



# A. S. Connection

Connecting Academic Staff to Useful Information

Spring 2023

## UWM WELCOMES LARGEST GROUP OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS SINCE 2015

In the fall of 2022 UWM welcomed 1,297 international new and continuing students to campus. This is the largest group since Fall 2015 when UWM had 1,612 international students enrolled. Currently, 919 of these students are graduate students. This is the highest number of international graduate students UWM has ever seen. Unfortunately, not all the statistics are encouraging. While UWM has received over one thousand more undergraduate applications this year than previous years, only 66 of the 1,402 applicants started as new freshmen.

In 2015, UWM saw a rise in students from Saudi Arabia, most of whom were granted scholarships from their home country to study in the United States. Over the years UWM has seen a decline in sponsored students from Saudi Arabia as the government has pulled back on scholarships. Last year UWM welcomed more students from India than any other country and saw increases of students from Nigeria and Ghana. Jennifer Gruenewald, Director of International Student and Scholar Services attributed the large numbers of Indian applicants and students to UWM's Regional Manager, Priyal Shah. Ms. Shah is headquartered in India and offers a personal connection to UWM students that is invaluable to not only helping students choose UWM but to make sure they feel a sense of connection to UWM even before they arrive.

Outside factors such as the pandemic and global economy also need to be addressed. For almost two years international travel, in-person classes, and visa processing were limited. Now that the world is opening back up, students who were prevented from studying abroad are now rushing to apply. This could be a reason we are seeing the large disconnect between number of applicants and number of new students.

Significant effort has been made by the Center for International Education (CIE) to provide extra support and create a sense of belonging for international students. This is in line with UWM's initiative to be radically welcoming. CIE strives to enhance what is already available to UWM students through events like the Harry Potter Halloween Party, Friendsgiving, international student specific Fall welcome events and more. CIE also shows recognition to faculty and staff who go above and beyond to support our international students with the International Advocate Awards (nominations submitted by international students).

UWM is lucky to have such a large international student population. International students are not the only ones who benefit from studying in the U.S. They enrich our university by providing diversity in the classroom and offering domestic students cross-cultural experiences, and a better understanding of international issues, foreign affairs, and immigration. The increase in international student enrollment also comes at a time when domestic student enrollment across the U.S. is declining. To maintain a healthy campus we need to retain our international students.



### ACADEMIC STAFF TIP



Did you know UWM offers FREE technology training courses for faculty and staff? Dive deep into Microsoft Teams, Excel and much more! Check out the UWM TechTraining website for the spring online course schedule: [uwm.edu/techtraining](https://uwm.edu/techtraining). All sessions are recorded to view at any time. Be sure to note training opportunities in your file for indefinite status under the Professional Development section!



## LENGTH OF SERVICE **DIANA BORDERS**

Diana Borders has been at UWM for over 25 years and during that time, she has made numerous contributions to the success and vitality of the university. In our interview, Diana talks about her remarkable career journey as a member of UWM's Academic Staff.

**In which unit do you work?** Office of Charter Schools (OCS) in the School of Education (SOE). The OCS functions as a district or central office for 15 charter schools with over 5,600 students. As the Business Services Assistant Director, I manage the office's operations and all financial reporting activities. I also serve as the compliance regulator working with the charter schools to ensure they are meeting their contractual obligations.

**Tell us a little about your background and what led you to UWM.** My first campus job was working as an LTE for the McNair Program in the Graduate School while I completed my BA program at Alverno College. I began my professional career as a grant manager in the SOE specializing in the administration and coordination of funding from various sources including federal and state. When the grant expired, I served as an independent contractor for several UWM entities which led to my full-time hire in OCS.



**What do you enjoy about your job?** Creating effective infrastructure processes and being trusted to lead initiatives that improve our overall operations and support our charter schools. I also enjoy serving on many UWM committees and connecting with people that otherwise I would have never met.

**What project have you been most proud of?** One of the most beneficial projects I initiated, implemented and administer was moving from a manual data collection process to an online repository. I worked with the technical team of the software company to customize the website to maximize its functionality for our office and our schools. The repository is used to collect, review and approve many of the documents that schools must submit as outlined in their charter contract. The online system provides school leaders and other stakeholders with access to current and historical documents in a centralized location where they can track their submission proficiency rate. We also efficiently process new charter school applications and renewal applications in the online system.

**What is most challenging about your job?** Challenges can occur when working internally with individuals who do not know that UWM is a charter school authorizer. In order to move forward with an operational task, I have to explain the function and role of the office, which is to carry out the University's responsibilities to serve as a charter school authorizer.

**What advice do you have for other academic staff?** Participate, be a change agent and expand your opportunities and personal growth! I realized early on in my 25+ years at UWM that if you want positive things to happen, you must be willing to put in the effort and work to make things better. That is why I served on committees and was an Academic Staff Senator. I am currently a member of the Affinity Groups Multicultural Coalition (AGMC), and the Wisconsin Women in Higher Education Leadership (WWHEL) UWM Chapter. I am chair of the African Diaspora Council (ADC), an employee resource group comprised of UWM faculty and staff who are committed to promoting and enhancing a sense of community, equity, and professional and educational development for our members, students, and the surrounding community.

### ACADEMIC STAFF TIP



Did you know participating in the Panther Prowl can be noted in your file for indefinite status? The next Panther Prowl will be on October 14, 2023. If 5Ks aren't for you, there are also volunteer opportunities for academic staff at the event. To learn more about getting involved in future Panther Prowls, please contact Bonnie Fuggiasco in University Advancement at 414-229-5305 or [fuggiasco@uwm.edu](mailto:fuggiasco@uwm.edu).



