



**State of Wisconsin  
Department of Administration  
Division of Personnel Management**



**Serving People Who  
Serve Wisconsin**

**State Council on Affirmative Action Report**

**January 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016**

**January 2017**

*Scott Walker*  
Governor  
State of Wisconsin

*Scott Neitzel*  
Secretary  
Department of Administration

*Gregory L. Gracz*  
Administrator  
Division of Personnel Management

101 E. Wilson Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
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**WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF  
ADMINISTRATION**

**SCOTT WALKER**  
GOVERNOR

**SCOTT A. NEITZEL**  
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January 2017

The Honorable Scott Walker  
Governor, State of Wisconsin

The Honorable Roger Roth  
President, Wisconsin Senate

The Honorable Robin J. Vos  
Speaker, Wisconsin Assembly

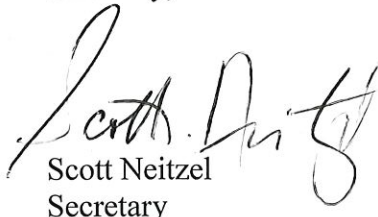
Gentlemen:


I am pleased to present to you the January 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016 annual report for the State Council on Affirmative Action. This report summarizes the Council's activities and highlights the 2016 annual diversity awards.

The Council's mission is to foster progress towards an equitable and diverse workforce in state government and the University of Wisconsin system. Its efforts complement the mission of Division of Personnel Management (DPM), Bureau of Affirmative Action to promote innovative human resources leadership and strategic direction.

I look forward to a continued working relationship with the Council as we serve the citizens of our great State.

Sincerely,

  
Scott Neitzel  
Secretary

  
Gregory L. Gracz  
Administrator

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# DIVISION OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT (DPM) MISSION/VISION STATEMENT

## *Mission Statement...*

DPM's mission 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.

## *Vision Statement...*

DPM's vision is to continuously improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the state's human resource system through communication, partnerships, and strategic application of best practices to Wisconsin state government.

## SCAA MISSION

The State Council on Affirmative Action was created by Chapter 196, Laws of 1977, s. 230.46, Wis. Stats., describes the duties of the Council as follows:

*“The council on affirmative action shall serve in a direct advisory capacity to the Administrator and as part of that relationship shall evaluate the progress of affirmative action programs throughout the civil service system, seek compliance with state and federal regulations and recommend improvements in the state’s affirmative action efforts as an employer. In carrying out its responsibilities, the council may recommend legislation, consult with agency personnel and other interested persons, conduct hearings and take other appropriate action to promote affirmative action. The council shall report at least once per year to the governor and the legislature.”*

The Council’s overall purpose is to foster measurable progress towards an equitable and diverse work force in state government.

## SCAA MEMBERSHIP

*“There is created in the division of personnel management in the department of administration a council on affirmative action consisting of 15 members appointed for 3-year terms. A majority of members shall be public members and a majority of members shall be minority persons, women, or persons with disabilities, appointed with consideration to the appropriate representation of each group. The president of the senate, the speaker of the assembly, the minority leader of the senate, and the minority leader of the assembly each shall appoint one member and the remaining members shall be appointed by the governor.” s. 15.107(3) Wis. Stats.*

### **Members of the State Council on Affirmative Action from January 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016:**

James Parker  
Professor Emeritus, History and Women’s Studies  
University of Wisconsin - La Crosse

Roger Pulliam  
Assistant Vice Chancellor Emeritus for Academic  
Support Services, University of Wisconsin -  
Whitewater

John Magerus  
Dean and Professor Emeritus  
College of Liberal Studies  
University of Wisconsin –La Crosse

Christopher Zenchenko  
IS Business Automation  
Department of Natural Resources

Yolanda Santos-Adams  
President and CEO  
Urban League of Racine and Kenosha, Inc.

Lakshmi Bharadwaj  
Associate Professor of Sociology  
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

## Message from SCAA Chair, Christopher Zenchenko

January 2017

Throughout 2016, the Council delivered a message of support to our Affirmative Action Advisory Councils (AAAC). We understand the critical importance of their role in supporting and advising state agencies and the university system on local affirmative action needs.

These volunteer AAAC groups operate within state agencies with a similar function to that of SCAA but provide their input to the agency secretary, managers and Human Resources (HR) staff. We have been and will continue to attend meetings and offering our services as guest speakers as well as providing support and serving as a resource.

One way we achieved this was to reach out to the agency AAAC groups and invited them to become participants of the annual diversity award program which many were instrumental in forwarding award winning submissions.

At the 17<sup>th</sup> annual diversity awards, we had Secretary, Ray Allen as keynote speaker who gave a rousing and impassioned address on Affirmative Action and what it means to the Department of Workforce Development. We were also able to introduce and showcase two new well qualified SCAA Council candidates Ms. Shiva Bidar and Mrs. Corinda Rainey-Moore who were part of the award program. Division Administrator, Greg L. Gracz also shared his remarks with attendees and awardees, and presented the Ann Lydecker, Diversity, and Program Achievement awards to award recipients.

The keynote address, the speakers, award winners, and students, all made the 2016 Diversity Award program a great success. The successes of the programs being honored all help illustrate the positive impact of diversity in the State workforce and the important work of the Council.

We will continue to identify more effective ways to communicate our role and mission to state agencies and universities. We would also like to reiterate our ongoing declaration for the state and its administrative officials to continue to encourage a more proactive stance in promoting affirmative action statewide. We will continue to seek methods and strategies by which we can cooperatively assist in that effort with state officials, Affirmative Action Officers (AAO) and state legislators.

# SCAA ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

## I. Council Meeting – February 2016

The Council discussed outreach strategies to increase agencies and universities participation in the Diversity Awards program. The Council also discussed revising the format presentation of the SCAA report and it was recommended the report distribution should be extended to include the Legislative Minority leaders. In addition, the Council felt it more effective to focus on engaging with and staying in tune with agency affirmative action officers over dialogues with the legislature and Governor's office.

The Council resolved that a first priority would be to recruit new members and that assigned Council members would submit names of potential new candidates to the Chair for follow up by the Bureau of Affirmative Action (BAA).

BAA staff provided updates including a name change from the Division of Affirmative Action to the Bureau of Affirmative Action due to the absorbing of the Office of State Employment Relations (OSER) into the Department of Administration (DOA). BAA also shared analysis on the signing of Assembly Bill 373 (Act 150) and the potential implications for BAA as well as other BAA updates.

The 2016 Diversity Award program was discussed, the submissions received for the year, tentative dates of the program, and updates to the annual Diversity Award Honors publication.

## II. Council Meeting – September 2016

The Council discussed and evaluated this (the) year's submissions received for Diversity and Ann Lydecker Awards and made selections. The guest speaker for the awards program will be Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary, Ray Allen. The Chair suggested the keynote theme be; "What AA means to the mission of his agency". BAA Director, Jeanette Johnson introduced new BAA member Marcus S. Miles to the Council.

