2005
REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY
Making a Commitment to Community Engagement

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee launched The Milwaukee Idea just six years ago and with it a new era in civic engagement for the state’s largest urban research university.

Taking a giant step off the beaten path, UWM mounted a planning effort that embraced an unprecedented number of community participants and asserted a very public commitment to building broad and enduring partnerships well beyond the confines of campus. These partnerships would enrich teaching and learning, bring university and community representatives to the table as equals and together, drawing on their respective resources and expertise, enhance the common good.

In part, UWM was responding to the stirrings of a national movement which envisioned a new role for higher education in American life, one distinguished by engaged scholarship and teaching. Today, UWM is at the forefront of that movement with hundreds of community-university partnerships in full flower, with more than 1,000 students who’ve benefited from service learning experiences in the community and with research that is making UWM a force for economic, social and educational change in the region and throughout the state.

UWM is also a leader in the important national dialogue about community-university engagement. In spring, 2004, UWM and the University of Cincinnati brought leaders and practitioners from engaged institutions across the country to the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wisconsin. A report on their work, published by UWM, outlines several critical steps colleges and universities must take to achieve engagement and calls on funders and policy leaders to make engagement a national priority. The report concludes: “University-wide, institutionalized and sustained commitment to engagement is a necessity and a priority if American higher education is to continue its global leadership role. Engagement is higher education’s larger purpose.”


Stephen Percy
Chancellor’s Deputy for The Milwaukee Idea
Age and Community Scholar Scott Strath is one of three faculty members at UWM awarded a grant of $100,000 by The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to conduct research on how environmental factors, specifically the elements of “walkable” neighborhoods, affect the likelihood that older people will engage in physical activity, and thereby improve their health.

The study also will go a step further, shedding light on which attributes of their environment successfully encourage an active lifestyle for those ages 55 and over. It will sample people in four different Milwaukee-area neighborhoods; Milwaukee’s near East side, Shorewood, Elm Grove, and Mequon, according to Strath, assistant professor of human movement sciences, who is the study’s principal investigator. Co-investigators Raymond Isaacs, assistant professor of architecture, and Michael Greenwald, assistant professor of urban planning, will inventory different “indicators” that could encourage physical activity, such as housing density, land use patterns and the connectivity of streets.

“Many environmental attributes have been identified for the general population,” says Strath, who also is director of the Older Adult Fitness Programs in the College of Health Sciences. “What we want to find out is what’s different in providing ease for the older adult.” One example, he says, is finding out if older people are more likely to use an intersection that has a center island or a longer walk signal so that those who walk slowly will have adequate time to get across. To accurately measure physical activity, Strath will have volunteers wear both an “accelerometer” and pedometer during the day for seven consecutive days. The pedometer will count steps taken, while the accelerometer will record the intensity, duration and frequency of activity.

“It will facilitate comparisons between the physical environment and physical activity,” says Isaacs. “It will also allow for explorations of other questions, like whether people are able to take the shortest path to a destination.”
Students who enroll in Cultures and Communities (CC) classes or sign up for the initiative’s new certificate program have a unique opportunity to build their understanding of our increasingly diverse world and apply it in their personal and professional lives. CC promotes multicultural awareness and civic engagement by sponsoring undergraduate classes, real-world learning experiences, community partnership grants, faculty research and special events. Over 6,000 students have completed one or more courses affiliated with Cultures and Communities and more than 130 students have already enrolled in the certificate program. The certificate gives undergraduates a chance to meet UWM’s basic educational requirements by taking courses emphasizing community engagement, cross-cultural literacy and global awareness. Of particular note is the fact that students of color are choosing the certificate in numbers that are double their percentage in the student population as a whole, suggesting that the certificate can play a substantial role in recruiting and retaining students of color.

Cultures and Communities in Action: Student Perspectives

Dana Weber, junior, and Vinthant Souvannarath, senior, both with double majors in Psychology and Sociology are working toward a Cultures and Communities certificate.

Dana Weber

Weber was raised on Milwaukee’s North Side and attended Brown Deer High School. She went to UW-Eau Claire, but missed the diversity of a larger city with a more heterogeneous population. She plans on becoming a clinical psychologist and hopes to attend graduate school in another city so that she can experience more of the country’s diversity.

“The Cultures and Communities program provides exposure to people of various backgrounds and to learning from them. For this reason, it’s an asset to a student’s educational, professional and personal endeavors.

