

For this year's presidential leadership award, I believe Lindsay Okonek is the best choice because of the incredible hard work she has put into representing CC as our new esports coordinator, for bringing together every team after the huge COVID break, and making esports a welcoming space for every gender and sexual orientation. Lin helped Fem Fridays start up again, allowing female identity gamers to get the esports space for themselves to have the opportunity to learn how to play and have fun (without the overwhelming, sexist pressure from the outside world). Additionally, Lin is always around to lend an ear, to direct our varsity and JV teams, and handles COVID regulations in a way that's fair and safe for everyone. Because of her, CC Esports has not only been able to come back stronger, but also with new additions (with an entirely new Valorant team and new female players) and bigger opportunities (NACE and SCAC final competitions during the spring and fall)!

-Alyssa Metzger, sophomore at CC

Lin Okonek is the eSports Coordinator here at Colorado College. In her few months here she has made the eSports community a more inclusive and safe space for several minorities. eSports is typically a male dominated space and closed off to others who do not fit in. But with Lin as the leader we have seen an increase in female-identify and non-binary members in the community. Lin makes an effort to make eSports a safe place for minorities and to communicate with us in order to make the space safe for us all. Instead of ignoring the issues of a lack of female-identifying students she made sure to accept the challenge. Lin bans hostile behaviors that would repel fem-identifying students and has put in effort to create a welcoming environment for not only students, but staff as well. Having Lin as a leader made me more comfortable and I can see a change can take place in our community with her in the Leadership role.

-Dee Knox, sophomore at CC

Lin as an esports coordinator has really helped to make the esports organization at CC a more inclusive and diverse community. She has made all players and staff feel welcomed and important. She has always been open to new student ideas and feedback, making sure student opinions are well known and respected. Lin makes herself clear that she is always open to answer questions or support students, even outside her office hours. Overall, Lin has cultivated the esports organization to a more inclusive and popular community on campus, which I believe will continue to grow in the coming years.

-Al Lo, junior at CC

Lin played a major role in significantly increasing the number of female-identifying players in esports through the Fem Friday events that she hosts, which is a big accomplishment because the esports community is notorious for being male-dominant community. Lin is also a genuinely kind person who really cares about each one of the esports staff members - she's like the glue that connects all of us student workers together. Her zero-tolerance for racism, hate

speech, and sexism also really helped make the esports community at Colorado College a safe space for everybody - now we have more CC students wanting to come into the lab to play games than ever. The esports community at Colorado College would not have achieved this much growth and prosperity without Lin.

-Claire Shin, junior at CC

Diversity and Inclusion Award – Barbara J. Wilson

Barbara Wilson embodies the qualities laid out in the Victor Nelson-Cisneros Award in the way she inclusively works with many people from diverse backgrounds. In the past year, Barbara went above and beyond to demonstrate her skills in this area as she led Facilities on an interim basis. Barbara's background is not in Facilities, but because she excels in bringing together those with different backgrounds, opinions and voices, she was able to bring the team back to greater functionality and prepare for a new, permanent Associate Vice President for Facilities to come in.

Barbara is resourceful in her work and in general problem-solving, bringing together diverse groups of people to weigh in on a given project or topic. Because she has been at the college for some time, she knows many people and the strengths they bring to a group. I have served on various committees and workgroups with her, and I continually see how she intentionally encourages others to participate. Due to Barbara's excellent work in this area, I was pleased to hear she had been asked to serve as the interim director for diversity, equity and inclusion for staff.

Barbara's work with the new DEI leadership team takes her individual efforts in this area to the next level, and it multiplies the learning opportunities and focus on issues of equity and inclusivity. The DEI leadership team was asked to speak with members of the Campus Budget Committee, with a goal of learning more about ensuring that every decision and communications about those decisions were considered through a DEI lens. I was pleasantly surprised with the advice we received from all three members of the team, but it was really evident how much Barbara had to offer in this team of seasoned leaders in the DEI space. She is an amazing representative of staff diversity, equity and inclusion issues, and she has much more to teach us in our pursuits of becoming an Antiracist institution.

Thank you for your consideration of Barbara Wilson for the Victor Nelson-Cisneros Diversity and Inclusion Award.

I am delighted to nominate Barbara Wilson for the Victor Nelson-Cisneros Diversity and Inclusion Award. Barbara currently serves as associate vice president for Administrative Services and has also taken on the interim role as director of diversity, equity, and inclusion for staff. Taking on interim and additional duties in the service of the college is nothing new to Barbara; she has always stepped up when called, whether it's serving as interim vice president for Finance and Administration, interim director of Facilities Services, or her current interim role. I've always told Barbara, "You're the woman who can do anything!" And she does it all with tremendous integrity, grace, professionalism, and always with an eye towards inclusion, diversity, and equity.

