

Professional Staff Member Award Nomination Form

The ACT Professional Staff Member Award recognizes an individual who provides exemplary service in the community and technical college system.

Name of nominee: (Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr.): Jody Bortz

Title: Basic Education for Adults (BEaA) Director

Organization: Big Bend Community College

Daytime phone no.: 509.793.2331 Email: Jodyb@bigbend.edu

Nominated by: Board Chair Gary Chandler and the Board of Trustees

College: Big Bend Community College

Title: Board Chair

Daytime phone no.: _____ Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: March 21, 2024

Please include this nominations form, a criteria statement and two letters of support (one of which is from the Board of Trustees).

Send complete packet **no later than March 22, 2024** to:

ACT
ATTN: Awards Committee
PO Box 42495
Olympia, WA 98504-2495
or
Email: ktanaka@sbctc.edu

Professional Staff Member Award

Purpose:

The ACT **Professional Staff Member Award** recognizes an individual who provides exemplary service in the community and technical college system.

Eligibility:

Eligibility for this award is open to:

- Any board staff member (i.e., an administrative assistant or executive secretary to a Washington president/chancellor); or
- Any staff member of a Washington community or technical college or the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) office (i.e. vice president, dean, administrator or other exempt staff).

Criteria:

The nomination must come from an ACT trustee and the following questions must be answered:

- In what ways has this staff member demonstrated a service leadership role toward the members of the board of trustees, administrators, faculty, students, and community?
- How does this staff member demonstrate performance in support of the board/CEO team?
- How has this staff member assisted the board/CEO team in developing or initiating innovative projects for your institution?
- What professional development activities at the national and/or state level has this staff member pursued?
- What other continuing education activities has this staff member pursued?
- What recognition has this staff member received for his/her leadership or involvement in the college or community?
- What outstanding characteristics motivated you to nominate this staff member?

Nominations:

In order to be considered complete, the nominations packet must contain the following:

- The completed nominations form.
- A criteria statement, which addresses each criteria point in the order listed. The statements must demonstrate how the nominee meets the criteria. A response covering each question is required.*
- Two letters of support must be submitted with the nomination, including:
 - A letter from the Board of Trustees that states the board supports the nomination;* and
 - One additional letter of support.*
- Nominations should be sent **no later than March 22, 2024**, to:

ACT • PO Box 42495 • Olympia, WA 98504-2495

Or Email: ktanaka@sbctc.edu

* The nominations can be provided in any format the college desires. **Additionally, ACT staff needs the following documents to be provided in Word format so the nomination can be adapted for submission to the ACCT awards program:**

- **The criteria statement; and**
- **All of the letters of support.**

Selection:

ACT's Awards Committee will serve as the selection committee. Nominations will be judged on content, presentation, letters of recommendation and attributes demonstrating leadership and furthering the mission of community and technical college.

2024 ACT Professional Staff Member Award Criteria Statement
Jody Bortz

In what ways has this staff member demonstrated a service leadership role toward the members of the board of trustees, administrators, faculty, students, and community?

Ms. Bortz embodies Big Bend’s mission “To Serve as a Bridge, Stand as a Leader, and Support for Success.” She assumed the helm of the Basic Education for Adults (BEA) program at a critical juncture when underperformance plagued the program. The program was not compliant with the state nor the federal operational guidelines and was at risk of losing federal grants. Within six months, Ms. Bortz successfully navigated audit visits to resolve the concerns. Her transformative leadership led to revamped policies, enhanced curriculum, and renewed relationships within the community which catapulted the program from the brink to a statewide beacon of excellence.

As a servant leader, Ms. Bortz recognizes that “it’s the little things” that make a huge difference in motivating students, many of whom face enormous challenges that can derail their education. For example, BEA was housed in a building on the periphery of the campus where interaction with the rest of the campus and the student body was limited. She advocated for her BEA students to be absorbed into the campus instead of being a fringe program both figuratively and literally. First, she reached out to the ASB leadership to ensure BEA students were included in programming opportunities. Then she advocated for BEA to be moved from the periphery into our newest building, The Workforce Education Center (WEC), where workforce programs are housed. This move was strategic and intentional on her part. Students who were struggling to complete high school were now learning in classrooms alongside students in Industrial Systems, Welding, Mechatronics, Agriculture, etc. Working with BEA faculty and Workforce Faculty, the curriculum is now contextualized so that students can glimpse these workforce programs while working towards their GED/High School Diploma. Her students now see a future of meaningful careers and are learning about the options available to them.

