

UW-River Falls student, faculty member honored by UW System

December 5, 2018 – The University of Wisconsin System recently announced the recipients of awards promoting diversity, equity and inclusion on its campuses, including two honorees from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.

UWRF Teacher Education Assistant Professor Manu Sharma received the Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award and JJ Knapp, a 2018 graduate with a degree in art, received the Dr. P. B. Poorman Award for Outstanding Achievement on Behalf of LGBTQ+ People.

Nominations for the awards are submitted by the UW institutions, highlighting the nominee's contributions to improving the status and climate for women and people of color and to advancing the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion for LGBTQ+ people.

In recommending Sharma for the award, nominators pointed to her instructional strategies as having a transformational effect on UWRF students, approaching critical topics with a blend of content mastery and positive energy to create a safe atmosphere where all voices are encouraged.

Similarly, Knapp was viewed as a catalyst and driving force for the visibility and advancement of the LGBTQIA+ community. Nominators noted Knapp has been a consistent presence and resource within the Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA) at UWRF, helping to reorganize and reinvigorate the organization.

“Dr. Sharma and JJ are well-deserving of this recognition, having demonstrated leadership and courage in support of our core values,” said UWRF Chancellor Dean Van Galen. “We are proud of their commitment to advance inclusiveness on campus and in the community.”

The Outstanding Women of Color in Education Award is an annual honor given to faculty, staff, students, or community members to recognize their achievements in advancing equity and inclusion for people of color within the UW System as well as

communities across the state. This year is the 23rd anniversary of the award through which 375 women of color have been recognized for their transformational work.

The Dr. P. B. Poorman Award for Outstanding Achievement on Behalf of LGBTQ+ People is an annual honor given to LGBTQ+ people or their allies who have helped to create a safer and more inclusive climate for LGBTQ+ people. The award celebrates the memory and legacy of Paula B. Poorman, a highly regarded faculty member at UW-Whitewater who dedicated her life to improving the lives of LGBTQ+ people. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the founding of the award.

For more information about the awards and past recipients, visit [wisconsin.edu/grants-awards/women-of-color/](https://www.wisconsin.edu/grants-awards/women-of-color/) and visit [wisconsin.edu/grants-awards/poorman-award/](https://www.wisconsin.edu/grants-awards/poorman-award/).

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<https://www.wisconsin.edu/news/archive/uw-system-honors-outstanding-women-of-color-in-education-award-recipients-for-2018/>

<https://www.wisconsin.edu/news/archive/uw-system-honors-achievements-of-lgbtq-advocates-and-their-allies-across-uw-system/>

Photos show each recipient with their award and UW System President Ray Cross.