The 2016 OIT Excellence Award winners were announced at the OIT Unit-Wide Meeting on January 11. The Awards were created to recognize the exceptional work done by OIT staff members, teams, and projects in support of Montgomery College, its mission, and its user community. This year, two projects, 13 teams, and 32 individuals were nominated for their excellent service. In total, for the four award categories, there were 87 nominations, 74 of which were submitted by the general community.

PROJECT: The winner for the OIT Project Excellence Award was the **VDI Project Team,** comprised of   Harriet Beasley (project manager), Dave Hawkins, Lapo Ogunyemi, Tanuja Shah, John Simmens, and Jay Yu.

> The project award is intended not just to recognize a successful project, but also to recognize the use of good project management processes. The VDI project created a technology that allows classrooms and labs to leverage desktop images hosted in the cloud. This has many benefits, as summarized by John Hamman, the Dean of Mathematics and Statistics. "Our students are faced with a constant challenge of not having access to specialized (and expensive) software like MATLAB or Minitab at home. Students, especially online students, do not always have the ability to come to campus to make use of our classrooms or labs. Furthermore, scheduling all classes that need particular software into one room is an unpleasant burden. When implemented successfully, this could be a revolutionary concept in the way that IT desktop services are provided in the educational environment."

> John reinforced the teamwork involved, not just within OIT, but especially with the faculty. "This team made repeated visits to our offices to sit beside faculty members and students as they use the VDI to identify problems and find solutions. They have always been respectful of the changes we requested and have made this a truly collaborative endeavor. The mutual respect and teamwork approach has made this project a pleasure to be involved with."

> "In summary, we feel that this project is incredibly valuable to our students and faculty, yet we understand what an undertaking this has been for the VDI team. They have worked tirelessly despite multiple obstacles to bring our vision into a reality. We are indebted to them for their service and they certainly deserve to be recognized for their contributions."

TEAM: The winner of the OIT Team Excellence Award was the **ST Flood Recovery Team**, comprised of Conrad Beadling, Juma Conway, Jim D'Ambrosia, Franco DiBari, Hussein Elfadl, Chris Novak

> On July 4th, 2015, a water pipe ruptured in the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Student Service building, dumping thousands of gallons of water in the basement. Unfortunately, that included the main telecommunication room for the East side of the TP/SS campus, as well as the entry point for the campus's Wide Area Network connection that allows communications to the other campuses as well as access to the College's primary data

center. The flood shorted out the backup power supplies and much of the network infrastructure.

A call was put out to anyone who could help with clean-up and service restoration. This team responded, each one putting aside their family plans for the July 4th festivities. The first challenge was getting replacement equipment. With Franco's help, the engineers scavenged UPSes and network switches from other campuses. It should be noted that each UPS unit weighs several hundred pounds, and 14 ruined units had to be removed and replacements found, transported, and installed. Only then could the network equipment be replaced, also from spares from around the College, and then reconfigured, tested, and activated. All of this was accomplished successfully, with all services available when the College re-opened on July 6.

INTERNAL INDIVIDUAL: The winner of the Individual Award for Internal Candidates was **Heather Vizas.**

The OIT Internal Individual Award is designed to recognize an OIT employee who works behind the scenes to support the front line staff or provide a service to the College that is not generally recognized by our customers. In that vein, Heather is a perfect honoree. Of all of the infrastructure that usually comes to mind when thinking of IT, we tend to look at the network, servers, storage, firewalls, and computers. But we don't often think of the telephones, which, to be honest, we just take for granted. Heather is the primary reason why we do so. As the sole telephony engineer, she is tasked with keeping our telephone network, along with voice mail and teleconferencing, operational. The fact that many you don't often hear Heather's name is a testament to her skill at doing that. But it's not just a matter of keeping the phones working. As with everything else, telephony continues to evolve, and today's technology is radically different than even a few years ago. Over the past year, Heather completed the migration of the Montgomery College system from Verizon to Windstream. All of this occurred during normal business hours, with no loss of service to the College community. The net result of this change has been substantial cost savings to the College.

EXTERNAL INDIVIDUAL: The winner of the OIT Individual Excellence Award for Customer Support was **Isabelle Doucet.**

While Isabelle is being honored for her body of work over the years, she gained special recognition this year because of her major outreach associated with the Luminis 5 upgrade project and the associated Intranet Web redesign. She was cited by both College faculty and OIT staff for her dedication and the relationships that she forged to move a potentially contentious project forward. She hosted more open campus meetings than we can count, making sure to include stakeholders from throughout the College. And when it comes to the College Intranet, everyone is a stakeholder. Throughout, she navigated the challenge with aplomb and eternal optimism.

In the words of the nominators:

"Isabelle demonstrated a high level of professionalism in her concern that the new site works for everyone."

"She has consistently gotten very positive reviews for the way that she has brought the many teams together to redesign our internal Web site. Her extremely positive attitude and great communications skills enabled her to bring a very large project team together to create an internal site that will serve the College community for many years to come."

"Isabelle took her charge of providing the College with a redesigned MYMC and made sure that it is functional, improved, useful, logical, and objective in the College community it is intended to serve."

"She has, at times, turned lemons into lemonade. In my time at MC, I have seen very few individuals put their heart and soul into a project."