



# 2023 AWARDS CEREMONY

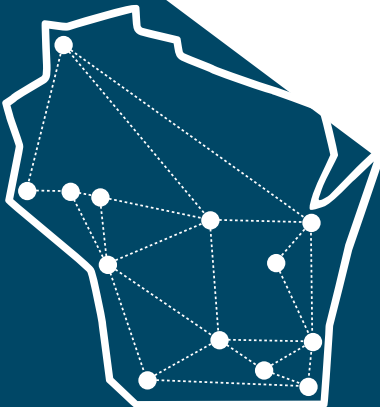
OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF  
COLOR IN EDUCATION AWARD

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DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARD  
FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT  
ON BEHALF OF LGBTQ+ PEOPLE

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2023**

*Gordon Dining and Event Center, Concerto Room  
770 W. Dayton Street, Madison, Wisconsin*



# OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF COLOR IN EDUCATION & DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARDS CEREMONY

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2023**

*Gordon Dining and Event Center, Concerto Room*

**3:00 p.m.** Registration/Doors Open

**3:30 p.m.** Call to Order: *Dr. Monica M. Smith, Associate Vice President,  
Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging*

*Land Acknowledgments: Richmond Panford, UWSA Fellow*

*Welcome: Jay Rothman, Universities of Wisconsin President*

*Tribute to Dr. P.B. Poorman: Susan Simmons, Life Partner of  
Dr. P.B. Poorman*

*Introduction of Keynote Speaker: Dr. Chia Vang,  
Vice Chancellor, Division of Diversity, Equity, and  
Inclusion (DEI), UW-Milwaukee*

*Keynote Address: Dr. Monica M. Smith, Associate Vice  
President, Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging*

Presentation of Awards

*The presentation of awards will be organized by university.  
Photos will also be taken during this time.*

*Closing: Dr. Monica M. Smith, Associate Vice President,  
Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging*

**5:30 p.m.** End of Program

# OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF COLOR IN EDUCATION AWARD

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The UW System Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award is organized and supported by the Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging. The award and recognition ceremony were initiated in 1994 to acknowledge the ties and shared concerns among administrators, faculty, staff, and students within women's studies and ethnic studies, and to uphold a continuing commitment to the goals of Inclusive Excellence.

Each UW university was invited to select one woman to receive this recognition based on their areas of diversity or women's studies scholarship and activism, and/or in doing service to improve the status and climate for women, particularly women of color. The charge was to identify women of color who have consistently demonstrated their ability to rally diverse forces together to advance the agenda of women; who have created positive changes at their institutional level, such as curriculum development and infusion, acquiring grants, or mentoring women; and who have demonstrated an understanding of the interplay of family, community, and culture in the lives of women of color.

In previous years, the Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award was presented during a ceremony at the UW System Women's Studies Conference. The award and events were jointly sponsored by the UW System Offices of Academic Diversity and Development and Women's Issues as well as the UW System Women's Studies Consortium, renamed the Women's and Gender Studies Consortium and housed at UW-Madison.

Today, the award continues to honor women of color from around the state for their leadership in making significant contributions to their campuses and communities. Honorees are recognized for their work in fostering social justice and organizational change and advancing the goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Since the award's inception, more than 400 women of color have been recognized for their transformational work.

# DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT ON BEHALF OF LGBTQ+ PEOPLE

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The UW System and the LGBTQ+ Inclusivity Initiative established the annual Dr. P.B. Poorman Award for Outstanding Achievement on Behalf of LGBTQ+ People in 2008, honoring the memory of Dr. Poorman and recognizing faculty, staff, and students for excellence in their advocacy, research, and/or service efforts on behalf of LGBTQ+ communities.

Paula B. Poorman, a founding member of the UW System LGBTQ+ Inclusivity Initiative and a faculty member at UW-Whitewater, was killed in an accident on Interstate 90 on June 27, 2007, at the age of 56. Those who worked with Dr. Poorman in the UW System knew her as P.B.

P.B. was a faculty member for 11 years in the Psychology Department at UW-Whitewater, where she was promoted to full professor. She loved to teach and encouraged students to go further than they ever thought they could with their education. Her scholarly work focused on underserved populations and issues of powerlessness and privilege. Her research on domestic violence and oppression was published in numerous professional articles and presented at state, regional, and national conferences.

P.B. played an instrumental role in the foundation and development of the LGBTQ+ Inclusivity Initiative, serving as a member of both the Steering and Research Committees at its inception. P.B. took on the daunting task of investigating various campus climate research models and helped implement a systemwide campus climate study. P.B. was a strong voice on the Inclusivity Initiative, rallying members with humor and determination to continue with advocacy when things looked bleak, and cajoling and urging the administration to continue moving further in its support of LGBTQ+ students, faculty, and staff. The recipients of these awards carry on Dr. P.B. Poorman's immeasurable legacy to the state of Wisconsin, the UW System, and LGBTQ+ communities.

# KEYNOTE ADDRESS

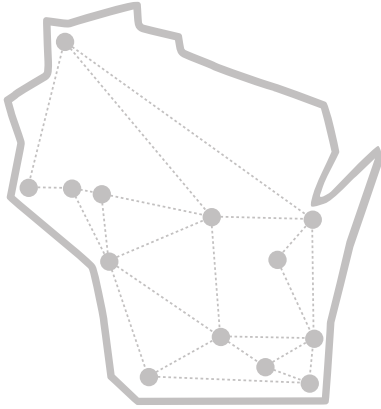
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## Dr. Monica M. Smith



**Monica M. Smith**, DSW, joined the Universities of Wisconsin as associate vice president for equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging in June 2023. Most recently, she was the inaugural vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion at Augustana College in Rock Island, Illinois. Her leadership led the college to receive four Higher Education Excellence in Diversity (HEED) awards and an Innovation in STEM award.

Monica has an extensive record of accomplishment developing strategies and implementing inclusive and supportive learning and working environments.



