



Eastern Kentucky University

Student Employee Awards
2021-2022

EKU Student of the Year



Addison Riel

Greenhouse Assistant, Biological Sciences

Nominator: Robert Pace

"Addison was a quick study in learning the sophisticated electronics utilized by the facility and came into the position with personal experience. Addison has been instrumental in detecting equipment failure which has saved thousands of dollars' worth of plants from premature death.

She is an invaluable resource for my department, a team player, and a natural leader. I know any task that I set for her is going to be performed swiftly, thoroughly, and with finesse. She has earned my deepest respect and serves my department through her incredible work ethic and diligence."

Excellence in Leadership



Zachery Combest

Editor-in-Chief, Easter Progress

Nominator: Tricia Fulks Kelley

“Zach's impact is profound. As Zach's adviser, I cannot be more proud of the person and editor he is. He is a leader and a role model in the Progress newsroom, encouraging others, holding high standards and doing quality work. He has been a leader since the time he set foot on campus and has certainly solidified that standing as he's taken over bigger roles at the Progress. Leadership comes naturally for him. No challenge is too much in his eyes. And he does it all with a positive, can-do attitude.”

Rockstar Rookie



Bianca Aparicio

Student Graphic Designer, CIEGE

Nominator: Ron Jackson

"All active groups in the CIEGE have been impressed with her work and with her professionalism. She has developed icons and logos that will likely remain in place for 10 years or so in the future. Bianca's work has truly helped our department share events and educational programs with the ECU Community. Bianca has been a ROCKSTAR with how she has handled the array and abundance of information. She is an impressive young lady, and we are better because of her involvement with our department."

Big Idea

Jade Sipes

Front Desk/Marketing Student Worker, Student Life & First Year Experience

Nominator: Dylan Bogard

"Jade is a real "go getter" in our office. She comes in everyday and picks up any task that is handed to her, while also providing a fun and positive attitude. Since joining our office just over a year ago, she has made a significant impact on our marketing and promotion efforts. She has improved our marketing with live stories and posts at events, created the designs for 85% of the University-wide E3 giveaways, and created innovative posters for our events. She is always coming up with new and creative ideas to improve our office and our marketing."

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Chase Carson

Tutor/Mentor, Corbin Regional Campus

Nominators: James Wilson, Darlene Jones and Michele Anderson

“Chase goes above and beyond in anything that he does. He is an excellent speaker and always represents EKU well by being prepared and knowledgeable. He is often recruited for these assignments because of his positive outlook and mannerly treatment of others.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Amber Sizemore

Student Employee, Student Life & First-Year Experience

Nominator: Dylan Bogard

“Amber is always eager to help out in her role. She tries to make sure that everyone has a good time at events, and that everyone coming into the office feels comfortable. Amber has definitely made her mark. She encourages students to get involved on campus, come to our events, and inspires Colonel Spirit.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Lynsey Patrick

HR Student Admin Assistant, Human Resources

Nominator: Reid Connelly

"I've been working in the HR department for almost 10 years and Lynsey is easily one of the top student workers who have worked with our team. When it comes to work, Lynsey is always willing to help and to learn something new. Lynsey is dedicated and dependable and very enjoyable to work with."

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Chloe Lundy

Student Worker, Student Accounting Services

Nominator: Kyle Naugle

“Chloe brings a charisma to the department and wants to be taken on arduous tasks. She isn't afraid to ask for help but understands the importance of daily assignments. She is willing to learn new concepts and never fails to be punctual on arrival and completed tasks.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Ellen Harrington

Student Worker, Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy

Nominator: Whitney Cook

“Ellen is a wonderful leader and takes initiative to get her work done. She always completes her work in a timely manner, and she always does so with a smile on her face (behind her mask, of course!) Ellen is phenomenal. She is a gem to have in our department and we are so thankful for her.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Brady Parlato

Graduate Assistant, Biological Sciences

Nominator: Cy Mott

“Brady has shown graduate and undergraduates' student what achievements are possible with focus, determination, and a passion for one's field. He effectively leads efforts to maintain our captive herpetology (reptiles and amphibians) collection, organizing weekly meetings with graduate and undergraduate employees and volunteers and overseeing their subsequent efforts to provide exceptional care for our captive animals and use these animal in outreach activities.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Taylor Hogsed

Student Worker, Student Financial Assistance

Nominator: Candace Cummins

“Taylor has been with our department for quite a while and provides a lot of expertise for the other student workers. She is consistent, reliable and up to any challenge. She's a model of being cool, calm and collected while always greeting our students and parents in a friendly way.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Jenna Ross

Graduate Assistant, Clinical Therapeutic Programs

Nominator: Robyn Wahl

"Jenna was specifically asked to support the marketing needs for our program. She has a background in graphic design and a "student perspective" for social-media use. Thanks to Jenna, our Instagram following has grown exponentially, which we believe has directly impacted our full recruiting /admissions numbers in an era when numbers are down across the country."

