

Harvard Heroes Award-Winning Nominations
Illustrative Examples, Excerpted

Carlos Guerrero, Custodial Crew Chief, SEAS, Harvard Hero



Walking down the hall with full hands, realizing it's going to be a conundrum getting into my office, there's a soft jingle in the wings. Without notice, a friendly smile and helping hand make all the difference in what could have been a messy situation. Carlos Guerrero has been a custodian and crew chief in Pierce Hall as long as I have been a resident. He approaches each day with a desire for excellence, while never overlooking an opportunity to lend a helping hand. His supervisors look to him for stability in an ever-changing work environment, whereas his peers depend on his leadership and guidance. Following are comments from others who are affected by Carlos's outstanding efforts:

- "Carlos exemplifies what all Harvard employees should strive to be: kind, considerate, friendly and helpful. In the 10 years that I have been here, Carlos has never been less than warm-hearted and hard-working. He works back to back jobs and yet is never too busy to help out above his call of duty here. I look forward to seeing his smiling face every day. SEAS is very lucky to have him in our community."
- "Carlos always has a smile and he is a pleasure to work with. He has a great eye for detail and has always gone above and beyond on any requests...he has acted as a liaison multiple times between HR and his co-workers, assisting them with paperwork completion, payroll needs, etc. SEAS is lucky to have Carlos!"
- "...Carlos has been a constant source of positivity and kindness. He is always willing and eager to help! Most importantly, he is thoughtful and really cares about the people he works with."

...Not long ago, Carlos was assigned to another work location. His absence created such a void that many people informally petitioned for his return. Without Carlos, the energy just wasn't the same. He brings a level of calm along with his daily chores. Carlos is the ideal candidate because he approaches his job with a strong sense of integrity. He truly cares about doing a good job, helping his fellow workers and providing a service that is integral to the functioning organization."

Brandon Edwards, Departmental Administrator, Freshman Dean's Office, Harvard College, Harvard Hero



Brandon is our nominee because his contribution to the Freshman Dean's Office is immense. He is not only a vital member of our team, but in serving as the "go to" person for the 65 proctors who oversee things throughout the Yard, he lightens their load and adds joy to their day. Sometimes students are fearful of seeking help...but all they have to do is meet Brandon and they quickly feel comfortable and understood...It is a luxury for the Freshman Dean's Office to be able to count on Brandon's stunning work ethic, upbeat and people-centered attitude, ability to work with minimal supervision, and writing talent that is distinguished by both grace and precision.

...It's often said that you never get a second chance to make a good first impression—a maxim that applies as much to institutions as it does to individuals. Brandon Edwards works diligently every year to ensure that over 1,600 new students feel welcome and at home at Harvard College. Stationed right next to the FDO's front door, Brandon is a courteous, gregarious, and accessible link between administrators and students... Brandon has become a veritable expert on the ins and outs of Harvard College. No matter how idiosyncratic the question, Brandon can almost always track down an answer in moments...we can refer student questions to him with confidence, and freshman parents who call the dean's office and talk to Brandon no doubt feel that their students are in very good hands.

...Brandon inspires all of us...no one works harder or is more dedicated to the welfare of our students. When one of us is stuck, we know that we can count on Brandon to help bail us out, with no expectation of getting anything in return. We wish that we could clone Brandon...

...From a parent..."I called the FDO and was fortunate to get Brandon Edwards...He was just delightful, warm and enthusiastic, and he emailed me a lovely, friendly note and **FOUR WONDERFUL PICTURES IN FIVE MINUTES**. For a parent 3,000 miles away, I cannot tell you how much this means..."

Joan Smeltzer, Administrative Coordinator, FAS, Harvard Hero



Joan Smeltzer embodies the true spirit of the Harvard Hero -- an extraordinary person and one of the most beloved, respected members in the Department of Psychology, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) and on the Harvard University campus.

