State Council on Affirmative Action

Diversity Award Honors

Past Recipients (2010-2014)

The Office of State Employment Relations

(OSER)

The overall mission of the Office of State Employment Relations (OSER) is to provide innovative human resources leadership and strategic direction to Wisconsin state government in order to maximize the quality and diversity of the state's workforce. The annual diversity awards program established by the State Council on Affirmative Action (SCAA) and described in this booklet helps OSER fulfill its mission by encouraging all state agencies and UW system campuses to develop innovative programs in affirmative action and equal employment opportunity. I congratulate the SCAA and its dedicated members for their commitment to promoting diversity in our state.

Gregory L. Gracz, OSER Director

Purpose of This Publication

- The Wisconsin State Council on Affirmative Action (SCAA) established the diversity award in 2000 to recognize the achievements of outstanding affirmative action and equal employment opportunity practices among state agencies and University of Wisconsin system campuses.
- The State Council advises the Director of the Office of State Employment Relations (OSER) on the progress of affirmative action programs throughout the Wisconsin civil service system.
- Each year the Wisconsin State Council on Affirmative Action (SCAA) gives two awards to recognize efforts that have been made in creating new and innovative programs that foster diversity. One of these awards is made to a governmental agency, the other to a division of the University of Wisconsin System.
- This publication is designed to provide a summary of the programs that have been awarded this recognition for the last five years. In addition, at the end of the document there is a complete list of the awardees. There is also a reference to the web page where a description of each program that was honored can be found.
- With this publication the SCAA wants to continue to honor those agencies and universities that have received awards in the past. The programs and initiatives that are described in this publication can serve as positive examples of what can be done to promote diversity across the state of Wisconsin.
- Contact information for particular programs can be obtained from the Division of Affirmative Action (DAA) of OSER.

Greeting from Chris Zenchenko, Chair
SCAA

The publication you have in your hands celebrates and promotes the mission and vision of the State Council on Affirmative Action.

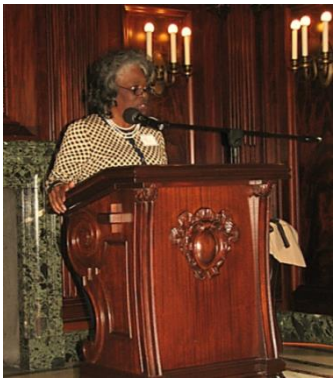
As chair it is a great pleasure for me to encourage and promote all that is being done at our state agencies and universities to make Wisconsin a place for all citizens to live learn and work.

Diversity is more than a word. It is a concept that makes it possible for everyone to contribute to the richness of life we live here in our great state. As you look at the many creative and effective programs that have earned recognition in the past consider how you can learn from the experiences and efforts they highlight.

The awards represent ways to make a difference. Use them to share and promote similar efforts in your organizations. Also consider ways you can do even more to improve and expand equal opportunity whenever and wherever you can.

My sincerest hope is that a program in your organization is one of those recognized in 2015 so it will appear in these pages next year.

Greeting from Jeanette Johnson, Administrator
Division of Affirmative Action



Greetings

It is a great pleasure for me to congratulate the State Council on Affirmative Action (SCAA) Diversity Award Honorees.

I commend the SCAA for your efforts and accomplishments over the years in promoting diversity within Wisconsin state government and honoring those agencies and universities for their accomplishments.

The Office of State Employment Relations (OSER), Division of Affirmative Action (DAA) is committed to supporting the SCAA. One of the most significant ways we can assist is by continuing to provide assistance to the agencies and universities. OSER, DAA strives to engage state agencies and universities and help them to create an inclusive culture which enables employees feel valued, appreciated and to contribute their best work. Our diversity and inclusion efforts are focused on nurturing a diverse workplace that is representative of the agencies and universities we serve. These efforts will not only drive growth but create a fully engaged and inspired workforce.

I wish all honorees my best for successfully building relationships through diversity. I hope that you continue to diversify your agencies and universities and are inspired to take the next step to have a talented workforce that mirrors the population we serve.

