile to uplift others and strengthen the Division. We appreciate her enthusiasm, professionalism, and commitment to helping others thrive.

# Chris Shively

Chris exemplifies the core values, especially CARE. Dedicated, diplomatic, and unflappable, he leads his team through complex, often challenging implementations with grace. He ensures each team member has what they need, respects their expertise, and motivates them to deliver excellent outcomes. He listens to feedback and responds thoughtfully, always aiming for improvement. He balances accountability with kindness, and brings clarity, service, and generosity to everything he does. We appreciate his leadership and integrity.

# Lisa Roberts

Lisa consistently ensures all voices are heard, listening with intention and speaking with clarity and purpose. Thoughtful and patient, she seeks understanding before taking action and makes good decisions. Even in challenging moments, she responds with kindness and grace. We appreciate her attentive and inclusive approach.

# Matt Brown

Matt is a quiet force—thoughtful, respectful, and deeply effective. With a calm, unassuming presence, he leads by example, treating others with kindness and consideration. He listens, invites diverse perspectives, and remains open to changing his mind. Even when offering correction, his tone fosters collaboration. He brings both breadth and depth to his technical work, solving complex problems with clarity and care. We appreciate his integrity, humility, and impact.

# Achievement Award

Achievement awards recognize sustained, exceptional performance resulting in significant contributions either within the employee's area of responsibility or going beyond their normal performance expectation.

# Miles Gentry

Jitendra Shrestha

Stephen Carpenter

# Vicki Hall

# Degrees & Certifications

# Justin Strickland

Master's degree in Information Technology
Virginia Tech, December 2024.

# Deya Gagot

Cyber Security Governance, Risk and Compliance Certification

Strengthens risk awareness, compliance knowledge, and cross-team collaboration. Enhances communication, incident response, and understanding of security protocols. Bridges technical support and organizational compliance, helping prevent legal, financial, and reputational risks.

# Ludwig Gantner

Cybersecurity Management Graduate Certificate, December 2024

Masters of Information Technology Degree, Virginia Tech, May 2025

Project Management Professional (PMP) certification
Project Management Institute (PMI), July 2025

# Muhammad Shoaib

Red Hat Certified Systems Administrator (RHCSA)
January 2025

# Feruza Rustamova

Red Hat Certified Systems Administrator
April 2025

# Valli Nagraj Devendra

Boomi Associate Administrator Certification
May 2025

This certification verifies foundational knowledge of managing and administering the Boomi AtomSphere platform. This certification ensures an understanding of the platform's administrative functions, enhancing the ability to build and maintain more reliable and scalable integration solutions.

# Ryan Wesdock

CompTIA Network+
CompTIA A+ Core 2
CCST Cybersecurity (100-160)
CCST Networking (100-150)

New River Community College, May 2025

# Kenny Berry III

Masters of Engineering in Computer Engineering, with a focus on Quantum
Computing and Machine Learning

Virginia Tech, May 2025

# Mathew Mathai

Globally recognized within the agile and lean communities, these certifications support strategic agility, stronger team performance, and more effective decision-making.

The Kanban Maturity Model (KMM), February 2025 – validates expertise in assessing team maturity and guiding improvement in using the Kanban Method.

Kanban Coaching Professional (KCP), March 2025 – equips leaders to drive evolutionary change and improve organizational agility and performance.

Upstream Kanban, July 2025 - the practice of visualizing, refining, and managing work before commitment to include the deliberate selection of high-value options. This approach helps teams manage uncertainty, reduce overburdening, and focus on prioritizing high-value work.

# Dave Ryan

Master of Arts in Data Analysis and Applied Statistics
Virginia Tech, August 2025

Focuses on statistics, design of experiments, collaboration and
professional communication.

# Saujanya Mani

Master of Engineering, Computer Science
Virginia Tech, May 2025

# Andrea Kennedy

Ph.D., Higher Education Leadership for Changing Populations
Notre Dame of Maryland University, December 2024

Congratulations to our
2025
award recipients and
achievers!