

“What’s YOUR Big Idea?” Contest Winners

2018

The award for Best Workload Innovation/Resources:

- Nick Kilmer, Assistant Director of the Money Education (ME) Center, Scholarships and Financial Aid Office
 - Nick’s Big Idea was “for the University to purchase a virtual waitlist system and allow offices providing significant lobby assistance the opportunity to choose to use it to improve their customers’ experience. Students could check-in online for walk-in assistance using this system and could wait anywhere they please. When it is nearly their turn to be assisted, the students would be notified via app (which shows real-time wait time information) or text, allowing them to arrive just in time to be assisted. This should improve our students’ experience with the office, and in turn the job satisfaction of the staff who serve them.”

The award for Best Work/Life Balance:

- Suresh Krishna Kagga, a student employee in International Student Services
 - Suresh’s big idea was to create a virtual reality relaxation space for staff. “The idea is an attempt to utilize the potential of Virtual Reality to reduce work related stress, thus ensuring a better work life balance and optimizing the efficiency of the workforce at TAMU.” The idea here is to create an integrated Virtual space for staff to use throughout the day to help relax and reduce stress.

The Team Award for the Overall Best Idea:

- TEAMSRS, is a volunteer-based group made up of Sponsored Research Services employees. Ann Savell is the team lead. Other members of TEAMSRS who participated in the Idea Contest are Lyndal Arceneaux, Rene Contreras, Carolyn Franklin, Vicki Hegemeyer, Rebecca Hernandez, Elizabeth Johnston-Vasquez, Chad Kacir, Jonathan Klippel, Jessica Love, Andrea McLean, Sara Poremski, Pattie Sims, and Martha Tackett.
 - TEAM SRS’ idea was to share more broadly how teams and workgroups can use the Google Team Drive (available through TAMU’s Google Suite package). This tool allows staff to publish and share information and provide a place to share processes/approaches that work the best for them and which could be used or adapted by other departments to suit their needs.

The Overall Best Idea – Individual Award:

- Melissa Bohnsack, Assistant Director, overseeing the phone queue customer service team, Scholarships & Financial Aid

- Melissa's idea was to purchase and implement an artificial intelligence chatbot for at least the Financial Aid website and possibly other offices on campus. An artificial intelligence chatbot could help departments provide a "customer service agent that can triage customer service requests, extend hours of operations, and improve the overall quality of services [provided]." "The [chatbot] would be custom-trained to serve specific knowledge domains; this means it can live in chat form on a website, at an email address, text message, Facebook messenger, and in a live agent chat window to answer [department] specific questions."