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Lexi Edwards-Bobart

Graduate Assistant, Clinical Therapeutic Programs

Nominator: Robyn Wahl

“Lexi displays professionalism and models this behavior to undergraduate students. There have been times when she has asked me how to respond in certain situations to convey the “right thing” to undergrads. I think this shows that she cares about the students’ futures and wants them to represent EKU well.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Kaylee Wilson

Graduate Assistant-Extended Day Lead, Applied Human Sciences

Nominator: Lara Armstrong

“Kaylee has always been one who has anticipated what needs to be done and does it. When she gets to work, she always asks what needs to be done or if something has already been done and does it if it hasn't been. When our director was looking for someone to take over the Extended Day programming, Kaylee stepped up and took it over with no hesitation.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Rina Tanaka

Band and Concert Recording Graduate Assistant, Music

Nominator: Bernardo Scarambone and Kelly Gallardo

“This year we had a position become vacant, and Rina stepped up to help with the department by helping with student worker scheduling; ensuring that all events (not just bands) had student worker coverage. She is an excellent representative of EKU. I'm proud to have this opportunity to work with her.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Sonia Kwiecinski

Library Student Employee-Keyholder, Libraries

Nominator: Misty Bailey

“Sonia is an amazing student employee. She has excellent customer service and leadership skills. She consistently excels in everything that she is tasked with. She has been a crucial part of the music library move. Sonia is so positive and helpful with other student employees. She never needs to be prodded or asked to take on new responsibilities.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Faith Roberts

Student Office Associate, Academic & Career Services

Nominator: Jessi Craft

“Faith is an amazing worker. I call myself her supervisor, but I rarely must tell her what she needs to do. She comes in everyday and immediately seeks out what needs to be done and accomplishes it in a timely manner. She is certainly our most reliable student worker and we'll be very sad to see her go, but we're all rooting for her and we're excited to see what life will bring her beyond ECU.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Victoria (Tori) Long

Graduate Assistant, University Counsel

Nominator: Whitney Crowe

“Tori has repeatedly demonstrated to me her dependability and strong work ethic as well as her ability to meet every challenge with maturity beyond her years and a smile on her face! She shows tremendous initiative and leadership at the Office in taking on additional responsibilities, including high priority and time sensitive assignments, and completing such in a highly efficient and effective manner.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Rhiannon Spradlin

Graduate Assistant, Professional Education Services-College of Education and Applied Human Services

Nominator: Anna Stamper

“Rhiannon is one of the most positive people I know and is always in great spirits which is great for moral. She is such an asset to our office, and we are all going to miss her dearly when she moves on, even though we are extremely proud of her and her accomplishments. We have had a lot of amazing student workers and GAs in our office, but Rhiannon is truly the cream of the crop.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Brianna (Kae) Peterson

Student Employee, Student Life & First-Year Experience

Nominator: Dylan Bogard

“Kae is truly deserving of this award as she is an example of a hard worker. Kae constantly steps up to help new students in the office, make people feel welcome in the Colonel's Cupboard, and make our events fun and successful. Since starting in the office as a first-year student, and now preparing to graduate, she has helped us to improve processes and events, while also growing individually as well.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Geffen Stanhope

Parking Service Student Worker, ECU Parking and Transportation

Nominator: Joshua Cheeks

“Geffen is always on time for his shift and has the willingness to take on any task given to him daily. He works the 2nd shift which is after office hours. This a major factor as the 2nd shift student workers must tackle back-office responsibilities such as registering students that have been booted or towed. Geffen has truly stood out and approaches all situations with a fair/calm demeanor. We're fortunate for his contributions.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Danika Riddle

Lead Guru-Social Media, Student Success Center

Nominator: Dr. Ashley Sweat

“The first (and only) Guru to be hired their first semester at EKU, Danika immediately took responsibility for the Student Success Center’s social media accounts. She helped implement the Canva account, and closely worked with Brand Management (before COVID) to ensure that the SSC was making appropriate flyers and social media posts. The world is a better place with her in it.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Lauren Chugg

ECE-TRIS Training Associate, Training Resource Center

Nominator: Angela Fultz

“Lauren is our 'front line' and to achieve her level of productivity with accuracy and such efficiency, you must take initiative and employ various time management techniques. Lauren has been with us for four years and she has been an asset to our team. She is an intelligent young woman who will be representing EKU well as she pursues her law degree. She will be missed!”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Jared Christian

Education Abroad Student Worker, Education Abroad

Nominator: Katie Samuel

“Jared takes the initiative to make sure work gets done before it is needed. He is conscientious about making sure everything is done accurately. Jared takes every opportunity to talk to students about study abroad both in the office and on his own time. He takes his role as a study abroad ambassador to heart and shares his passion for study abroad with everyone he meets.”