The SCAA hosted the annual Affirmative Action Advisory Committee meeting at the State Capitol on October 27, 2016.

BAA provided the Council a detailed update on the changes of Act 150 and the Civil Service hiring process.



### III. Diversity Awards

#### A) 17th Annual Diversity Awards – October 2016

The 17th annual Diversity Awards ceremony was held on October 27, 2016 at the State Capitol, Senate Parlor room in Madison. The Council established the Diversity Award program 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 honors are awarded as follows: the ***Diversity Award*** is given to the highest ranked agency; the ***Ann Lydecker Award*** is given to the highest ranked university.

Eight agencies and universities submitted programs for consideration for the 17<sup>th</sup> annual awards. They included:

- Department of Health Services
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Revenue
- The Wisconsin State Public Defender's Office
- Fox Valley Technical College
- Gateway Technical College
- University of Wisconsin – Whitewater
- University of Wisconsin – Stout

The ***Diversity Award*** was awarded to the Department of Health Services (DHS) for its development of a training program using technology to increase accessibility and the training experience for employees that are blind, visually impaired, deaf, or hard of hearing. Deputy Secretary, Tom Engels accepted the award for DHS.

The ***Program Achievement Award*** was awarded to the Department of Revenue (DOR) for its program which exposes Persons with Disabilities to Career Opportunities with the DOR. The award was accepted by DOR Secretary, Richard G. Chandler.

The ***Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award*** was awarded to Fox Valley Technical College for its Brother to Brother program. The award was accepted by President, Dr. Susan May and Rayon Brown, Manager-Diversity and Inclusion Services.

The ***Program Achievement Award*** was awarded to UW Wisconsin – Whitewater for its Research Apprenticeship Program, and the award was accepted by Catherine Chan, Director of Undergraduate Research.

## GOALS FOR SCAA

1. Continue to monitor and evaluate affirmative action progress for universities and state agencies.
2. Continue to develop and strengthen the working relationship with agency and university affirmative action officers and affirmative action advisory committees.
3. Continue follow-up discussions with state EEO/AA Officers to ensure that proper leadership and support is available to perform job description functions.
4. Further increase the number of universities and state agencies participating in the diversity award process.
5. Increase council membership.
6. Recommend legislation to promote affirmative action.

## STAFF SERVICES FOR THE SCAA

Staff services to the Council are provided by the Division of Personnel Management, Bureau of Affirmative Action, 101 E. Wilson Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7855. Staff includes:

Delores Butler, (email: [delorese.butler@wisconsin.gov](mailto:delorese.butler@wisconsin.gov))

Jeanette Johnson, (email: [jeanette.johnson@wisconsin.gov](mailto:jeanette.johnson@wisconsin.gov))

Marcus S. Miles, (email: [marcuss.miles@wisconsin.gov](mailto:marcuss.miles@wisconsin.gov))

Inquiries regarding this report can be addressed to:

Marcus S. Miles  
Executive Equal Opportunity Specialist Senior  
Bureau of Affirmative Action  
[marcuss.miles@wisconsin.gov](mailto:marcuss.miles@wisconsin.gov)





State of Wisconsin  
Department of Health Services

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Scott Walker, Governor  
Kitty Rhoades, Secretary

August 11, 2015

State Council on Affirmative Action  
Diversity Award Program  
Chair: Christopher Zenchenko  
Attn: Jeanette Johnson  
Division of Personnel Management  
Bureau of Affirmative Action  
101 East Wilson Street  
Madison, WI 53703-7855

Dear Mr. Zenchenko:

I'm pleased to nominate the Office of Organizational and Employee Development (OOED) within the Department of Health Services (DHS) for the 2016 Annual Diversity Award.

Beginning in 2015, OOED evaluated the accessibility of its course offerings, and realized that there were opportunities to use technology to improve the training experience of employees who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, or hard of hearing. In an effort to not only support DHS employees with a physical disability, but also increase awareness and inclusivity throughout the rest of DHS's workforce, OOED took steps to create a training program that includes thoroughly accessible course curriculum for all employees. OOED's efforts to make training more accessible ensured that all members of DHS's workforce have access to training and development opportunities, which in turn strengthened the skills of our workforce and allows us to provide better service to the citizens of Wisconsin.

A highly skilled and engaged workforce is any organization's most valuable asset, and OOED truly deserves recognition for the innovative and technologically advanced steps that they have taken to improve the DHS workforce's skillset through the creation of accessible training. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas J. Engels".

Thomas J. Engels  
Interim Secretary

Department of Health Services  
Division of Enterprise Services  
Bureau of Human Resources

Diversity Award Application  
August 5, 2016

One of the primary training goals of the Department of Health Services (DHS) is to increase the accessibility of training for DHS's workforce to better serve our customers and the citizens of State of Wisconsin. The Office of Organizational and Employee Development (OOED) plays a key role in meeting this goal and has made revisions in its design, development, and delivery of training courses that have positively affected the diversity of the workforce by:

- 1) Increasing 508 compliance footprint with OOED produced courses and materials;
- 2) Increasing cultural consciousness among DHS staff members; and
- 3) Ensuring learning environments for people with physical disabilities are designed and implemented to ensure their appropriateness and accessibility.

**Background:**

OOED is centrally located at DHS Headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin and is responsible for providing support to all employing units in DHS. Employees hired by DHS exercise multiple roles in the protection and promotion of the health and safety of the people of Wisconsin, including oversight of statewide programs for the blind and visually impaired as well as those for the deaf and hard of hearing. An accessible and usable web is part of the concept of e-accessibility, one of the key elements of e-inclusion, which aims to ensure that everyone without exception is included in the information society. Given this context, e-accessibility refers to the removal of technical barriers and difficulties which the blind or the visually impaired or deaf and hard of hearing might encounter as they attempt to become part of the information society.

In reflection of this statewide diversity, OOED has evaluated its current training curriculum with an emphasis on ensuring accessibility for all. An underlying premise of this initiative is the increase in number of new professional development opportunities OOED has launched in the past 24-months. The popularity of the new courses, combined with an increased emphasis on ensuring accessibility for all, has created greater satisfaction for DHS staff who have a physical disability.

**Actions Taken to Support Goal:**

**2015**

In 2015, it was determined that OOED needed to ensure that all training courses and training materials were accessible to DHS staff members who were visually impaired or deaf or hard of hearing. OOED had recently begun to offer a suite of new professional development courses to DHS staff, which increased employee participation in classes. In working with DHS's Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (ODHH) and the Office of the Blind and Visually Impaired (OBVI), OOED learned more about the accommodations that could be made for staff members requiring assistance.

Additionally, the STAR implementation provided an opportunity for OOED to test new design techniques with training job aids for staff members. Federal 508 compliance requires all pictures on a website or job aid to have an imbedded description that can be translated through a screen reading software application. The STAR Training job aids contained many screen shots from the new system, and OOED was able to tailor the job aids to meet Federal 508 compliance requirements for DHS staff by using technology to imbed screen-reader compatible descriptions within all images.

