

STATE COUNCIL ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
2026 State Council on Affirmative Action Impact Awards
Ann Lydecker Educational Innovation Award

I. Introduction

The State Council on Affirmative Action (SCAA) established its Awards Program in 2000 to recognize outstanding Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Affirmative Action (AA) practices within state agencies, University of Wisconsin System institutions, and Wisconsin Technical College System colleges. Pursuant to Wisconsin Statute, chapter 230.46, the SCAA is an appointed body that advises the Division of Personnel Management Administrator on the progress of affirmative action programs throughout the Wisconsin civil service system. The Council also promotes compliance with state and federal regulations and recommends improvements in the state’s affirmative action efforts as an employer.

As part of this Awards Program, the Council created the **Educational Award** in 2003 and renamed it in 2004 in honor of the late University of Wisconsin–River Falls Chancellor **Ann Lydecker**. This award recognizes exceptional efforts to recruit and retain an innovative, experienced, and skilled faculty workforce and to foster learning environments in which students thrive, as demonstrated by data showing improved educational outcomes.

II. Eligibility

Technical Colleges and University of Wisconsin System campuses are welcome to apply through a self-nomination process. To be considered, colleges and universities must have implemented a program or initiative no later than **January 1, 2025**, and continued the program to the present time. Please select a single program for award nomination rather than an array of programs or initiatives. You may submit a previously nominated program only if significant changes have been implemented since its earlier submission.

III. Nominations and Selection Criteria

The Council will accept nominations for the 2026 SCAA Awards until **Friday, September 11, 2026**.

In the selection process, the Council will review the nominations submitted by universities. The nomination submitted to the Council for consideration must include:

- a. A letter from the university chancellor or college president to the State Council on Affirmative Action. The initiative's letter and description should be no more than three to five (3-5) double-spaced, typed pages.
- b. The rationale for developing or undertaking the program or initiative.
- c. A description of the program or initiative, highlighting the impact of implementing innovative and inclusive best practices in programming and university culture improving opportunities of access to education for all Wisconsin communities.

- d. The information should demonstrate the college or university's efforts and achievement, which addresses the following selection criteria:
 - i. A commitment to values and discuss the experiences and history for students at all levels of academic pursuit; and
 - ii. Initiatives, practices, and programs that will support and enhance the recruitment and retention of all people or students' enrollment in the state of Wisconsin institutions of higher learning. Examples of this could be student retention and graduation rates in critical areas (science, technology, engineering, mathematics, teacher education, business, etc.), participation in high demand and non-traditional programs (study abroad, honor programs, undergraduate research, etc.), college enrollment, and pre-college programs.
 - iii. Initiatives, practices, and programs that will support and enhance the recruitment and retention of all people for employment in the state of Wisconsin institutions of higher learning. Examples of this could be the employment of specialized faculty and staff, summer internships for students, and language access programs.
- e. Email nominations to Briann Padrutt at briann.padrutt@wisconsin.gov with the subject line: **"2026 State Council on Affirmative Action Impact Awards"**.

IV. Judges

A three (3) or five (5) person committee of the State Council on Affirmative Action members, representing communities across the state, and the Division of Personnel Management will review all nominations and rate them according to selection criteria.

V. Award Presentation

The chancellors and presidents of the selected colleges or universities and the persons responsible for administering the programs are notified of the awards no later than **Friday, September 28, 2026**. Awards will be presented on **Friday, October 23, 2026**, in the Assembly Chambers of the State Capitol.

VI. Contact Information

For additional information about the SCAA Ann Lydecker Educational Innovation Award program, email: briann.padrutt@wisconsin.gov.