The program is also appealing because it offers many courses from a wide range of disciplines. The cultural knowledge and appreciation I gained from Cultures and Communities courses has benefited my volunteer work with St. Rose’s Family Unification Program, which helps children visit their mothers in prison; and Milwaukee’s YWCA program which helps empower women and girls in the central city. These volunteer experiences have, as well as the CC coursework, equipped me with a cross-cultural understanding of our pluralistic society.

Overall, the Cultures and Communities courses I’ve taken have challenged my thinking, expanded my horizons and reinforced my belief that cultural differences are best handled if they’re embraced.”

Vinthany Souvannarath

Souvannarath, whose family is Lao, was born in a Thailand refugee camp. She attended Milwaukee’s Hamilton High School and plans to pursue a Sociology PhD so that she can become a researcher and a college professor. She arrived in the U.S. when she was three and English is her second language.

“The Cultures and Communities program allows me to open my mind about experiences of ethnic groups different from mine and it gives me the opportunity to share the experiences of my cultural group as immigrants to the U.S.

Students learn to realize how race shapes the experiences of all people. We also learn that the first way to confront this problem, to make a change, is to admit it exists. The need for diversity in curriculum is important, as this society and the world are becoming more, not less heterogeneous in peoples and cultures.”
Healthy Choices in Action: Working to Reduce Risky Behavior

Through a recently funded project called Heart to Heart, the Center for Addiction and Behavioral Health Research (CABHR) hopes to help one of the most vulnerable populations in Milwaukee: women whose use of alcohol and other substances puts them at risk for HIV exposure. A $3.3 million federal grant from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism supports Heart to Heart, a multi-year, innovative study being conducted in partnership with the Milwaukee Women’s Center (MWC).

“This study is a first in combining a state-of-the-art risk reduction program for alcohol and drug use with other women’s issues,” says Allen Zweben, former director of CABHR. “Also making it unique, is the focus on women.” According to Zweben, evidence suggests that alcohol and other drug use influences women’s choices regarding other risky behaviors. Heart to Heart will focus on determining whether or not women who benefit from alcohol use treatment also reduce their involvement in risky sexual behaviors.

Carey Tradewell Monreal, president and CEO of the Milwaukee Women’s Center, pointed to the unusual nature of the collaboration between the Center for Addiction and Behavioral Health Research and her organization. “Traditionally researchers look at a community provider only as a location for conducting research; with Heart to Heart, CABHR and MWC staff will truly be pursuing all aspects of the research together.”

A separate clinical site at MWC has been newly developed to host Heart to Heart, with the goal of enrolling approximately 375 women during the next three years. “Our hope is to reach this population with education, since many of the women are not fully educated about ways in which they are vulnerable to HIV,” says Lisa Blaeser of CABHR. “Studies have been done on alcohol use and on HIV risk reduction prevention, but interventions for both have not been combined in this way before.”
KnowledgeFest Highlights:

- Showcasing a variety of community-university projects and partnerships at summer ethnic festivals that annually reach over 50,000 attendees. Exhibits and displays are staffed by UWM faculty and teaching scholars, and provide a direct connection to information about how research at UWM positively transforms the quality of life in Milwaukee and beyond.

- Launched the “Knowledgefest Community Scholars in Residence” (CSR) awards. The fellowship stipend supports a scholar who can bring community expertise to UWM courses and projects.

- Created the Chancellor’s Research Fellow, a new award recognizing faculty or teaching staff for state of the art research projects that are being applied in the community.

- Finalized plans for the Chancellor’s Community Roundtable. This advisory council, composed of community members, will have direct access to the chancellor to advocate for community issues.

Women’s Health Research Collaborative

Women’s Health Research Highlights:

- Sponsored a conference for the community and campus to raise awareness of the need for women’s health research.

- Pilot-tested a survey on campus and in the community to identify areas of interest in women’s health research.

- Hosted a community seminar on women’s reproductive health with noted author Bell Hooks.
Institute of Environmental Health

Institute of Environmental Health Highlights:

• Establishing UWM as an international leader in the use of zebrafish to study environmental health. The Institute continues to work in partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences on research that will greatly expand understanding of how the genetic variability of humans and other mammals affects their reaction to toxic chemicals.

• Constructed one of the largest zebrafish animal facilities in the United States to support the initiative’s research efforts.

• Expanded the knowledge and leadership skills of middle school science teachers and enriched middle school science curriculum with the support of a $750,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health. Partners include the Milwaukee Public Schools, Carroll College and UWM’s Departments of Biological Sciences, Chemistry, Curriculum and Instruction, Film and the Great Lakes WATER Institute. The project has worked with over 30 middle school science teachers from metropolitan and regional schools, many of whom have introduced new science instruction in their classrooms.