OOED worked with the OBVI staffers and had them "test" job aids to ensure they were readable by the Job Access With Speech (JAWS) software program. Developed for computer users with vision loss, JAWS is a screen reading software that allows visually impaired or blind staff members the ability to navigate on a PC. The software will read the screen to them or they can print screen content in braille. OOED acquired a JAWS license for their office and finalized an internal process for quality assurance with all printed and electronic job aids they produce. Before any job aids are electronically released, OOED tests all to ensure they are compatible with the JAWS software.

As a result of the change to the job aids, OOED extended their 508 compliance and QA requirements to all other e-learning offered by DHS. Most e-learning environments are designed for sighted individuals, utilizing complex visual images and interactive features. However, DHS's visually impaired or blind employees must rely on JAWS to translate the contents of screen displays into an accessible format. E-learning created by OOED is now designed and developed to be compatible with the JAWS software.

## **2016**

Moving into 2016, OOED worked more with ODHH to understand the accommodations needed by deaf or hard of hearing DHS staffers. OOED already provided closed captioning on all of their e-learnings. However, through discussions with ODHH, OOED learned that close captioning along wasn't always adequate and ODHH was able to share more on the needs of American Sign Language (ASL) users.

ASL is a complete, unique language developed by deaf people, for deaf people, and is used in its purest form by people who are deaf. Being its own language, it not only has its own vocabulary, but also its own grammar that differs from English. Consequently, because of the differences in vocabulary and grammar between ASL and the spoken English language, there are times when word for word closed captioning may not adequately convey the content of a training.

To ensure all DHS ASL speaking staffers could take advantage of OOED courses, ASL interpreters are provided to all staff members who request them. ASL interpreters provide an overview to those around the hearing impaired staff member on how to communicate with the hearing impaired staff person. The interpreter then assists the DHS staff member in participating in the conversation with the class. Having ASL interpreters in OOED courses has provided a higher cultural awareness and increased cultural competency on ASL and on our deaf and hard of hearing staff members.

Additionally, OOED has worked with ODHH and the DHS Bureau of Information Technology (BITS), to record videos of interpreters communicating in ASL, descriptions of all OOED courses and programs. These videos communicate the written words to any DHS staff members who rely on ASL as their primary form of communication.

OOED often markets trainings with posters and other printed materials. To make these materials accessible to a wider audience, a Quick Response (QR) code is printed on OOED marketing materials. A QR Code is a mobile phone readable bar code that can store website URLs, plain text, phone numbers, email addresses and pretty much any other alphanumeric data. A deaf or hard of hearing staff member can scan the QR code with any mobile device and it will open a URL on their browser. A video will then play of an interpreter communicating the information on the course marketing poster in ASL. The video is also closed captioned.



As a result of the success of the QR codes on posters, OOED has established new guidelines for all courses to include QR codes with ASL videos. OOED is in the process of working with ODHH and DHS's Bureau of Information Technology Services to record the videos for their courses. The descriptions will be placed on OOED's webpages for all DHS staff to access.

**Conclusions:**

DHS believes in the value of and supports a diverse and inclusive workforce. DHS's efforts described in this document not only support DHS employees with a physical disability, but also increase awareness and inclusivity throughout the rest of the workforce. Through the efforts described above, DHS ensures that all members of its workforce have access to training and development opportunities, which in turn strengthens the skills of our workforce and allows us to provide better service to the citizens of Wisconsin.





## Wisconsin Department of Transportation

[www.dot.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov)

Scott Walker  
Governor

Mark Gottlieb, P.E.  
Secretary

Office of the Secretary  
4802 Sheboygan Avenue, Room 120B  
P O Box 7910  
Madison, WI 53707-7910

Telephone: 608-266-1113  
FAX: 608-266-9912  
E-mail: [sec.exec@dot.wi.gov](mailto:sec.exec@dot.wi.gov)

July 28, 2016

State Council on Affirmative Action  
Wisconsin Department of Administration  
Division of Personnel Management  
Attention: Jeanette Johnson, Bureau of Affirmative Action  
101 East Wilson Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Madison, WI 53703-7855

Dear Council Members:

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is committed to equal employment opportunity and recognizes the value of diversity in the workplace. We would like to take this opportunity to highlight one of our recent achievements for your consideration for the 2016 Diversity Award Program.

In 2012, WisDOT added several diversity goals and expectations as part of our performance evaluation process. On an annual basis, all employees are evaluated on diversity, respect and inclusivity. In December 2015, the Bureau of Human Resource Services developed a 20-minute online training module called Honoring Our Differences. This training was developed to provide employees with additional background on the benefits of workplace diversity and to provide employees with tools to meet WisDOT's diversity goals and expectations.

The content and design of the training was created by staff in the Bureau of Human Resource Services, using online design tools and the Cornerstone learning management system. The training focused on the following learning outcomes:

- Explaining how a respectful workplace impacts WisDOT's goal of inclusivity;
- Identifying the difference between discrimination and harassment;
- Recognizing how behaviors impact the work environment; and
- Knowing the resources available to follow the complaint process

Jeanette Johnson, Bureau of Affirmative Action  
July 28, 2016  
Page Two

All WisDOT employees were required to complete the training. In addition, this training module is a required element of New Employee Orientation for all new WisDOT staff. This proactively helps set the tone for a work environment where individual differences are acknowledged, respected and celebrated. The Bureau of Human Resource Services received a great deal of positive feedback from employees on this training module. Many employees felt the module presented the information in a non-threatening and unique way. Others felt it was the best training module they have completed at WisDOT. One of the main benefits we witnessed was that employees were actively engaged on the issues of diversity and inclusivity.

By implementing this training module as an online course on our LearnCenter, WisDOT did not incur any costs that would typically be associated with conducting an instructor-led training, such as instructor fees or travel expenses for trainers or trainees. This training also complemented the department's Affirmative Action Advisory Committee's educational initiatives.

WisDOT is proud to nominate its Honoring Our Differences training module for the 2016 Diversity Award. If you would like additional information about this training initiative, please feel free to contact WisDOT's Human Resources Director, Randy Sarver, at [Randy.Sarver@dot.wi.gov](mailto:Randy.Sarver@dot.wi.gov) or (608) 266-0507. We appreciate your consideration.

Thank you,



Mark Gottlieb, P.E.  
Secretary

cc: Randy Sarver, WisDOT Human Resources



**State of Wisconsin • DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE**

2135 RIMROCK ROAD • Mail Stop 624A • P.O. BOX 8933 • MADISON, WISCONSIN 53708-8933 • 608-266-6466 • FAX (608) 266-5718  
<http://www.revenue.wi.gov>

*Scott Walker*  
Governor

*Richard G. Chandler*  
Secretary of Revenue

August 19, 2016

State Council on Affirmative Action  
Diversity Award Program  
Department of Administration, Division of Personnel Management, Bureau of Affirmative Action  
101 East Wilson Street  
Madison, WI 53703-7855

**2016 Annual Diversity Award - *Exposure of Career Opportunities to Persons with Disabilities***

Dear Council Members:

I am pleased to submit this application from the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) for consideration for the State Council on Affirmative Action 2016 Annual Diversity Award.