# A CENTURY OF NIGHT SKIES

Eighty percent of people on Earth do not have access to a truly dark night sky. For the last century, planetariums have given all of us a window into that cosmic world. The marvelous planetarium machine turns 100 in 2023, and its legacy is more crucial than ever in helping shape the future of our planet.

The first modern planetarium projector, built in 1923 in Germany, could project celestial objects such as stars and planets in a dark room with an easy mechanism for controlling daily and annual motion. Like a time machine, these projectors show what the sky looks like at various times and places. Indeed, with modern projectors, audiences can leave the Earth and travel through space. The planetarium projector has inspired audiences as they identify constellations, see patterns of celestial motions, and learn concepts like what causes the phases of the Moon.



To celebrate the centennial of this awesome invention, the UWM Planetarium is branding the 2023-24 school year "The Year of Space" and spearheading several major events and collaborations centered around this theme, including:

- Not one but two solar eclipses! The first, October 14, 2023, to occur during Panther Prowl and the second, April 8, 2024, a breakfast event
- Astronaut guest speaker during the Distinguished Lecture Series
- An astronomer from Kenya will visit and hopefully one from Chile
- Space Ball Party: a night of dancing and celebration
- Summerfest Family Fun Day series
- Semi-monthly culturally themed collaborations
- Semi-monthly science-themed collaborations
- Having as many middle school MPS students visit the planetarium and campus on field trips as possible
- We want to plan events to feature campus connections to space, whether they are scientific, personal, cultural, or artistic. Is your department or organization interested in collaborating with us? We are eager to brainstorm with you. Email us at [planetarium@uwm.edu](mailto:planetarium@uwm.edu) to get the conversation started.

The significant role played by planetariums will continue for the next hundred years. As urban populations continue to grow, reconnecting to the cosmos and our place in it will be crucial in the future. Regardless of where we live on the Earth, we share one sky and one precious planet. This universal connection is certainly a cause for celebration.

## *A Look Back*

## **AT UW-MILWAUKEE**

### **30 YEARS AGO - 1993**

The university evaluated its promotion practices and professional climate to curb sexual harassment and sex-based discrimination after a business professor sued for being denied tenure due to pregnancy. At least one tenured faculty member was terminated for cause during the process. In lighter news, The UWM Post breathlessly covered an investigation of the pilfering of a couch from the 3rd floor of the Union, discovered hours later in the office of rival news outlet The UWM Times.

### **60 YEARS AGO - 1963**

Students complained of a lack of parking on campus and a decline in their number as numerous new buildings were completed, while residential neighbors groused about student "litterbugging." The UW System president suggested that the university terminate its football program to save money, prompting a surprisingly apathetic reaction from the student body. Cigarette ads festooned the pages of the student newspaper; even the recurring humor column "On Campus with Max Shulman" featured a paean to Marlboro cigarettes in each edition.



## ACCESSIBILITY TIP

### MORPHIC TOOLBAR

UWM now has access to a program to improve digital accessibility. The Morpnic toolbar, or MorpnicBar, is a toolbar that you can install to make the built-in accessibility features in the computer's operating system available in a single space. This simple to use toolbar increases efficiency by reducing the need to search for or click to find all the accessibility features individually.

The Morpnic toolbar is available in the campus computer labs or as a download from the UWM Software Center for staff computers. Search for Morpnic in the UWM Software Center and download the program. The Morpnic toolbar will automatically appear on the computer screen once the installation process is complete. The Morpnic toolbar is usable on both Mac and Windows devices.



There are multiple accessibility features available on the toolbar, for example, Adjustments to increase/decrease text size, Screen Magnification, Snip to take a snapshot of all or a part of the screen, Color and Contrast settings, and a Read Selected option that provides for onscreen text to be read aloud.

Hovering the mouse over each feature brings up a brief explanation of it. The buttons below the features can be used to modify each option.

To find out more information about this new accessibility toolbar go to the Morpnic website at <https://morpnic.org>.

#### ACADEMIC STAFF TIP



A Records Management Workshop is offered every semester to faculty and staff. Learn about what is considered a "record", how records should be managed, how long to keep them, and how to transfer them to the Archives department for permanent retention. Workshops offered across UWM are great items to note in your file for indefinite status. There will be a Records Management Workshop offered this upcoming March with more information sent to staff closer to the workshop date. If you have any questions, please contact Derek Webb ([webbds@uwm.edu](mailto:webbds@uwm.edu)).

### The A.S. Connection team consists of the following members of the Academic Staff Communications Subcommittee:

Amanda Brickner, Shiraz Bhathena, Jean Creighton, Gina Lukaszewicz, Sarah MacDonald (Co-Chair), Nicole Palasz (Co-Chair), Mingyu Sun, Beth Traylor, Lynn Washatko Uhyrek, Derek Webb, Jason Williamson.

If you would like to join this committee, please contact Sarah MacDonald at [macdonal@uwm.edu](mailto:macdonal@uwm.edu)

#### ACADEMIC STAFF TIP



UWM has several professional development opportunities scheduled for this semester. Topics range from managing change, the importance of inclusivity, to supervisor-specific training. To see the full schedule of options and registration please visit the UWM Professional Development webpage: [uwm.edu/hr/professional-development/](http://uwm.edu/hr/professional-development/).