Another example of her service-oriented leadership is in how she cares for her students. The learning bandwidth of a student is dramatically reduced by hunger. Ms. Bortz and her team have a stocked pantry equipped with a microwave, Keurig, and refrigerator available to students. The BEA team goes beyond just feeding students snacks and have worked with the college’s Benefits Navigator to ensure they have access to nourishing meals all freely offered in a way that is non-stigmatizing. The area resembles that of a “staff break room” than a food pantry station where students can avail themselves of what they need no questions asked.

How does this staff member demonstrate performance in support of the board/CEO team?

Ms. Bortz envisioned a BEdA program that would provide relevant services to our community through expanded English Language Acquisition programming, as well as robust High School Completion/GED programming. She expanded outreach into underserved communities and the program has grown *exponentially* and the numbers speak for themselves.

- Student FTE grew by 233% (83-194 FTEs) from 2021-22 to 2022-23, the largest percent increase of any college in the state;
- Classes nearly doubled from 21 in three communities to 40 in six communities;
- Faculty doubled from 12 to 25;
- Professional staffing increased from 3 to 15;
- Workstudy staffing increased from 1 to 5;
- Contracts with School Districts for Open Doors increased from 1 to 3,
- Significant increase in Measurable Skills Gains* from 16% in 2021-22 to 29.5% a year later.

*Measurable Skills Gains is used by the Federal Government to measure student progress in BEdA programs.

How has this staff member assisted the board/CEO team in developing or initiating innovative projects for your institution?

The BEdA program serves as a vital link for residents of our service district who experience a dearth of educational opportunity, are more likely to be impoverished, and have limited English language proficiency. She oversees Big Bend's High School Equivalency Program (HEP) grant which provides services to seasonal and migrant farm workers in communities that meet the definition of being "underserved." In the first year of the five-year grant, 35% of the served participants attained their GED/High School diploma and the other 65% were retained. To add emphasis to this feat, NONE of the students withdrew from the program and yet they are among some of the most vulnerable!

Ms. Bortz's commitment to excellence extends to employee and student onboarding, with interventions improving organization and instructor-student matching. Quarterly faculty in-services ensure a high standard of teaching and student support is maintained. Since September of 2021, faculty in BEdA have been offered 27 opportunities for professional development through faculty in-services organized by Ms. Bortz.

What professional development activities at the national and/or state level has this staff member pursued?

Ms. Bortz's professional development activities include:

- the North Central Washington AI Expo,
- Annual Veterans' Stand Down event,
- Student Success Summit,
- WA Apple Education Foundation Workshops,

- Equity Minded Recruitment Webinars,
- Guided Pathways Coaching Sessions,
- National Reporting System Training,
- WIOA and Title 2 Federal Outcomes, and
- North Central Washington Coalition for Digital Access and Equity to name a few.

Ms. Bortz also serves on several local and statewide committees including:

- the IELCE Bridge Modules development,
- Open Doors Summit, and
- the Council for Basic Skills.

She has served as the keynote speaker and emcee at the Governor’s Committee on Disability Issues and Employment. Ms. Bortz has also emerged as a leader and resource in troubleshooting BEdA student coding issues in the statewide enterprise resource system called ctclink.

What other continuing education activities has this staff member pursued?

Over the years, Ms. Bortz has sought out relevant professional development to help her improve her service to students often enrolled in BEdA programs. She has attended Bridges Out of Poverty Training and is a Bridges Out of Poverty trainer for the campus and community.

What recognition has this staff member received for his/her leadership or involvement in the college or community?

Ms. Bortz is leading the state in identifying challenges and developing solutions with ctclink regarding BEdA courses and transcripts. She has been asked to give a presentation later this year to college and SBCTC staff about this work. Ms. Bortz earned the CSG Innovators Award for Teamwork.

What outstanding characteristics motivated you to nominate this staff member?

Ms. Bortz is both a visionary and an achiever. She is dedicated to individuals who have very little access to education and she directly addresses their barriers and challenges. Our service district has very low educational attainment rates and Big Bend must work with advanced manufacturers to build a pipeline into family sustaining jobs and meaningful work. She understands that our mission starts with migrant farmworkers who don’t speak English and adults who did not earn their high school diploma or GED. She has inspired this entire campus to honor our role as a Hispanic Serving Institution, which, in our context, means addressing intergenerational rural poverty. Ms. Bortz confronts this challenge head-on and with heart.

Big Bend is proud to nominate her for this award!