



UWM Foundation, Inc.
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UWM Foundation Names Laura Bray as New President

Milwaukee, WI – The UWM Foundation is proud to announce the appointment of Laura Bray as its new President. A seasoned nonprofit leader with a deep-rooted commitment to Milwaukee and public higher education, Bray brings a dynamic blend of vision, philanthropic leadership, and community impact to the role.

A longtime Milwaukee resident and neighbor to the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee (UWM) campus, Bray joins the Foundation with a strong belief in UWM’s dual mission as both a leading research university and a public access institution.

“Laura’s passion for the Milwaukee community and higher education, along with her strong, mission-aligned partnerships, make her an exceptional choice to lead UWM Foundation into the future,” said UWM Foundation Board Chair Matt Rinka.

Bray brings over 30 years of experience in economic development, higher education, advancement, public-private partnerships, and nonprofit strategy. She holds both a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Business Administration from Marquette University. For the last eight years, she has served at Milwaukee Area Technical College as the Vice President of College Advancement and External Communications and the Executive Director of the MATC Foundation where she led efforts that more than doubled the Foundation’s assets, significantly expanded scholarship programs, and enhanced the college’s visibility.

Bray also spent a decade as Executive Director of Menomonee Valley Partners, where she spearheaded a nationally recognized public-private initiative to revitalize Wisconsin’s most visible brownfield — transforming acres of abandoned, blighted land into a thriving hub of economic and environmental renewal.

She succeeds Dave Gilbert, who retires in June after more than two decades of distinguished service as Foundation President. Under Gilbert’s leadership, the UWM Foundation achieved significant growth and is well-positioned for continued success.

As President, Bray will lead the Foundation’s strategic direction, oversee financial stewardship, and strengthen donor engagement, reinforcing its role as a trusted, independent partner to the

university. Working closely with the Foundation Board, UWM leadership, and key stakeholders she will support the university's long-term sustainability and mission.

"Throughout my career, I've focused on building partnerships that drive inclusive growth and strengthen communities across the Milwaukee area," Bray said. "I'm excited to bring that commitment to the UWM Foundation, which is uniquely positioned to support economic and talent development through its investment in a university that serves as a powerhouse for our city and state."

Bray will assume the role on July 31.

For more information about the UWM Foundation and its mission, please visit <https://uwm.foundation/>.

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