EKU Student of the Year Nominee

Heather Nicole Lyon

Admissions Customer Service Specialist, Admissions

Nominator: Phyllis Fuchs

“Nicole takes initiative by working to problem solve admissions issues and other issues that come through the Admissions front desk - walk-in, phone and email. Her positive attitude and kindness have made our office a place where student workers enjoy working and feel accepted and valued.”

Excellence in Leadership Nominee

Brandon Tyler Beardsley

Virtual Reality Flight Simulator Lab, Aviation

Nominator: James Glass

“Tyler Beardsley took great initiative during the standup of the Virtual Reality Flight Simulator Lab. His experience, attention to detail, and initiative were integral to the successful training experience of over 850 ECU students, High Schools and were instrumental in a summer High School Teachers Conference.”

Excellence in Leadership Nominee

Heidi Flores

HR Student Record Keeper, Human Resources

Nominator: Lucy Steele

“Heidi has gone above and beyond to assist new student employees by training them on office duties and shadowing them. She is gentle when reminding others of proper procedures and is quick to help others correct mistakes when they are noticed. Heidi is friendly with co-workers but also helps to keep the group focused on their assigned task.”

Excellence in Leadership Nominee

Connor Hadley

Music Assistant, Music

Nominator: Kelly Gallardo

“Connor is proactive in his work; he has contributed to both the office work and music events. In the office Connor has worked directly with another student training him and giving him assignments. They work out the best way to accomplish the tasks together. He has been a great mentor to other SOM student workers.”

Excellence in Leadership Nominee

Whitney Reed

Library Student-Keyholder, Libraries

Nominator: Misty Bailey

“Whitney is our student key holder. She helps and steps in, when necessary, when a staff member or there is a need for more coverage. She is a crucial part of our weekends and evening shifts. She helps our staff open and close the building when they are not available to be there.”

Excellence in Leadership Nominee

Rina Tanaka

Band and Concert Recording Graduate Assistant, Music

Nominator: Bernardo Scarambone and Kelly Gallardo

“Rina has been one of the best student workers we ever had. She goes way beyond her duties, making sure everything is properly done regarding essential aspects of our department: recordings, recitals, editing videos, promo materials etc. Her leadership in ECU has inspired many students, including colleagues in the graduate class.”

Excellence in Leadership Nominee

Kor'ee Jackson

Graduate Assistant, Student Success Center

Nominator: Dr. Ashley Sweat

“Kor'ee, or “King Mentor” as I like to call him, is a fantastic student mentor to the students he mentors and his peers here in the Student Success Center. He helps train Gurus on how to talk to the students they mentor and creates scenarios to prepare them for unexpected situations.”

Excellence in Leadership Nominee

Rachel Hampton

Graduate Assistant- Collaborate Workshop Coordinator, Noel Studio (GA line through Dept. of English)

Nominator: Trenia Napier

“Without Rachel’s initiative and leadership, the Noel Studio Collaborate Workshop program would still be relying solely on my time and energy. I am certain that we would not have maintained pre-pandemic levels of service in terms of both quantity and, more importantly, quality. Rachel is the epitome of grace under fire.”

Excellence in Leadership Nominee

Zachary Gay

Operations Lead, Campus Recreation

Nominator: Ryan Fisher

“Zachary is the ideal Operations Lead and student employee of Campus Recreation. His work ethic, dedication, commitment and initiative is what sets him apart from other student staff. Zachary is very much a self-starter, who enjoys taking the initiative of seeking out the next opportunity or task. On shift, he completes various tasks independently, without being asked.”

Big Idea Nominee

James (Robbie) Riley

Student Office Associate, Educational Talent Search Program

Nominator: Laura Castillo

“Robbie always seeks clarification on assignments before beginning so he avoids confusion or delay. He is reliable and flexible. Respectful. Our whole staff appreciates having someone so dependable to assist them with extra work!”

Big Idea Nominee

Cameron White

Library Student Employee, Libraries

Nominator: Misty Bailey

“Cameron has worked in the library since the fall of 2019. In that time, he has been such a positive influence on the team. He has been beneficial in helping create new processes in the library as well as helping create a graduation tradition for future library student employees. Cameron has been a wonderful student worker and will be hard to replace after he graduates this spring.”

