

“I would like to nominate Jonathan O'Hara, academic and financial aid advisor, for the DCTC 2020 Staff of the Year Award as Jonathan consistently goes above and beyond to serve students and colleagues. Jonathan serves students and colleagues with compassion, listening and caring ears, and implements the appreciative advising philosophy in his daily interactions with students, faculty, department colleagues, and leaders.

“Students seek Jonathan out due to his deep knowledge, caring spirit, and willingness to problem solve with the students to obtain a workable solution. Students respect Jonathan as do faculty, deans, and colleagues. Jonathan has developed strong relationships with faculty in an effort to better serve students.

“He attends department meetings, Academic Standards Council, program advisory board meetings, and other relevant to meetings to understand program curriculum and strengthen relationships with faculty and other key stakeholders. Jonathan works with faculty to help improve programs. For example, he worked with the healthcare faculty to develop a check sheet for students so they clearly understand program expectations such as background study requirements.

“Jonathan has worked tirelessly with the veterinary technician faculty to help them develop deeper student support strategies due to the intensity of the program. For example, he has started a study group for the students along with the nursing students. Additionally, Jonathan goes to the Lakeville site every other week to serve the veterinary technician students and support the faculty.

“Along with the exceptional service Jonathan provides to students and colleagues, he has co-lead new initiatives in the Student Affairs Division. For example, he was instrumental in the implementation of the appreciative advising model and the Bounce Back program. Not only was the appreciative advising model implemented to all in the Division but the Division had an Appreciation Wall for staff and now has a Dream Wall for students to write their dreams. Jonathan regularly has new ideas to improve student service. The ideas are thoughtful, thorough, and generally successful upon launch and execution.

“Jonathan was an active voice as the Division revamped the Student Orientation and Registration model. He took part in researching best practice models not only for Student Orientation and Registration but also for the Advising Best Practices report due to the System Office. He also helped develop the online orientation program. Jonathan likes to be involved in initiatives. He regularly finds time to actively participate after volunteering for various initiatives.

“Jonathan has been involved in the development of the college's strategic plan, the strategic enrollment management plan, and the polytechnic initiative. In fact, Jonathan has taken leadership of the Transportation Management program working collaboratively and professionally with academic leadership at DCTC and Metropolitan State University. Most recently Jonathan has been an active member of the Starfish implementation team. The

commitment has been at least a year long commitment. Jonathan regularly gives voice for process improvement and does so with respect and professionalism. The voice is shared in the spirit of exceptional service to students so they are able to persist and graduate.

“Jonathan also serves the college by presenting at various conferences. For example, Jonathan presented at the Adult Learner Institute in 2018 and the Higher Learning Commission's Annual Conference last spring on the Student Orientation and Registration model. Jonathan is in the process of submitting a proposal to present at the annual Financial Aid conference and the Adult Learner Institute this spring.

“Jonathan is committed and dedicated to DCTC as exemplified by his unwavering caring actions and team spirit As Jonathan once shared with me, "My heart is at DCTC." Please accept this nomination for DCTC Staff of the Year. Jonathan is most deserving as he has been instrumental in process improvements, providing extraordinary student service, role modeling top notch service to colleagues, and selflessly sharing his many gifts and talents. Jonathan is truly a team player. The students and DCTC personnel benefit from Jonathan's spirit. He is an example of courage, professionalism, and respectful behavior in the workplace.”