The Milwaukee Idea is hitting its stride with several of the “First Idea” initiatives up and running. Initiative leaders are opening offices, designating advisory councils, putting staff in place, building new community connections and trading plans for action.

“This is a busy, exciting and challenging time for The Milwaukee Idea,” said Stephen Percy, Deputy Chancellor for The Milwaukee Idea. “We’ve set ambitious goals for each of the initiatives and are expecting accountability and measurable outcomes. Although there is much hard work ahead, we’re confident that we can help create meaningful change in the university and the community.”

Here’s an update on the First Idea initiatives that have been launched:

**Campus Design Solutions** is focusing on improving the physical environment of campuses in the UW system and the neighborhoods of which they are a part. Several exciting collaborative efforts are now underway, among them the Milwaukee Idea House, a prototype for low-cost, energy efficient urban housing which is being developed in partnership with the city of Milwaukee. Other projects include Spaces and Traces, an assessment of how public spaces on the UWM campus can be improved and a report on school design for the Milwaukee Public Schools Neighborhood Initiative. The latter shows how new and existing schools can be designed to accommodate changing student demographics. Contact: Susan Westrop, 229-6165; Bob Greenstreet 229-4014.

**Consortium for Economic Opportunity (CEO)** — The Consortium has mounted its first course, called “Introduction to Multi-cultural America Through Literature.” The initiative also hosted a well-attended conference on teaching and learning that brought educators and members of the community together to explore how cultural diversity can be integrated into coursework and research. In addition, CC has awarded faculty fellowships for course development as well as several mini-grant projects. Community partners include the Milwaukee Art Museum, Woodland Patterns Book Center, Walnut Way Conservation District and the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Contact: Greg Jay or Sandra Jones: 229-5960.

**Ready, Set, Go! The Milwaukee Idea in Action**

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- Printing and distributing over 15,000 copies of a bilingual alcohol and drug prevention self-help guide to assist women and children who receive Temporary Assistance to Needy Families.
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**Partnerships in Education** is an exciting community-wide effort to revitalize our urban schools which is supported by over $26 million in federal grants. UWM, the Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee Area Technical College and other educational institutions throughout southeastern Wisconsin are joining forces to:

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For more information, contact Margaret Kennedy, 229-5415; e-mail, mnk@uwm.edu.

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Human Experience Theatre dramatizes real world issues

By Sandra Jones, Assistant Director, Cultures and Communities

Can theater be a way of raising people’s awareness about diversity, tolerance, and social injustice? Patrick Sims thinks so, and that is why he is so enthusiastic about UWM’s Human Experience Theatre.

Sims is a new faculty associate in UWM’s Department of Theatre and Dance and Director of the Human Experience Theatre, an innovative diversity training program. Through acted segments, HET demonstrates real world scenarios that illustrate the challenges of living and working in multicultural environments. The experience is intended to be an interactive one that gives audience members a chance to discuss their reactions with the actors and among themselves.

“We want to use live theater as a training tool to address issues of diversity, violence in social systems, hostile environments and other social concerns,” Sims says. “All these are related to the human experience. That’s where the name comes from.”

Sims believes the power of HET lies in its ability to connect real situations to live theater. HET is the kind of theater that makes people see themselves in the dramatic presentations. More importantly, the drama doesn’t end when the show is over, since discussions between actors and audience follow the performances. “The real drama that a person experiences from an HET training is in the dialogue that happens after the dramatic presentation,” Sims says. “People feel they can let their hair down and really talk about social issues.”

Ready, from page 1

Healthy Choices – The goal of this initiative is to reduce, in targeted populations, the negative personal and public health consequences of alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse. The initiative offers community education, research and evaluation of treatment services. Healthy Choices projects include:

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UWM’s Information and Media Technologies Division (I&MT) has joined forces with the Milwaukee Idea to provide a unique learning and employment opportunity for a select group of students as well as cost effective and much needed technology services for the nonprofit sector.