Big Idea Nominee

Kelsie Arisman

Lead Guru- Satellite Locations, Student Success Center

Nominator: Dr. Ashley Sweat

“What I love most about Kelsie is that she listens to students and creates a plan to help them be successful and train her fellow Gurus. She works on special projects, presents workshops, keeps inventory of SSC promotional items and Guru clothing, and represents the Student Success Center at events. Her presence has been vital to the success of the Student Success Center.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Matthew Thomas

Library Student Employee, Access Services

Nominator: Misty Bailey

“Matthew is a bright part of the day; he is peppy and all smiles. He always has a quick wit and loves to make people laugh. He is very attentive with patrons and fellow teammates. I believe that he will excel in all he does. He is an amazing student worker.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Shelby Hyland

eCampus Student Worker, Office of eCampus Learning

Nominator: Neil Lindon and Lakin Wooldridge

“Shelby has only been with us since the beginning of the year, but her impact on the department has already been made very apparent to everyone around her. She goes out of her way to provide excellent support to everyone in the Enrollment Management unit of eCampus. We are excited to have her on our team and look forward to working with her and seeing her professional development growth during her time here.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Dakota Morris

Aviation Student Worker, Aviation

Nominator: James Glass

“Dakota Morris has taken great initiative to ensure that the very critical job of VA Student Tracking has been accomplished in a timely and efficient manner. His attention to detail and great work ethic has been noteworthy in ensuring very time-sensitive reports have been submitted.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Laykin Tolliver

Student Worker, Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy

Nominator: Whitney Cook

“Laykin is phenomenal. She is always eager to help and willing to do what is asked of her. She works very hard and always completes her tasks in a timely manner. We are so thankful to have her working in our department.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Makayla Fightmaster

Library Student Employee, Libraries- Access Services

Nominator: Misty Bailey

“Makayla has really taken to working in the library she has gone above and beyond to help working in the Libraries education Learning Resource Center. She has helped make several displays and helped with many projects in the library.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Janie Sayers

Library Student Employee, Libraries

Nominator: Misty Bailey

“Janie has been a great addition to the library. She is very adaptable and ready to tackle any assignment that is given to her. She has been so trustworthy that she has been able to work in every library location and trusted to work without supervision.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Caroline Holsclaw

Library Student Employee, Libraries

Nominator: Misty Bailey

“Caroline has been a wonderful addition to our team. She has excellent customer service and always goes above and beyond in all her job duties. She needs no encouragement when it comes to taking on new responsibilities and has excelled at everything that she has been challenged with.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Paul Acosta

Music Office Assistant, Music

Nominator: Kelly Gallardo

“Paul is quick about the work and has a positive attitude that helps everyone get through their day. He is very adaptable and ready to tackle any assignment that is given to him.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Randi Mills

Library Student Employee, Libraries

Nominator: Misty Bailey

“Randi has been a wonderful addition to our team. She has excellent customer service and always goes above and beyond in all of her job duties. She needs no encouragement when it comes to taking on new responsibilities and has excelled at everything that she has been challenged with.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Peter Myre

Graduate Assistant, Exercise & Sport Science Dept

Nominator: Jim Larkin

“Peter just joined our department in January, and he performs like a veteran. Peter takes much initiative at work. I never have to tell Peter what to do. He does tasks before having to be asked. He sees things that need to be done and takes care of it effectively.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Luz Valdespino Soto

Student Worker, Social Work

Nominator: Stephanie Saulnier

“Luz shows up ready to tackle any job we have. She actively seeks work and is willing to ask questions and learn what we need. One example of this is to develop a social media plan for Social Work Month. She has also developed extensive databases for our field programs.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Vic Montgomery

Student Employee, ECU Special Collections and Archives

Nominator: Caitlyn Rahschulte

“Vic really hit the ground running when she came to SCA! Vic has been bright, attentive, and extremely detail oriented. She has been eager to learn and seemed to have an immediate understanding of basic archival work even though this is her first time in an archive. When we interviewed Vic for the position, we came away with huge smiles on our faces. Now that she's here, we know without a doubt that we made the right choice in hiring her!”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Alexandra Canada

Student Worker, School of Nursing

Nominator: Brooke Bentley

“Alex is a quick learner who intuitively understands what is needed to tackle the unique work in the nursing office, from confidential, tedious filing to hands-on projects for ceremonies. Alex takes the initiative without oversight. She seems to take pride in her work. Best of all, Alex is very professional, kind and has a winning personality. She helps make the office a pleasant environment for students, faculty and staff.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Matthew (Matt) Saylor

