

February 6, 2003

Paula McLain, Coordinator Student Employment
Nominations for Student Employee of the Year
Human Resources
Administration Building 107
Northwest Missouri State University
Maryville, MO 64468

Dear Paula:

As the supervisors for the Academic Computing Computer Lab Consultant Team, we would like to nominate this group of exceptional students for the Outstanding Teamwork award during National Student Employment Week.

“Together we can make a difference” is the AC Computer Lab Consultant motto, and this company of talented individualists lives up to this axiom each and every day. This diverse, cohesive, and tight-knit team of students imparts hands-on assistance to troubleshoot and solve computer-related problems and questions in a courteous and professional manner. But more importantly, they also bring understanding, empathy and their rich, cultural heritages to the work place.

The AC Computer Lab Consultant Team, affectionately known by our department as the United Nations of Northwest, is comprised of exemplary students from various cultures, ethnicities and educational backgrounds. This team, which is a living, breathing symbol of the spirit behind Northwest’s International Plaza, is comprised of individuals from Africa, America, Bangladesh, India, Russia, Sweden and Tibet. In this time of promise and peril in our nation and around the globe, this team is truly an inspiring example of how people from different cultures and faiths can work together toward a common goal in harmony and friendship.

Good communication is the ultimate key to being a successful Computer Lab Consultant, and each AC Computer Lab Consultant excels in relating to their fellow coworkers and the patrons they assist in the computer labs. Despite cultural and lingual differences, the AC Computer Lab Consultants bridge the gap of ethnicity between themselves with humor, hard work and a lot of laughter, and in doing so have created a wonderfully-blended, well-rounded, friendly and professional environment for the mselves and for the patrons they assist. Their ability to work together as a unit and learn from one another makes the AC Computer Lab Consultant team a true role model not only for other student employees, but the entire campus community.

Having consultants who are multilingual has proven to be of tremendous benefit when dealing with International students in the computing labs. We currently have seventeen consultants, nine of whom speak a total of fifteen languages, including English.

Born in Bombay, India, Ritu Jain, who fluently speaks English, Hindi, Gujrati, and Marathi, has often stayed after her shift was over to aid various patrons in everything from utilizing a scanner to scan images to educational portfolio web page creation. Jain was hired as an AC Computer Lab Consultant her freshmen year at Northwest, and continues to work as a consultant while also holding down a position as a student assistant in the President's Office.

Russian student Anvar Gabidouline, American students Alicia Hill and Jared Watson, Swedish student Peter Sjolín, African student Njavwa Mulwanda and Bangladesh student Mohammed Naeem Zaman are all tremendous assets to the AC Computer Lab Consultant team not only for their commitment to work place professionalism and good customer service, but for their talent at languages. Gabidouline has fluency in Russian, English and Spanish. Hill has fluency in French. Watson has fluency in Hebrew. Sjolín has fluency in English and Swedish. Mulwanda has fluency in English, Bemba, Nyanjo, Namwanga, and Mambwe. Zaman, who is also a Residential Life Assistant, is fluent in English, Hindi, and Arabic.

Indian student, Utkarsh Bansal and Tibetan student, Tsjering Panjor often take on the role of translators when other students from India need assistance and their English skills are not mature enough yet to adequately express their computing needs. Bansal, who is a Residential Life Assistant as well as a consultant, is fluent in English, Hindi and Gujrati. Panjor is fluent in English, Hindi, and Tibetan. Like Jain, Bansal and Panjor have often generously given of their personal, off-duty time to help lab patrons with various computing tasks and problems.

Benjamin Heavilin is another AC Computer Lab Consultant who has often given selflessly of his personal time in the computer labs. A student from Naples, Florida, Heavilin, who is also a tutor in the Physics Department, has stayed numerous times to assist patrons who were having difficulty with Adobe Photoshop or web page creation well after his regular work shift had ended.

AC Computer Lab Consultant, Derick Snow is yet another excellent example of a consultant going above and beyond the call of duty. Snow, who is a native Nebraskan, took control of a situation in the computer lab that could have turned dangerous if not for his quick thinking and intervention. Two young female students were being harassed by another student and through the use of diplomacy, Snow helped to resolve the incident quickly and in such a manner that the other lab patrons were undisturbed by the altercation. Moreover, he provided Campus Safety with identification of the harasser and expert testimony as to what occurred in the lab. Snow has truly proven himself to be a tremendous asset to the AC Computer Lab Consultant Team.