# UW-Eau Claire

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## OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF COLOR IN EDUCATION



**Nga-Wing Anjela Wong**, PhD (she, they pronouns) is an activist scholar and professor in the Department of Education for Equity and Justice and an affiliate in the Department of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at UW-Eau Claire. Anjela acknowledges that the land they live and work on is the traditional land of the Ojibwe and Dakota Nations.

Anjela earned their PhD and MA in educational policy studies from UW-Madison and BA in Asian American Studies and anthropology from San Francisco State University. Anjela's research and teaching interests include educational policy studies, home-community-school partnerships, and children of immigrant experiences. Anjela is the author of *Opening doors: Community centers connecting working-class immigrant families and schools* (Peter Lang, 2018). They have collaborated with youth of color and immigrant communities in the Greater Boston Area, San Francisco Bay Area, Anchorage, Wisconsin, and Minnesota.

At UW-Eau Claire, Anjela advances equity, diversity, inclusion (EDI) and justice initiatives through teaching, scholarship, and service, including through the Critical Hmong Studies Initiative and as advisor for the Hmong Students Association and co-chair of the 2025 EDI Strategic Plan Committee. They also have been working with the College of Education and Human Sciences on EDI and justice initiatives. Anjela has mentored junior colleagues, four McNair Scholars, and more than 30 student researchers, the majority first-generation college students, BIPOC, and from other minoritized identities. In 2018, Anjela founded the Southeast Asian American Educational Partnerships, an educational pipeline that creates partnerships and mentorship opportunities that work toward justice.

They received the 2022 Office of Multicultural Affairs' Excellence in Service Award, the 2021 Ron Satz Teacher/Scholar Award, and the 2020 UW-Eau Claire Emerging Mentor in Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity Award. Anjela was recently named the recipient of the Shirley Paulson-Lee Education University Fellow at UW-Eau Claire.

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## DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARD



**Bob Nowlan**, PhD (he, him pronouns) has been a professor of critical studies with the Department of English at UW-Eau Claire since 1997 and a university faculty member since 1985. Bob brought a long prior history of LGBTQ+ and progressive activism. Bob was the first out faculty member in the history of UW-Eau Claire as well as the first UW-Eau Claire faculty member to teach classes focused on LGBTQ+ film and queer theory.

Bob was long-time faculty advisor for successive UW-Eau Claire LGBTQ+ student organizations and founded UW-Eau Claire's first LGBTQ+ staff and faculty organization. Bob is a past winner of the MLA Queer Caucus' annual Michael Lynch Award and of UW-Eau Claire's annual Excellence in Service Award. Bob has also been the founder and leader of numerous progressive film festivals and series in Eau Claire as well as founding chair of the board of directors and long-time DJ with Eau Claire's independent progressive community radio station, WHYS. Bob has advised over 15 other UW-Eau Claire student organizations as well as been a leader and active contributor to many Eau Claire area community organizations with strong interests in and commitments to social justice. Bob teaches classes in critical theory, television and film, popular music and popular culture, and 20th to 21st century British literatures and cultures. In recent teaching, Bob has not only continued his long-standing emphasis on engagement with intersectionality as critical inquiry and praxis in terms of race, class, gender, and sexuality, but also in terms of disability and mental health/illness, while offering yet further new classes, centrally concerned with social justice issues, including *Sports, Politics, and Society*; *Contemporary Black British Experience*; and *Critical Studies in Crime, Justice, and the Law*. Bob is co-editor and co-author of *Directory of World Cinema: Scotland* (2015, Intellect/U of Chicago Press), and author of many published articles on issues in film, LGBTQ+ studies, and critical theory. Bob has also written the forthcoming books *Excessive Flashpoints*, *Solitary Demands*, *Darkest Corners: Ian Curtis, Joy Division*, *Critical Theory*, and *Me*, a part-memoir, and *21st Century British TV Crime Drama: a Critical Guide*, a prospective multi-volume series.



# UW-Green Bay

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## OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF COLOR IN EDUCATION



**Crystal Lepscier (Wāqsepāēhketūkiw)** is an enrolled member of the Little Shell Band of Chippewa of Montana. Her mother is enrolled Stockbridge-Munsee and father (kaeh nap) is enrolled Menominee, making her a direct descendant of both Wisconsin tribal communities. Her former role at UW-Green Bay was to serve as the First Nations student success coordinator, which meant that she served and supported all self-identified First Nations students on campus. She did this work by meeting

with students to address their needs, creating programming that supported First Nations students interests and success, partnering throughout the University with various departments to build infrastructure designed with the needs of First Nations students in mind, and establishing and maintaining relationships with local tribal communities. She is happy to currently serve as an associate lecturer for campus, teaching a First Year Seminar course under the First Nations Studies department. Her course is entitled “Rizz on the Rez: Indigenous Knowledge in Higher Education” and includes various resources and guest speakers to highlight the Indigenous knowledge all around. Crystal also currently works full time as a program manager for Menomini yoU, Inc. which is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works to revitalize and renormalize the Menomini language in the community.

Crystal earned both her Master of Science degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis (2011) and her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art (2005) from UW-Madison. She recently completed the UWGB First Nations Education Doctorate program, earning her Education Doctorate in May 2022. Her dissertation title is *Listening for the Canaries: Addressing Racial Battle Fatigue in First Nations Students in Higher Education*.

Crystal, her husband Justin, and their two children reside in Shawano, Wis. In her spare time, she enjoys reading, beading, and spending time with family.

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## DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARD



**Bryan J. Carr** is a professor teaching in the Communication and Information Science departments at UW-Green Bay, where he oversees the Mass Media and Game Studies emphases and serves on the interdisciplinary Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies faculty.

