

**Profile of
Cyndi Kernahan**

**Psychology Professor and Assistant Dean for Teaching and Learning, University of Wisconsin–River Falls
2017 Regents Diversity Award Individual Recipient**

Highlights from nomination materials:

- Since joining UW-River Falls in 1999, has become a recognized expert on the study of racism and prejudice; under her leadership, the university has improved campus climate and is addressing issues of diversity and inclusion through university-level strategic planning.
- Developed and teaches “The Psychology of Prejudice and Racism,” a course that has specific learning outcomes requiring data collection and reporting on a five-year basis.
- Has held many critical roles on campus, including Director of Ethnic Studies and University Fellow for Diversity and Inclusivity; has served on a number of diversity-related committees, including currently the Bias Incident Response Team and the Diversity and Inclusivity Committee.
- Helped design and implement a campus climate survey, and worked with the results to take action steps that addressed issues revealed in the survey results.
- Uses data to understand impediments to academic progress; recently helped UWRF earn a grant to improve retention among underrepresented minority students.
- At the university and system level, leads faculty development opportunities; credited with being an influential mentor and role model for colleagues; has served as co-director of the UW System Wisconsin Teaching Fellows/Scholars Program since 2012.
- Has presented at conferences; delivered sessions to student audiences, including a first-year seminar at UW-Barron County and a fraternity at UW-River Falls; and invited expert speakers to campus to address such topics as stereotype threat and implicit biases.
- Work has been published in top journals and is cited frequently among scholars in the field.

In Cyndi Kernahan’s own words:

- “In my own presentations, particularly on classroom practice, I have focused on the broad concept of Stereotype Threat and how to mitigate its effects. As a result, I have reviewed research and presented classroom/campus interventions that can increase the feelings of belonging and inclusivity for a variety of kinds of students (e.g., women in science and math, racial minorities, first-generation students, Christian students in science courses, adjunct instructors).”

In the words of colleagues:

- “On campus, Dr. Kernahan has gone above and beyond the call of duty in her service through providing faculty development opportunities and serving on committees directly related to diversity and inclusivity. Her discussions are always thought provoking and challenge participants (faculty, staff and students) to infuse issues of diversity into their classroom settings, in their involvement with students and student organizations, and into their personal lives.” —*Faye Perkins, Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, UW-River Falls*
- “[Dr. Kernahan] takes a very difficult topic, one that gets much resistance from students, and presents it in a non-threatening, thoughtful way. Her goal is to give students a safe space to discuss issues of race, racism, inequality and diversity, and to find the best way to make an impact on students once they leave the classroom and university.” —*Tricia Davis, Associate Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, UW-River Falls*