Statement from the Wisconsin SCAA

Whereas the Wisconsin State Council on Affirmative Action was created under Chapter 196, Laws of 1977, as a 15-member citizen body appointed by the Governor and legislative leaders to evaluate the state's progress in achieving statutory affirmative action objectives and to operate in an advisory capacity to the Director of the Office of State Employment Relations;

And whereas as part of this advisory capacity, the Council is charged with evaluating the progress of affirmative action programs throughout the civil service system and seeking compliance with state and federal regulations and recommending improvements in the state's affirmative action efforts as an employer;

And whereas the Council has as one of its goals to develop and strengthen the working relationship with agency and university affirmative action officers and affirmative action advisory committees;

And whereas the Council is also charged to continue follow-up discussions with state AA/EEO Officers to ensure that proper leadership and support is available to perform job descriptions functions;

And whereas the current financial and economic situation in the United States as well as in Wisconsin has led to significant unemployment and job uncertainty,

We, the members of the Wisconsin State Council on Affirmative Action do affirm our commitment to the mission and goals of this body; attest to our continued interest in providing equal opportunity to all individuals in their pursuit of employment; and declare our dedication to the principle that all candidates for positions within the state of Wisconsin system be judged on their qualifications and not on their gender, race, ethnicity, age, ability, sexual orientation and/or creed.

Members of the Wisconsin State Council on Affirmative Action

Christopher Zenchenko, Chair
James Parker, Vice Chair
Yolanda Santos Adams
John E. Magerus
Patricia Matthews
Angela Kellogg
Janice Hughes
Lakshmi Bharadwaj
Roger L. Pulliam
Fred Royal
Al Thompson

The Annual Diversity Award for State Agencies

The State Council on Affirmative Action (SCAA) established the Diversity Award in 2000 to recognize the achievements of outstanding affirmative action and equal employment opportunity practices among state agencies.

- *Eligibility*--State agencies apply for this award through a self-nomination process. Agencies are encouraged to select a single program for award nomination rather than an array of programs or initiatives.
- *Application*--Applications for the award must include: 1) a letter from the agency head; 2) the rationale for developing or undertaking the program or initiative; and 3) a description of the program or initiative, its objectives and its impact on the agency's overall diversity achievements.
- *Review*--The members of the State Council on Affirmative Action review each application and look for a demonstration of the following: 1) a strong commitment to the recruitment, retention and promotion of a diverse workforce, 2) measurable and innovative recruitment efforts/initiatives that attract and provide access for minorities, women, and persons with disabilities; and 3) improvements in upward mobility for racial and ethnic minorities, women and persons with disabilities.
- *Award Presentation*--Awards are presented at a ceremony at the State Capitol in Madison in October. The secretary of the state agency and the individual responsible for administering the program are notified of the award no later than September 30th.

The Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award

The Educational Diversity Award was introduced in 2003 to recognize the efforts and achievements of state institutions of higher learning in preparing minorities, women, and persons with disabilities for employment in the state of Wisconsin. In Fall 2004 the award was renamed to honor UW-River Falls Chancellor Ann Lydecker, who died in a car accident in March 2004. Chancellor Lydecker was a tireless worker for diversity efforts during her educational career.

The Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award recognizes exceptional efforts made by University of Wisconsin campuses for their recruitment and retention of a diverse student body and diverse faculty workforce as evidenced by data showing improved outcomes.

- *Eligibility*--University of Wisconsin System campus apply for this award through a self-nomination process. Campuses are encouraged to select a single program for award nomination rather than an array of programs or initiatives.
- *Application*--Applications for the award must include: 1) a letter from the university chancellor; 2) the rationale for developing or undertaking the program or initiative; and 3) a description of the program or initiative, its objectives and its impact on the university's overall diversity achievements.
- *Review*--The members of the State Council on Affirmative Action review each application and look for a demonstration of the following: 1) a commitment to the value of a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic experiences for students at all levels of academic pursuit; 2) initiatives that support and enhance the recruitment and retention of multi-cultural racial and ethnic minorities, women, and persons with disabilities for matriculation and employment in the state of Wisconsin institutions of higher learning; and 3) innovative programs that address diversity issues through college or pre-college programs.
- *Award Presentation*--Awards are presented at a ceremony at the State Capitol in Madison in October. The chancellor of the university and the individual responsible for administering the program are notified of the award no later than September 30th.

Recipients of the 2014 Diversity Awards

The **2014 Diversity Award** was given to the Department of Children and Families for its recruitment and retention program in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW).

Becky Schermer, Human Resource Specialist in Milwaukee, accepted the award for the Department of Children and Families. Ms Schermer was instrumental in establishing the process that is described below.

