

University of Wisconsin Colleges

Research Initiatives

The University of Wisconsin Colleges is the University of Wisconsin System's network of thirteen freshman/sophomore campuses and UW Colleges Online that offers an Associate of Arts and Science degree; six campuses also offer a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences degree-completion program. The University of Wisconsin Colleges mission is to make a University of Wisconsin education affordable and accessible to all by charging the lowest tuition in the UW System and admitting every qualified student who applies. More first-generation college students, more part-time students and more adult undergraduate students attend the University of Wisconsin Colleges than any other UW institution. Excellent instruction by a qualified faculty prepares students of all ages and backgrounds to transfer into baccalaureate and professional programs. The University of Wisconsin Colleges serves more than 14,000 degree-seeking students, who enjoy guaranteed transfer within the University of Wisconsin System.

In recent years, the University of Wisconsin Colleges has embarked on new initiatives to extend access to university degrees to even more Wisconsin citizens, especially underserved populations, through the following programs.

UW Flexible Option

The University of Wisconsin Colleges is a founding member of a partnership between University of Wisconsin System campuses and UW-Extension that offers the new and innovative UW Flexible Option, a more personalized, convenient, and affordable way for adults and other nontraditional students to earn a University of Wisconsin degree or certificate while balancing work, family, and other commitments. The UW Flexible Option includes self-paced, competency-based degree and certificate programs that allows participants to make progress toward a degree by demonstrating what they know, whether that knowledge was gained through prior coursework, military training, on-the-job training, or other learning experiences. By emphasizing what they know rather than how much time spent learning, the Flexible Option lets the participant advance toward a UW degree at a pace they set.

Rather than create courses, expert faculty from University of Wisconsin Colleges and its partners identify competencies—skills and knowledge—that they consider necessary to earn a UW degree. Participants in the program make progress by mastering these competencies and passing assessments that demonstrate their mastery. Along the way, they may draw upon existing knowledge to complete assessments at their own pace, whenever they are ready. As they prepare for assessments, they will learn and receive support from a variety of sources, including a dedicated mentor called an Academic Success Coach.

Concurrent Enrollment Program

Many advanced high school students are ready for college-level courses, and some high school teachers have the educational background to teach at that level. This presents a win-win opportunity for students, teachers, high schools, and the University of Wisconsin Colleges. Following review by University of Wisconsin Colleges academic departments, approved high school teachers teach college level courses in the high school. The high school students who enroll in the classes earn college credits and meet the related high school requirements (concurrent enrollment). This saves the students money and shortens time to college graduation. The University of Wisconsin Colleges and the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh created the UW System Concurrent Enrollment Consortium to aggressively expand this program to more high schools in the state and will expand the consortium and opportunities for high school students by including other interested UW System institutions.

University of Wisconsin Colleges Online

UW Colleges Online offers many of the same courses which are taught by the same instructors as on our thirteen campuses, but in an entirely online format accessible from anywhere including home, school, work, or traveling afar. Students in the Online program can earn the UW Colleges Associate of Arts and Science degree which fulfills the university-wide, college, school and general education breadth requirements for most bachelor's degree programs and is widely accepted by other institutions, including those within and beyond the University of Wisconsin System. Experiencing steady growth since its inception in 1998, the program currently enrolls about 2000 students in 60 courses each semester.

Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences

The Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences (BAAS) degree completion program is offered at six University of Wisconsin Colleges campuses in collaboration with UW System comprehensive universities. Classes are taught by faculty from both University of Wisconsin Colleges and the comprehensive universities. The BAAS degree is designed for adults who already have an Associate of Arts and Science (AAS) degree from UW Colleges or an equivalent liberal arts associate degree. The BAAS degree includes a strong component of community involvement and practical experience in addition to classroom learning, that prepare students to apply theoretical knowledge, higher order intellectual skills, and practical experience to solve complex problems in the workplace and community.

Existing Partnerships with Federal Agencies, Reaching Out and Supporting Underserved Populations

Portals of Discovery

Portals of Discovery is an NSF-STEP funded collaborative effort between UW-Manitowoc and UW-Stout designed to increase the number of STEM graduates in the state of Wisconsin by: 1) Creating a seamless pipeline of STEM education bridging the high schools, two year colleges, and four year colleges

through the integration of transformative, real-world research and mentoring experiences; 2) Facilitating the establishment of new collaboration teams of faculty and peer mentors from two year and four year campuses; 3) Targeting talented and underrepresented populations of students through recruitment and outreach; 4) Developing new curriculum which will increase STEM skill sets early in the students' college career.

Precollege Programs

The University of Wisconsin Colleges offers programming aimed at junior high and high school students to encourage them to attend college and be prepared for college. Preparatory workshops include STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Saturdays, summer daily and residential academic camps, tutoring in math and writing and ACT prep workshops. Encouragement to attend college occurs through campus tours, attending college classes for a day and assistance with college and financial aid applications.

TRIO Student Support Services Program

This federal grant program offers intrusive academic advising and personalized tutoring in math and writing to 450 students who are first generation college students, low income students, or students with disabilities. A student-staff ratio of 23 to 1 encourages individualized attention for disadvantaged students. Assistance in career exploration, transfer planning, and financial aid and scholarship applications encourages students to start and complete a baccalaureate degree.

Centers and Institutes

West Bend Economic Development Center

The West Bend Economic Development Corporation (WBEDC) is a private non-profit organization made up of a cross section of employers, educators and civic leaders from the West Bend area that has been in existence since 1985. They are dedicated to improving the economic development of the area through downtown development, creation of family supporting jobs, workforce development, enhancing the educational, health and cultural climate of West Bend and supporting infrastructure development. For the past 7 years the University of Wisconsin - Washington County has worked with the WBEDC providing technical resources, research, administrative support, facilities and a staff member who has functioned as the Executive Director. Through this relationship, the campus has been involved in conducting Business Retention surveys, Economic Impact studies, Downtown Re-development, Business Development/Business Attraction, Business Start-up Advising and Façade Improvement program development.

Center for Wisconsin Archaeology at UW-Baraboo/Sauk County

The mission of the Center for Wisconsin Archaeology (CWA) at UW-Baraboo/Sauk County is to conduct archaeological consulting, as well as assess and preserve archaeological resources within Wisconsin. The CWA at UW-BSC also provides various outreach programs on Wisconsin archaeology such as presentations for public and school groups and tours of regional archaeological sites. Available services include archival research, Phase I surveys, Phase II evaluations, Phase III mitigations, and identification of Wisconsin burial sites. Outreach activities include presentations to civic groups, programs for school groups, keynote speakers for conferences, and tours of regional archaeological sites.

Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service (WIPPS)

In an age when Americans have noted declining citizen involvement in community life and increasing political partisanship, a movement towards reclaiming the civic mission of colleges and universities led to the 2008 founding of the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service (WIPPS) on the University of Wisconsin-Marathon County campus in Wausau, Wisconsin. The institute connects the resources of the University of Wisconsin with public policy issues, providing new opportunities for faculty and staff to be engaged in public work and promoting student interest in public service. To fulfill its mission of addressing public needs that arise from topical issues and to advance the goals of public scholarship and student engagement in the community, the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service generates and hosts a wide variety of public programs and events of local, statewide, and national interest. WIPPS also collaborates on other public programs and events with a wide range of partners, such as: the Wisconsin Humanities Council; Wisconsin Campus Compact; the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters; Kids Voting USA, and other agencies and organizations.