His academic research focuses on representation in popular culture – particularly video games and superhero comics, with a recent focus on transmedia storytelling and media economy. Last year, he published *The Transmedia Construction of the Black Panther: Long Live the King* with Lexington Books and co-edited *Gendered Defenders: Marvel's Superheroines in Transmedia Spaces* alongside Dr. Meta G. Carstarphen for Ohio State University Press. He also has over seven years of professional broadcast industry experience in radio and television in a wide variety of roles.

He currently is the general manager and advisor of UW-Green Bay's student radio station, Radio GBX, and serves as advisor for the Black Student Union. He regularly volunteers in support of the Pride Center and Multicultural Resource Center, collaborating on programming and awareness and supporting UW-Green Bay's diverse student population. He also hosts and produces a regular podcast, *Serious Fun*, which explores the complex world of popular culture through the eyes of those who produce, study, and consume it. He is happily married and acts as butler to two cats.

# UW-La Crosse

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## OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF COLOR IN EDUCATION



**Michelle Satram Sylvester** is an educationist and an advocate for social justice within the sphere of education. A South African who grew up in a turbulent and inequitable society, she knew from an early age that she was called to teach. She believes that education is the key to social transformation and that teachers are influential changemakers.

Michelle's roles in education range from being a classroom teacher to positions of leadership. Among her roles, she most notably held the deputy head position at the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in Johannesburg, South Africa.

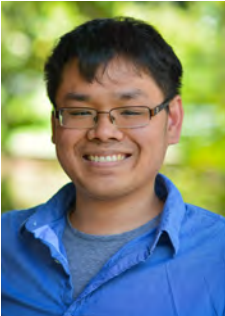
After decades in education in South Africa, Michelle took on the senior equity advisor/recruiter position at the UW-La Crosse School of Education. This was a natural career progression as it offered an opportunity to work in teacher education with a lens into equity and belonging. She was part of the reformation of the Dean's Student Advisory Council and continued the Multicultural Education Students Organization, ensuring student agency.

Michelle is part of the Strategic Planning Team and the Belonging Action Group, which both work to foster a culture of belonging on campus. She was also part of the Campus Climate Research Committee, a project that aimed to define institutional commitment to diversity and gathered experiences through story telling from BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ students.

Michelle consistently strives to inspire students in her care through mentorship and encouraging them to advocate for themselves. The principle of "Ubuntu - I am because we are" embraces her work.

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## DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARD



**Jason Sumontha**, PhD (he, him, his pronouns) is an assistant professor at UW-La Crosse, where he teaches and conducts research on the psychology of sexual orientation and gender identity, family health, and positive youth development.

With a PhD in Community Psychology and Prevention Research and Developmental Psychology from the University of Virginia, Jason has a strong background in quantitative and qualitative methods, data analysis, and grant writing. He has successfully managed multiple grant-funded projects on justice and equity in postsecondary education, published in top peer-reviewed outlets, and presented his research in both researcher- and practitioner-focused venues.

Recently, he was the closing keynote presenter for the Wisconsin Rural Health annual meeting where he presented on the topic of promoting the well-being of LGBTQ+ parents in rural communities. He is dedicated to lifelong learning and continued growth in cultural competency and cultural humility.

# UW-Madison

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## OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF COLOR IN EDUCATION



**Maichou Lor**, RN, PhD, is an assistant professor at UW–Madison in the School of Nursing. She received her Bachelors, Masters, and PhD from UW-Madison, then completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Columbia University before returning to join the faculty. She was the first Hmong registered nurse to receive a PhD in the United States.

Maichou’s inquiry, investigation, interventions, and advocacy stem from witnessing how the Hmong community is both underserved and under-involved in health care. She strives to expand linguistic and cultural access to care for populations with limited English proficiency, with a focus on the Hmong community. She has led multiple interdisciplinary research teams in the areas of patient-provider communication, hearing screening, mental health, and medical interpreting. Among many notable accomplishments of Maichou and her teams, one significant milestone was development of the first Hmong word recognition test. This test, a basic component of hearing evaluations, enables Hmong-speaking patients to receive an accurate diagnosis of the type of hearing loss they may have and receive appropriate hearing care and treatments.

Maichou has published more than 40 articles and has given 60 scholarly research presentations at local, regional, national, and international conferences on issues resulting from poor access to care, health disparities related to cultural and language differences, and solutions for improving engagement of underrepresented communities in health research. She has been invited to speak locally and nationally on topics related to recruitment and retention of minority nursing students and Hmong health, and presents frequently for student organizations, professional organizations, and the Hmong community.

Maichou especially enjoys teaching Nursing 105: Culturally Congruent Health Care Practice, a course that helps students critically reflect on their socially constructed identities and the impact these identities have on patient care and health care systems. She has mentored nearly 30 students, including many first-generation college students and students of color, and received UW-Madison’s highly competitive Undergraduate Mentoring Award in 2017.

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## DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARD



**Ronni Hayon, MD**, (she, her pronouns) is an associate professor (Clinical Health Sciences) at UW-Madison in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health. She earned her MD from Drexel University College of Medicine, completed the UW Family Medicine Residency Program, and is board certified in Family Medicine. Ronni is committed to providing care that is gender-affirming and that promotes health equity, anti-racism, and size acceptance. She finds great purpose in welcoming people back into

healthcare and working to rebuild trust after prior experiences of harm or marginalization by the healthcare system.

Throughout her academic career, Ronni has advocated tirelessly for inclusive and equitable care for LGBTQIA2S+ patients and families. She is known nationally as an expert in gender care, is a trusted resource in Wisconsin for education and consultations, and is recognized by her colleagues as an inspirational leader who has the confidence and bravery to advocate for others in ways that are not always comfortable or safe. Twice each month, she hosts Trans Health Office Hours, open to clinicians who would like to discuss topics ranging from pronoun usage to complex medical cases.

Ronni serves as a physician champion, creating novel curricula and clinical training, for the National LGBTQ+ Health Fellowship. The AMA Foundation selected UW-Madison's School of Medicine and Public Health as the inaugural institution for this groundbreaking fellowship, which is housed in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, in 2021.