The Department had been experiencing significant turnover in critical positions in the Bureau. Based on close evaluation of recruitment and retention data, they undertook a systemic change in operations. Together with the Bureau of Human Resources, the BMCW:

1) developed the new Initial Assessment Specialist (IAS) classification that is more reflective of the child protective services work being performed;
2) modified the assessment criteria of the classification by broadening the education and experiential requirements;
3) reevaluated and expanded the recruitment outreach process for the position, and
4) further defined the internal training program provided to new and current IAS employees.

These changes significantly improved the quality of the recruitment process, enabled the BMCW to maintain minimum staffing levels, and enabled this Bureau to recruit a more diverse, qualified applicant pool from which a more diverse workforce has been hired.

The **Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award for 2014** was given to the Eagle Mentoring Program at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

Professor Victor Macias-Gonzalez, the Creator and Director of this mentoring program, accepted the award.

The Eagle Mentoring Program was established at UW-La Crosse to address disparities in retention, academic achievement, and graduation rates among low-income, under-represented minority and first generation students. The Eagle Mentoring Program focuses on academically strong students in the liberal arts, and reaches them during their critical second year of college when many students flounder due to a lack of awareness of campus resources and the absence of consistent faculty support. By providing these students with personalized mentoring and support designed to maximize their academic potential the program has achieved a success rate (progress toward graduation) of 96% over five annual cohorts of 10 to 12 students each. The University of Wisconsin System has recognized it as a "proven program for academic success."

A **Program Achievement Award** was given to the Department of Natural Resources for its Tribal Youth Internship Programs. John Gozdzialski, Director of the Northern Region of the DNR, accepted the award.

The tribal youth internship programs sponsored and supported by the DNR are focused on middle and high school aged youth so they can pursue studies in high school and beyond that will prepare them for a career in natural resources. These programs not only spark interest in natural resources but they also build bridges to help tribal youth transform that interest into a career. This is another effort by the DNR to broaden the scope of its employees.

A **Program Achievement Award** was given to UW-Marathon County's Multicultural Resource Center. Greg Lampe, Provost of the UW-Colleges, accepted the award.

The Multicultural Resource Center of UW-Marathon County has been fundamental in creating a safe gathering space for students, developing co-curricular programs that increase awareness of diversity and multicultural issues, advocating for policies and practices that create an inclusive campus climate, and assisting the campus in reducing barriers to higher education for under-represented populations. The committee was impressed by the fact that this program is student-led and goes beyond the college campus to include the local community.

2013 Recipients of the Annual Diversity Award

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), were given the 2013 large-focused program award, for their joint agency training efforts which pooled resources and staff to target internal department-wide diversity needs more efficiently.

- The joint collaborative AA/EEO Training created by DWD and DOC staff was entitled "Respect and Inclusion in the Workplace Training." A main goal identified for this training was for participants to be able to identify behaviors to avoid and apply strategies in the workplace to enhance a positive work environment.

- This interactive training was developed for the employees of these two agencies who are located statewide. This full-day training, includes group and practical exercises and video clips, and focuses on what contributes to a respectful and inclusive workplace, and details how perception and bias can influence the work environment.

- By offering the training at various locations throughout the state, AA/EEO training participation has increased for both agencies. In addition, by sharing resources/costs for this joint training, both agencies are more effectively utilizing resources/staff time, cutting down on training costs, and furthering Lean Government initiatives/goals.

The smaller-focused program diversity award was given to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center (SRSTC) for its successful efforts at increasing the diversity of the workforce at its Center.

- Included in the efforts launched through the SRSTC Affirmative Action Committee were the following: visits to Job Center and distribution of information about job opportunities at SRSTC; increases in advertising avenues through identified contacts; implementation of a process of maintaining contacts with job fair individuals; designing specialized brochures for use in recruiting; promoting Juneau County as a place to live.

- The number of minority applicants increased from six to 11 in the space of one year. This increase can be attributed to a concerted effort to contact technical colleges and job centers throughout Southern and Central Wisconsin. SRSTC continues to expand on its accomplishments by developing a culture that supports and values diversity.

2013 Recipient of the Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award

The Educational Diversity Award was given to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, for its innovative and evidence-based approach to student retention, and its ability to attract and serve students of color.

- The *Bluegold Beginnings* was launched in 2008 as part of a strategic goal to increase recruitment and retention of underrepresented students.

- In its fifth year (2012-2013) *Bluegold Beginnings* served over 550 fifth through twelfth grade students in twice weekly tutoring sessions, 1,800 fifth grade students for a campus tour day, 1,000 eighth grade students for a Science, Technology, Engineer, Math (STEM) Day, 250 students through summer programming, and 80 multicultural UW-Eau Claire students through a learning community.

