

The UW Colleges/UW-Extension Administrative Integration

Frequently Asked Questions

Background: *The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents on Feb. 10, 2005 approved a plan to integrate the Madison-based administrative offices of UW Colleges and UW-Extension under a single chancellor. After months of study, UW System President Kevin Reilly advanced the plan as part of an effort to reduce costs, increase efficiency and strengthen the “access missions” of both institutions.*

Q: Why integrate these administrative offices?

UW-Extension and the UW Colleges already have a lot in common. Both are geographically dispersed organizations, administered from central offices in Madison. The UW Colleges offers an Associate of Arts and Science degree at 13 freshman-sophomore campuses and through UW Colleges Online. UW-Extension is responsible for 72 county offices, as well as outreach programs on all 26 UW campuses. In partnership with the Educational Communications Board, UW-Extension also oversees the statewide networks of Wisconsin Public Radio and Wisconsin Public Television.

Together, the UW Colleges and UW-Extension represent the UW System’s two connections to county and local governments. Local communities finance the physical facilities of the UW Colleges campuses. Counties support Cooperative Extension faculty/staff salaries and provide other in-kind support for local offices. Strengthening these community partnerships will help the university respond more effectively to emerging local needs.

Both UW-Extension and the UW Colleges have strong partnerships with the UW System’s 11 comprehensive and two doctoral campuses. All of the doctoral and comprehensive campuses have credit transfer agreements with the UW Colleges, which also host baccalaureate degree programs. UW-Extension funds campus-based continuing education courses at all 26 UW campuses. On all 13 four-year campuses, UW-Extension funds and supports the work of Small Business Development Centers, and four campuses host Cooperative Extension specialists who support the work of county-based educators.

Q: Will educational programs be cut as a result of this integration?

No. Administrative consolidations in Madison can be achieved without diminishing the quantity or quality of educational programs, applied research and outreach initiatives in either institution. In fact, university clients and all state taxpayers may enjoy additional long-term benefits as a result of strengthening the connection between these two UW institutions. In the short term, most students and clients will probably not notice any change to the educational programs in which they participate.

Q: How will this result in greater efficiency?

Efficiency is more than just reducing expenses. It is delivering greater value to the state at a lower cost.

The first step in this integration process will be to hire one chancellor to lead both institutions, resulting in immediate savings associated with the elimination of one executive position. In approving this measure, the Board of Regents also directed the two institutions to explore other opportunities for integrating specific administrative functions. A feasibility study identified the following areas as possible candidates for integration:

<i>Internal Audit</i>	<i>University Relations</i>
<i>Risk Management and Safety</i>	<i>Human Resources</i>
<i>Information Technology</i>	<i>Business Services</i>
<i>Affirmative Action/EEO</i>	

In addition to potential cost savings associated with this integration, greater collaboration between UW Colleges and UW-Extension can also enhance the UW System and deliver greater dividends to taxpayers who support this public university:

- With a wide range of distance-learning capacities in both institutions, and UW Colleges' established degree program and course offerings, the UW System could help more Wisconsin residents achieve a college education. This could greatly expand access for returning adults, students of color, economically disadvantaged, and place-bound students. A more highly educated workforce means higher per-capita incomes and robust economic development statewide.
- UW Colleges and UW-Extension have complementary advising services that could provide valuable assistance to adult learners. Working together, these units could provide a coordinated statewide outreach network to serve non-traditional students who are interested in pursuing a two- or four-year degree.
- Faculty and staff from both institutions could collaborate in new ways to address local economic development. This could involve UW Colleges Business and Economics faculty members, along with staff from the Small Business Development Centers, and county-based UW-Extension educators who specialize in Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development.
- With the resources of UW Extension's Wisconsin Humanities Council and the UW Colleges already acting as community cultural centers, there is enhanced civic capacity to address issues of concern to local citizenry.

Q: How will this be accomplished?

These first steps are the result of many conversations and collaborative work with people at the state and local levels. A cross-institutional steering committee will lead the administrative integration while the search for a single Chancellor is underway. Partners, clients and other stakeholders will be involved to preserve access and maintain quality across both institutions.