

## **Scott &#x201c;Santa&#x201d; Cowen confers Staff Excellence Awards**

December 22, 2011 1:45 AM Alicia Duplessis Jasmin  
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On the last day before the winter holiday break, Eva Morris arrived at work dressed casually. Her 8:30 a.m. meeting on Dec. 22 was proceeding as planned until Tulane President Scott Cowen paid her a surprise visit.



Eva Morris, who has worked at Tulane since 1995, is the first staff member of the day to receive her President's Staff Excellence Award from Tulane President Scott Cowen as he makes his rounds on Thursday (Dec. 22). (Photos by Paula Burch-Celentano).



Another excited award recipient is associate athletics director Vince Granito, left.

Morris, assistant director of compensation and records in the Workforce Management Organization, is one of seven recipients of the 2011 President's Staff Excellence Awards. Wearing a Santa hat emblazoned with a Tulane logo, President Cowen each year delivers a check for \$1,000 to each winner.

"I had no idea," said a surprised Morris to President Cowen. "I'm usually onto stuff like this."

President Cowen said that the day he delivers the awards is always "one of the best days" of his year. But his visits are sometimes perceived as ominous when he arrives at the winners' offices.

"When I show up, sometimes people think they are being fired," he said, wearing a red tie this year to match his hat. "At other times, the Santa hat is a dead giveaway."

Recipients of President's Staff Excellence Awards are selected through a nomination process. Four categories ? increased productivity, cost savings, enhanced objectives and humanitarian efforts ? are the criteria for selection.

In addition to the cash prize, award recipients are invited to dine in February at the home of President Cowen and his wife, Marjorie.

Other 2011 honorees are:

- Laney Armstrong, senior program coordinator, School of Business
- Doreen Barrett, senior program coordinator, Office of Academic Affairs
- Shellond Chester, assistant dean for finance, School of Liberal Arts
- Dayna Ann Gessler, assistant director, Center for Academic Advising
- Vince Granito, associate athletics director, Department of Athletics
- Ann Salzer, assistant provost, Office of Academic Affairs and Provost.