The experience and knowledge the AC Computer Lab Consultant Team provides to students, faculty and staff at Northwest Missouri State University is an invaluable service, and the AC Computer Lab Consultants strive to ensure that the computer lab patron experience is one of satisfaction. Often they are the public face of Information Systems when network problems arise and as their supervisors, we are proud to say that they handle these situations with great grace, diplomacy and ingenuity, helping to soothe and support students who were affected negatively by the disruption of service, often providing alternatives and even solutions to help them in accomplishing tasks despite problems with the network. For instance, consultant Nathan Meyer helped save a student's online test answers. This student was in the process of submitting her test when a network

outage occurred. She was almost in tears, because it was an essay exam and she had spent well over an hour working on it. Unfortunately, now that the network was no longer functioning, she could not submit the answers and if she closed the test, it would lose all her hard work and lock her out of the test. Meyer screen-captured her answers on the test, inserted the images into a Word document and helped her send it as an attachment to her instructor with an explanation of what had happened. Meyer's quick thinking saved this student hours of frustration and stress and this is just one example of the many times our consultants have rushed in to aid students in difficult situations.

Besides their dedication to helping the computer lab patrons, the AC Computer Lab Consultants are also dedicated to aiding each other. If a consultant has a scheduling conflict, has a crisis or becomes ill, his or her fellow team members are always willing to trade hours or take on extra hours to support each other and ensure continuous quality service for the lab patrons. The consultants treat each other with respect deserving of colleagues, but also with the warmth and affection of family. One great example of this kind of caring and consideration between consultants occurs at noon this trimester every Tuesday and Thursday. Nathan Welch, a consultant who is also a Northwest Student Tele-counselor, the secretary for the International Fraternity Council and a member of the Board of Directors of Team Leadership, has a class that consistently runs long. He sent the word out to his AC Consultant family that he needed assistance, and consultant Vishal Sethi, who is the consultant who works the shift prior to Welch taking over, willingly agreed to help out his fellow team member by staying on duty until Welch arrives. Another illustration of this kind of steadfast support of a fellow consultant in need occurred one Saturday when a crisis arose and the computer labs needed a replacement consultant on extremely short notice. Within seconds of being notified that his team member needed his shift covered, Derick Snow instantly agreed to fill part of the six-hour shift and arrived within minutes at the lab, while two other consultants, one of whom was Ritu Jain, jumped in to take the remaining hours and thus, the computer lab patrons continued to receive uninterrupted service. Again, the above are just two examples of the many ways and times that the AC Computer Lab Consultants have been there for each other, as well as their supervisors and the computer lab patrons.

Always willing to take on extra responsibility, the AC Computer Lab Consultants readily and with enthusiasm volunteer to help during Advantage Week Freshmen Computer Training. The training is held over two days, typically Friday and Saturday, and consists of 45-minute sessions, which run continuously from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. each day. These sessions, which are given by the AC Computer Lab Consultants, are designed to introduce new students to Northwest's Information Technology (IT) resources, policies and guidelines. The AC Computer Lab Consultants are excellent trainers, and each one gains a lot of satisfaction from helping new students acclimate themselves to Northwest's IT-oriented environment and resources.

An important component of the AC Computer Lab Consultant team is continuing education and each AC Computer Lab Consultant takes advantage of the opportunity to enhance their technical skills and knowledge through ongoing software training. As part of their duties, AC Computer Lab Consultants are required to study various computer-related training materials and pass two tests per month over said material. What is surprising and gratifying to us as supervisors, is that many of the AC Computer Lab Consultants in a quest for self-improvement take the initiative to study more than the required amount of training materials per month and pass the related tests, to provide greater knowledgeable service to lab patrons.

In conclusion, we would just like to reiterate that each member of the AC Computer Lab Consultant Team is reliable, hard working, and always willing to give of his or her time, experience and knowledge. Furthermore, each one has a tremendous capacity for understanding, tolerance, and open-mindedness, which allows them to readily appreciate and more often than not embrace the differences in others. Consequently, we feel the AC Computer Lab Consultant team would be an excellent choice for the Outstanding Teamwork award. This team of students is a wonderful representative of our University with its commitment to quality and diversity.

Sincerely,

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