

2004 UW-La Crosse Academic Staff Excellence Award

A student helper

Von Ruden makes advising a 'SNAP'

Jan Von Ruden has been making students' lives easier since she walked into Graff Main Hall in 1991. And, student advisers on campus could make the same claim.

Von Ruden's first job in the Records and Registration Office was to help with developing the campus' automated degree audit system, SNAP — Student Notice of Academic Progress. The system provides a road map for students, telling them everything they need to graduate.

"Students don't have to go through five places in the catalogs to find out what they need to graduate," she explains. "Instead, it's all on one or two pages."

Von Ruden, associate registrar, carried that student and adviser-friendly theme when developing the university's new Web-based records system to welcome the new millennium. TALON — Targeted Access to the La Crosse Online Network — went online in fall 2003. It's very user-friendly and gives students access to all their records 24/7.

"TALON really has changed the way we do business," notes Von Ruden. "Students have much more access to their information. And, students can register from anywhere in the world."

Gone are the computer cards of the '70s and '80s and the touchtone registration of the '90s — not to mention the guesswork of graduation requirements, class registrations and grades. With TALON, students have all their records — registration, class schedules, grades, academic profiles, address updating, billing and financial aid information and tax documents — right at the tips of their fingers.

"It's awesome," she continues. "Students love it. Almost every comment we've heard from students has been positive."

And that is what Von Ruden's work in the office has been for students — awesome. "Jan exceeds 'required' in everything she does and for which she is responsible," says Registrar Diane Schumacher. "Students are her first priority. She is fair and holds everyone to standards, yet will do whatever she can to help them."

Von Ruden has been helpful to colleagues, too. Recently, she has been working with Information Technology Services staff to develop AERIE — Access to Enterprise Records Information for Employees, a new Web service for faculty and staff.

The site allows instructors to view class lists and will soon include adviser information. "We have a wonderful working relationship with the ITS staff that allowed us a smooth transition off the UNISYS mainframe, along with the creation of new services to aid our faculty, staff and students," she says.

Von Ruden has served on numerous campus, UW System and statewide committees and working groups. And, her

work has spread internationally. She organized a book drive and secured free transportation to create a library for children at an orphanage in Kakinada, India. The project had special meaning to her.

Kakinada is the area where Von Ruden's adopted daughter, Grace, was born. "We shipped over 2,000 books last fall," she explains. "The library has been named 'Mamatha's Library' after Grace, whose Indian name was Mamatha."

—Brad Quarberg, University Relations



The Jan Von Ruden file

- Associate registrar, UW-L Records and Registration Office. Has worked in the office since 1991.
- Interim director of student affairs, faculty counselor and transfer specialist, Vermilion Community College (Ely, Minn.) 1988-91.
- Academic adviser, UW-L College of Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1987-88.
- Energy assistance program coordinator, Monroe County, 1985-86.
- Campus volunteer, including Academic Staff Council, UW System committees, Wisconsin Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.
- Graduate of UW-L twice: a bachelor's in public administration/political science in 1984; master's in college student personnel, 1988.