

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Outstanding Women in Tech

Women's History Month provides an opportunity to recognize women on campus who excel in STEM fields, which are traditionally male dominated. It's only historical trends that have prevented disciplines like information technology from having a full diversity of faces.

The UC Women in Technology committee annually asks each campus to select one female IT staff member to receive recognition for their contributions. This year, the Office of the Chief Information Officer chose to recognize Anne Weger, an advanced application support engineer for Kronos, the university's timekeeping system.

"I was surprised, honored and humbled to be nominated for this recognition," Weger said.

Between the wildly unanticipated Kronos outage in December to the service's time clock upgrade, Weger's work has impacted the entire campus community. "If you got paid during the months of the outage, you can thank Anne for making that happen," said Manny Cintron, Director of Application & Technology Services. "There were a lot of people that helped during that time, but Anne carried most of the weight."

When Kronos was disabled by a cyber attack and experienced a month-long outage, Weger led the effort to keep faculty and staff paid. "Anne provided direction, expertise and a considerable number of working hours to keep UCSB afloat," said Cintron. "She helped carry our technical payroll needs for over 32 days due to the

Kronos outage.”

“No one expected an outage of our Kronos application to last more than 24 hours,” Weger said, “and coming up with immediate response solutions and longer-term plans that would last the duration was critical.”

For anyone else, it might have been a frenetic scramble to ensure the quality of payroll information, communicate with stakeholders and coordinate a variety of other tasks. But Weger’s coworkers say she brings a calmness to all her projects, planned and unplanned alike. “We did not have a documented plan for this type of significant outage,” she recalled, “and I went into autopilot, pulling on my previous work experience.”

Weger’s experience and knowledge has been invaluable across a diverse set of projects beyond Kronos. She has also played a key role in UCPath projects and business process changes impacting leave administration, interfaces and data repositories. Weger makes herself available to answer questions and assist in the analysis of system or process change impacts. Her dedication ensures the right things are done in the best way possible.

Altogether, six UCSB IT professionals were nominated for this honor. With such talent on campus, the Office of the CIO was challenged to select a single employee for the UCOP recognition, according to Shea Lovan, UCSB’s interim chief information officer (CIO).

“UC Santa Barbara benefits greatly from the diversity of perspectives and skills in our IT community,” Lovan said. “The women nominated for this year’s award are some of the best technologists at UCSB making important contributions every day.”

Elda Schaffield, in Student Information Systems & Technology, plays a major role in integrating the unit’s web presence with the Drupal system. She has helped to convert 20 websites, establishing a proper developer workflow and setting higher standards for managing websites.

Diane Soini, in Letters and Sciences IT, has worked hard supporting the university’s online learning platform, GauchoSpace. Her efforts were crucial during the stay-at-home order, when classes were remote.

Jennifer Mehl and Libby Whitt, in Network & Security Services, have kept busy maintaining the university's firewall. Mehl and Whitt bring an intricate knowledge of network and firewall security and keep abreast of the latest cybersecurity threats to campus.

Alina Gutierrez has been key to the continued success of the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics (KITP) throughout the pandemic. She expanded the reach of KITP Online Talks by cross-posting to the institute's YouTube account, and designed a custom system to facilitate live collaboration between the 2,000 virtual and in-person scientists participating in KITP activities each year.

The six nominees are representative of — and a testament to — the many women across the campus, across the UC system and nationwide making important contributions to IT and other STEM fields.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.