• Continued work on a project supported by an $800,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health to provide critical public information about the risks of eating contaminated fish from local and regional waters. Partners in this effort are Milwaukee’s 16th Street Community Health Center, the Hmong American Friendship Association and several UWM departments.

• Began work on a public information effort, in partnership with La Causa, on the problem of childhood obesity among Latino children.

• In partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin, began planning for a joint Center for Children’s Environmental Health. The Center would be recognized and funded by the National Institute for Health Sciences.

• Worked closely with the State of Wisconsin Bureau of Environmental Health on building environmental health capacity and with the state’s on-line Health Action Network for health care workers to introduce on-line curriculum and research to the Network.
Community Design Solutions in Action: A look at the work of the Quick Response Team

- Provided the Metcalfe Park Residents Association Housing Renewal Project with detailed facade improvement designs for 15 houses in the area of N. 36th Street and W. North Avenue.

- Partnered with the Martin Luther King Economic Development Corporation to develop housing designs for vacant lots in an area spanning several blocks along N. 2nd and N. 5th Streets, between E. Center and E. Locust Streets.

- Collaborated with the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh to design a new building called The Living, Learning, Serving Center that would better connect the university with the community.

- Worked with the Riverworks Development Corporation to develop housing designs for several vacant lots on N. 1st and 2nd between W. Keefe Ave. and W. Randolph Street.

- Developed a design plan to improve the area around the intersection of Atkinson, Capitol and Teutonia Avenues in collaboration with the Business Improvement District and the City of Milwaukee. Suggested strategies to make the area friendlier, safer and more attractive including a bus stop pavilion, merchant market and new landscaping.

- Designed new landscaping for Enderis Park and provided quality renderings to the Enderis Park Neighborhood Association. The renderings were used to promote the project to the neighborhood and City of Milwaukee and helped the association win a $600,000 grant to implement the design.
The Consortium in Action:
Graduate Fellows Learn Lessons in Urban Renewal

Two former Peace Corps volunteers are involved in a unique fellowship program that allows them to combine working for a community organization with their graduate studies at UWM. Kevin LeMoine and Kristin Stieger are participating in The Milwaukee Idea Economic Development Fellows program, which aims to help local nonprofit organizations achieve their economic development goals. A project of the Consortium for Economic Opportunity, it is open to alumni of the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps.

Though they are in different fields, LeMoine and Stieger are linked by their community assignments. LeMoine, a geography student, is helping the Sixteenth Street Community Health Center in its quest to track progress in renewing the Menomonee River Valley. An urban studies student, Stieger is also involved in the Valley, working for the public-private partnership that is guiding the revitalization effort, the Menomonee Valley Partners.

At the health center, LeMoine is compiling a detailed “State of the Valley” report, with data on topics such as environmental health, job growth, crime rates, property values and the prevalence of health problems among residents. The goal is to track the progress of the area over the next few decades.

Steiger says she is impressed with the momentum of the Valley project since 2000 and the variety of people joining the effort. “One of the things that amazes me is the breadth of public and private involvement,” she says. “This is the most visible brownfield redevelopment initiative in Wisconsin and if we do it right it has the potential to serve as a model for brownfield redevelopment across the nation.”
Partnerships for Education in Action: Teachers Go High-tech

Shorewood teachers are getting a chance to learn more about new technology for the classroom, thanks to a collaborative effort involving the Shorewood School District, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Army National Guard.

Teachers and administrators had a chance to learn everything from how to attach an email to how to prepare for a “distance learning” class. The recently completed course, Workshop in Computer Instruction in the Schools, allowed teachers to practice using Web-based learning systems, videoconferencing equipment, the Internet and computer software programs. UWM faculty member Simone Conceição taught the two-week class, which was held at the Milwaukee National Guard Armory on Richards Street.

“We’re trying to work with communities and nonprofits to make better use of taxpayers’ dollars,” says Floyd Sutton, Wisconsin distance learning technician, who helped coordinate the class using the armory’s technical facilities. The military is reaching out to encourage more community use of technical resources in its facilities, he added, and the Richards armory location was close to Shorewood.

“This type of class gives the university a chance to collaborate with school districts in teaching, research and service,” says Conceição, an assistant professor in UWM’s School of Education, who also serves on the Shorewood School district’s technology planning committee. Partnerships for Education provided partial support for the class through a $3,000 mini-grant.

