



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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News Release

Regents announce Academic Staff Excellence Awards for 2021

Educators in Madison, Oshkosh recognized for work to support student success

MADISON, Wis.—The University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents today announced this year’s recipients of the Academic Staff Excellence Awards. These awards recognize exceptional service to the university and are the UW System’s highest recognition bestowed on members of its academic staff. The 2021 recipients will be honored at the next Regents meeting, June 4 via videoconference, along with the [2020 recipients](#). Last year’s award ceremony was postponed due to COVID-19.

“Our committee is pleased to recognize these academic staff for their outstanding efforts, representative of the stellar academic staff across our UW System,” said Regent Karen Walsh, chair of the selection committee. “We are particularly inspired by their expertise navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, helping students, campuses, and the larger community successfully rise to the challenges of a global pandemic.”

Award recipients are selected for superior performance resulting in significant contributions to the department and institution; use of positive personal interaction to manage work changes; and a consistently creative approach that improves productivity and work quality. Each recipient is awarded \$7,500.

The 2021 recipients include two individuals and one program:

- **Dr. Malia Jones, Associate Scientist, Applied Population Laboratory, UW-Madison.**
Jones, an associate scientist with the Applied Population Laboratory for the past six years, studies infectious disease epidemiology, herd immunity, and spatial variation in vaccine coverage. Her scientific expertise and outreach talents, combined with her interest in the complex relationship between geography and human health, helped her support an informed public response to address pressing questions resulting from the 2020 COVID-19 global health pandemic. She is project co-founder, editor-in-chief, and a contributing writer for *Dear Pandemic*, an interdisciplinary team of women that uses its significant social media presence to help members of the public face the COVID-19 pandemic with curated, scientific, and practical information. In 2018, she was awarded a five-year \$500,000 grant through a Mentored Research Scientist (K01) Career Development Award from the National Institute for Allergies and Infectious Diseases, helping her research how clusters of people who decline vaccines can affect herd immunity and how misinformation about vaccines and infectious disease risks spread in social networks. Dr. Jones has been a guest on national television and her statements and interviews on COVID-19 appeared in major news outlets, including NBC News, the *New York Times*, and *USA Today*.
- **Ms. Kimberly Langolf, Director of Risk and Sponsored Programs, UW Oshkosh.**
Langolf, an academic staff member at UW Oshkosh for more than a decade, has consistently played an important role in supporting students, faculty, and staff to help them achieve success. She joined the staff at UW Oshkosh’s Environmental Research and Innovation Center (ERIC) to do research on beach restoration on the Great Lakes and was later promoted to ERIC lab manager. In 2020, Langolf became

the core architect of the university's COVID-19 testing program. She served as one of the primary points of contact with critical stakeholders, including the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Wisconsin Department of Public Health, Winnebago County Health, Prevea-Health, and Advocate Aurora Health. Langolf served as the primary source for information for the CDC, which piloted its research studies on COVID antigen testing through a coordinated effort with UW Oshkosh. Langolf was recognized by Surgeon General Jerome Adams for the university's proactive COVID-19 response. The *Oshkosh Northwestern* newspaper selected her as a 2020 Oshkosh Person of the Year for outstanding impact on the community. Langolf earned both her undergraduate and graduate degrees at UW Oshkosh, in biology and microbiology, respectively.

- **Project Success, UW Oshkosh.** Founded in 1979, Project Success assists hundreds of diverse students at UW Oshkosh each year and is one of the few university programs in the country to specialize in the use of phonics-based multisensory methodology to improve reading, spelling, and writing skills, as well as provide developmental mathematics instruction and tutoring. Under the leadership of Director Jayme Reichenberger, staff provide best-practice, remedial student support; recruitment and enrollment initiatives; retention and graduation efforts; and promotion of inclusivity and awareness to its campus and Fox Valley communities. The National Center for Learning Disabilities indicates that students with learning disabilities enter four-year institutions at half the rate of their nondisabled peers. Project Success services increase enrollment for this specific population of students and aid in their persistence and success. In 2019-20 alone, 221 unique students used at least one exam accommodation through Project Success in 283 distinct courses. Additionally, in 2019-20, approximately 225 unique UWO instructors taught a course in which at least one exam accommodation was requested. The shift to online instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic encouraged staff to collaborate with Information Technology services to provide technical support to course instructors that ensured students' academic accommodations continued to be met.

Other members of the Academic Staff Excellence Awards selection committee included Regent Mike Jones, Regent Cris Peterson, and Regent Corey Saffold.

The committee also recognizes the important contributions of this year's other nominees:

Individual nominees included Nicole Kurth, UW-Green Bay; Dr. Abigail Deyo, UW-La Crosse; Leigh Mahlik, UW-Milwaukee; Kathleen Wagner, UW-Platteville; Leanne Van Allen, UW-River Falls; Anne Rogalski, UW-Stevens Point; Harry Anderson, UW-Superior; and Dr. Terri DeWalt, UW-Whitewater.

Program nominees included the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, UW-Green Bay; TeachOnline@UW, UW-Madison; and the Office of Sustainability, UW-River Falls.

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

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The University of Wisconsin System serves approximately 165,000 students. Awarding nearly 37,000 degrees annually, the UW System is Wisconsin's talent pipeline, putting graduates in position to increase their earning power, contribute to their communities, and make Wisconsin a better place to live. Nearly 90 percent of in-state UW System graduates stay in Wisconsin five years after earning a degree. The UW System provides a 23:1 return on state investment. UW System institutions also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin's culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy.

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