

UW System: Regents' 2019 Diversity Awards recipients announced

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Educators in Eau Claire, Milwaukee, and Oshkosh recognized for work to support student success

MADISON, Wis. – The University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents will honor the recipients of the 11th annual Regents' Diversity Awards on February 8 in Madison at the next Regents meeting. These awards recognize individuals and programs that foster access and success for students who are members of historically underrepresented populations. Each recipient will receive \$5,000 to support professional development or continue the program being honored.

"The remarkable people and teams we selected for this year's Regents' Diversity Awards are making an impact on their campus to increase opportunity for all student populations," said Regent Mark Tyler, who chaired the special Regents' committee to determine the recipients. "We are delighted to recognize their profound dedication to building partnerships to support retention and student success."

Award recipients were selected using the following criteria:

Sustainable positive impact on equity and diversity, leading to positive institutional change.

Accountability demonstrated through routine assessment and feedback to promote forward movement on equity and diversity goals.

Intersections across multiple dimensions of diversity.

Collaborations with other units, departments, or communities – within the institution and beyond.

The 2019 recipients are:

Individual: Dennis K. Beale Jr., Assistant Director, Blugold Beginnings, UW-Eau Claire.

A two-time alumnus of UW-Eau Claire, Beale began his career there as a graduate assistant who supported student athletes, especially those of color, by developing their talents on the field and ensuring they had a strong community off the field. He assisted with recruiting efforts at high schools in major cities to bring students of color to campus and supported their success by creating mentoring programs and fostering leadership skills. Over the past four years, Beale has continued to contribute to the university, first as a student services coordinator and now as assistant director of the award-winning Blugold Beginnings program, which works to make higher education possible for low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students. He works closely with departments and units across campus to actively engage students, faculty, and staff in creating a more welcoming and inclusive campus. He has developed many programs and initiatives, including the influential Black Male Empowerment (BME) group, which he mentors. This past summer, Beale led a group of 15 BME students in a successful intercultural exchange to England and France to encourage African-American students to participate in faculty-student research and study abroad. The students will present their findings this spring at UW-Eau Claire's annual Celebration of Excellence in Research and Creative Activity.

Team: Food Center and Pantry, UW-Milwaukee (UWM).

The UWM Food Center and Pantry is a collaborative effort among students, faculty, and staff to address equity issues related to hunger and food insecurity on campus. Its mission is to ensure the entire UWM community has nutritious food and key necessities in a welcoming and educational space. Since its inception in January 2018, the pantry has helped address increasing student need. The pantry's sole staff person, Quincy Kissack, assistant director of Student Association Professional Staff, oversees the daily operations of the UWM Food Center and Pantry, including supervising and scheduling student employees and volunteers. During off hours, students can get access through the Student Association, Dean of Students, Inclusive Excellence Center, or LGBT Resource Center. The pantry collects demographic information and comments from students via a drop box and email. The data is used to improve processes and ensure that it is equitable, inclusive, and accessible to meet the needs of UWM's diverse student population. The Food Center and Pantry collaborates with Pick 'N Save and the Hunger Task Force to bring fresh,

healthy food at discount prices to UWM every month. The pantry also works with community partners to connect students to local food agencies and hosts dialogues on campus to spread awareness about food insecurity and ways to combat hunger.

Team: Titan Advantage Program (TAP), UW-Oshkosh.

TAP began in 2014 as a group of concerned faculty and staff on campus were addressing the issues of recruitment, retention, and persistence to graduation of underrepresented students. A 15-member team made up of experts on academic persistence, success, resources, and pedagogy, particularly as it pertains to students of color, created the summer bridge program for incoming underrepresented, low-income, and first-generation college students to earn four to six college credits the summer prior to their first year at UW-Oshkosh. To date, 137 students of color have successfully completed the program, which is coordinated by Mai Khou Xiong, assistant director and program manager for access and retention in Student Achievement Services within Academic Support and Inclusive Excellence, a division led by Associate Vice Chancellor Sylvia Carey-Butler. UW-Oshkosh has increased the enrollment of students of color from 11.4% in 2013 to 15.7% in 2018. Evidence shows that TAP has played a significant role in attracting and enrolling increased numbers of students of color even if they do not participate in the program because TAP students are recruiting family and friends to enroll at UW-Oshkosh.

Other members of the selection committee included Regent Eve Hall, Regent Cris Peterson, and Regent Ryan Ring.

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The University of Wisconsin System serves more than 170,000 students. Awarding 36,000 degrees annually, the UW System is Wisconsin's talent pipeline, putting graduates in position to increase their earning power, contribute to their communities, and make Wisconsin a better place to live. More than 80 percent of UW System graduates stay in Wisconsin five years after earning a degree. The UW System provides a 23:1 return on state investment. UW System institutions also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin's culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy.

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