DOR is committed to the recruitment, retention and promotion of a diverse workforce to serve the state of Wisconsin. In 2014, as part of our initiative to increase hiring and retention of persons with disabilities, we entered into a partnership with Madison area high schools to hire students with disabilities into limited term employment (LTE) positions. The primary objective of this partnership is to provide job training to students while simultaneously increasing diversity awareness among DOR employees.

Additionally, the partnership:

- Introduces DOR as an employer of choice to persons with disabilities and supports a positive image of the agency within the local community
- Serves DOR customers with a productive, reliable and consistent workforce
- Supports existing DOR AA goals to establish and maintain a diverse workforce
- Enhances workplace experience for DOR employees working successfully side-by-side with persons with disabilities

We are pleased with the success of this initiative, which to date has resulted in the employment of eight students in positions at DOR. The response from participating students, their parents and guardians, as well as DOR managers and co-workers, has been overwhelmingly positive. We believe it highlights the Department of Revenue's ongoing commitment to maintain a nurturing environment for all while continuing to educate staff on the value and importance of diversity and inclusion in the workforce.

Thank you for your consideration of this application. A brief overview of the program is attached for your reference. If you have any questions or need any additional information, please contact DOR Diversity Officer Alenka Dries at 608-264-6879.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard G. Chandler". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Richard G. Chandler  
DOR Secretary

cc: Jon Reneau, ESD Administrator  
Scott C. Thompson, HR Director  
Edward Porter, Assistant HR Director  
Alenka Dries, Diversity Officer



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<http://www.revenue.wi.gov>

*Scott Walker*  
Governor

*Richard G. Chandler*  
Secretary of Revenue

August 19, 2016

State Council on Affirmative Action  
Diversity Award Program  
Department of Administration, Division of Personnel Management, Bureau of Affirmative Action  
101 East Wilson Street  
Madison, WI 53703-7855

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard G. Chandler".

Richard G. Chandler  
DOR Secretary

cc: Jon Reneau, ESD Administrator  
Scott C. Thompson, HR Director  
Edward Porter, Assistant HR Director  
Alenka Dries, Diversity Officer

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

In 2014, the Wisconsin Department of Revenue entered into a partnership with Madison area high schools' Vocational Transition Programs as part of Governor Walker's Year of a Better Bottom Line Initiative to encourage and promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. The Department's Human Resources Bureau, Diversity Officer and Diversity Advisory Council actively endorse and promote this program throughout the department, which has helped divisions identify opportunities where their business needs can be successfully met by engaging the help of the program participants.

Since its inception two years ago, program participation has expanded from one to four of DOR's divisions and has resulted in employment of eight students in temporary employment positions at DOR. As of the submission date, seven of those students are still employed and three of them are celebrating a two-year employment anniversary with the department. The program has provided the participating students with valuable job training while simultaneously increasing diversity awareness among DOR employees.

The students who participate in the vocational training are typically 18-21 year olds with developmental disabilities. The goal is to secure a paid part-time work placement for every student prior to leaving the school system. For some students, this might be their first working experience, while other students may have already participated in other placements. Students participate in the work experience placements 2-3 times per week for a 2-3 hour morning or afternoon shift.

Students have a wide range of abilities and skills and require different levels of support to be successful in the workplace. At first, students are supervised by special education teachers and job coaches until

2016 SCAA DIVERSITY AWARD  
DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE APPLICATION

they learn the work skills and appropriate work behaviors. They are typically assigned repetitive tasks that occur on an ongoing basis. As students master their jobs, the teachers and coaches decrease active supervision and only check in occasionally.

Students are hired as limited term employees and paid regular wages for their employment. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides a stipend at the onset of their employment to cover an estimated 50% of their first 90 days of employment. DOR pays the remaining 50% for the first 90 days and 100% of their wages thereafter.

Eight students have been hired through the partnership since its introduction at DOR:

Name	Location	Position	Start Date
Trevor Hei	Lottery Division - Warehouse	Inventory Control Coordinator	7/29/2014
Charles Essie	Lottery Division - Warehouse	Inventory Control Coordinator	7/29/2014
Valeria Moffat	Lottery Division - Warehouse	Inventory Control Coordinator	8/4/2014
Grant Thom	Enterprise Services Division - Mailroom	Shipping and Mailing Associate	10/6/2014
Peter T Lang	Lottery Warehouse	Inventory Control Coordinator	5/18/2015
Danie Jo Larsen	Enterprise Services Division - HR Bureau/ Lottery Warehouse	Office Associate/Inventory Control Coordinator	2/22/2016
Kaitlin Whitish	State and Local Finance	Office Associate	7/25/2016
Rachel Tracosas	IS&E Division - Audit Bureau, Pass -Thru Income Section	Office Associate	7/25/2016





# Wisconsin State Public Defender

17 South Fairchild Street, Fifth Floor  
PO Box 7923 Madison, WI 53707-7923  
Office Number: 608-266-0087 / Fax Number: 608-267-0584  
www.wispd.org

**Kelli S. Thompson**  
State Public Defender

**Michael Tobin**  
Deputy State  
Public Defender

August 19, 2016

**RE: 2016 Diversity Awards**

Dear Selection Committee:

The Wisconsin State Public Defender (SPD) is proud to submit its application for the 2016 Diversity Awards.


The SPD has a history of providing equal opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment in accordance with all applicable EEO/AA laws, directives and regulations of federal, state and local governing bodies and agencies. The SPD will take affirmative action to ensure that all employment practices are free of such discrimination. To assist the agency in meeting our policy, the State Public Defender Board asked the agency to prioritize addressing racial disparities in the criminal justice system. Before we could facilitate changes in the criminal justice system, we wanted to make sure that our staff was aware of and sensitive to racial injustice. The agency, with the assistance of our Training Division and the AA/EEO Officer, created the Racial Justice Training Program.

In 2012, the first component of the training was Racial Bias Discussion Circles. The goal of the circles was to help more than 600 SPD staff members to talk comfortably about race. In 2014, the second component of the training was titled Responding to Racism Effectively. Our staff discussed racism in general and shared how they would respond and react in different scenarios. These trainings were also made available to the more than 1000 private attorneys appointed by the Public Defender's office.

In 2016, we decided to make our discussion on race more personal, forcing people to look within themselves for their own implicit biases. The program is titled A Biased Informed Approach to Public Defender Advocacy. This is the program that I will discuss in regards to our application for the 2016 Diversity Awards.