The perfect “first face” of our busy Department, Joan reports to the Director of Administration and performs an ever-growing, myriad of administrative and financial duties, not only for the Director but for our Department Chair and Faculty Coordinator in one of the FAS’ largest academic departments.

...Her effusive, effervescent personality is tailor-made for her “be-all-things-to-all-people” position. She responds cheerfully and attentively to our many and varied walk-in customers, fields innumerable general inquiries, answers all phone calls on the first ring, welcomes visiting scholars and dignitaries with grace and aplomb, sorts and distributes all incoming mail and general correspondence...yet still finds time to do her “real” job.

Wearing her hat as Psychology’s payroll coordinator, Joan generates employment and payroll forms for staff and academic appointments, approves staff time and labor entries, runs and reviews weekly payroll reports. A problem-solver, innovator and troubleshooter extraordinaire, Joan is the “go to” conduit for any and all payroll and H.R.-related anomalies. She works closely with the Director and our Department’s payroll liaison to resolve payroll-related problems—many times from her computer at home before coming into work to ensure she’s on top of everything.

Additionally, Joan maintains and updates all highly-confidential staff and faculty files, creates and maintains computer databases for Department personnel and ensures all local directories and mailing lists remain current. Further, she assists our Faculty Coordinator with faculty searches, tenure appointments and promotions, while maintaining the applicant database and files, distributes resumes to hiring managers, schedules interview appointments and makes travel and lodging arrangements for candidates. Somehow, she also finds time to coordinate the staff new hire process, which includes creating offer letters, collecting and generating necessary paperwork.

As our special events coordinator, Joan facilitates all logistics for special events; coordinates and supports various departmental meetings and programs and finally, coordinates all administrative needs for our clinical science program....Her spirit and work ethic are positively indefatigable. With Joan involved,

the results are always “win win”! ...when I reviewed the nomination criteria for this reinvigorated award, I immediately thought, “This IS Joan Smeltzer.”

Joan...sets a very high bar for those of us who do what we do—always with real empathy and a true compassion for others. She is a model employee whose hard work and skillful collaboration have delivered outstanding results, not only for Psychology but for the FAS and the entire campus. She perpetually fosters a spirit of teamwork, innovation and a sense of collaboration in everything she does... She is a friend, ally and colleague to all and one of this University’s most cherished and valuable resources. I am proud and delighted to nominate Joan Smeltzer as a Harvard Hero and can think of no one more deserving...

Joao Amado, Associate Manager, Facilities Maintenance Operations, Harvard Hero



Ask around Harvard University. Joao Amado is a legend.

He is a man who has journeyed around the University for over a decade, fixing operations, improving the lives of his coworkers, and acting as a mentor to so, so many...I felt compelled to nominate Joao when a manager alerted me of this program's resurrection. I can honestly say I have never met anyone quite like Joao. Neither have the dozens of people on campus that say the same...to me every day.

...He is a constant, positive teacher. He is the most polite, ethical, and intelligent coworker I've ever had. He has a scientific cleaning background that is second to none, and spans decades; and he's become an event expert at HLS, managing the setting up and breaking down of its more than four thousand events per year. Joao is an administrative machine, something he dabbles in on the side, while still trying to help our new management team of seven get off the ground here at HLS.

...Joao Amado is the consummate professional. He has accepted each new team member with open arms, and tirelessly trains each of them for 12-14 hours per day, while his young sons and wife are awaiting his delayed return home.

You cannot teach someone to be like Joao Amado. It's something special people are born with - a knack for simply “getting it” and knowing how to respond to each situation and person in an appropriate, professional, and kind manner. His drive for excellence in customer service has made him one of the most respected people on this campus. He knows how to have a laugh, and when to get down to business.

Joao is the backbone and glue of the Facilities Maintenance Operations at HLS...because demand for the operation has exploded since the opening of the Wasserstein Building...FMO needed Joao to answer the call and lead its operation at a time of sincere need...He answered that call. He more than kept the sail afloat -- he kept the skies blue and sunny for the few dozen staff members he manages, and the entire HLS community.