

**Profile of
Jennifer Elsesser, MS, LPC
Assistant Director, Counseling Services, UW-River Falls
2015 Regents Academic Staff Excellence Award Recipient**

Highlights from nomination materials:

- Member of the UW-River Falls (UWRF) campus community since 2002.
- Primary point of contact for faculty, staff, students, and community members for counseling emergencies and concerns.
- Developed and instituted a triage intake system for campus counseling services to minimize wait times for students, as well as prioritize services for more serious issues and match students with counselors' areas of expertise.
- Worked with the campus Department of Technology Services to develop an online wellness assessment for students based on the eight dimensions of wellness.
- Developed a highly successful pet therapy program; a variety of wellness and fitness sessions provided free of charge for students, faculty, and staff; and co-created the award-winning "iRock" program, an education series for students living on campus to help promote wellness on topics such as healthy relationships, stress management, fitness, nutrition, and career and academic development.
- Co-wrote three "Bringing Theory to Practice" grants from the Association of American Colleges and Universities, which resulted in more than \$20,000 to fund successful projects.
- Received the 2009 Chancellor's Award for Program of the Year (for "iRock" program), the 2014 Chancellor's Award for Academic Excellence, and a Compass Award for work in counseling first-year students.
- Has invited national speakers on wellness to campus and presented at professional conferences on topics such as addressing mental health from a wellness perspective and collaborative efforts to address student mental health issues.

In Jennifer Elsesser's own words:

- "Through my experience and training at UWRF, I strive to meet the increasingly complex and diverse needs of students and those who serve them. It has always been important to constantly find new means of enhancing the collective wellbeing of campus in creative and innovative ways."

In the words of colleagues:

- "Serving as a mental health counselor is a challenging and difficult role, but Jennifer manages this role by being a highly skilled and caring therapist who is able to listen hourly and daily to the very difficult and often heart-wrenching stories that our students share, or whom concerned others share. [She] is able to determine through her skill and expertise, and highly honed interpersonal skills and communication, how to support and assist students in determining goals to help them succeed and connect them with the services and resources they need."
—*Alice Reilly-Myklebust, PhD, RN, Director of Student Health and Counseling Services, UW-River Falls*
- "Jennifer Elsesser is an over-achieving, performance-enhancing, dynamo on our campus."
—*Mark Huttemier, MA, LPC, Student Mental Health Counselor, UW-River Falls*