Our efforts have drawn national attention and we have been invited to other states to present these trainings to both public defender agencies and other criminal justice system partners. Wisconsin's SPD has developed a program that our state and criminal justice can be proud of and I am excited to present it to you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kelli Thompson  
Wisconsin State Public Defender

**Wisconsin State Public Defender 2016 Diversity Award Nomination  
Program Description – A Biased Informed Approach to Public Defender Advocacy**

The SPD's implicit bias program, entitled "A Biased Informed Approach to Public Defender Advocacy," was developed with the goal of employing participants with the following: 1) a clear understanding of implicit bias; 2) understanding how implicit bias originates; 3) understanding of how implicit bias can affect day-to-day decisions in interactions with coworkers and clients; and 4) providing ways for individuals to change their implicit bias. SPD staff planned and assembled the curriculum for the program.

Input was received from staff throughout the agency. The SPD has thirty-six local trial offices and two appellate offices representing indigent clients in all seventy-two counties. The program's presenters were SPD staff and represented a diverse group of facilitators. Agency funding was not used in the development or the implementation of the program.

In delivering the program, the SPD wanted to ensure that a consistent message was sent to all staff. Therefore, training sessions were in the following strategic locations: Appleton; Eau Claire; La Crosse; Madison; Milwaukee; Racine; and Wausau. Staff was open to discussing the topic, particularly on the points of the origins of implicit bias, how such biases are inherent in people, and how individuals involuntarily react and treat each other based on our biases. Several staff commented that they were humbled by the training and would make a conscious effort to attempt to respond to people and situations differently. Staff have since contacted some of the facilitators and stated that they are using some of the techniques that they learned in the training to resolve problems.

The feedback received from participants was overwhelmingly positive. This training has not only benefited the day-to-day interaction of staff with other criminal justice professionals, but has given staff members an insight in how better to interact with and serve our clients.

The SPD has a strong commitment to recruiting, retaining and promoting a diverse workforce. We believe this program has been a valuable tool in our commitment. The agency strives to hire staff that reflects the agency's client base. The agency also believes that its managers and staff who participate in balanced interview panels must be aware of their implicit bias as they interview and select candidates.

The issue of implicit bias is formally discussed after the interviews are completed as the panel makes the final decision regarding the applicants. This has allowed a more diverse pool of candidates to be considered for second interviews. Additionally, those involved in the creation of the interview questions have modified and, in some cases even eliminated, the questions to ensure that they are appropriate and do not include any bias or partiality.

In regards to retention, our agency has determined that one way to retain our staff is to make sure that staff feel valued and appreciated. Most of our managers participated in the implicit bias training. They were encouraged to be aware of their own implicit biases and intentionally make efforts to respond differently as situations arise. In speaking with some managers, they mentioned that the training triggered genuine sentiments of internalized beliefs and attitudes.

The training discussed that it is "okay to see the differences in people and recognize those differences as a strength" both within our offices and interactions with clients and others in the criminal justice system. Finally, in regards to promotion, our agency is aware that over the next few years we will have a large number of managers retiring. Our plan is to prepare the next generation of managers by allowing the current managers to mentor younger, diverse staff members. This can only be done if we are able to retain our diverse staff and if the current managers are able to be aware of and appropriately address their biases to work with and invest in their staff. This program has provided all staff with an opportunity to sit down and communicate with one another.

Through this training, we have been made aware of the misconceptions and mistaken beliefs that we have of one another that can be resolved by understanding ourselves and our upbringings and understanding the culture of others. Within the past year, we have had an increase in the number of minorities that have been hired within our agency. We are committed to retaining and promoting our staff to ensure that our agency remains diverse. The benefits of implicit bias training have a lasting impact and this program can serve as a model for other state agencies seeking to provide the best service possible to the taxpayers of the state of Wisconsin.



To: State Council on Affirmative Action

From: Dr. Susan May, President  
Fox Valley Technical College

Date: August 18, 2016

Subject: Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award Application

I am very pleased to submit Fox Valley Technical College's (FVTC) application for the Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award. The program that will be highlighted in this award application, the Scholars for Success Program, has been in existence at FVTC for over three years. The multiple phases of the program are listed below, and have all led to the existence and success of the current version of the Scholars for Success Program:

- 1) Using internal student data, staff discovered that retention rates for African American male students at FVTC were 20%+ lower than those of the general population;
- 2) Staff developed a small-scale, pilot response (Brother-to-Brother Program) to the need, designed to provide various types of support for the students;
- 3) The Brother-to-Brother Program received funding for one year from the Great Lakes Higher Education Guarantee Corporation;
- 4) The Brother-to-Brother Program completed the year (2013-14) with positive outcomes (below) and was expanded and renamed the Scholars for Success Program, to add other minority groups and women, utilizing pilot data to improve processes;
- 5) The Scholars for Success Program received a continuation grant for 2014-15 academic year from Great Lakes Higher Education Guarantee Corporation;
- 6) Scholars for Success completed the year (2014-15) with excellent outcomes. College staff utilized the data to make improvements, and FVTC committed to continuing the program using College operating funds and WTCS General Purpose Revenue grants.

The Brother-to-Brother Program was developed in 2013 to support a growing population of African American males at FVTC. Data showed that graduation rates for cohorts of African American men who started between 2006-08 were at least 20% below those of the general

student population. The Brother-to-Brother Program was developed to address the lower retention rates, and the College received a grant from the Great Lakes Higher Education Guarantee Corporation. Forty African American men were enrolled into the program, all first generation, low income, and with strong commitments and desires to succeed. The men received intensive services designed to improve the likelihood for success. These services included:

- Orientation to the program, to include expectations and responsibilities;
- Academic advising and Individual Education Plans for each student;
- Monthly mentoring sessions and workshops;
- Weekly learning community meetings for every student;
- Book vouchers for students who met program milestones;
- End of semester celebration to highlight achievements for students and families.

The two primary outcomes that were measured included semester-to-semester retention and year-over-year persistence, and after one year of intensive services, the outcomes for the program were impressive:

Semester-to-Semester Retention	
Program Target	70%
Actual Retention	<b>83%</b>

*(NOTE: semester-to-semester retention for the general population = 73%)*

Year-over-Year Persistence	
Program Target	67.5%
Actual Retention	<b>72.5%</b>

*(NOTE: year-over-year persistence for general FVTC population = 60.5%)*

The program also measured grade point averages, completion of coursework, and attendance at the mentoring and community-building sessions, and all exceeded the targets established for the grant application. The total costs for the 2013-14 year for the Brother-to-Brother Program were \$105,974, and covered a full-time Program Director salary and fringe benefits, book vouchers for students, and other student costs. Aside from the data-driven outcomes, presentations were provided for other Wisconsin Technical College System colleges, and the Program Director presented on best practices at the 2014 Minority Male Mentoring Conference in North Carolina.

As a result of the successes of Brother-to-Brother, the Great Lakes Higher Education Guarantee Corporation provided a second-year continuation/expansion grant to increase the numbers of students served. While outcome data was the primary impetus for the second year expansion, an intangible factor was the high numbers of students during the first year who observed the impact of the support services, and either requested to participate, or simply started to attend the workshops and mentoring sessions.

