

Staff Employee of the Week

Melissa J. Williams

JOB TITLE: Fiscal Coordinator

HOME DEPARTMENT: Mechanical Engineering

COLLEGE OR VP AREA: College of Engineering

NOMINATED FOR: Staff Leadership Award

NOMINATED BY: Matt Swift, Department Administrator, Mechanical Engineering

VIRGINIA TECH HIRE DATE: September 1, 2004



SUMMARY

Melissa Williams is the Fiscal Supervisor in the department of Mechanical Engineering. Her duties include: direct supervision of seven administrative staff and a variety of student workers; handling virtually all the payroll duties in a department with typically 250 to 300 individuals on payroll at any given time; and helping faculty with all sorts of financial questions and transactions related to their sponsored research projects.

That is the "official" list of duties; the actual range of problems that Melissa comes across on a daily basis would fill a book. For starters, she is a sounding board and mother hen to a huge population of needy graduate students on assistantships, who come to her in a steady stream every day. Next she looks after her staff, each of whom is balancing priorities coming in from six to ten faculty they support directly, or possibly covering for another member of the team who is out. Finally the faculty themselves have learned that Melissa has the answers when it comes to financial management of their research projects.

Melissa somehow juggles these priorities with apparent ease. She does this with a combination of maturity, calm, and innate leadership instincts, as well as techniques she has learned in the many professional development courses she has taken.

Melissa has the knack of adjusting the management style to the individual, and the same ability carries over to dealing with the forty or so faculty who make a regular path to her door; not to mention the graduate students. She understands fully what it means to a graduate student when he or she is concerned about getting the right paycheck on time, and day after day goes the extra mile to get everything right, so people are treated in a thoughtful and caring way.