UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
FLEXIBLE OPTION

AARON BROWER
INTERIM PROVOST, UW-EXTENSION
SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE UW SYSTEM PRESIDENT FOR NEW EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES
WHERE ARE WE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF UW FLEX?

• New Name

• “First to Flex” Cohort I programs announced

• Program Development Underway

• Advisory Group Input into Quality, Financial and Operational Components
“First to Flex”

- November 28 Press Event:
  - Cohort I Flex programs announced
  - Website launched and YouTube video shown
  - Good Press!
“First to Flex”: UW-Milwaukee

- UW-Milwaukee will offer four degree programs and one certificate program:
  - Two Nursing degrees: R.N.-to-B.S.N. and R.N.-to-M.N.
  - Bachelor's degree-completion program in Diagnostic Imaging
  - Bachelor’s in Information Science & Technology
  - Certificate in Professional and Technical Communication through College of Letters & Science
“First to Flex”: UW Colleges

- UW Colleges will:
  - provide an array of general education and liberal arts courses in the new UW Flexible format, in core fields
  - working to provide the Associate of Arts and Science degree via UW Flex
“First to Flex”: UW Extension Independent Learning

- Piloting two courses and a non-credit certificate offered *this winter (not yet advertised)*:
  - College Algebra, Elementary Stats, Cert. in Bus. Math & Personal Finance
  - First 100 students receive research stipend so cost is free in exchange for allowing us to study progress and experiences
    - Enrollments as of Dec 3: 11 in Algebra, 9 in Stats, 5 in certificate
Other UWs

- **UW-Superior** and **UW Independent Learning** are developing Flex Option general education courses in Communications and Art History, ready to enroll students in Fall, 2013.

- **UW-Parkside** considering a Bachelor’s in General Studies.

- In conversation with other UWs where Provosts, faculty, and others are beginning to explore how they might participate.
WHAT IS THE FLEX OPTION?

Video Link
WHAT IS THE FLEX OPTION?

- Competency-based, with degree progress through rigorous assessments
- Supported by strong, proactive, “wrap-around” advising/mentoring/tutoring
- Prior learning & experiences shape all aspects of educational experience
- Quality based on existing faculty and departments
- Aimed at non-traditional, returning students
HOW DOES UW FLEX DIFFER FROM TRADITIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMS?

• No seat time

• No semesters or terms (start, stop at any time)

• Individualized, proactive, “wrap around” advising/mentoring/tutoring

• Self-paced by
  • length of time to complete
  • number of assessments needed
  • type of support needed
FOUR INTERLOCKING AREAS TO BE DEVELOPED

Academic Components
Operational Components
Financial Components
Communications & Marketing
WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- Enrollments
- Retention Rates/Progress towards degree*
- Time to Degree/Completion rate*
- Employability

* Successful completion may mean stackable credentials vs. degree
Information about UW Flex is available on the UW System’s eCampus site:

http://www.ecampus.wisconsin.edu/online-degree-programs/flex-option.aspx