- The elementary school program has a tutoring/mentoring component and a campus tour day event. A total of 304 volunteers served a total of 1975 hours, helping make Tour Day a huge success.

- *Bluegold Beginnings* serves seven area middle schools, a total of over 250 students, during resource time twice per week during the school day and during afterschool programming.

- At the high school level, UW-Eau Claire mentors meet twice weekly with over 125 high school student to provide tutoring services, mentoring, and to complete a 27-week course curriculum that covers topics associated with academic success.

- *Learning Community*: Once students reach college, the *Bluegold Beginnings* Learning Community (BBLC) provides underrepresented students the opportunity to continue their education in an inclusive environment with peers of similar backgrounds.

- In order to maximize external grant funding, collaborate effectively with community stakeholders and schools, provide adequate reporting to external funders, and continuously improve, the *Bluegold Beginnings* program has developed a comprehensive research project.

2012 Recipients of the Annual Diversity Award

The Diversity Award for 2012 was given to the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) for its successful efforts to recruit and hire Wisconsin's disabled veterans.

- The DOA improved veteran outreach in four areas: recruitment, utilizing existing veteran programs, attending Job Fairs, and collaborating with other agencies.

- These efforts increased veteran applications and new hires not only for the Department of Administration but also for consolidated and attached agencies/boards.

- Wisconsin had 3,200 soldiers return from Iraq in the spring of 2010. DOA sent specific position descriptions to Wisconsin National Guard units in an attempt to reach more returning veterans.

- Between September 2010 and July 2012, DOA attended six veteran specific job fairs, to include Madison, Eau Claire, Kenosha and Milwaukee areas. During this time, DOA was able to interface with over 800 veterans.

- DOA utilized the Noncompetitive Appointment for Certain Disabled Veterans program, for eight fulltime and one half time permanent positions within the Division of State Facilities. These recruitments resulted in hiring four disabled veterans. In addition, the Power Plant recruited and hired two veterans in three of their Limited Term Employment positions.

- DOA recognizes that hiring a veteran adds strength to our team. Veterans bring with them leadership skills, teamwork, respect for procedures, integrity, global technology and efficient performance under pressure.

A program achievement award was given to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) for its work to increase the number of persons with disabilities among its employees.

- DWD determined to accomplish this increase through various initiatives, which included the identification of positions that would be dedicated to the hiring of persons with several disabilities.

- The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) worked with DWD and its divisions to increase the use of DVR On-the-Job Training Internships in Limited Term positions.

- As a result of this initiative, DWD utilized 21 DVR Interns in 2010, 29 DVR Interns in 2011, and 23 DVR Interns in 2012. By the date of the award DWD had hired 11 DVR Interns into permanent and/or project DWD positions.

2012 Recipient of the Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award

The 2012 Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award was given to the University of Wisconsin-Stout, for its rigorous provision of an intentionally-designed diversity-based curriculum.

- The goals of this curriculum were to improve retention rates among students of color and other underserved populations, and to graduate students who could function effectively within a diverse society.

- Seventeen faculty members committed to a year-long project that challenged their perceptions and understanding of diversity and multiculturalism, often provoking genuine reflection on life-long internalized beliefs and attitudes.

- Building on these understandings and other resources, these educators transformed their courses, exposing 584 students to this intentionally designed diversity-based curriculum.

- Educational artifacts were produced that improved course content, nurtured more active student engagement, developed a plethora of diversity-based content activities, and created meaningful assessment tools.

- To assess the impact on students, a survey was designed and distributed to all students enrolled in the diversity-based courses during spring 2012.

A program achievement award was given to the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater for its Future Teacher Program. This program addressed the growing need to prepare a diverse, highly-qualified and motivated new generation of PK-12 educators.

- The Future Teacher Program offers students a comprehensive set of high-impact collaborative programming, initiatives, and transformational learning experiences aimed at promoting student success and increasing the number of graduating education majors from minority groups.

- For three years prior to the award, the Future Teacher Program enrolled newly-admitted freshmen in a summer program designed to: 1) help minority students transition to the university, and 2) provide programming and high-impact activities related to the field of education and the concepts of leadership and service.

2011 Recipients of the Annual Diversity Award

The Department of Transportation was selected to receive the annual diversity award for its Bilingual Customers Workgroup Hiring Initiative. This Initiative was instrumental in increasing bilingual staff, translating printed material and web copy in Spanish, and opening a bilingual customer service center in Milwaukee.