Students with advanced computer skills from I&MT’s student technology support team are sharing their expertise with the Nonprofit Management Fund located in Milwaukee’s Historic Third Ward. The Fund is a collaboration among several foundations and other funders whose goal is to improve the management capability and effectiveness of nonprofit organizations. Whether a nonprofit is in the business of advancing the arts or meeting human needs, success is increasingly linked to the best use of technology.

The project provides greater support and continuity for the participating organization and students than a more typical internship would offer. The partners developed a service agreement for 60 hours per week for three or four students at a time, all of whom are recruited, screened, and trained by I&MT. UWM also provides hiring and payroll services which saves the Fund additional costs. As an added benefit, students and staff of UWM’s on-campus computer Help Desk provide technical support to their counterparts at the Fund, which gives all involved a chance to share their knowledge.

Students have been surprised to learn of the different levels of sophistication in the nonprofit sector and are now aware of the variety of jobs in the field. They’ve enjoyed the challenges and responsibilities of technical projects, including database design, web design and network installation. They’ve also learned management and other professional skills, an opportunity only available in a real world environment. And they’ve had a chance to get a first-hand look at the work of nonprofits in such areas as program evaluation, project management, grant application review and budgeting.

“I came into this project knowing a lot about technology,” says Michael Fatica, student team leader. “But this level of responsibility and the leadership skills I am practicing have moved my professional development to a whole new level.”

The technology assessment is an example of how student skills are applied to community challenges. Students meet with nonprofit staff to discuss technology issues such as networking, data needs, and use of the Internet. Based on this discussion and a written assessment, the students make recommendations to enhance technology usage which in turn helps the nonprofit establish priorities and a technology budget. Unlike reviews done by hardware and software vendors, the final report recommends approaches, but does not endorse specific products or services, which often saves organizations much needed resources.

The Nonprofit Management Fund’s Technology Initiative, in partnership with the Milwaukee Idea, has spawned a forum for exchange between the University and the community. Says Scott Gelzer, Advisor to the Fund: “We welcome the opportunity to demonstrate the potential of the Milwaukee Idea through linking the University, the nonprofit community and student talents.” Students participating in the project are Tracy Lynn Apps, Kevin Flasch, Mike Fatica, Robert Farley and Chris Stapel. For more information, contact Margaret Kennedy, 229-5415; e-mail, mnk@uwm.edu.

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According to Sims, HET uses an innovative approach to gathering material for its performances, which may focus on discrimination, sexual harassment, diversity, sexual orientation, alcohol and drug abuse or other issues specific to a particular client. “We write our own material based on the personal experiences of clients or students or participants in HET,” he says. “Everything we do is rooted in some truth and we present that in dramatic form.”

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There are number of things Sims wants to accomplish at UWM. Among them: to play a part in the change that is taking place in UWM’s Department of Theater and Dance and to establish Human Experience Theatre as one of Milwaukee’s – and the nation’s – most unique artistic endeavors.

The theatre is already on its way to achieving that stature. In the two years since its founding by the university’s Office of Diversity/Compliance and the Professional Theatre Training Program, Human Experience Theatre has earned accolades from clients like the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Metropolitan Milwaukee Sewage District and Milwaukee Area Technical College.

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Milwaukee Industrial Innovation Consortia – This initiative draws on the substantial research capability of UWM to foster technology innovation and enhance economic development in the state. The initiative provides technical training and intellectual property support services and is expected to play an important role in commercializing innovations in bioengineering, software development and information technology. One of its inaugural efforts brought industry leaders from over 30 companies together with UWM faculty and staff for a dialogue on the Center for Intelligent Maintenance Systems. The technology to greatly reduce breakdowns in production systems and manufacturing.

Contact: William Gregory, 229-4126; Heather Zopf, Graphic Design

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Global Passport Project, a part of UWM’s Center for International Education, is preparing students to take their place in the global workforce. The Project is expanding opportunities for study abroad, increasing the number of international students and faculty on campus and offering a variety of programs on international issues for the community. Important

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