

## Santa meets Santa

December 16, 2013 12:00 PM Alicia Duplessis Jasmin  
aduples@tulane.edu

For 13 years, Joseph "J.C." Paciera, a Tulane University shuttle driver, has seasonally taken on the role of Santa Claus at events around New Orleans. But on Friday (Dec. 13), Paciera found himself on the nice list of another Santa played by Tulane President Scott Cowen.



Tulane University President Scott Cowen, left, responds with laughter as J.C. Paciera, one of 10 President's Staff Excellence Award winners, shares a story about his exciting job. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Paciera, a two-year Tulane employee, was one of 10 winners of the [President's Staff Excellence Awards](#). Each year, President Cowen ? donning a Santa hat ? surprises each winner with a \$1,000 check and an invitation to a dinner party at his home.

During Paciera's visit, the surprised employee shared with Cowen that he'd applied to the university 88 times before finally getting an interview. Paciera's supervisor Brian Lowe, manager of shuttles and transportation, recalled that Paciera's resume stated he'd once delivered cows.

"Now that's what I want in a shuttle driver," Lowe recalled thinking.

Cowen used the occasion to poke fun at Paciera's side job before handing over the eagerly anticipated envelope.

"I heard you are Santa at the Royal Sonesta. You aren't doing that on Tulane time are you?" asked Cowen.

Lowe says he nominated Paciera for having increased productivity in the department and for being a humanitarian.

Following several emotional exchanges, Paciera told his friends and colleagues who had gathered for the surprise that working at Tulane feels like a "dream come true."

"I am so happy to do this job everyday," said Paciera. "I want to do this for the rest of my life."

In addition to Paciera, the 2013 award recipients are: Avery Brewton, program manager, Center for Public Service; Katie Busby, assistant provost, Assessment and Institutional Research; Joy Cazenave, program manager, Undergraduate Admission; Ronnie Charpio, maintenance supervisor, key and signs, Facilities Services; Tim Deeves, director of networking services; Michael Goodman, associate VP, University Financial Aid; Allison Mull, executive secretary, Jewish Studies Department; Sandra (Sandy) Parker, assistant dean, School of Science and Engineering; and Bobby Thompson Sr., heavy equipment operator, Facilities Services.