****

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Rappahannock Community College

Michele Inderrieden

Media Services Manager

minderrieden@rappahannock.edu

(804)333-6824

May 13, 2024

**Rappahannock Community College Faculty and Staff Win Awards**

Rappahannock Community College (RCC) recently announced the winners of the College’s IDEAL Awards. Presented annually to a full-time instructional faculty member; a full-time classified staff, an administrative, or professional faculty member; an adjunct faculty member; and, a dual enrollment instructor, the award focuses on RCC’s values.

The award’s name comes from an acronym encompassing the College’s values Integrity; Diversity and inclusion; Excellence; Access; and, Learning for Life. Students, colleagues and community members have the opportunity to nominate an RCC employee for the award.

Winners are:

* Shelby Brooks, dual enrollment instructor and chair of the Social Studies Department at Northumberland High School. She began teaching dual enrollment Government in the 2021-22 Academic Year. Ms. Brooks is a transformative instructor and challenges her students to engage with political processes as a part of their class. She also leads by example, serving as the Co-President of the Northumberland County Education Association, and regularly lobbies school administration and elected officials to support area youth in their educational journeys. Ms. Brooks also teaches Political Science courses at Haynesville Correctional Center.

Nominator comments included, “She has a great rapport with her students and holds them to a high standard.”

* Jesse Fortune, adjunct faculty. An alumna of RCC, Ms. Fortune joined the adjunct faculty in Spring 2023. She regularly teaches history courses for the college’s program at Haynesville Correctional Center. Despite the confines of her classroom at the Correctional Center, she engages her students with phenomenal stories and discussion to bring history alive. Outside of RCC, she teaches Middle School for King William County Public Schools and is planning to begin offering Dual Enrollment History next year.

“It was clear she had a phenomenal rapport with her students. What’s more, during the lesson she not only covered the traditional topics of a U.S. History class, she shared knowledge of her personal experience with local Virginia tribes. She was able to bring forth an open discussion about diversity in her class,” the nominator commented.

* Brittany Abdul-Malik, full-time staff, Donor Relations Specialist. Another alumna of RCC, Ms. Abdul-Malik was a work-study student from 2011 to 2015. She returned to work at RCC full-time in 2018 as the donor relations specialist, coordinating the Educational Foundation’s annual Preakness Party fundraiser, annual fund mailings, communicating with donors, and in 2021 also took on programming and management of the Rappahannock Institute for Lifelong Learning.

“Brittany is a very hard worker and is honest. She assists her coworkers and completed her Bachelor’s degree and is working on her Master’s all while maintaining her many responsibilities. Brittany was instrumental in the record fundraising results of the 2022 Preakness event,” commented the nominators.

* Dr. Lekh Adhikari, full-time faculty, Physical Sciences Discipline Lead and Chemistry Professor has been a member of the RCC faculty since 2015. He supports research projects of his students and helps them find opportunities to represent their research on the state level.

Student comments on his nomination included, “Dr. Adhikari manages to supervise and help students, without doing all the work himself, allowing the students to further develop problem-solving and researching skills; He challenges his students with classwork that forces us to not just remember formulas but to understand the material.”

Dr. Ralph D. Elliott established an award in 2022 to annually recognize and honor an RCC instructor, staff member, or administrator who has promoted initiatives in the field of workforce credential or continuing education in a worthy and exemplary manner. This year’s winner of the Dr. Ralph D. Elliott Award is Sherry Grantham, Adult Education Regional Specialist, and current president of the Support Staff Association. Her nominators said, “She is very supportive and always willing to help in every way possible to help you get to your goals. She is a wonderful and caring person.”

“I congratulate the winners and all those who were nominated,” said RCC President Shannon Kennedy. “As one student nominator said, ‘All of the RCC staff and faculty are exemplary and have proven their commitment to the students,’ and I completely agree!”

###

Since 1970, Rappahannock Community College has been breaking down barriers to education in the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck. Five degrees, 6 certificates, and 26 career and workforce studies programs are offered through RCC, in addition to nearly 40 guaranteed admissions agreements with colleges and universities across the state and region. For more information, visit rappahannock.edu.