



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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News Release

## UW System Board of Regents announces 2021 Diversity Awards

*Educators in Eau Claire, Madison, and across the state recognized for work to support student success*

MADISON, Wis.—The University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents will honor the recipients of the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Regents' Diversity Awards on February 5 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 is awarded \$7,500 to support professional development or continue the program being honored.

"From an impressive pool of nominees, we selected three outstanding awardees for increasing opportunity and making a lasting impact on their UW campus communities," said Regent Olivia Woodmansee, who chaired the special Regents' committee to determine the recipients. "We are proud to recognize their exceptional dedication to expanding partnerships that support student success for all student populations."

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 university and beyond.

The 2021 recipients are:

- **Individual: Dr. Selika Ducksworth-Lawton, Professor of History, UW-Eau Claire.**  
Ducksworth-Lawton has played a pivotal role at UW-Eau Claire in producing positive university change in equity and diversity. She created and teaches courses on African American history, the Civil Rights movement, and Black masculinity. She served as one of the first Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) fellows on campus, working on the university's 2016 EDI Implementation plan and with the Office of Multicultural Affairs on training staff and students to be more attuned to EDI issues. In that position, she created a mentoring program for underrepresented students which became part of the Blugold Beginnings precollege initiative. She advised Black student organizations and recently helped guide and lead student responses to incidents on campus, in the community, and across the country. Beyond the university, she works with local government and community organizations, participating in regional and national conversations about race and social justice and its effects, such as co-hosting a weekly radio show and podcast, "Conversations of Color," which features community conversations around race and how to create an inclusive community.

- Program: Counseling Services, UW-Eau Claire.**  
 Counseling Services, led by Dr. Riley McGrath, develops resources and mental health services to support UW-Eau Claire's efforts to make access to education equitable. The department fosters greater access and success for students of color, students with disabilities, first-generation college students, international students, and LGBTQIA students. The department has improved student outcomes by collaborating with other student-supporting organizations; diversifying its staff; creating staff growth plans to increase cultural competence; and providing relevant training to the campus community. Clinicians work to stay current with industry and national best practices, participate in ongoing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) training and education, and offer identity specific group therapy. Since 2016, Counseling Services has seen a 45 percent increase in use of services among students of color. Because of efforts to diversify its professional staff, the department now offers services in Spanish and Hmong.
- Program: Wisconsin Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (WiscAMP), UW-Madison.**  
 The Wisconsin Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (WiscAMP) was established in 2004 with a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to increase the number of students graduating in a STEM discipline (science, technology, engineering, or mathematics) who are from an ethnic or racial group that is minoritized in STEM. Led by Dr. Gail Coover as its executive director, WiscAMP contributes to the successful recruitment, retention, academic success, and career paths of hundreds of students, sustaining connections across 13 UW System campuses, Wisconsin's private colleges, and Madison College. Over the past decade, more than 90 Wisconsin small grants and subawards have supported initiatives at every alliance institution, with more than 90 percent of resources going to students. The five-year growth rate in underrepresented minority STEM degrees averaged across participating institutions between 2014 and 2018 was 86 percent compared to 46 percent between 2009 and 2013. This translates into an average of 200 more underrepresented minority students graduating with STEM baccalaureate degrees each year between 2013 and 2018 compared to the previous five years.

Other members of the selection committee included Regent Amy Blumenfeld Bogost, Regent Héctor Colón, and Regent Robert Atwell.

The committee also recognizes the important contributions of this year's other nominees. Individual nominees included Kelli Strickland, UW-Green Bay; Dr. Charles Martin-Stanley, UW-La Crosse; Elizabeth Evans, UW-Madison; Dr. Donald F. Hones, UW Oshkosh; Giovanna Gutierrez, UW-Parkside; Lystra Yates, UW-Stout; and Dr. Kenny E. Yarbrough, UW-Whitewater.

Program nominees included Department of African and African Diaspora Studies, UW-Milwaukee; Office of Campus Climate, UW-Platteville; Social Justice Action Committee, UW-River Falls; Center for Inclusive Teaching and Learning, UW-Stevens Point; Stout Student Association Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Council, UW-Stout; and the Stolen Sisters Exhibition, UW-Whitewater.

**To download high-resolution photos of recipients, see [online news release](#).**

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*The University of Wisconsin System serves approximately 165,000 students. Awarding nearly 37,000 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. Nearly 90 percent of in-state*

*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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