The expanded, second-year program was named the Scholars for Success Program, and served 86 students using slightly modified types of services from Brother-to-Brother. Outcomes for 2014-15 from the Scholars for Success program were similar or better for retention and persistence:

Semester-to-Semester Retention	
Program Target	75%
Actual Retention	<b>87.2%</b>

*(NOTE: semester-to-semester retention for the general population = 71.5%)*

Year-over-Year Persistence	
Program Target	67.5%
Actual Retention	<b>72.5%</b>

*(NOTE: year-over-year persistence for general FVTC population = 54.6%)*

The total budget for the second year, expanded Scholars-for-Success program was \$201,905, and included two program coordinators' salaries and fringe benefits, peer tutors (utilizing Brother-to-Brother Program students from the prior year), two general education instructors for College Success courses, workshop speaker fees, book vouchers as incentives for milestone completion, and meeting food and supplies.

With a strong commitment from the college to advance the academic success of students of color, the Scholars for Success Program continues today. It is currently being financially supported by the College operating budget and WTCS General Purpose grant funds. The program has grown to serve 220 men and women of color. During the 2015-2016 academic year, the same types of services were expanded to be offered on the Oshkosh Riverside campus. As a result of the experience gained from these programs, the College has included a key strategy to improve outcomes for students of color in its 2016-2020 Strategic Plan.



Bryan D. Albrecht, Ed.D.  
President and CEO

August 19, 2016

**BURLINGTON CENTER**  
496 McCanna Pkwy.  
Burlington, WI 53105-3623  
262.767.5200

RE: Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award Application

Dear Sir/Madame:

**CENTER FOR BIOSCIENCE  
& INFORMATION  
TECHNOLOGY**  
3520 - 30th Avenue  
Kenosha, WI 53144-1690  
262.564.3600

Gateway Technical College serving more than 20,000 students in the Southeastern Wisconsin counties of Kenosha, Racine and Walworth, continues to lead the country with its innovative approach to career and technical education. Gateway graduates continually, through high-response-rate surveys, report satisfaction rates with their education of near 100 percent and employment percentage rates in the mid-80s. Gateway is aggressive in ensuring it delivers graduates who have learned real-world technical skills that get them hired. Gateway is one of 16 colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS).

**ELKHORN CAMPUS**  
400 County Road H  
Elkhorn, WI 53121-2046  
262.741.8200

**HERO (HEALTH AND  
EMERGENCY RESPONSE  
OCCUPATIONS) CENTER**  
380 McCanna Pkwy.  
Burlington, WI 53105-3622  
262.767.5204

Gateway Technical College's Multicultural program prepares students for the future and encourages the success of students of color by offering comprehensive services which promote academic achievement, career building, cross cultural engagement, and leadership development. The program is staffed with three student support specialists (one for each campus), peer advocates, and tutoring staff all supported by a WTCS grant of \$197,445. A major strategy of the 2010 academic strategic plan was to build a multicultural resource center on each campus. The last center opened Fall 2015. The multicultural department is a part of the academic and campus affairs division and is supervised by the dean of learning success. The Multicultural Program provides opportunities and guidance through three pillars of success – Academic Support and Student Advocacy, Leadership Development, and Social-Cultural Engagement.

**HORIZON CENTER FOR  
TRANSPORTATION  
TECHNOLOGY**  
4940 - 88th Avenue  
Kenosha, WI 53144-7467  
262.564.3900

**SC JOHNSON  
IMET (INTEGRATED  
MANUFACTURING  
& ENGINEERING  
TECHNOLOGY) CENTER**  
Renaissance Business Park  
2320 Renaissance Blvd.  
Sturtevant, WI 53177-1763  
262.898.7500

**Academic Support & Student Advocacy**

Students in the multicultural program receive one-on-one personalized assistance to ensure college success. Students develop an individual learning plan based on the student's strengths and academic needs. This assistance also includes information about college and community support

**KENOSHA CAMPUS**  
3520 - 30th Avenue  
Kenosha, WI 53144-1690  
262.564.2200

**LAKEVIEW ADVANCED  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER**  
9449 - 88th Avenue (Highway H)  
Pleasant Prairie, WI 53158-2216  
262.564.3400

**RACINE CAMPUS**  
1001 South Main Street  
Racine, WI 53403-1582  
262.619.6200

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resources. Multicultural Program tutors are available in a variety of subjects to provide additional assistance or instruction in coursework in the form of facilitated study groups, supplemental instruction, one-on-one tutoring sessions, and online tutoring services. Monthly student success workshops offer a comprehensive array of topics including employability skills, personal growth – “Finding your purpose,” “Visualizing your goals,” and student development – “Test-taking Strategies,” “Help! I’m an on-line learner,” and “Study smarter, not harder.” Students looking to pursue a bachelor’s degree after completing their applied associate’s degree receive assistance with reviewing career options and the enrollment process at four-year colleges and universities. Students receive early notification when midterm grades and instructor feedback are available, as well as information on midterm preparation and academic resources on campus. Peer advocates provide Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English Language Learning (ELL) students with support services and academic assistance as they transition into a post-secondary program of study at Gateway. This support includes English language immersion through weekly “Coffee Conversations.” The final component of this pillar is Multicultural Heads Up Mentoring. Students receive academic and professional guidance and assistance from mentors (faculty, staff, and community leaders) as they complete their program of study and successfully enter their careers.

### **Leadership Development**

A College Success Seminar is offered in the fall to prepare students to succeed in their program of study. The Student Leadership Conference offered each spring semester builds leadership and networking skills, preparing students to enter the world of work. There also is a student club called the Alliance for Multicultural Students that provides personal development and leadership opportunities through college and community engagement activities.

### **Social-Cultural Engagement**

The Multicultural Program collaborates with Gateway's Office of Student Life to host events that help to create a climate of inclusion and cultural consciousness. Each multicultural resource center is designed to be a warm inviting space for students of color to feel comfortable and interact with other students of color as well



as peer advocates and other support staff. Many resources are available in the centers including texts, computers and even games.

### **Outcomes**

As a result of this program we have been able to assist our students whose complex identities and life circumstances have presented challenges for academic achievement. In turn, we have provided our students with services that involve best practices to empower and enhance student success in the classroom and beyond. These best practices have included one-on-one case management, mentoring, community engagement, leadership development, tutoring with study halls, and learning communities. In addition, we have utilized peer to peer support through student life activities, tutoring/study halls, and one-on-one follow up. 2015-2016 outcomes include:

- 87% of students participating in the program (n= 300) successfully completed the spring 2016 semester with a 2.0 or higher GPA, with a mean GPA of 2.75
- 67% of our student mentees (n=50) in the HEADS Up Mentoring Program successfully completed the Spring 2016 semester with an average GPA of 2.8
- 20 ELL/ABE students successfully transitioned from ELL/ABE courses to multiple academic programs including Certified Nursing Assistant, Human Services, and IT –Sharepoint

These highlights provide a glimpse of the quality & vitality of the relationship between students of color and the multicultural program. These proactive relationships provide a spirit of collaboration and build student ownership of their academic journey. The college would be happy to provide any additional information or documentation if necessary. Thank you for providing the opportunity for this world-class program to be recognized.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bryan Albrecht".

