

**Profile of  
Mark Klapatch  
Sustainability and Custodial Supervisor, Sustainability/Facilities Management  
University of Wisconsin–River Falls  
2019 Regents Academic Staff Excellence Award Individual Recipient**

**Highlights from nomination materials:**

- Has worked at UW-River Falls since 2007; oversees a staff of 17 full-time permanent employees and, on average, 60 to 70 part-time student employees; in 2015, accepted a dual role leading Sustainability and Custodial Services.
- Tracks sustainability initiatives, facilitates reports, presents in classes, gives campus tours, mentors student volunteers and student organizations, liaises with all campus departments, and manages the waste minimization, recycling, and landfill diversion efforts on campus.
- Serves as chair of the university's Sustainability Working Group and works with the Sustainability Faculty Fellows Committee to support and improve sustainability within the curriculum, including the recently created Sustainable Justice Minor available to all students on campus.
- Created a partnership with the Honors Program and now has several students who volunteer with sustainability efforts on a weekly basis.
- Created a new staffing model that relies heavily on student employees because of reduced full-time staff; the new staffing model improved services for the campus while allowing the team to respond to budget reductions without layoffs; as part of the staffing model, created guides and checklists for over 30 areas, documented processes, and implemented an effective onboarding training program for 60 to 70 student employees.
- Evaluated all cleaning products and equipment and transitioned the department to green cleaning chemicals.
- Together with another supervisor, started a surplus program on campus to redirect usable items from the trash; the program diverts over 100,000 pounds of furniture and other materials from landfills each year and offers students and community members affordable items.
- Has facilitated the completion of the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) report from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education for the past three years; his leadership and ability to engage others is credited for the campus's achieving a Gold Rating in 2018 after receiving a Silver STARS assessment in previous years.
- Has organized events such as the Office of Sustainability Open House, film showings, Food Waste Audits, WeBike River Falls Community Rides, and a Sustainability Fair, as well as Earth Day events such as Aldo Leopold Day.

**In Mark Klapatch's own words:**

- "In reviewing my current efforts on campus, I realize that I am serving on 13 campus committees, advising three student groups, and serve on another handful of state and regional committees. While this may seem excessive, I feel that this is just part of my job. I believe my involvement is vital in helping improve our campus, so we are a viable university for many years to come."

**In the words of colleagues:**

- "Mark is a thoughtful driver of our campus sustainability efforts, serving as a campus-wide resource, including offering seminars and designing sustainability campus tours for incoming freshmen and others."  
—*Dean Van Galen, Chancellor, UW-River Falls*
- "He effectively balances a large variety of projects, supervisory roles, and committee work, and is always willing to take on more because he is genuinely invested in making the institution better."  
—*McKenna Pfeiffer, Assistant Director of Career Services, UW-River Falls*