

COMMUNIQUE

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Keim Selected as November Employee of the Month

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Rebecca Keim, Assistant Director of Cooperative Credit and Director of the Early College Start Program, has been named the Lindenwood University Employee of the Month for November.



The St. Peters resident has served in her current position since April 2012. Prior to that, she served as a graduate assistant for Lindenwood's Office of Student Academic Support Services.

As Assistant Director of Cooperative Credit, Keim works to offer graduate credit to educators and counselors seeking additional certifications or college credits in order to advance their careers. As Director of the Early College Start Program, she works with 21 high schools in the St. Louis Metropolitan Area to offer students classes through which they can also earn college credit.

"I love being able to go out and create relationships and share the value of earning high school and college credit simultaneously," Keim said. "With the cost of higher education increasing, it's rewarding to be able to share that cost-benefit with students, and to help them possibly reduce the amount of loans they'll need when they do get to college."

Her work with the Early College Start program is one of the reasons Keim was nominated for the Employee of the Month Award by John Feely, Associate Dean of Graduate Education Initiatives.

"Rebecca's willingness to provide the customer service required to grow our programs has been excellent," said Feely. "Not only has she worked to operate our dual credit program in a more organized way, but she has interjected our meetings with new ideas that have helped us offer the program to other school districts throughout the bi-state region. She also grasps ideas quickly, doesn't shy away from taking on new tasks, and has the flexibility to work with many different departments on the Lindenwood campus."

Did You Know?

Did you know that George Sibley's business partner, Lilburn Boggs, later became the governor of Missouri? Prior to founding Lindenwood, Sibley briefly owned a trading post. Boggs is best known for being the governor that sent the Missouri militia to expel Mormons from Missouri after a "war" with non-believers escalated tensions in the region.

Keim said her interaction with other departments is one of her favorite aspects of the job, and was quick to praise several Lindenwood colleagues before expressing her gratitude for receipt of the award.

"It's great working with all the deans, with Virginia Keck in the Office of Admissions, with Stefani Schuette in the Business Office, and with Mary Stacy-Brewer in the Office of the Registrar," she said. "Without those people, my job would not be possible."

"And, I have to say I'm excited to receive the award because I've been working really hard to grow the program, and while special recognition is unexpected, I am very appreciative and do consider it a special honor."

Ayyagari, Wife Endow Student Research Scholarship

L. Rao Ayyagari, PhD, is a long-time Lindenwood University professor with an intense desire to share his passion for scientific research with students. It's for that reason that he and his wife, Subhadra, recently created the Dr. Rao Ayyagari Research Scholarship in Cell Biology and Genetics.



The \$25,000 endowed scholarship, dedicated specifically to scientific research, is the first of its kind at the University, making it an important part of Ayyagari's legacy as he prepares to retire at the end of the 2014-2015 academic year.

"In many academic fields, but in science in particular, you cannot have only teaching without practical research," said Ayyagari. "I felt there was a need to create this funding so research can progress the way it should. I want to help inspire our students and give them the opportunities they need to succeed."

Ayyagari certainly knows about success in the field. He's enjoyed a 42-year career that began in earnest after his completion of a doctoral degree in 1972 from Loyola University Chicago. He conducted post-doctoral breast cancer and mitochondrial DNA research at the University of California, Davis, until 1977, when he began work as a research scientist at the Michigan Cancer Foundation.

His next move was to the University of Michigan-Dearborn, where he taught for more than three years before relocating with his wife to St. Louis, Mo. He was an adjunct instructor of chemistry at several local colleges for just under two years before being hired as an assistant professor at Lindenwood in 1983.

He was hired to teach cell biology, genetics, and biochemistry courses. In the past 32 years at Lindenwood, he has taught these and other courses like biophysics, microbiology, nutrition, concepts in biology, principles of biology, and general biology. He estimates that more than 2,000 students have gone through his classes over the years.

He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1987 and to Full Professor of

Biology in 1990. While teaching at Lindenwood, he also collaborated for more than a decade on DNA replication studies with colleagues from the Washington University School of Medicine Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biophysics.

Ayyagari's current research interests at Lindenwood involve spider biochemistry and arthropod skin secretory protein studies, as well as nutraceuticals (foods and nutrients that possess certain natural antifungal or antibiotic properties). He has produced more than two dozen abstracts in coordination with more than 30 undergraduate researchers over the years, annually presenting findings at conferences hosted by the Missouri Academy of Science and the Midwest branch of the American Society for Microbiology.

As a champion for student-led research, it is Ayyagari's fervent desire that the scholarship he created will have a positive effect on students and faculty alike.

"It will help students gain practical experience instead of simply studying theory, and provide them with independent research opportunities in cell biology and genetics, while exposing them to independent thinking and the corporate integration processes," he said. "I'm hoping, too, that other faculty members will be inspired to create similar scholarships to aid students in their academic endeavors."

The Dr. Rao Ayyagari Research Scholarship is open to juniors conducting independent research in the areas of cellular biology and genetics, who are enrolled in an independent research course within the School of Sciences at Lindenwood's St. Charles, Mo., campus. A three-person faculty member selection committee will determine annually the awardees. The first recipient of the scholarship will be personally awarded a \$1,000 stipend by Ayyagari during the University's Honors Convocation ceremony in the spring of 2015.

For more information on how to apply for the Dr. Rao Ayyagari Research Scholarship in Cell Biology and Genetics, contact Ayyagari (636) 949-4714 at rayyagari@lindenwood.edu.