The teachers are at a variety of levels in using technology, says Conceição. “Some have good technology skills and others don’t know what they don’t know.” Teachers learned to work with various new technologies, and discussed how curricula and styles of teaching could be integrated with the new tools.

Teachers were interested in the ways Web-based courseware as well as computer software could be used, says Conceição. One continuing benefit that has come out of the class is the establishment of a shared message board that will allow the Shorewood educators to share tips and resources with each other.

“We’re all interested in figuring out ways to reach students,” says Arthur Anderson, a school psychologist with the Shorewood School District. Some students, for example, might respond better to teaching that involves visual aids like PowerPoint presentations or other graphics programs. “The whole issue of integrating technology into the classroom is exciting for us as a district.”
The Global Passport Project: New Degree Equals More Globally Aware Grads

More than three years in the making, UWM’s new Bachelor of Arts in Global Studies (BAGS) is one of the few degree programs of its kind in the nation. Other global studies degrees exist, but UWM’s is the only one that combines disciplines in Letters and Science with pre-professional studies.

“The BAGS initiative will help distinguish our campus from others offering international education programs and will ultimately turn UWM into a more global environment for both students and scholars,” says Patrice Petro, Director of the Center for International Education. “Best of all, it will fill a need in the workforce for more college graduates with global competencies.”

Designed for motivated students, the degree requires eight semesters of foreign language study, a semester abroad and an international internship. Students choose from several “tracks” or fields of concentration, including global management, cities, communication, security and classrooms.

Thirty five new courses and five overseas programs to date have been developed around the degree’s areas of study. Among them are courses related to globalization and information technology, global communication, security, urban studies, international business, foreign languages and culture, people and politics and economics and the environment.

Student interest in global studies is strong, evidenced by the sold out response to the first offering of Global 101: “People and Politics”, a course which supports all five areas of study for the degree. “It was an interesting and diverse group,” said instructor Robert Beck, Director of Academic Technology in the Center for International Education. “There were a number of students with Ukrainian, Romanian and Mexican heritage. There were also a fair number who have lived abroad or speak another language. This seems to be as international a class as I’ve encountered at UWM.”
The Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management (HBI) is a multi-disciplinary, university-wide, academic center launched in 2001 with a generous lead grant from the Helen Bader Foundation. Its goal is to strengthen nonprofits through a variety of activities, which include creating degree and non-degree educational opportunities in nonprofit management and leadership, conducting applied research on the nonprofit sector, expanding the capacity of nonprofits in metro Milwaukee and promoting diversity in nonprofit organizations, both locally and nationally.

Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management Highlights:

- Launched the Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management, an academic credit program offering graduate level courses on such topics as nonprofit management and governance, accounting, human resources, marketing and fundraising. Enrollment has exceeded expectations. To date, a total of 50 students have enrolled and declared their intention to complete the Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management program.

- Expanded enrollment in the Professional Certificate in Nonprofit Management, which is offered in collaboration with UWM’s School of Continuing Education. As of December 31, 2004, this program had generated a total of 607 workshop registrations. Seventy-two students have declared their intention to complete either the entire certificate or a mini-certificate program. As of February 2005, twenty-eight mini-certificates and three comprehensive certificates have been awarded to students.

- Provided financial and other support for several applied research projects including a study of nonprofit arts and culture organizations in Greater Milwaukee. The study was done in collaboration with the Cultural Alliance of Greater Milwaukee and other nonprofit arts/culture groups.

- Initiated a “small grants” research program to support research at UWM on a variety of topics related to the nonprofit sector. Each year, these small grants will be awarded to faculty members and to faculty/community research teams. In the first two years of this program, eight research grants were awarded.

- Launched a series of research colloquia to disseminate findings from the “small grants” research program.

- Sponsored a research project focused on the provision of technical and other management support services by “consultants of color” working in the Greater Milwaukee area.

- Expanded the work of ENTECH (Empowering Nonprofits in Technology), which helps nonprofit organizations effectively use information technology. ENTECH has conducted technology assessments for nearly 100 nonprofits, distributed 120 computers to local nonprofits free of charge, developed software programs and technology instruments specifically designed for nonprofits, and is publishing the “Knowledge Guide to Nonprofit Technology,” a guide to ENTECH’s innovative software products and services.
Freshwater

Freshwater in Action: Aquatic Robots to Enhance Water Security

Safeguarding the nation’s critical freshwater supply is the aim of the Center for Water Security at the WATER Institute. The center is establishing a Laboratory of Exploration, Robotics, Technology and Surveillance which will promote the use of remotely operated vehicles, or ROVs, and sensor systems for water security.