Barbara first came to Colorado College in 2000 as our director of Human Resources. Under her strong leadership, the college made tremendous strides on the Workplace Excellence initiatives as part of the CC Plan: Building on the Block. These strides include the development of Excel@CC, an in-house professional development series that leverages our own expertise and includes strong diversity, equity, and inclusion components. Barbara also received the Distinguished Service Award from the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources, a well-deserved honor. As director of Human Resources, she worked with staff to resolve harassment and discrimination complaints and also served as Title IX Deputy for staff from 2012 to 2018. I worked closely with Barbara in my role as Title IX Deputy for Students and was always struck by her genuine concern for the well-being and safety of our students, faculty, and staff. As both chair and co-chair on the faculty and staff diversity action team, she focused on equity in recruitment and retention.

In her current interim role as part of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion leadership team, along with Peony Fhagen, senior associate dean for equity, inclusion, and faculty development, and Rosalie Rodriguez, senior associate dean of students/director of the Butler Center, Barbara is again stepping up to serve the college. As a member of this leadership team, she brings institutional memory from myriad perspectives, calling upon her vast experiences and her own positionality. Barbara's self-identification as a woman of color, and her role in senior leadership positions at the college has always served as an inspiration to other women of color on our campus, including me. As a member of our CC Women of Color group, she mentors, counsels and supports so many of us; she is always there when we need her.

Barbara Wilson embodies the spirit of Victor Nelson-Cisneros, and the diversity and inclusion award named in his honor.

Diversity and Inclusion - Kimberly Elahab

Kimberly Elahab exemplifies the spirit of the Victor Nelson-Cisneros Award in the many ways that she supports diversity and inclusion at Colorado College. Colleague Brenda Gillen writes, "Where others see differences, Kimberly finds common ground. She is empathic and deeply connects with others in meaningful ways."

One of the most significant contributions Kimberly has made to diversity and inclusion at Colorado College is the role she has played supporting first generation students.

Kimberly has participated with the Butler Center's First Generation Collegiate Program, as a keynote speaker, panelist, and program mentor.

Pearl Leonard-Rock writes:

Kimberly has been a consistent and supportive partner to the Butler Center. She has participated in our anti-racism initiatives as well as our signature student program, the 1st Generation Collegiate Program.

Kimberly knows that educational transformation happens when others commit their time, talent, and treasure to help college students succeed. She is always willing to give of her time and talents to support students, especially 1st Gen students.

She has served as a keynote and panelist in the 1st Gen program. She also serves as a program mentor. In Block one, she delivered a presentation to 1st Gen students on how they can ANCHOR themselves for success and build in strategies for resilience. Kimberly has spent her career making a difference in the lives of students and that effort continues to happen here at Colorado College. She is an awesome story teller and has a compelling delivery style.

Kimberly's Block One presentation included the following mnemonic device for cultivating resilience:

- A= Ability to believe 100 percent in yourself
- N= Never give up
- C= Connect with others for support
- H= Hold on to your dreams
- O= Overcome negative thoughts with positive actions
- R= Root and ground yourself to your goals

Kimberly's outreach to first generation students and students of color is not limited to her involvement with the First Generation Collegiate Program. Over the past few years, Kimberly has employed students to assist with various administrative and research tasks for the Prospect Management team. Yet Kimberly's work with the students goes beyond the immediate job at hand. Colleague John Wallace writes, "I have been really impressed by Kimberly's ability to create meaningful experiences for student workers. She does really seem to care not only about how to train them to be effective contributors – but also to provide them with experiences they can build on if they choose to do so."

Marj Webster, Prospect Management Analyst, commented, "She takes a personal interest in each one of them, making it a true mentorship not just a job." As Kimberly's supervisor, I have seen firsthand the relationships that Kimberly builds with the student workers. She has been a support structure for the students, encouraging them through her personal experience.

In supporting and inspiring students, particularly first generation students and students of color, and by embracing the diversity found within our community, Kimberly is cultivating the inclusive and equitable community that Colorado College strives to be.

Diversity and Inclusion Award - Felix Sanchez

It's an honor to nominate Felix Sanchez, assistant vice president for communications, for the Victor Nelson-Cisneros Diversity and Inclusion Award. As a campus leader, Felix sets a strong example of how to effectively bring diverse voices to the decision-making table.

He is thoughtful and intentional about including diverse perspectives in meetings, publications, conversations, and projects. Not only does he make it part of the conversation, he makes inclusivity a priority.

Felix's leadership was critical in successfully guiding sensitive and challenging conversations on the "Untold Stories Project," and Felix has stepped up to lead this project going forward. This project creates an engaging space to share the experiences of marginalized persons who make up our Colorado College community and our history.

Felix has worked closely with the NASU students to follow a thoughtful process to request the creation of a space on campus, named in Native language. He is a contributor in making sure to include thoughtful recommendations on the Native world view, helping to foster cultural dialogue on campus. Felix was involved in development of the smudging policy and making this a relevant part of campus discussion.

In addition, he serves on the steering committee for the external review of racism at CC and works to improve communication campuswide on this essential initiative.

Felix exemplifies the qualities of former Associate Dean of the College Victor Nelson-Cisneros in supporting diversity and inclusion and is quite deserving of this award.