

Three SUU employees widely acknowledged for excellent service

De Nean Petersen ('86), a counselor at Southern Utah University's Wellness Center, was honored with the Outstanding New Professional Award at Utah's National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) Conference in September. She was chosen from among professionals in six states, including Utah, Nevada, Washington, Oregon, Alaska and Idaho.

The award is given to a professional with fewer than five years of experience in student affairs and who has given outstanding service to an institution of higher education. The individual should also demonstrate innovation or creativity within student affairs, be active in student affairs professional organizations, and show a significant promise for future leadership roles in the student affairs profession.

A second SUU employee who has been recognized by NASPA for outstanding job performance is **Georgia Beth Thompson**, vice president for student services. She was honored at the NASPA Western Regional Conference in Tucson, Arizona, on Nov. 11. Thompson received the Scott Goodnight Award for Outstanding Performance as a Dean, a feat for



De Nean Petersen



Georgia Beth Thompson



Jeb Branin

which she was in competition with candidates from Utah, Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Alberta, Nevada, Montana, Washington and British Columbia.

The Scott Goodnight Award is given to a dean or vice president who has demonstrated sustained professional service in student affairs work; competency in administrative skills; innovative response in meeting students' needs; effectiveness in developing junior staff members; and leadership in community and university affairs. The award is given at both the regional and national levels and is named for NASPA's founding president.

Jeb Branin, associate director of the SUU Student Success Center, was named the Outstanding Orientation Professional at the international conference in Florida of the National Orientation

Directors Association (NODA).

This award is given to an individual who makes outstanding contributions to the orientation, retention and transition profession; enhances a model orientation, retention and transition program that meets the varied needs of students; exhibits notable regional and/or national leadership; and extends the scope of the orientation, retention and transition profession beyond his/her institution.

Next year's international NODA conference will be in Salt Lake City, Utah. Branin will be co-hosting the event with Gwen Fears at the University of Utah and a team of about 30 professionals from all over the country.

Written by Elizabeth Bowler, senior Communication major from Washington, UT.

SUUPER STUDENT

Utah National Guard Medic and SUU Nursing student **Jill Stevens** returned to classes this past Fall after serving for a year with the 211th Aviation Group in Afghanistan. She stitched up a few injured soldiers here and there but spent much of her time running humanitarian aid to the locals.

Stationed at Bagram Air Base, the 22-year-old Stevens often ventured via helicopter on missions to a remote village named Jegdalek. Children particularly caught her attention. She won them over making funny faces.

After returning to camp one day, Stevens noticed the crossed eyes of a 5-year-old girl in a photograph she had

taken. She went to work lining up a surgeon to correct the problem.

Because of other duties, Stevens wasn't able to get back to the village for five months. And when she did, Halima was not among the children gathered to greet the soldiers. But then, like in the movies, the crowd parted and Stevens and the girl ran to each other and embraced. Stevens called it a "magical moment."

"I made a difference in her life, and she made a difference in mine," she said.

"I love challenges," she said. "How could I not do this? It's just another chance to serve my country."