

Madison Mayor Rhodes-Conway: Introduces new hires

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Today, Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway announced three new hires: two Deputy Mayors and an Executive Assistant.

“I am excited to announce these new employees in the Mayor’s Office as we continue to build a strong team to support smart, effective government and policymaking in Madison,” said Mayor Rhodes-Conway. “Everyone in my office will focus on collaboration, equity and community engagement, in addition to being assigned to one of my specific priorities including housing, transit and climate resilience.”

Dr. Linda Vakunta joins the Mayor’s Office to assist with housing and human services with more than a decade of experience in grassroots community engagement and program development, monitoring and evaluation work. She served as Program Director at the Chicago-based Heartland Alliance International (HAI), where she led, developed, and designed training programs for government, community, and non-governmental organizations to combat trafficking in persons. In recent years, she has worked as a researcher with Sustaining Natural Circle’s CDC funded grant on understanding impacts of opioid use among African American women in Madison. Dr. Vakunta is a founder and executive director of a Wisconsin-based non-profit called Project 1808. She was instrumental in the growth, success, and global-local recognition of the group as an important player in transforming lives, enabling youth and adults, and building capacity in Sierra Leone through School-Community-University Partnership Models. She holds a PhD in Environmental Studies, a Master’s Degree in Rehabilitation Psychology and a Bachelor’s Degree in

psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her start date is June 3.

Cameron McLay will assist the Mayor with the City-wide initiative on Performance Excellence. McLay has enjoyed a long career creating high-performing outcome based organizations, with a goal of providing equitable and high-quality service to communities. McLay served for many years with the City of Madison Police Department, where he retired at the rank of captain in 2014. He later served as the Chief of Police for the City of Pittsburg where he institutionalized data-driven community-oriented policing; improved relationships between officers and the communities they served, and instituted systems of accountability to restore integrity to the leadership systems. He also recently served as a Senior Advisor for PricewaterhouseCoopers Safe Neighborhood Analytics Initiative and as a consultant to the City of Seattle. McLay holds a Master's Degree in Organizational Leadership, with an academic focus on human resource performance. He will begin his job on June 10.

Natasha Holmes will serve as the Mayor's Executive Assistant. She has a wealth of professional experience in both executive management, marketing and social media. As a Senior Administrative Operations Assistant and as a Senior Executive Assistant at UW Health, Natasha supported the Maintenance and Engineering Department of over 200 employees, and worked as the Executive Assistant for the department's director, as well as three other senior managers. Prior to her work at UW Health, Natasha was the Digital Marketing and Social Media manager for Max Score Credit in Silver Springs, MD and brings social media experience to the Mayor's Office, including a stint as a realtor in Washington, DC where she focused heavily on property marketing through social media to sell historic homes. She earned a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and Supply Chain Management from Howard University. She is a proud graduate of Madison West High School. Her first day in her new position will be June 3.