Bryan Albrecht, EdD

President

Gateway Technical College





UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
WHITEWATER

Office of the Chancellor

August 19, 2016

Christopher Zenchenko, Chair, State Council on Affirmative Action  
Office of State Employment Relations, Division of Affirmative Action  
101 East Wilson Street  
Madison, WI 53703-7855

Dear Mr. Zenchenko,

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is proud to nominate the *Research Apprenticeship Program* (RAP) for the 2016 Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award. RAP is an innovative program designed to overcome the achievement gap between majority and minority students. RAP engages primarily first- and second-year students in undergraduate research (UR), a proven high-impact educational practice. This program enjoys very high participation from underrepresented minority, low-income and first-generation students and has directly contributed to a substantial increase in the diversity of students who participate in UR. As noted in the materials submitted, RAP students also demonstrate significantly better academic outcomes. RAP is critical in our efforts to close the achievement gap at UW-Whitewater by engaging all students early in their college careers to improve their retention, success, and graduation.

RAP serves a diverse array of students of opportunity and supports students to continue their deep engagement with their disciplines and the University. The program has become one of the first steps on a pathway where students of opportunity are supported to succeed within and beyond their time at UW-Whitewater.

In summary, I am delighted to nominate RAP as a contender for the 2016 Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award. I believe this program deserves special recognition for the positive impact it has on building sustainable diversity at UW-Whitewater and its focus on student success and closing the equity gap.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beverly Köpper".

Beverly Köpper, Ph.D.  
Chancellor

cc: Susan Elrod, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
Greg Cook, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
Catherine Chan, Director, Undergraduate Research Program

**2016 Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award Application**  
**University of Wisconsin – Whitewater**  
**Research Apprenticeship Program**

**Program Rationale:** A strong body of evidence shows that educational high-impact practices (HIPs) such as conducting undergraduate research (UR) with faculty and staff mentors can significantly contribute to positive educational outcomes of college students, including critical thinking and socially responsible leadership, and can improve student retention, self-efficacy, and graduation rates. UR can increase college success rates, especially for students belonging to underrepresented minority (URM) and other underserved groups. This is important for closing the achievement gap between majority and minority students. The Research Apprenticeship Program (RAP) at UW-Whitewater is designed to address this issue by recruiting students, especially URM students, to engage in UR with mentors early in their college careers for overall success.

**Program Description:** RAP actively recruits students new to UW-Whitewater to be paid research assistants for one academic year for faculty/staff mentors according to mutually compatible research interests and expertise. Acceptance in RAP does not depend on students' academic standing, major program, or SAT/ACT scores. RAP introduces students to faculty-student collaborative research (a proven HIP), helps mitigate some of their financial need, and gives students a sense of belonging and of positive agency early in their educational careers that can last even after graduation. Students are encouraged to present their research on- and off-campus to further expose them to the culture of research and professionalism and develop their communication skills. Moreover, RAP provides a freshmen-to-senior pathway for students by encouraging them to transition to our regular Undergraduate Research Program (URP) after their RAP experience.

**Impact:** In the short span of five years (Academic year 2011-12 to 2015-16), RAP has served 225 students with a high participation rate from underserved students. For example, 36% of RAP students belong to URM groups (much higher than the 13% overall at UW-Whitewater, 1999-2014 data), 63% are from low-income households (defined as eligible for Pell Grant and other federally subsidized loans; compared to 53% overall at UW-Whitewater, 2009-14 data), and 45% are first generation students (compared to 37% overall at UW-Whitewater, 2011-16 data). The composite ACT scores of RAP applicants (ranging between 21.1 and 23.5) are not significantly different from the average composite ACT scores of incoming freshmen students (ranging between 22.1 and 22.6) attending UWW, indicating that RAP students are not self-selected for success.

RAP students have substantially higher than average 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year retention rates (96% and 93% respectively, 2010-14 data) than campus 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year retention rates (78% and 69% respectively, 2010-14 data). This program has only been available to

students since 2011; not long enough for us to systematically collect six-year graduation rates of participants. However, since a majority of RAP students continue to be engaged in research after their RAP experience, we expect a higher-than average 6<sup>th</sup> year graduation rate for RAP participants, similar to students conducting traditional undergraduate research (89-92% 6<sup>th</sup> year graduation rate for students participating in undergraduate research compared to 55-60% 6<sup>th</sup> year graduation rate overall, 2006-10 data).

RAP students gain hands-on experience in a wide variety of disciplines, with almost equal representation of research topics from social sciences, physical sciences, professional studies, and education. RAP students and mentors frequently collaborate with local businesses (especially start-ups), area government agencies, and non-profit organizations that have led to regional economic growth, as well as internships and job opportunities for students. RAP students report significant gains in self-confidence and in several important skills, such as problem solving, teamwork, written and oral communication, and critical thinking skills from conducting research. These skills are highly valued by employers, and RAP participants are well prepared for entering the workforce after graduation.

A majority of RAP students develop to become campus and community leaders. They go on to win prestigious national scholarships and other competitive awards, including the 2016 Barry Goldwater Scholarship, one of the most prestigious scholarships in sciences. RAP participants currently lead the campus Student Undergraduate Research Organization. Two female RAP students from the STEM disciplines are representing UWW as WiSys Technology Foundation Ambassadors for 2016-17. Exemplary RAP students are invited to become peer-mentors for incoming RAP cohorts so we can grow the community of scholars and support network.

We expect the positive impacts of the RAP experience to continue well past graduation. Nationwide studies show that students who felt emotionally supported by at least one faculty mentor, and were engaged in experiential learning activities, have a much higher chance of being engaged at work, and enjoy higher quality of life overall. We intentionally recruit faculty/staff mentors of various ethnic, gender, and disciplinary backgrounds to serve as effective role models for our aspiring young scholars. We recruit female mentors from traditionally male dominated disciplines, such as computer science and business, to promote diversity in multiple levels within RAP. Students and mentors with similar ethnic/cultural backgrounds working together helps attract and nurture a diverse student body, and creates a support structure for students during their college career. We can confidently state that after graduation these students are highly likely to be actively engaged in their future careers, and experience overall well-being in their lives.

## Program Cost:

RAP is a cost-effective program. Below is the cost of RAP for the last academic year when it supported 73 students at a cost of only \$1,189 per student.

