

# The Adult Student Initiative

## Maximizing Access to College Degrees for Adults Statewide: Status of the UW Colleges and UW-Extension Adult Student Initiative

Purpose: To increase the number of bachelor's degree holders in Wisconsin and thus help fuel the Wisconsin knowledge economy

# The Context

**The State of Wisconsin is 35<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the percentage of bachelor's degree holders. In 1970 Wisconsin was 30<sup>th</sup>.**

**The U.S. is 10<sup>th</sup> in the world in the level of education of its populace. In 1970 it was first.**

**The Knowledge or Innovation Economy generates wealth and all that is associated with it (jobs, living standards, etc.) through the creation of highly creative and implementable knowledge.**

# The Context

**“The key to economic growth lies not just in the ability to attract the creative class, but to translate that underlying advantage into creative economic outcomes in the form of new ideas, new high-tech businesses and regional growth.”** --Richard Florida from *The Rise of the Creative Class*

**“I believe this country stands at a crossroads. For decades, innovation has been the engine of prosperity in this country. Now, economic progress depends more than ever on innovation. And the potential for technology innovation to improve lives has never been greater. If we do not [improve], the center of progress will shift to other nations that are more committed to the pursuit of excellence.”**

--Bill Gates from his presentation to Congress, March 13, 2008

**On April 4, 2008, U.S. unemployment was 5.1% for individuals with high school degrees only; 2.1% for individuals with bachelors degrees and higher.** --U.S. Department of Labor

# ASI History

- UW Colleges and Extension began foundational work in 2005.
- UW-Extension Continuing Education, Outreach, and E-Learning invested \$2M non-recurring funds over three years to:
  - **Raise awareness** about degree completion opportunities
  - Create **new degrees** (online)
  - Launched a pilot project to begin an **adult student advisory network**
  - **Outreach to students** who “stopped out” (COBE)
- **UW Colleges launched a pilot project (\$40,000) to:**
  - Experiment with **accelerated hybrid course** offerings

# Broad Overview of the ASI

**The Adult Student Initiative (ASI) has three interrelated yet distinct parts:**

- **Create broad awareness** among adult and nontraditional students about the value of a bachelor's degree and about the programs and services that the University of Wisconsin System institutions provide to help adults earn bachelor's degrees.
- **Create an array of student support services** especially for adult and underserved students to help them enter and succeed in the UW.
- **Create a variety of undergraduate programs** in areas and formats that meet the needs of adult and nontraditional students, focusing on 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills and competencies.

# ASI to Date

- **The following programs have been or are in the process of being converted to online formats:**
  - o Organizational Administration – UW-Oshkosh
  - o Criminal Justice – UW-Platteville
  - o Information Systems and Project Management - UW-Parkside
  - o Human Services – UW-Oshkosh
  - o Fire Science & Emergency Response Mgt. – UW-Oshkosh
  - o Early Childhood – UW-Milwaukee
  - o Communicating Arts – UW-Superior
  - o Technical Education – UW-Stout

- **The UWin Campaign was launched in 2006**
  - 3,078 Wisconsin adults expressed interest in pursuing a bachelor's degree
  - 306 adult students applied to UW institutions as a result of the fall campaign. Of those, 74 applied to the Colleges.
- **Three adult student service coordinators were hired**
  - Southeast Wisconsin
  - Fox Valley
  - Central Wisconsin

# ASI to Date (cont.)

- **UW Colleges Accelerated Hybrid Course Program launched fall 2007:**
  - UW-Fox Valley
  - UW-Marathon County
  - UW-Washington County
- **UW Colleges Accelerated Hybrid Course Program expanded in spring 2008 to include:**
  - UW-Fond du Lac
  - UWC Online



# How ASI funds will be used

- ~ **\$700K (Colleges) for intensive format, face-to-face and online**
  
- ~ **\$850K (to Comprehensives) to create new, forward-facing UW bachelor's degrees for 21<sup>st</sup> Century competencies, including:**
  - Green Business
  - STEM for Teachers
  - Global Leadership
  - Healthcare
  
- ~ **\$650K (Extension) for student support services and other infrastructure needed to address nontraditional student needs**

# The ASI Bottom Line

**Who: UW Colleges and UW-Extension.**

**What: Leading Wisconsin to provide access to adult and nontraditional students to start, continue or complete a degree.**

**Where: Anywhere in Wisconsin.**

**How: Through online degree programs, intensive courses on Colleges campuses and online, and through comprehensive advising services to help students complete and succeed.**

**Why: Because educated people fuel the knowledge economy and help create jobs.**

