Marcia Emerson receives the Employee of the Year Award from Dr. Benz

DFCI's first Employee of the Year: Marcia Emerson

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When Marcia Emerson joined Dana-Farber in 2005 to manage content on the Institute’s intranet, the employee Web site was badly in need of an overhaul.

Since then, Emerson – serving as intranet editor in the Communications Department – has helped transform DFCI Online into a key communications tool that helps employees do their jobs more effectively and connects staff on an expanding campus, both to each other and the organization’s mission. Last year, intranet usage rose 30 percent, thanks in large part to Emerson’s work building and promoting DFCI Online.

For her efforts, Emerson received Dana-Farber’s first Employee of the Year Award at a ceremony on Jan. 16 in the Smith Family Room.

“I’m totally shocked and honored,” the 28-year-old Emerson said as she accepted the award from President Edward J. Benz Jr., MD. “I love my job and I have wonderful colleagues. Please use the intranet!”

Emerson, who received an Individual Impact Award during the last quarter, was selected by members of Dana-Farber’s executive management group. The distinction came with an American Express card worth 500 points.

Darlene Lewis, PhD, senior vice president for Human Resources, said the Employee of the Year Award reflects DFCI’s strategic goal of creating an ideal work environment. A key component of that, she said, involves “recognizing our staff for their hard work and diligence every day.”

Emerson’s role

Working with colleagues in Communications, Emerson has helped departments build and organize their content, expanded webcasts of events and meetings, promoted tools such as the Collaboration Workspace and web conferencing, launched employee surveys, helped improve the search function and other intranet tools, and spearheaded some more light-hearted features, such as the “Photo of the Week.” She works with 100 or so contributors around the Institute who manage content for their areas. Today, DFCI Online boasts about 4,000 pages of material.

In addition, Emerson writes and edits stories for the intranet and staff newspaper Inside the Institute, serves on various DFCI committees, and outside
Nominator Valerie Ching of the Office of Diversity and Talent Management wrote this about Emerson: “By enhancing and improving the intranet as a major medium of internal communication, she has influenced the way we are able to do our work, which in turn helps us contribute more effectively towards our mission.” Ching also pointed out Emerson’s intellect, commitment to high standards, compassion, respect, and sense of humor.

In his remarks, President Benz thanked the award nominees and all staff. Citing the core values of impact, discovery, excellence, and compassion and respect, he said, “This is what all of you in this room and our colleagues represent. Whether you’re in a laboratory, clinic, or office, this is an organization that innovates and invents and learns. Everyone is relentless in trying to excel, but still at our core . . . this is a place where we can give and get compassion and respect.”

Leading up to the winner’s announcement was a humorous video produced for the event by the Communications Department. It featured science writer Richard Saltus as a somewhat scatterbrained journalist trying to track down the winner of the Employee of the Year. Venturing from campus to campus, he winds up in Chief Operating Officer Janet Porter’s Dana 16 office and steals the interoffice envelope with the recipient’s name. Before he has a chance to reveal the secret, the screen goes blank.

In the Smith Family Room, Benz then stepped to the podium with the coveted envelope and read Marcia Emerson’s name, to the cheers of her friends and colleagues.

To learn more about the employee awards and recognition program, visit the Employee Relations section.

By Debra Ruder

Photo: Sam Ogden