Resident Advisor (RA), Housing & Residence Life

Nominator: Kyle Dunham

“Matt has taken initiative in his work as an RA by demonstrating his commitment to the job, his determination, and passion. Matt has excelled at asking any question he has to his returning peers and his supervisors when figuring out what he needs to do during situations, follow ups, or reports.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Jordyn Nickens

Library Student Employee, Libraries

Nominator: Misty Bailey

“Jordyn has shown such outstanding performance as a library student employee. He has taken on every challenge that has been presented and excelled. I have been able to trust and leave Jordyn to help with important job duties like closing and securing the building as we close the library. ”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Kassandra Ramirez

Library Student Employee, Access Services-Circulation Desk

Nominator: Misty Bailey

“Kassandra has been a wonderful addition to our library team. She has excellent customer service skills and has no issues tackling the hard questions. She needs no encouragement when it comes to taking on new responsibilities and has excelled at everything that she has been challenged with. ”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Sarah Cooper

Library Student Employee, Libraries

Nominator: Misty Bailey

“Sarah has been a wonderful addition to our team. She has excellent customer service and always goes above and beyond in all of her job duties. She needs no encouragement when it comes to taking on new responsibilities and has excelled at everything that she has been challenged with.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Meghan Allison

Student Employee, ECU Special Collections and Archives

Nominator: Caitlyn Rahschulte

“Meghan really hit the ground running when she started working with us! What stood out to us in Meghan's initial interview with SCA was that she had experience in transcribing. From the moment her shift starts to the end of her shift, she's glued to her work. She's not only told us that she greatly enjoys her project, but she's shown us through her fantastic work ethic as well.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Staci Tate

Peer Career Mentor, Academic & Career Services

Nominator: Jessi Craft

“Staci's first day working with our office was the day of the Fall job fair. Staci jumped right in to help where she could and took everything in stride. Since then, she's picked up a multitude of appointments and conducts herself in a very professional manner with every student, regardless of their age or class status. Staci is not afraid to take on any task we throw at her.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Matthew Saylor

Resident Advisor, Housing & Residence Life

Nominator: Kayla Barber

“Matthew is always willing to volunteer and will go above and beyond in assisting with the department. Matt is someone that likes to take action and make changes such as rearranging furniture to better suite the environment for our residents. Matt always turns everything in way above everyone else and incredibly administratively strong that most do not realize he is a new RA.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Tiffany Porron

HR Student Record Keeper, Human Resources

Nominator: Krista Caudill

“Tiffany is always willing to assist the office staff with any task. She has assisted with multiple projects and takes pride in her work. She is very self-sufficient and needs very little instruction to stay on task. Tiffany always brings a smile to work. She is very personable and gets along great with our department.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Rosalie Richburg

*Math & Statistics Course-Embedded Consultant and Tutor,
Mathematics & Statistics*

Nominator: Kristin Whaley

“Rose is never afraid to ask questions about the material, or moreover to check her understanding; but has always taken the initiative to meticulously learn material unfamiliar to herself and most others in this role. Beyond the requirement of a CEC, Rose has set an outstanding precedent as a mentor and tutor among her peers.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Emma Grammer

Office Associate, Chemistry

Nominator: Tanea Reed

“Emma is a go-getter. If she sees something that needs to be done, she just does it without having to be asked. She completes her tasks efficiently and is always willing to help others in any way possibly.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Daniela Oronia- Cruz

Student Support Staff Member, Division of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Student Life

Nominator: Heather Brent

“Daniela has managed the front office with professionalism, and she has excelled at greeting individuals. She has assisted me personally in organizational projects and social media outlets for the office and the Powell Building.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Jediah Holman

Diversity Student Office Support Staff, College of Justice & Safety

Nominator: Heather Brent

“Jediah has been a great asset to our department. There isn't a day that Jediah has come in that she hasn't asked, “Is there anything you need me to do today?”. She knows what is expected daily. Her initiative to keep going is impressive.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

Cassidy Cain

Guru, Student Success Center

Nominator: Dr. Ashley Sweat

“Cassidy started in August 2021, and quickly became one of the Gurus that I can count on the most! She truly considers the whole person. She always arrives to work on time, asks daily if there’s anything I need help with, and is the first to volunteer to work with students and professors.”

Rockstar Rookie Nominee

John Mader

HR Student Worker, Human Resources

Nominator: Caleb Adams

“John is always willing to assist the office staff with any task. He is friendly and welcoming, not only to his co-workers, but to any patrons that visit the office. He is very self-sufficient and needs very little instruction to stay on task. We love having him as a part of our team!”