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Diversity Innovator Award Recipients for 2022 Announced

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Diversity Innovator Award Recipients for 2022 Announced

Faculty given recognition, grant for service to create more equitable campus

FEBRUARY 15, 2022 BY STAFF REPORT



OXFORD, Miss. – Three **University of Mississippi** faculty members are being recognized for their efforts to make diversity, equity and inclusion a part of their work.



The recipients of this year's UM Diversity Innovator Award are Larry Pittman, professor of law and the Leonard B. Melvin Jr. Lecturer in Law; Nikki Reinemann, assistant professor of **biomedical engineering**; and Ashleen Williams, senior Barksdale fellow in the **Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College**.

"The 2021-22 Diversity Innovator Award recipients have demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in their scholarship and service to the university," said Shawnboda Mead, vice

chancellor for diversity and community engagement. "They have made outstanding contributions to the University of Mississippi and are all very deserving of this recognition.

"Our division is proud to support their efforts and honor their work in making the University of Mississippi's campus a more welcoming community for all."

Award recipients receive a \$750 grant to support their professional development and research efforts.

Larry Pittman

Pittman, chair of the **School of Law** Diversity Committee, led the drafting of a comprehensive diversity plan for the school. The plan has been key in the school's efforts to create a more equitable and inclusive environment for law students, law faculty and staff.

"It is an honor to be a recipient of a Diversity Innovator Award, and I am so appreciative of those involved in the selection process who found my contributions worthy of such recognition," Pittman said.

"The student body, the faculty and the staff at the university are diverse. It is important that the climate at the university be welcoming to that diversity and that all students, faculty and staff – present and future – be treated equitably and fairly, and that they receive sufficient opportunities to be active and contributing members of the university and its various schools, to the greatest extent possible.



Larry Pittman

"In that respect, I believe that the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, its leaders and staff are doing an excellent job promoting diversity, equity and inclusion at the university."

Nikki Reinemann



Reinemann has dedicated her teaching and research career to including and mentoring students from diverse backgrounds to broaden participation in STEM fields.

Her work includes mentoring students in her research lab and establishing the Ole Miss Nanoengineering Summer Research Experience with the goal of exposing students of all backgrounds to cutting-edge research early in their college careers.

"Being a woman in engineering, a young mother and being a first-generation Ph.D. scholar, my path forward in my career hasn't always been very clear, and so the role models and mentors I've had have really been invaluable to me," Reinemann said "So I hope that by winning this award that means I've had the same impact on others here at the university."

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Campus Briefs

Civil Engineering Professor Receives Most-Cited Paper Award

OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation's capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy's new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying "thank you." "It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to

Williams was named a diversity innovator because of work with first-generation students at the university. In 2019, she began serving as the First-Generation Student Network faculty adviser and helped plan the university's first campuswide First-Generation Celebration Week.

She serves as co-chair to the First-Generation College Student Task Force, a higher education adviser to the Mississippi College Access Project and an adviser to more than 120 scholarship students at the university.

"I am very honored to receive this award because I am inspired daily by students and colleagues who commit to creating a more inclusive University of Mississippi," Williams said. "When I originally started working with first-gen students, my goal was simply to help make things easier and more navigable for students I had a shared experience with.

"I was not expecting this to develop into what it has."

Williams is also the university's 2022 IHL Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion Award nominee.



Ashleen Williams

The Diversity Innovator Award has been given to Ole Miss faculty and staff since 2020 and was extended to students last year. It is awarded by the **Division of Diversity and Community Engagement** to members of the campus community who show a level of commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion that goes above and beyond what is required by their positions.

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