<b>Administrative Salaries</b>	Administrative Support, Graduate Assistant	\$ 10,558.53
	Administrative Support, RAP Faculty Coordinator	\$ 10,000.00
	Administrative Support, URP Director	\$ 3,972.91
	Administrative Support, RAP Student Staff	\$ 336.00
	Administrative Support, RAP Peer Mentors	\$ 900.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 25,767.44</b>
<b>RAP Student Salaries</b>	<b>RAP Student Salaries (Total for 73 students)</b>	<b>\$ 47,970.80</b>
<b>Research Related Expenses and Supplies</b>	<b>RAP Research Expenses (Total)</b>	<b>\$ 13,041.51</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 86,779.75</b>



August 8, 2016

**OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR**

325 Administration Building

715.232.2441

715.232.1416 fax

State Council on Affirmative Action  
Diversity Award Program  
ATTN: Jeanette Johnson  
[Jeanette.johnson@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Jeanette.johnson@wisconsin.gov)

Dear Ms. Johnson:

I am honored to submit this letter to nominate the Disability Services office at UW-Stout for the Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award. UW-Stout has a strong commitment to ensuring success for a diverse student body, including racial and ethnic minority students and persons with disabilities. Our commitment to diversity is reflected in three of our five strategic planning goals, all seven of our enduring goals, and more than three-quarters of the performance indicators that we use to assess the success of these goals. The Disability Services office plays an important role in achieving these goals, as is demonstrated with continual increases in enrollments for students with disabilities and consistently higher retention rates for students with disabilities as compared with the campus population. These impressive outcomes are the result of an intentional, proactive, and social justice oriented emphasis by the Disability Services office to advocate for students and educate the campus community about ways to make the learning environment more inclusive and accessible. These practices could serve as a role model for other institutions within the UW System.

This fall, we will be launching a university-wide initiative to achieve the following statement: "UW-Stout embraces diversity, equity, inclusion and intercultural competence as an integral part of the university community." The Disability Services office will play an important role in this initiative. Kara James, the director of the disability services office, has already been actively involved in these efforts, collaborating with the Diversity Leadership Team, participating in activities associated with the Intercultural Development Inventory, and encouraging her staff to get involved.

In March, 2016, we received a visit from our accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission, as part of our 10-year comprehensive visit. They affirmed the excellent work of the Disability Services office. They said, "a wide variety of established offices, programs, services and committees interviewed and visited by the Team evidence that UW-Stout understands its role in a multicultural society... Disability Services provides equal access and opportunity for persons with disabilities."

They also said, that "The Office of Disability Services is robust. As discussed by Student Services Staff in the Support Staff Open session with the Team, staff believe they receive proper training to meet the needs of students at a 'high level.'"

The Disability Services office is very deserving of the Ann Lydecker Educational Diversity Award. Please contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Meyer".

Bob Meyer  
Chancellor



**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-STOUT**

P.O. Box 790 | Menomonie, WI 54751

[www.uwstout.edu](http://www.uwstout.edu)

The Disability Services office at the University of Wisconsin-Stout has stepped into national leadership in Disability Services in Higher Education by utilizing a social justice framework that supports the recruitment and retention of multicultural racial and ethnic minorities, women and students with disabilities. During the past seven years, the student population the office serves increased by 211% while the retention rates for students with disabilities continue to outpace those for students without disabilities: 77.9% versus 76% respectively. The office now serves the fourth-largest number of students with disabilities in the UW-System.

One of the main reasons for this growth is the positive experience that students with disabilities have on campus. For the first time in their lives, many students with disabilities do not have to ask to be included in campus activities and they are not treated differently or as "less than" their peers. The campus environment is inclusive and accessible, which leads to a much more positive experience. The Disability Services office consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to the value of multi-cultural experience for students at all levels.

This accomplishment was achieved in four steps. First, the Disability Services office identified a need for change and explored the different models of working with disability in the educational context. Next, the Director of Disability Services applied and was chosen to join the highly-selective grant team of Project SHIFT. Third, through Project SHIFT, a faculty member was selected for collaborative leadership in bringing change to the UW-Stout campus. Fourth, the Director and the faculty member launched a joint educational effort to shift the focus away from the medical model of disability to embrace the social justice model.

Under the medical model, often students with disabilities experience education from the margins. They tire of asking for access, they feel like they are a burden to the faculty and staff, and they oftentimes

remain silent about their lack of access to avoid differential treatment and instructor frustration. As a result, they do not have the same experience as their non-disabled peers.

What sets Stout apart is that we are proactively focused on making the learning environment more inclusive and accessible, versus the retroactive responses of many campuses, which usually result in differential treatment towards students with disabilities. As the shift towards the social justice model unfolded, the Disability Services office made changes to their policies and procedures. For example, they began by changing the language used in the office. To make the experience more inviting to people with disabilities, instead of greeting students with "how can I help you?" they instead ask, "what brings you in today?" The "intake visit" became the "welcome interview." The focus of that encounter shifted from the student's "struggles" to "barriers experienced in the learning environment," so that the environment became the focus of change, rather than the student. This shift recognizes and respects students' different learning capabilities; we, as a campus, concentrated on ensuring that the learning environment is inclusive and accessible to all types of learners. The changes across campus have had a rippling effect. Faculty members who become more educated and more comfortable creating inclusive and accessible learning environments share their ideas with other faculty. Disability Services staff continue to be resources through the conversations about improving accessibility through Universal Design.

The greatest strength of the Disability Services office is the dedicated and competent staff that strive for continuous quality improvement, learning, then sharing their time and knowledge to ensure that the campus is inclusive and accessible. They also have formed strong collaborative partnerships with faculty and staff, working with almost every department throughout the campus community. The high quality services provided by a relatively small staff demonstrates efficient use of human and fiscal resources. Over the past few years the Disability Services staff grew from 0.5 FTE to 3.0 FTE which resulted in a 1:280 staff to student ratio. This is still below the UW-System staff to student ratio average of 1:124.

The shift to embrace a social justice model of disability also has improved the Disability Services office's ability to recruit, retain, and support multicultural students. In results from a recent survey of UW-Stout students, faculty and staff, responses to a question about the strengths of the Disability Services office included the following: "Knowledgeable staff who work together with students to create cohesive, effective equal access to higher education for all learners"; "They do everything they can to optimize the students learning experience"; and "Friendly, welcoming atmosphere, accept diversities in learning and people." One student wrote, "If there was anything higher than 'very satisfied' I would have clicked it. I know that I would not be still enrolled and on track to graduate without Disability Services. And I know that the same is true for many people." Another wrote, "They have been extremely helpful in helping me to gain fair access to taking exams for my classes. I have been able to retain the GPA that I work for because of their services." A faculty member commented, "Disability Services is a vital service to the Stout community. Their services have enabled students with disabilities to successfully pursue an education resulting in a college degree that will vastly improve their prospects for remaining independent." The survey data indicate that 100% of the faculty, staff and students who had interactions with Disability services responded that they were "always" either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" working with the office.

UW-Stout's exceptional efforts have earned it an excellent reputation for being inclusive and accessible to students with disabilities. The campus embraces disability as a component of diversity, which has led to improved outcomes. This framework creates a positive experience for students with disabilities as evidenced by the data that show a doubling of recruitment rates, impressive levels of retention, and 100% satisfaction rates. The Disability Services office has become an outstanding agent of change for affirmative action and equal opportunity as it led the campus community away from the medical model of disability to embrace the social justice model.