Ronni also serves as the co-medical director of UW Health's multidisciplinary Gender Services Clinic, which opened its doors to patients in 2022, as the program director for PPWI's gender program, and most recently as an advisor to PBS Kids. In her spare time, she co-produces *This Is Probably A Really Weird Question*, a podcast about gender, sexual health, and history.

## OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF COLOR IN EDUCATION



**Crystal Carter**, a professor at UW-Milwaukee, teaches graduate field seminars, coordinates graduate clinical internships, and develops strong ties to professional social work organizations that lead to employment for future social work graduates. Crystal facilitates orientation for field instructors, trains students on licensing and credentialing, and employs creative approaches to the classes she teaches. She teaches statewide workshops to professional social workers on ethics and boundaries.

Crystal has published multiple articles related to systemic racism in healthcare, race-based trauma, Black women and their mental health, and how to protect Black girls from sexual violence. Beyond publishing articles focused on uplifting Black lives, she has been interviewed by WUWM Public Radio, presented at multiple Wisconsin Chapter – National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Conferences, and has been invited to speak in front of national audiences. This past year, Crystal traveled to Germany to serve as a delegate for Zonta International Conference. Zonta International empowers women worldwide through service and advocacy, including providing fellowships and international education opportunities.

Crystal also shares her talents on campus by volunteering with the Ombuds Council, African Diaspora Council, and Wisconsin Women in Higher Education Leadership. She led a student study-abroad trip to South Africa and volunteers her time on committees and countless other work groups. Most recently, Crystal was appointed as a UW-Milwaukee Academy Fellow in the 2022-2023 Mosaic Leadership Academy, where she supports the efforts of building community, fostering knowledge, skills, and networks of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) staff and faculty.

Last, but not least, Crystal mentors and gives strength to BIPOC students on their way to becoming professional social workers. These students leave the program prepared to provide psychotherapy, work with veterans, counsel sexual abuse victims, and become community leaders.

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## DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARD



**Carl Bogner** directed what is now titled the Milwaukee LGBT Film/Video Festival. This festival first began with the showing of a few films in 1982 and grew to be the central Milwaukee LGBTQ+ community event of the year. It's hard to overstate how important the film festival was to the Milwaukee-area community when Carl first became involved in organizing it in 1998. Bear in mind that 1998 was the first year in which Milwaukee Pridefest was held, and in the early years, attendance was sparse, with anti-

LGBTQ+ protesters outnumbering attendees.

Carl knew he needed multiple skillsets. First, there was the issue of finding films to screen, which was a difficult task in the days before access to inexpensive video recording and production and online video hosting. Then there was the issue of representation. If it was hard to locate LGBTQ+ films generally, it was particularly hard to find ones not made by cis gay white men, and to a lesser degree, cis white lesbians. But Carl took the issue of representation very seriously and sought out films by QTPOC filmmakers, about LGBTQ+ elders, by trans and nonbinary people, about disabled LGBTQ+ people, etc. His goal, which he achieved, was to help weave an inclusive LGBTQ+ Milwaukee community by making all feel welcomed and represented at the festival.

Carl is well-known and admired all around Milwaukee and has brought positive attention to UW-Milwaukee in the process. In 2022, he was diagnosed with an advanced cancer of the brain. Surgery for that has left him without the use of one hand. He is currently undergoing intensive chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Among the 126 statements of support and admiration for Carl on the GoFundMe set up for him is the following from a former student, "You are one of the most delightful, clever and generous professors I've had the honor of taking classes with." Another from a colleague stated, "I was a fan of the UWM LGBT film festival for more than 20 years. Over that period of time, I often thought that someone should make a film about you, Carl. I still think it's worth doing. You are fit for that kind of tribute." After all he has done for the university and the Milwaukee LGBTQIA+ community, Carl is emblematic of all that is desired in this award.



## OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF COLOR IN EDUCATION



**Renee Simpson** completed her master's degree in liberal arts and sciences with an emphasis in sociology from Western Illinois University. She also completed her undergraduate degree in sociology from the University of Wyoming

Renee is currently an academic advisor beginning her third year at UW Oshkosh. Renee had also served in this role for over 11 years at Western Illinois University. In addition to academic advising,

Renee has worked in other areas of higher education for over 20 years. Her background includes work in diversity, equity, and inclusion; college admissions counseling; and human resources management.

Renee's area of expertise includes academic coaching, proactive advising, developmental advising, community outreach, and student persistence and retention. Outside of higher education, Renee has also served in the Oshkosh community teaching high school health. While in Illinois, she had also worked at a nonprofit agency serving survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Renee's professional background has been centered in serving various students regardless of their educational background as well as individuals within the campus community. Much of her focus has been grounded in working with minoritized and underprivileged populations of students.

Outside of work, Renee serves at Breakthrough Covenant Church in a leadership role with her husband over the praise and worship, marriage enrichment, and women's ministry. Other volunteer work Renee currently enjoys is serving as a team fellow in the UW Oshkosh Athletic Department for the women's gymnastics team and for the men's basketball team.

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## DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARD



**Eve Hawpetoss** (they, them, their pronouns) is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. Eve promotes social justice in their schoolwork, programming, and everyday conversations. Eve accepts nothing less than a positive transformation in all spaces in which they occupy and seeks ways to perpetually improve the environment for all beings to thrive and be their favorite selves. Eve's student leadership roles on campus include vice president of the Rainbow Alliance for Helping Others Perceive

Equality (HOPE), president of the Inter-Tribal Student Council (Indigenous student organization), president of the Women's Advocacy Council (gender equity student organization), and the student lead for the Center for Pride and Gender Equity (formally known as the LGBTQ+ resource center). This determination, resilience, and power continue through their academic journey. They encourage classmates to join in, seek to understand differing perspectives, check in when they are absent, and seek advice on how to be supportive while respecting boundaries.

