

A GROWTH AGENDA FOR WISCONSIN

GROWING PEOPLE, JOBS, & COMMUNITIES

UW Colleges and Extension: Adult Student Initiative – Phase 2

Brief summary: The Adult Student Initiative (ASI) expands adult learning opportunities by making more degrees available online. ASI-2 will create a single point of entry into all UW online programs and provide comprehensive services to ensure that students succeed in their online education.

Why is it needed?

The number of degree holders in Wisconsin continues to lag behind the rest of the nation. In Wisconsin, 25% of adults have bachelor's degrees. For comparison, the national average is 27% and 31% are degree holders in next-door Minnesota. Transitioning from a manufacturing economy and sustaining high-tech leadership in Wisconsin requires an educated workforce. In addition to young, traditional graduates, encouraging current workers to expand their education is critical to meet this goal. However, adult students may have unique academic and counseling challenges, including outside responsibilities that may limit their ability to travel to an academic institution or to attend classes full-time.

How does this proposal meet the need?

ASI-2 will create an online portal (*UW Front Door*) that will allow students to access the resources of the entire UW System from a single location. This unified branding will make online degrees more marketable and help potential students identify the best opportunities.

This phase also will create the underlying infrastructure that is necessary to support online education. Traditional students are supported by career advising, face-to-face interaction with professors, study groups, and academic services to address similar needs. This initiative will create an online learning community that connects adult students to faculty, future employers, colleagues, and support services. This additional support will retain adult students and create smoother work-to-school and school-to-work transitions.

Furthermore, ASI-2 will increase the number of online programs offered by UW institutions.

What are the outcomes/benefits?

- Provide resources and course delivery specifically designed to meet the education and learner support needs of the adult working population;
- Double UW System online enrollments from 4,500 to 9,000 by 2014;
- Add four new online bachelor's degrees and two online master's degrees by 2014;
- Build the Wisconsin Knowledge Portfolio with learning opportunities for students across their lifetimes, tentatively to be launched by 2013.

Estimated ongoing cost: \$2,500,000 (\$1,625,000 GPR/\$875,000 Fees)

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