

UWM REPORT

UWM earns national sustainability award

By Alex Vagelatos | APRIL 22, 2016 | CAMPUS & COMMUNITY | CAMPUS NEWS



Working with greenhouses is just one of several reasons UWM became the first UW System school to earn the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Award. (UWM Photo/Derek Rickert)

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee just became only the second Wisconsin postsecondary school to receive a U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools Award.

Chancellor Mark Mone announced the award Friday, April 22 – Earth Day – and noted it was emblematic of UWM’s “organic” approach to sustainability and health and wellness.

“This has never been a top-down initiative,” Mone told an audience of UWM faculty, staff and administrators who are involved in the school’s sustainability and environmental efforts. “It has always been due to the hard work of many dedicated people at UWM.”

Kate Nelson, UWM’s chief sustainability officer, said the award was based on UWM’s high achievement in three key areas: reducing environmental impact and costs; improving the health and wellness of students and staff; and providing effective environmental and sustainability education, incorporating STEM, civic skills and green career pathways.

“The Department of Education was very impressed with UWM’s efforts in combining health and wellness, curriculum and research,” Nelson said.

No other UW System school has received the award since its inception in 2012, and the only other Wisconsin recipient has been Western Technical College in La Crosse.

Nelson said the education department was particularly impressed with a number of UWM initiatives from the past few years. UWM has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions at all sites by 10 percent and made a large investment in a bicycle-sharing system, resulting in the 2015 placement of six BublR Bikes stations around campus.

“They were also impressed with our Master of Sustainable Peacebuilding program,” Nelson said. That program prepares graduates for careers in government and the nonprofit and private sectors, concentrating on human development, resource stewardship and conflict resolution.