Eve is a fierce advocate for many vulnerable communities and uses their scholarship to continue advancing our university's core values in inclusive excellence. Eve brings humility and visibility to the critical conversations surrounding intersectionality and student belonging. Eve continues to help ensure every student feels included and seen. Eve continuously advocates spaces for social justice in their classes and in front of the administration. They have been a steady voice for gender equity and multiracial identity representation in predominantly white areas. Eve is also focused on their scholarship and career journey. They have taken courses integrating their intersecting experiences as a learning opportunity for their peers and faculty. Eve does not shy away from pushing the topic to center on important and current issues affecting many communities. Eve wants to continue being an advocate in a high school setting while providing mentorship to future advocates and students from different experiences.

# UW-Parkside

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## OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF COLOR IN EDUCATION



**Mita Banerjee**, PhD, is an associate professor of sociology and the founding faculty director of the Sociology Online Degree Completion Program at UW-Parkside. She also codirects the International Studies Program. Through her teaching, research, service, and mentoring, she has utilized her expertise to further education, awareness, and a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI) for underserved and underrepresented students at UW-Parkside.

Mita teaches with an equity-minded pedagogy to cultivate and sustain an inclusive classroom. She teaches courses in social inequality, focusing on disparities in economic well-being, health, and educational outcomes. She has won UW-Parkside's Teaching Excellence Award, the Wisconsin Sociological Association's Outstanding Teacher Award, and the Advising Excellence Award. Student nominations credited her social justice oriented pedagogy and her mentoring efforts as being profoundly instrumental to their learning. Students expressed becoming informed about racialized structures, policies, and practices that produce and sustain inequities and how – through her teaching and social activism – she provided opportunities to challenge prejudices, confront biases, and interrogate the status quo.

Mita's research spans social justice and the EDI realm. She is well-published in the area of the digital divide, pedagogical and social factors impacting learning outcomes for underserved and underrepresented students, and the teaching improvements necessary to enhance their classroom experiences. She participated in a process designed to help UW-Parkside prioritize strategies within the Academic and Student Affairs plan from an equity perspective. Her on-the-ground experience as a faculty member and as an academic advisor and her research on student success was incredibly valuable to the process.

Mita's service reflects important advocacy and activism work to narrow the achievement gap of underrepresented students. As a team member of the Student Success Taskforce, Moon Shot for Equity, and Diversity Council, she has been actively involved in helping UW-Parkside increase its persistence, retention, and student success metrics.

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## DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARD



**Parker Schinkowitch** (they, them, their pronouns) is in their third year of college at UW-Parkside. They are currently studying psychology with a concentration in mental health skills and eventually hope to earn an MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

Parker serves as president of the highly active and campus-engaged student organization Rainbow Alliance and is co-chair of the Student Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Council. Parker was

instrumental in leading the charge to help get the staff position for the campus LGBTQ Resource Center filled in an effort to provide increased support and resources for students, faculty, and staff. Parker is a student leader and scholar. They received multiple recognitions at the Taking Care of Business Awards ceremony, which recognizes the academic and leadership accomplishments of students.

Parker served as a representative of and provided the student voice for the LGBTQ+ student communities during the Higher Learning Commission accreditation processes. They have willingly served on multiple search and screen committees to ensure that potential candidates have the best interest of all students at hand. Additionally, Parker served as a dedicated committee member and moderator for the Passions Project. The event showcased a series of stories of Racine's vibrant LGBTQ+ community by offering the viewers a glimpse into their passions.

Parker's service on the Presidents Council for the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs is a testament to their dedication and advocacy for not only Parkside's LGBTQ+ community, but all marginalized communities. Parker is a dedicated and involved role model for UW-Parkside LGBTQ+ students.

# UW-Platteville

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## OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF COLOR IN EDUCATION



**Carla Lee-Wages** has served as a multicultural student advisor in the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs at UW-Platteville since 2020. As a first-generation college graduate and passionate advocate for the diverse needs of students, Carla brings a unique blend of personal and professional experiences to her role. Carla's journey in higher education and child welfare has equipped her with a deep understanding of the challenges that many students, particularly first-generation students, face on their path to academic success.

Her previous career began as a child welfare specialist in Chicago, where she dedicated several years to ensuring the well-being and empowerment of children and families from diverse backgrounds. This invaluable experience honed her skills in cultural sensitivity and empathy, which she now integrates into her work as a student advisor.

In her role as a multicultural student advisor, she is dedicated to fostering a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment on campus. She provides guidance on academic, personal, and cultural matters, ensuring that students feel heard, valued, and supported throughout their academic journey. Whether she is assisting with course selection, connecting students with resources, organizing culturally enriching events, or providing a listening ear, she is committed to empowering students to reach their fullest potential.

Carla is an active community member and has served on the Platteville Library Board. She is an educational advocate with The Black Platteville Community Network and a community advocate with Subversive Social Work in Platteville.

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## DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARD



**Seth Reilly** (he, him, his pronouns) is a fifth-year technology education and theatre student at UW-Platteville. He has been an active member of the Alliance for Gender and Sexuality, UW-Platteville's queer student organization, since 2019, and an executive board member in various positions since 2020. During his tenure, he was an integral part of the team that brought the Rainbow Rave Conference and Drag Show from a livestreamed performance during the COVID-19 pandemic to one of the most anticipated queer events

on Platteville's campus. He is regularly referenced and consulted by colleagues on queer topics and strives to create an aware, accepting campus for all students.

Seth has been an active member of Sigma Phi Epsilon and its queer member organization, the Chicago Society, since 2019, and has worked tirelessly to educate and raise awareness within the chapter on queer issues. As the chapter's risk management and mental health coordinator, he is proud to continue SigEp's mission to accept all male identifying persons.

In addition to his work on campus, Seth is a future educator. He aims to bring his experience in acceptance to his future classroom and create a space where traditionally male-dominated skills and trades will be taught to everyone, and no student feels othered by their peers.

