

**Profile of the
Department of Mathematics
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
2015 Regents Teaching Excellence Program Award Recipient**

Highlights from nomination materials:

- Led by Chair Dr. Rebecca LeDocq, the UW-La Crosse Department of Mathematics has undergone dramatic growth over the past several years, with a focus on developing interdisciplinary connections, engaging students outside the classroom and through undergraduate research, and instructing future mathematics teachers.
- The department has forged close ties with the Department of Biology to offer a weekly research seminar that meets the increased need for statistical methods in the study of natural phenomena; a new Statistics major educates students for a growing number of positions in this area, and is aided by the campus Statistical Consulting Center, which is expanding its services into the business community to provide students with real-world experiences.
- The department is creating opportunities for high-impact undergraduate research, in which students work closely with mathematics faculty mentors. Student research opportunities have resulted in over 100 national, regional, and local conference talks, poster presentations, and journal publications since 2007.
- In response to the growing number of students entering developmental (non-credit bearing) courses, the department created the Fast-Track Mathematics program, where incoming freshmen develop their mathematical skills online for six weeks before meeting on campus for a one-week campus stay. In its first two years, 73 of 75 participating students moved forward in their placement into a credit-bearing class.
- Currently, 18 mathematics instructors in the department use an online homework system designed by the Mathematical Association of America to assist with student learning and provide meaningful, timely feedback to students and faculty.
- The department is known statewide for excellence in K-12 teacher training and the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) for college math readiness, which it developed with support from the Gates Foundation.
- Faculty members established the Murphy Learning Center, UW-La Crosse's highly popular tutoring headquarters, which receives thousands of student visits each year.

In the words of a colleague:

- “The Department of Mathematics is keenly aware of economic needs and has consequently developed new academic programs, like the Statistics major, to train students for available positions. Related to this is UW-L's Statistical Consulting Center, which provides these students with opportunities to tackle problems from a wide range of disciplines....While it is impossible to reduce their successes to a dollar amount, it is worth noting that UW-L's Department of Mathematics has procured well over \$1 million in grants supporting educational initiatives or discipline-specific research with students. The Department of Mathematics is a productive and collegial team that has been a leader on our campus and in the UW System for years.”

—Heidi Macpherson, *Provost and Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs, UW-La Crosse*