

**Profile of
Roseann Mason
Director of Community Dialogues, Center for Community Partnerships
University of Wisconsin-Parkside
2009 Regents Diversity Award Recipient—Individual Category**

Background and Experience (Selected)

- Joined the UW-Parkside academic staff in 1987.
- Degree in Humanities and Sociology from UW-Parkside, 1986; Master's Degree in Writing from Northeastern University in Boston, 1993.
- Recipient of numerous awards, including:
 - 2005 YWCA Women of Distinction Award
 - 2003 State of Wisconsin Office of State Employment Relations Program Merit Award
 - 2002 Educational Institution Award from Sustainable Racine for Diversity Circles Program
 - 2002 University of Wisconsin-Parkside Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Service Award
 - 2001 UW-Extension *Wisconsin Idea Award*
- Coordinated the UW-Parkside Writing and Tutoring Center.
- Coordinated the Community Outreach Partnership Center, funded by a grant from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1997-2000.
- Developed Diversity Circles that focus on recognizing and countering racism in its many forms. The circles, launched in 1999, have been integrated into local high schools since 2003, and have been expanded to include other forms of dialogue, including World Café, Open Space Technology, and facilitation training.
- Developed Diversity Circles on topics of LGBT issues, gender, and poverty in addition to race; collaborations include working with local prisons, other communities, and UW Colleges and Extension to expand Diversity Circles statewide.
- Designed curriculum for “Understanding White Privilege: Ethnic Studies 390,” a course originally funded by a grant from the UW System Institute on Race and Ethnicity and now supported by the campus.

Professional Development

- Shambhala Institute for Authentic Leadership
- Dialogue, Deliberation, and Public Engagement Certificate from the Fielding Graduate Institute, in collaboration with the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue and The Kettering Foundation.
- *Facilitating by Heart*: A series to teach team leaders, committee chairs, supervisors, and other group leaders the facilitation skills/tools to support groups in working productively and collaboratively while honoring the voices of all group members.

In Roseann Mason's own words:

- “I started my career at UWP in 1987, and a year later, the UW system-wide Design for Diversity initiative was implemented. That provided me the opportunity to work for institutional change in the area of diversity. I designed a Multicultural Writing class that was taught to incoming first-year students with the goal of teaching writing through the use of multicultural materials. A number of our students were under prepared for college, and I was able to use readers and writing assignments that invited students to bring their experiences to the classroom AND to learn how to navigate in a college setting.”
- “I have collaborated with the Sociology Department to offer Diversity Circles on Dismantling Racism as a one-credit class. Students consistently write that this class should be required for all students who attend UW-Parkside, the most diverse campus in the UW System. The UWP Evaluation Research

Center is conducting research on the impact of Diversity Circles on student retention with the theory that the dialogue creates a safe campus climate for students and, thereby, increases retention....

Thinking about the impacts, intersections, and collaborations, I still reach for ‘the thing with feathers that perches in my soul,’ knowing that I must continue to work and hope for ‘that something better that awaits us.’”

In the words of her students:

- “I was enlightened in class by all my experiences. Diversity Circles. Diversity Circles is a class that I would recommend to my fellow students. I would say Roseann Mason is the best facilitator in the world. The class itself is a real eye opening experience when considering the open dialogue of the students. I personally enjoyed the class and am glad I took it. The Diversity Circle was one of the most meaningful classes I took this semester. This class has prompted me to consider my involvement in the community and how my individual effort can affect my community. I hope to be a change agent. This class has given me the opportunity to look at racism from a different perspective.” – *UW-Parkside student reflecting on class experience*

In the words of her colleagues:

- “Without Roseann, where would we be? Would we have the opportunity to examine our place in nature, see our attributes as social constructionists of our society, our family, our friends? Perhaps. However, what is clear is that Roseann has taken up this mission and has diffused these values throughout our University and the State. It is she who touches groups of people but also lives each day as a model for us all. That model does not tell people how to live their lives but allows us to see how our actions impact the lives of others. This is done through interactions with diverse peoples in the Diversity Circles. Her style is one that informs rather than instructs and allows people to make their own judgments based upon new information. Never judgmental, Roseann opens up new avenues of thought through which we may pass. Consistency and mission are attributes that reflect Roseann. She has a mission to rearrange our common conceptions of who we are, make us more aware and less comfortable with our common sense understandings of the world and our place in it. She does so with a calm and resiliency of someone who has passed through these avenues but sees a new road that can lead us to a better place.” – *Helen Rosenberg, Associate Professor of Sociology/Anthropology and Faculty Co-Director for Center for Community Partnerships, UW-Parkside*