



A GROWTH AGENDA FOR WISCONSIN

GROWING PEOPLE, JOBS, & COMMUNITIES

Growth Agenda Action Step # 8:

Expand the UW-Madison Connections Program

Brief summary: UW-Madison is not able to accommodate all of the academically strong students who currently apply for admission. Beginning in 2001, UW-Madison piloted the Connections Program, in partnership with four UW Colleges campuses, to allow applicants who are Wisconsin residents to begin their education at a two-year UW Colleges campus and finish their bachelor's degree at UW-Madison. Through expansion of the Connections Program, the UW System hopes to improve efficiencies, keep more academically talented students in state, and ensure that they graduate with a bachelor's degree.

How does the Connections Program work?

Applicants who choose to participate in the Connections Program complete their freshman and sophomore years (54 credits) at the participating partner institution of their choice. Unlike typical transfer students, the Connections students are accorded certain privileges and responsibilities of enrolled UW-Madison students. They receive a UW-Madison student ID that offers many of the privileges of UW-Madison enrollment, including access to libraries, student support services, cultural/social events, recreational facilities, and the opportunity to purchase student tickets to athletic events.

To be eligible for enrollment at UW-Madison as juniors, Connections participants must make satisfactory progress while enrolled at their starting partner institution and complete certain requirements within three years of their initial freshman enrollment. As for all UW-Madison students, meeting these standards of satisfactory progress does not guarantee admission to specific majors or programs.

What has been accomplished?

- The goal to expand the Connections Program has been completed and presented to the Board of Regents Education Committee in October 2008.
- The program now includes all 13 UW Colleges, three Wisconsin Technical Colleges, and the College of Menominee Nation.
- A partnership with UW-Green Bay was piloted in Fall 2008 and four additional comprehensive institutions plan to participate in Fall 2009: UW-Parkside, UW-River Falls, UW Stevens Point, and UW-Stout.
- Using the National Student Clearinghouse data as a benchmark, it is anticipated that 2009 student participation rates will increase 260% over 2007 participation rates, bringing the total number of participants in the Connections Program to approximately 285 students per year.

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