



GROWTH AGENDA FOR WISCONSIN

Access • Affordability • Growth

UW Colleges/UW-Extension: Adult Student Initiative

The UW Colleges and UW-Extension will use funding in the 2007-09 biennium to lead a system-wide Adult Student Initiative.

What is the Adult Student Initiative?

The goal of the initiative is to meet the needs of the state by increasing the number of baccalaureate degree holders. This initiative is an outgrowth of recommendations of the Committee on Baccalaureate Expansion, which identified the need to expand access to higher education in the state. The initiative includes:

- identifying, recruiting, and better serving potential adult learners;
- expanding opportunities for these students to obtain both associate and baccalaureate degrees via course re-design for accessibility, using distance, accelerated, and hybrid course formats;
- making better use of prior-learning assessment to enhance degree completion and student success; and
- providing increased counseling, student services, and advising for adult students.

What are the benefits of the Adult Student Initiative?

The proposed initiative will provide services and course delivery that are designed specifically to meet the needs of the adult working population. It is anticipated that headcount admissions will increase at all UW System campuses as the Adult Student Initiative builds, with additional accessible degrees added in each year.

What will the Adult Student Initiative mean for Wisconsin?

Recent statistics indicate that Wisconsin's per capita personal income is below the national average and considerably lower than that of neighboring states. In response, Wisconsin must create significantly more high-paying employment opportunities within the state's economy, and the workforce must possess high levels of education to obtain these jobs. According to a 2005 report by the U.S. Census Bureau, the percentage of Wisconsin's population 25 and older with at least a baccalaureate degree was markedly below that of Minnesota and Illinois. Any improvement in these statistics is presently limited by the small percentage of working-age adults enrolled in post-secondary education and a declining number of high school graduates. This initiative is designed to counteract this trend by increasing the number of adult, non-traditional students who are working toward, and obtaining baccalaureate degrees.

Estimated ongoing cost: \$2.6 million (\$1.7 million GPR / \$917,000 Fees)

For more information: Contact Chancellor David Wilson, 608-262-3786