Seth has dedicated his time on campus to bettering the lives of others through awareness and education, to create and foster a campus community of inclusion and acceptance. He will dedicate his future to bringing that same community to his classrooms, schools, and districts.

# UW-River Falls

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## OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF COLOR IN EDUCATION



**Youngmi Kim, PhD**, is an associate professor of Agricultural Engineering and Engineering Technology at UW-River Falls. She completed her undergraduate degree in Biological Engineering at Inha University in South Korea and her PhD in Agricultural and Biological Engineering at Purdue University. At UW-River Falls, she has taught a total of 13 courses in engineering technology, agricultural engineering, and general engineering. She has also taught portions of the Wisconsin Cheesemakers Short Course. She

was awarded an Evidence-Based Teaching Fellowship grant. She has served as a member of the Chancellor's Teaching/Learning Action Team and on the Building Math Pathways for Student Success Committee.

Youngmi has taken a keen interest in getting women and minorities involved in engineering and technology. She helped recruit STEM majors to UW-River Falls by attending Da Vinci Fest in Stillwater (Minn.), Girls in SCIENCE at UW-River Falls, the "Expanding Your Horizons STEAM Conference" at Inver Hills Community College (Minn.), and Camp Badger. She was the principal investigator in a UW System Women and Science Summer Grant Program and currently serves as a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion committee member for the American Society for Engineering Education and advisory board member of the UW System Women and Science Program. In addition, she has attended several STEM educators and "Women in Science & Engineering" workshops throughout Wisconsin.

She is co-assignee to four United States patents and has received a number of research grants at UW-River Falls, including funding by the Wisconsin Dairy Innovation Hub Initiative. She has eight peer-reviewed publications, along with a number of conference presentations, technical reports, and undergraduate research projects. Youngmi exemplifies the nature of a true educator who never stops learning and reaching new heights of instructional excellence. She is a true embodiment of a devoted and expert educator for which her department and university are grateful.

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## DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARD



**Linnea Milner**, a graduate of UW-River Falls in 2023, earned a degree in psychology and is a passionate advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence. At UW-River Falls, Linnea demonstrated an unwavering dedication to social justice and organizational change through various means such as advocacy, activism, and scholarship. As a resident assistant on the gender inclusive floor, Linnea tirelessly supported the well-being of her residents, addressing mental health, relationships,

and the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ students. She actively created a safe and inclusive environment by combatting issues of misgendering and homophobia.

Beyond her role as a resident assistant, Linnea served on the violence prevention coordinator search, advocating for comprehensive violence prevention measures that focused on LGBTQ+ relationships and sex education. She recognized the higher rates of violence experienced by the LGBTQ+ community and aimed to bring about positive change. Linnea's commitment to promoting positive transformation extended to her involvement in campus committees such as the Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging committee. She contributed to the UW-River Falls Land Acknowledgment and worked towards higher retention rates for students of color through the Dean's Council. As an active member of the Gender and Sexuality Alliance, Linnea consistently advocated for marginalized groups, pushing for increased representation, safe spaces, and funding. Linnea also collaborated with Student Involvement to host inclusive events, focusing on the needs of LGBTQ+ students and students of color. Notably, she led the Dan's Bandana project, raising awareness and support for suicide prevention among the LGBTQ+ community. Additionally, Linnea chaired the mental health ad hoc committee, championing initiatives to improve mental health support for all students, with a particular emphasis on students of color and LGBTQ+ students.

Linnea is pursuing her master's degree at the University of Minnesota. Her passion for social justice and well-being will undoubtedly shape her future endeavors, fostering inclusive and equitable communities.



# UW-Stevens Point

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## OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF COLOR IN EDUCATION



**Pratima Gandhi** began her role as the UW-Stevens Point vice chancellor for business affairs and chief business officer in June 2020. Since joining UW-Stevens Point, Pratima has brought integral change through engaging the Business Affairs Division. This engagement has led to the following:

- Expanded Capital Planning and Construction highlighted by the upcoming \$63 million dollar construction included in the Albertson Hall

Renovation project. The construction of a new building to replace Albertson Hall on the UW-Stevens Point campus will provide a state-of-the-art support/resource center for our students and community members.

- Dedicated focus on balancing the budget, enhanced reporting practices, and expanded education of financial practices.
- Implementation of operating efficiencies and restructuring to best deliver efficient and cost-effective solutions for campus and students.
- Elevation of sustainability initiatives for the long-term health of the campus community.

Pratima previously served as the chief financial officer and treasurer at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, where she had worked since 1993. She also served as an auditor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia.

While at Bradley, she provided leadership and operational management for the university's financial, business and facilities functions, including a budget of \$230 million and \$110 million in construction projects. She was active on the board of directors of several Peoria civic organizations, and served on several university committees at Bradley and Virginia Tech.

The vice chancellor for business affairs leads about 160 full-time employees in a division that includes Facility Services, Financial Operations, Budget and Planning, Human Resources, Capital Planning and Budget, Risk Management, Sustainability, Parking Services, and Police and Security Services. As the university's chief financial officer, Pratima is responsible for UW-Stevens Point's operating budget and serves on the chancellor's executive team. Pratima has a bachelor's degree in accounting from Indiana University.

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## DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARD



**Sandra L. Neumann, PhD** (she, her, hers pronouns) is an assistant professor of psychology at UW-Stevens Point at Marshfield. Her home is the Marshfield campus; however, she teaches on all three campuses of UW-Stevens Point. Courses she teaches include Psychology of Gender, Introductory Psychology, and Statistics for Psychologists.

Sandy is a proud alum of Humboldt State University (BA in 1995, MA in 1997) and Miami University (PhD in 2002), where she developed passions for teaching, service, emergency management, and bringing diversity, equity, and inclusion issues to the forefront of classes and conversations every chance she gets. Her research has studied animal shelter volunteers and disaster response. Sandra is involved personally, volunteering for the Marshfield Animal Pet Shelter. She also teaches community groups about disaster preparedness and animal sheltering.