- To find the best candidates, the Bilingual Customers Workgroup designed an exam that would better determine the level of skills of each bilingual applicant. Testing included both oral skills and translation abilities.

- In addition to advertising through the usual network, the recruitment exam was advertised directly to the Spanish-speaking community through La Movida radio station in Madison and the La Cup list serve.

- Better up-front recruiting resulted in both a greater pool of qualified candidates and better screening helped those that had the best skills to serve Division of Motor Vehicles' Spanish-speaking customers.

2011 Recipients of the Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater was selected to receive the Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award for its Pathway for Success Initiative. This program was developed to support underrepresented multicultural students enrolled at the university.

- The Pathway for Success Initiative was developed to assist students more systematically toward degree completion. This was accomplished through mandatory participation in study sessions and early enrollment in skill building development courses.

- Pathway for Success Committee members worked with instructors in developmental studies and counselor education to transform one existing course and create one new course in order to enhance the skills as well as career and academic plans of participants.

- Throughout the academic year, all of the instructors and non-instructional staff members involved with Pathway for Success meet to discuss the following: curriculum, students' progress, tutorial support, and suggestions for improvement.

- The intention of the Pathway for Success Initiative was to narrow the gap between remedial population and the non-remedial population in retention rates and six year graduation rates.

2010 Recipient of the Annual Diversity Award

The Department of Natural Resources was selected to receive the highest honor of diversity recognition for its continued outreach efforts beyond the original design of the Harmony in the Woods initiative.

- The DNR established several programs to facilitate communication with the Hmong communities of northwestern Wisconsin.
- In addition, it expanded the program to include a special deer hunt for people with disabilities.
- A Conservation Youth Corps was established with the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Ojibwa Indians and a summer internship program created with the Lac du Flambeau youth.
- Hunting regulations have been translated into Spanish and Hmong as part of this initiative.
- A special effort was made during the 2010 Deputy Warden Water guard recruitment process to attract qualified members of the Hmong community to apply for this position.

2010 Recipients of the Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater was selected to receive the 2010 Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award for its Summer Business Institute program.

- The goal of the Summer Business Institute (SBI) is to increase the retention of diverse students within the College of Business & Economics.
- A collaborative effort involving college administrators, faculty from accounting, economics, business education, marketing, and staff from Academic Support Services resulted in a week-long Summer Business Institute.
- The creation of the SBI provided opportunities for students to connect with business faculty & staff, to learn about basic communication and study skills, to meet with business leaders, and to embark on an understanding of college life.
- Since its inception three years prior to the award, the retention rate and the cumulative grade point average of students of color have improved dramatically in the College of Business & Economics.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison was selected to receive the Program Achievement Award for its Cultural Linguistic Services program.

- Cultural Linguistic Services (CLS) focuses on the recruitment, retention, and promotion of a diverse classified workforce through highly innovative and creative programs and initiatives.
- CLS engages in everyday practices that help with retention by providing interpretation and translation services along with training and educations interventions in Spanish, Hmong, and Tibetan languages.
- Cultural Linguistic Services' mission is to enhance communication, cultural understanding and learning in order to advance a multilingual work environment. This program was developed in response to an increased number of employees being hired for whom English was not their first languages.

Past Recipients of the Annual Diversity Awards

2000
UW-Parkside; Department of Justice; UW-Milwaukee

2001
Department of Workforce Development; Public Service Commission

2002
UW Milwaukee; Department of Revenue

2003
UW River Falls; Department of Transportation; State Office of the Public Defender

2004
UW Green Bay; Department of Workforce Development; Employee Trust Funds; Office of Justice Assistance

2005
UW Oshkosh; UW La Crosse; Department of Health and Family Services, Central Wisconsin Center; State Office of the Public Defender; Tourism

2006
UW Whitewater; Department of Workforce Development; Office of Justice Assistance

2007
Department of Administration; Department of Regulation and Licensing

2008
UW Whitewater; UW Stevens Point; Department of Workforce Development; State Office of the Public Defender

2009
UW Milwaukee; UW Colleges & Extensions; Department of Health Services; Employee Trust Funds

2010
UW Whitewater; Department of Natural Resources

2011
UW Whitewater; Department of Transportation

2012
UW Stout; Department of Administration

2013
UW Eau Claire; Department of Workforce Development & Department of Corrections; Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center

2014
UW La Crosse; UW Marathon County; Department of Children and Families; Department of Natural Resources