

# GUIDING INNOVATION | FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS ON THE PROWL: THE RESEARCH REVIEW

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June 2024

**Newsletter Contents:** UWM innovators win awards for patents and licenses, Mentor Spotlight Sunil Sharma, results from 414 Days of Giving, Wisconsin partners pursue \$160M for ag tech innovation engine, SBIR program managers coming to Wisconsin, and UWMRF President Jessica Silvaggi in the news.

## UWM Innovators Receive Awards

The people behind UWM innovations spanning research tools, water sensors, batteries, and more were recognized at the UWM Research Foundation Partners' Reception earlier this month.

This annual event celebrates faculty, students, and entrepreneurs who have secured patents, forged partnerships, licensed innovations, and ignited startups. Over the past 18 years, this translates to 198 granted patents and 44 active licenses that aim to bring transformative products to market, enriching lives worldwide.

Congratulations to the 11 recipients of this year's awards. Their contributions underscore the wealth of talent flourishing at UWM. Continue reading to learn more about their exciting advancements.



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2024 Partners' Award Recipients | Photo by Elora Hennessey

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In the dynamic landscape of entrepreneurship, Sunil Sharma utilizes his diverse expertise and steadfast dedication to mentorship to empower aspiring innovators on their journey to success. With a career defined by versatility, resilience, and a profound commitment to problem-solving, Sharma embodies the transformative capacity of leadership and collaborative efforts.

### Expertise:

- Digital & CX strategy
- Strategic planning
- Go-to-market strategy
- Organizational leadership
- System architecture

Sharma is currently Vice President of Enterprise Architecture & Transformation at Milwaukee's Rite-Hite. This position and a little proactive networking brought him to the UWM Research Foundation ENGAGE Mentor Program. His extensive professional background across several industries and regions has equipped him with a distinctive viewpoint, enhancing his ability to navigate various terrains with finesse.

### Industries:

- Manufacturing
- Technology



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We are so grateful for the generous donors that gave to the UWM Research Foundation for 414 Days of Giving at UWM. We surpassed our goal to raise \$10,000, raising \$12,975 and completed our challenge of finding 15 donors. These funds are crucial in supporting our innovators and entrepreneurs at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

## In The News

### UWM Research Foundation President in the News

In a recent feature article by MKE Startup News, Jessica Silvaggi discusses plans to lead UWM Research Foundation into the future. Click below to read full article.



[Milwaukee Commerce Spring 2024 by MMAC - Issue](#) (check out page 29)

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## Wisconsin Partners Pursue \$160M to Lead in Sustainable Ag

For more than a year, UWM Research Foundation has been participating in a \$1M National Science Foundation (NSF) funded project to lay the groundwork for making the Wisconsin region a global leader in sustainable agriculture. Led by WiSys, the project brings together all 13 University of Wisconsin institutions as well as a host of industry, nonprofit, and government entities to harness the region's talent and develop an ambitious regional innovation engine. Over the past year, voices from communities across Wisconsin have come together to identify challenges and opportunities for transforming sustainable agriculture in our state and beyond. We are excited to build on this momentum and use these findings to make a case to apply for follow-on NSF grant funding of up to \$160M over ten years.

## Events and Deadlines

### **SBIR Program Managers are Road Tripping to Wisconsin this Summer**

SBIR Road Tour

July 18, 2024, 8:00 am to 3:00 pm

Madison, Wisconsin (Starting Block)



Twelve government agencies, 30+ program managers, over \$1 billion in funding opportunities – Check out the SBIR Road Tour to see if it's a good fit for your idea. Whether this is the first time you've heard of SBIR or you're planning on submitting a proposal this year, this is a rare opportunity to meet with program managers in-person.

#### **Who should attend?**

Researchers, grad students, entrepreneurs, and business leaders: whether you already have a business, are thinking about creating one, or want to collaborate with one, the Road Tour will have a resource for diverse innovators.

#### **What's in it for you?**

- Hear from all agencies in a reverse pitch presentation focusing on strategies and topic areas specific to each agency.
- Private, one-on-one conversations with agency program managers.
- Learn all about federal and state resources available for innovation.
- Network with potential collaborators.

[Learn More & Register](#)

#### **Interested in carpooling from UWM?**

Please reach out to Brian Walsh at [brianw@uwmr.org](mailto:brianw@uwmr.org). If there is enough interest, we will explore the possibility of renting a van.