During her time in academia, Sandy has served as the chair of an LGB student union (even before the time that transgender students were recognized), as a member of campus presidential-level task forces, and as the assistant safety officer for the psychology department (the first graduate student to hold this position). She was a founding member of Miami University's White Women Against Racism and has published in the areas of welcoming sexual minority students in the classroom and as animal shelter volunteers.

At UW-Stevens Point at Marshfield, she serves as the co-chair of the Marshfield Steering Committee and director of the newly reimagined campus Multicultural Resource Center. She has expanded her teaching interests to better serve first-year psychology major. She also runs a research lab to work with students. She has earned the campus Teaching Effectiveness Award (twice) and a Distinguished Service award.

As a member of UW-Stevens Point, Sandy is grateful that she can bring her passion for diversity, equity, and inclusion to a variety of areas on campus and in the community.

## OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF COLOR IN EDUCATION



**Mai Khou Xiong** was born in a refugee camp in Thailand and raised in Fond du Lac, Wis. Mai Khou holds a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Master of Science in Educational Leadership, both from UW Oshkosh. She has several years of service within the Universities of Wisconsin, first at UW Oshkosh and most recently 2.5 years at UW-Stout, where she currently serves.

Mai Khou has gone above and beyond in dual roles of supporting students as both multicultural student services director as well as the student-facing role of interim director of equity, diversity, and inclusion. She has exhibited superior leadership and guidance to TRIO areas, the Qube LGBTQ+ center, and the Stoutward Bound bridge program for underrepresented students. Mai Khou's dedication to Stoutward Bound led to state-level recognition of the program, which received the Ann Lydecker Diversity Award in the fall of 2022. Mai Khou also chairs the Bias Incident Response Team, hearing and evaluating cases while providing an educational lens and validation to students who feel they have experienced bias based on various identities they may hold.

Additionally, Mai Khou is intentional about campus partnerships that promote inclusion and foster belonging, as she has collaborated with UW-Stout's Office of Educational Pathways to host a Minority STEM Youth Camp for 9th-12th graders with a 3M grant they were successful in securing. In addition to this partnership, Mai Khou recently accompanied staff from UW-Stout's Office of International Education Office to Thailand, as the university continues to fortify recruitment efforts globally and enhance their study abroad program via UW-Stout's heritage trip initiative.

Mai Khou has an invaluable skillset of bringing harmony to the ways in which people differ, which is the purest definition of diversity.

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## DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARD



*"Because of your smile, you make life more beautiful."  
- Thich Nhat Hanh*

**Jamie Arenz** (he, him, his pronouns) began his time at UW-Stout as a first-generation, nontraditional student in 2009 studying Vocational Rehabilitations with a dual concentration of Psychiatric Rehabilitation and Substance Abuse Counseling. Many of Jamie's professors took an interest in his success. Two include Dr. Susie Eberhart and Dr. Michelle Hamilton.

During his senior year of his undergraduate studies, Dr. Eberhart asked Jamie a question, "Have you applied for graduate school?" After overcoming a brief bout of "imposter syndrome" brought on by Dr. Eberhart's query, Jamie was graduated Magna Cum Laude in 2013 and began graduate school. Feeling the same sense of community and empowerment, he graduated with a master's degree in vocational counseling in 2015.

An internship in the UW-Stout's Disability Services solidified his desire to work in higher education. Jamie began his career at UW-Stout as an academic advisor in the Advisement Center and went on to pair that role with that of the testing coordinator.

Jamie is an egalitarian whose work in social justice, disability rights, and LGBTQ+ advancement is notable. He was faculty advisor for the Gender and Sexuality Alliance at UW-Stout, a role that allowed him to further support students at UW-Stout. Having come of age in the 1980s, the homophobia coupled with the AIDS crisis of that era were very formative for Jamie in his fight for LGBTQ+ rights. Working in higher education has brought a new light to his passion for equality for all and the advancement of diversity, equity, and Inclusion. Jamie has welcomed the support from his peers who have allowed him to be his authentic self.

# UW-Superior

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## OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF COLOR IN EDUCATION



**Heaven *Waasiikwe* Fleming** is a student at UW-Superior majoring in Elementary Studies and First Nations Studies. She is from the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe of Lake Superior Ojibwe. She is a part of the Eagle clan.

Heaven currently works as a paraprofessional at the Waadookodaading Ojibwe Language Immersion Institute, Wisconsin's only Ojibwe language immersion school. She hopes to become a lead teacher there when she graduates. She is passionate about learning her language and culture and teaching it to Indigenous youth.

In 2022, Heaven was awarded the Electa Quinney Institute Leaders of the Good Land Scholarship, which is awarded to Universities of Wisconsin Indigenous students based on academic achievement.

Heaven is an engaged student who expresses her thoughts and perspectives about different issues affecting American Indians. She participates in campus events, such as Indigenous People's Day, where she has demonstrated the jingle dress dance.

Heaven balances attending university with the work of both learning an endangered language (Ojibwemowin) and teaching it at the same time. Heaven works with advanced language speakers, including elders, to advance her language and cultural skills daily. She has made it part of her work to dispel negative stereotypes and misconceptions by teaching the history, culture, and tribal sovereignty of tribal nations. She generously shares what she knows about language and culture with fellow students and other members of the UW-Superior community.

Heaven's work and her leadership in this area are advancing the position and resilience of Ojibwe people in Wisconsin. She is passionate about learning as much as she can about the language from elders and community leaders (many of whom are passing away) and transmitting that knowledge to new generations.

