Profile of
Ann Lawton
Violence Prevention Coordinator, Lecturer in Art, and Art Therapist
Student Health and Counseling Services
University of Wisconsin–River Falls
2022 Regents Academic Staff Excellence Award Individual Recipient

Highlights from nomination materials:
• Has served at UW-River Falls since 2011; positions include lecturer in the Art Department; Board-Certified Art Therapist for Student Counseling, and Violence Prevention Coordinator.
• As Violence Prevention Coordinator, plans, implements, and evaluates theory and evidence-informed education and programming to promote healthy relationships and prevent sexual and intimate partner violence, gender-based violence, stalking, and hazing; strives to empower students to be compassionate, proactive, healthy members of the communities they learn, work, and live in.
• Creative methods to connect with and support students include online programming, outreach installations, and a new violence prevention social media account.
• Leads art therapy groups for Student Health and Counseling Services and advises the Art Therapy Club.
• Has taught a variety of foundational level art courses, including design, drawing, and introduction to art therapy.
• As mixed media artist, uses the applications of drawing, painting, and collage to document and process daily life.
• Community art therapy work focuses on populations impacted by high trauma, including incarcerated individuals, trafficked girls, domestic abuse survivors, individuals coping with addiction, and neurodivergent children.
• Examples of her work include a variety of campus community art projects such as the Empty Place at the Table installation in residence halls for domestic violence awareness and Paint Yourself in the Community; training and outreach for student athletes in compliance with National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) requirements; hazing prevention training for student organizations; care and consent take-and-make kits for students; and Falcon Community Foundations, a workshop designed to bring awareness to the connection between individual and communal accountability concerning healthy relationships and bystander intervention.
• Credits success of violence prevention efforts to colleagues' continuous support and encouragement, as well as willingness to try inventive approaches to transform ideas into realities.
• Member of Academic Staff Council
• Select awards: Chancellor’s Award for Non-Instructional Academic Staff: Violence Prevention Coordinator (2021); College of Arts and Sciences Award for Excellence in Teaching (2018).

In Ann Lawton’s own words:
• “Artmaking alleviates psychological defenses, creates opportunities for verbal discussion, builds self-esteem, and promotes self-awareness and empathy—all attributes necessary in addressing and facilitating change to dismantle the culture of sexual violence and unhealthy relationship behaviors.”

In the words of colleagues:
• “[Ann] epitomizes excellence and perseverance and is committed to helping students be successful while promoting a caring, healthy campus community....And, as always, she does this in a way that leads people to seek her out. She is approachable, kind, and funny. She has found a way to make the hard work of prevention, with its heavy subject matter and difficult conversations, accessible to all.” — David Travis, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UW-River Falls

• “Put simply, Ann lives out her value and ethic of caring for student success and well-being in incredibly concrete ways and with a consistency and efficacy that is notable even within the incredibly student-focused and caring environment of UWRF.” — Cyndi Kernahan, Professor of Psychological Sciences, Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, UW-River Falls