

**Profile of  
Brenda Cullin  
Academic Department Associate/Office Manager, Department of Economics  
University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee  
2021 Regents University Staff Excellence Award Individual Recipient**

**Highlights from nomination materials:**

- Has served UW-Milwaukee (UWM) for 42 years, as business manager for the Institute for Survey and Policy Research and as office manager (academic department associate) for the Department of Economics since 2011.
- Service and contributions have enhanced the sense of community and equity in the Department of Economics and more broadly at UWM; department cost-saving measures she suggested were adopted and the savings supported faculty and graduate-level research, improving department morale.
- Initiated a Graduate Student Lounge in 2019 to provide a space for undergraduate and graduate economics students to study and get to know one another.
- Inaugural chair of the University Staff Grievance Committee, example of her commitment to ensuring that university staff receive appropriate and fair governance; completed additional leadership training for the role.
- Has served on executive-level search-and-screen committees and Chancellor’s Best Place to Work Coordinating Team; treasurer for her local union.
- Co-chair of the African Diaspora Council (ADC), an employee resource group she was integral in helping to revive composed of university faculty and staff; ADC’s award-winning work has been highlighted in campus and community publications; through her leadership, the ADC continues to meet its goals of promoting and enhancing a sense of community, equity, and professional development for faculty, staff, and students.
- Instrumental in establishing ADC’s scholarship program by establishing campus, community, and corporate partnerships to assist UWM students and graduate more African American students, bridging equity gaps; over the last four years, ADC awarded \$38,000 to 21 scholars; to date, 19 of the students have graduated UWM.
- Spearheaded ADC’s fundraising that provides two Milwaukee Public Schools with school supplies, offering much-needed support that became even more important during the pandemic.

**In Brenda Cullin’s own words:**

- “Priority first is my students! I make sure they have all the necessary tools to succeed in their studies, as well as a work-life balance....In my 40+ years on campus, I have always seen myself as the ‘go-to’ person for advice and counsel around issues on campus that impact the department, the university staff, and African American employees. I often say I am the voice for the voiceless and speak on the mission and vision of the university around issues of diversity and inclusion.”

**In the words of colleagues:**

- “Every year, Brenda coordinates the Economics Department fall welcome and the end-of-year international potluck. Brenda does not just organize! Instead, she takes on these tasks as a challenge to make them fun and exciting for faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students. This is where Brenda has become the *soul* of the Economics department....” —*Rebecca Neumann, Professor, Department of Economics, UW-Milwaukee, and Diana Borders, Assistant Director of Business Services, Office of Charter Schools, School of Education, and Co-Chair of the African Diaspora Council (ADC)*
- “Brenda’s interactions with students, interactions that make them feel welcomed and valued, is ongoing....The graduate teaching assistants see Brenda as routinely helpful, friendly, and kind. Many are in touch with her long after they graduate....We are more collegial, compassionate, and student-centered because of her.” —*Scott Adams, Chair, Department of Economics, UW-Milwaukee*