

Marquette University: Financial aid systems director honored with Excellence in University Service Award

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MILWAUKEE — Neelima Tummala, assistant director of systems for the Office of Student Financial Aid at Marquette University, is a recipient of a 2020 Excellence in University Service Award.

What inspires Tummala in her career is the way in which her team exudes professionalism and comes together to tackle challenges — especially the unprecedented adversity as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. To her colleagues, though, Tummala is the one who plays an integral role in making the office run smoothly and promoting a positive outlook that extends beyond OSFA.

Caring, dedicated, enthusiastic and responsible are words commonly used to describe Tummala's character. Her work ethic and strong ability to relate to others make her a model colleague, a valuable resource for students, and a representation of the university's mission and values, particularly *cura personalis* — the Ignatian principle of caring for the whole person.

A person who nominated Tummala for the award wrote: "Neelima is one of the most invested colleagues on campus because she cares that our students and her coworkers have a good experience. Her touch on the university is far reaching. She wears multiple hats and does them all well. Personally, I can rely on Neelima to be an engaged partner whether working on data queries, website updates, financial literacy, regulatory implementation and so much more."

Tummala is also known for her unique ability to take large projects, easily break them down into definable goals and attainable tasks, and effectively communicate it to all. Moreover, during tough times when it would be easiest to stay out of the spotlight, Tummala demonstrates her powerful leadership skills by stepping up and eagerly taking on additional responsibilities.

As someone with a true passion for helping others, solving problems and offering her expertise to support people in achieving their goals, Tummala proves day in and day out she could not be more fitting for her role from which the campus community greatly benefits.

The Excellence in University Service Awards recognize staff members for their contributions to the essential work of Marquette at the highest level of excellence. Candidates are nominated based on meritorious service that is above and beyond the duties normally assigned to their positions.