Driven by remote control, ROVs are camera-equipped to search the bottom of lakes and other bodies of water, sending pictures to a site above the water, says WATER Institute Director J. Val Klump. They are also used to collect data and conduct experiments.

ROVs and remotely operated sensing devices can be extremely helpful in water security issues, Klump says. “We would use them like an aquatic bloodhound, to sniff out places where plumes of contamination might be.” Ultimately, the research could lead to development of the technology to create a tetherless chemical sensor system for use in aquatic environments.

The project is supported by a $1 million appropriation from the Department of Defense which brings the total amount awarded to the Freshwater Initiative and the WATER Institute for water security research to nearly $3 million since 2002.

Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management, con’t.

• Provided financial support for the “Nonprofit Portal of Greater Milwaukee.” This website (www.nonprofitmilwaukee.org) provides easy access to information important to improving the governance, leadership, management and program delivery capacities of Milwaukee-area nonprofits.
• Sponsored the Third Annual Greater Milwaukee Nonprofit Management Excellence Awards, an event recognizing management and leadership of nonprofit organizations in the areas of strategic alliance, board governance, management innovation, diversity, emerging organization and overcoming adversity. The event drew well over three hundred participants with proceeds supporting the general scholarship fund for students enrolled in the educational programs of the Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management.
Milwaukee Industrial Innovation Center Highlights:

• Continued notable research in partnership with the University of Michigan on “tether-free” technologies through the Center for Intelligent Maintenance Systems (IMS), a National Science Foundation Industry/University Cooperative.

• Received National Science Foundation grants totaling more than $1 million for research on intelligent maintenance systems.

• Partnering with several universities around the world, including the University of Toronto and Technical University of Berlin to enhance the effectiveness of predictive techniques and strategies.

• Forged partnerships with diversified industries including automotive, software, automation, precision machinery, power generation, semiconductor, building systems and medical services. More than 40 leading industries are represented in the Center’s membership and sponsorship, among them Rockwell Automation, Intel, General Motors, Ford, Harley-Davidson and We Energies.

• Collaborating with the U.S. Postal Service and the Intel Corporation on application of intelligent maintenance technology.

• Launched planning for the UWM Energy Research Center which will develop new technology and approaches to meet future energy needs.

• Participating in the Wisconsin Cyber Security Collaboration, a partnership representing six University of Wisconsin campuses that aims to increase the number of professionals in the field.
Institute for Urban Health Partnerships

Institute for Urban Health Partnerships Highlights:

- Provided primary health care and health education to more than 5,000 high-risk Milwaukee residents at three UWM academic community nursing centers located at the Silver Spring Neighborhood Center, House of Peace Community Center and Riverwest/Pierce School.

- Developed a program to reduce unnecessary emergency room visits through a contractual arrangement with St. Michael’s Hospital Emergency Room. Clients with non-urgent needs are offered the opportunity to seek care at the Silver Spring Community Nursing Center site, rather than wait long hours in the emergency room. Funding for this initiative is provided by the hospital health care system. This model is being tested for replication throughout the Covenant system.

- The Midwest Nursing Center Consortium founded by the UWM College of Nursing and 13 other research universities was awarded federal funding by the Agency for Health care Research and Quality to develop a practice-based research network for primary care—only the second of its kind to be so recognized.

- Funding was awarded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to the Midwest Nursing Centers Consortium Research to investigate the effectiveness of community-based interventions in improving nutrition and physical activity levels in low-income, underserved minority populations. In addition, findings are intended to promote changes in primary health care delivery to underserved populations.

- Received funding from Blue Cross/Blue Shield for collaborative projects with both the Medical College of Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin Medical School to implement school nursing initiatives in Milwaukee Public Schools.

The Institute for Urban Health Partnerships is one of only a few programs nationally that link the expertise of the university with the expertise of public and private organizations and residents to develop more effective solutions to pressing health care issues. Among its goals are the promotion of fundamental changes in quality and access to health care for underserved, urban populations. To achieve these goals, the Institute implements and tests collaborative health care delivery models as well as innovative approaches to community based research and the education of health professionals. The Institute is nationally recognized for its community nursing centers, adolescent pregnancy prevention programs, school health programs, primary care clinical documentation systems, and innovative partnerships with community organizations and integrated health systems throughout southeastern Wisconsin.
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