

Plans for Improving the Academic Program University of Wisconsin Colleges

The UW Colleges seeks to continuously improve its academic program. Plans for improving the academic program fall into three broad categories: implementing Inclusive Excellence in the UW Colleges, expanding the UW Colleges Assessment Program, and seeking approval of a proposed UW Colleges Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences degree completion program.

Inclusive Excellence as a practice is a UW System Administration (UWSA) conceptual framework for promoting inclusivity and diversity across its institutions: “The central premise of Inclusive Excellence holds that UW System colleges and universities need to intentionally integrate their diversity efforts into the core aspects of their institutions—such as their academic priorities, leadership, quality improvement initiatives, decision-making, day-to-day operations, and organizational cultures—in order to maximize their success” ([UW System Inclusive Excellence Frequently Asked Questions](#)). Promoting diversity and inclusiveness is a core value of the UW Colleges and taking part in the UW System Inclusive Excellence effort is an important continuation of all our work to date. Appointed by UW Colleges Provost Greg Lampe, the UW Colleges Inclusive Excellence Working Group, which includes student representation, is forming recommendations for the Office of Academic Affairs to:

Determine how Inclusive Excellence can be implemented in the UW Colleges;

1. Identify the roles and responsibilities of existing diversity/inclusivity committees, faculty and staff, academic and non-academic departments, and students regarding Inclusive Excellence;
2. Identify key Senate, Administrative, and/or UW System policy issues that might need to be addressed regarding Inclusive Excellence, and
3. Provide a timeline for Inclusive Excellence implementation.

UW Colleges Assessment Program leaders, which includes the UW Colleges Office of Academic Affairs, the UW Colleges Senate Assessment Committee and the UW Colleges Institutional Assessment Coordinator, together with academic department chairs and campus executive officers/deans, have begun planning how best to extend well-established processes for assessing student learning outcomes from classroom and campus levels now to an institution-wide level. We would like to make sure that what the UW Colleges will decide to fund in the future has a positive impact on student learning outcomes. Examples might include expanding professional development funding for academic departments; creating tenure-track positions on campuses; providing financial resources for increased diversity training for faculty, staff and students; developing international study abroad and exchange programs; expanding access to the UW Colleges through ever stronger recruitment and retention of traditional and adult students; and much more. The UW Colleges Strategic Plan will guide these ongoing planning discussions.

The proposed UW Colleges Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences degree completion program, if approved by the UW Board of Regents and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, will offer place-bound, underserved adult students in six areas of the state access to a new pathway through the UW Colleges to obtain a bachelor’s degree and help them meaningfully contribute to local workplace and community needs. While retaining its traditional transfer mission, the UW Colleges through the Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences degree will significantly contribute to advancing the UW System’s Growth Agenda and its goal of increasing the proportion of the Wisconsin population with higher education credentials to 55 percent by 2025.