

UWO student earns first-of-its-kind scholarship for female firefighters

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/2248/uwo-student-earns-first-of-its-kind-scholarship-for-female-firefighters/>

The first recipient of a scholarship for firefighters pursuing a bachelor's degree has been awarded to a former classmate of the memorial scholarship's namesake.

Melissa Spielman, a student at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, was awarded the Candice E. Tylke Scholarship, named in honor of a 1994 UW Oshkosh graduate and veteran firefighter/paramedic, who passed away in 2008 at the age of 42.

Spielman and Tylke were classmates in Madison Area Technical College's fire science program. Today, Spielman is working toward a Bachelor of Applied Studies in Fire and Emergency Response Management (FERM). UW Oshkosh is the only university in Wisconsin to offer this program.

"She was an inspiration," said Spielman of Tylke. "I am thankful to her for showing me the courage and determination that it takes to do this job."

The Candice E. Tylke Scholarship is a \$1,500 annual award for students in the FERM program at UW Oshkosh's Center for New Learning. Priority is given to female applicants.

Beginning October 1, 2009, any firefighter participating in the U.S. Fire Administration's National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Certification Program will be required to have attained a minimum of a bachelor's degree as part of the selection criteria for the program.

The two-year FERM program, which incorporates online and classroom instruction, provides fire and emergency personnel with leadership and administrative skills necessary to advance their careers and lead public health and safety organizations. Participants must have completed an associate degree in fire protection, fire science, paramedic technician or emergency management to enroll in the FERM program.

"After researching many different options, I found that UW Oshkosh had the best program for my learning needs," Spielman, 34, of Green Bay, said. "Most of the classes are online or a combination of online and face-to-face, allowing me to easily coordinate my work and school schedule. I also was granted additional credits for transferring classes from my previous associate degree."

Spielman has been an emergency medical technician since 1996 and became certified as a firefighter in 1997. After a firefighter/paramedic internship with the Town of Madison, she was hired by the City of Green Bay Fire Department as a firefighter and paramedic. She expects to graduate in 2010 and plans to pursue a master's degree in emergency management.

"The FERM program is giving me the tools necessary to succeed in the management environment,"

Spielman said. "I look forward to using what I learn in this program to manage a division, section or department in the future."

Currently, 38 students are enrolled in the FERM bachelor's degree program. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the number of emergency management specialists of all kinds will grow faster than the average for all occupations between 2004 and 2014, adding more than 2,300 jobs over the decade.

- For more information about the Candice E. Tylke Memorial Scholarship or to apply for the scholarship, visit www.uwosh.edu/lce/cnl/programs/bas-ferm/ferm-scholarship.