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## DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARD



**Sean Hayes** (he, him, his pronouns) deeply believes in the power and joy of an interconnected community. He has been a community advocate and organizer for the transgender and queer community in the Twin Ports area for over eight years. He is the co-founder and board chair of Trans Northland (TN), a Twin Ports area organization that provides support, advocacy, education, and connection to the transgender community. TN welcomes folks who are transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming, two

spirit, genderqueer, gender diverse, and gender expansive. Sean participates in community through coordinating peer-to-peer support groups, leading Trans 101 trainings for community organizations and businesses, and organizing events such as the Transgender Day of Remembrance, Transgender Day of Visibility, and most recently, the second annual Trans Joy Fest. Sean is a resourceful and compassionate advocate for anyone seeking help, connection, and community.

He currently works at Men As Peacemakers (MAP), which is a mainstream organization that focuses on primary prevention of gender-based violence. Sean serves two roles at MAP: He is the program coordinator of The Don't Buy It Project, which seeks to prevent commercial sexual exploitation, and he co-coordinates the statewide Men & Masculine Folks Network. That network focuses on fostering and creating a hub where men and masculine folks from diverse communities and organizations across Minnesota are connected and moving toward a collective goal of ending gender-based violence. He has also participated in restorative justice circles with repeat offenders of domestic violence, within MAP's Domestic Violence Restorative Circles program.

Sean attended and graduated from Denfeld High School, Duluth, Minn., in 2005. He earned his Bachelor of Liberal Arts from UW-Superior, majoring in English with a communications minor. He has lived in the Twin Ports area for almost 20 years. Sean is a daddy to an incredible and energetic four-year-old, Eleanor. He is an eight-year veteran of the Air National Guard and enjoys having deep conversations, especially on the topic of building a safe, equitable, and thriving community for all. He loves coffee dates, graphic design, and superhero movies.

# UW-Whitewater

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## OUTSTANDING WOMEN OF COLOR IN EDUCATION



**Prajukti (juk) Bhattacharyya** promotes inclusivity, diversity, equity, and accessibility in all her professional activities at UW-Whitewater. She is a full professor of geology, a STEM discipline historically dominated by able-bodied white heterosexual males. To expand representation in her discipline, juk has created a series of assignments in her introductory geology course where students are exposed to cutting-edge research activities by female and BIPOC geoscientists. She has incorporated student-designed

research activities in most of her courses so that students underrepresented in STEM disciplines can participate in high-impact practices (HIPs). For example, in the international travel-study course, “Geology and Physics of Iceland,” which she co-developed with her physicist colleague Dr. Yavuzcetin, students from all disciplines are expected to participate in mentored field-based research. To make this course inclusive, she developed a survey to address the needs of transgender/genderfluid students and students with invisible disabilities while traveling in Iceland.

juk’s scholarly activities reflect her focus on inclusive excellence. She has published multiple peer-reviewed articles on the impacts of mentored undergraduate research on reducing the equity gap, and ways to engage potentially at-risk students in research early in their college careers to ensure academic success. During 2014-16 she coordinated the UW-Whitewater Research Apprenticeship Program (RAP), and guided RAP to receive two statewide Diversity Awards for promoting student success. She received the Regent Scholar Award in 2020 for her interdisciplinary research on landslide monitoring.

Recently, she has received a grant from the National Science Foundation for creating a culturally appropriate geoscience learning ecosystem where students from all disciplines can work with Indigenous knowledge keepers to address geoscience-related societal issues. Currently, 11 students from first-generation, low-income, BIPOC, neurodiverse, active military, and LGBTQIA+ backgrounds and majoring in computer science, sociology, geography/geology, environmental science, graphic design, and professional writing are part of the research ecosystem she has created.

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## DR. P.B. POORMAN AWARD



**Kristen Prock**, PhD (she, her, hers pronouns) is the MSW program coordinator, assistant professor of social work, and affiliated faculty in Women's and Gender Studies at UW-Whitewater.

Kristen's research examines LGBTQ-related discrimination, policy, and practices in higher education, understanding the lived experiences of individuals facing multiple marginalization, and teaching evidence-based practice in social work education. Her current project, Photovoice for Social Justice, seeks to amplify the voices of LGBTQ+ students at UW-Whitewater through art, advocacy, and action-building bridges through her extensive research experience to undergraduate student advocacy and retention.

Kristen has an impressive record of research dissemination, publishing peer-reviewed articles and presenting her work at national conferences to increase awareness surrounding ongoing discriminatory practices against LGBTQ+ folks in institutions of higher learning. Through this work, Kristen has augmented the voices of marginalized communities in academic scholarship, holding space for the perspectives of those at the intersections of oppression.

Kristen earned a BA in Psychology from UW-Eau Claire, an MSW from Indiana University-South Bend, and a PhD in Social Work from Michigan State University.

Prior to joining the UW-Whitewater faculty in 2019, she worked as a licensed clinical social worker for nearly a decade with system-involved children and adolescents; her clinical expertise includes adolescent mental health and trauma, LGBTQ+ youth and young adults, and navigating systems of care. Recently, she was tasked with chairing the Chancellor's Committee on LGBTQ+ Issues at UW-Whitewater, a testament to her scholarship and ongoing advocacy efforts.



# Appreciations

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The efforts of many people went into organizing the events surrounding the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dr. P.B. Poorman Award for Outstanding Achievement on Behalf of LGBTQ+ People and the 28<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award.

Please help us extend our gratitude to all those who helped to make visible the important work being done every day on our campuses and in our communities by these amazing advocates for diversity and inclusion. This includes the staff and sponsors who contributed to this effort.

Thanks to UW System staff Jessica Coda, Brenda Joyce, Angela Kellogg, Robert Kosmeder, Danielle Lee, Sandra Kallio, Jennifer Moore, Richmond Panford, Diane Treis, and Karin Wrzesinski.

# Past Recipients

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To see past award recipients, visit:

Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award  
[wisconsin.edu/grants-awards/women-of-color/](https://www.wisconsin.edu/grants-awards/women-of-color/)

Dr. P.B. Poorman Award for Outstanding Achievement  
on Behalf of LGBTQ+ People  
[wisconsin.edu/grants-awards/poorman-award/](https://www.wisconsin.edu/grants-awards/poorman-award/)