Conference to examine challenges facing the metropolis

UWM’s Center for Urban Initiatives and Research invites you to take a very timely look at the issues and challenges facing metropolitan Milwaukee at its 5th Annual Urban Initiatives Conference, Governing Ourselves: Metropolitan Milwaukee at the Crossroads scheduled for May 29 at the Italian Community Center, 631 E. Chicago Street.

Panelists from the public, private, non-profit, and philanthropic sectors will lead some lively dialogue and debate on such topics as leadership in the metropolis, strategies for affordable housing, regional collaboration, embracing diversity, the role of counties in creating collaborative solutions and the importance of a vital inner city to the region. The day will open with a presentation of the results of a new survey conducted by the Center for Urban Initiatives and Research. The survey explores citizen preferences and viewpoints on a range of issues, from taxes to shared services to regional government.

Among the invited participants are Dave Schultz, Director of the Infrastructure Technology Institute at Northwestern University; Gregory Stanford, Journal Sentinel Editorial Writer; Tyrone Dumas, Director of Technical and Educational Initiatives for the Milwaukee Public Schools; Robert Milbourne, Executive Director, Greater Milwaukee Committee; Peggy Rosenzweig, Wisconsin State Senator; Kate Huston, Milwaukee

Innovative learning partnership builds museums and more in Riverside High School classrooms

Freshmen at Riverside University High School are sharpening their computer skills while they find new ways of seeing and understanding the world around them through a partnership that brings UWM students and faculty into the school’s classrooms.

The project is funded in part by the Milwaukee Idea’s Cultures and Communities initiative with major support from a University of Wisconsin System grant. It aims to help public school teachers integrate computer technology into everyday academics and increase the access that students in city schools like Riverside have to computers.

Using wireless laptops, the Riverside students are constructing museums online, evaluating the graphic effectiveness of various web sites and combing the Internet to research topics on everything from the culture and cuisine of other countries to
the artists of the Harlem renaissance. In essence, they’re learning not only to think analytically but to see analytically as well; to sift through and apply critical thinking skills to the images that engulf us every day — on TV and in the movies, on our clothes and our computer screens. They’re boosting what educators like to call their “visual literacy” and with the coaching of UWM students, their computer literacy as well.

“The whole idea is to exercise one’s eyes intelligently,” says Bill Washabaugh, a UWM anthropology professor who teaches a course in virtual museum studies and helped develop the project. Washabaugh and his wife Cathy, who is co-director of the partnership and an English teacher at Riverside, say studying and developing web-based virtual museums offers some important pluses. Virtual museums provide a focus universal enough to encompass all of the disciplines taught to high school students and at the same time accommodate a project-based approach to learning. They also facilitate learning in a way that bricks and mortar museums cannot. Washabaugh believes virtual museums give students more room to raise questions, particularly with software that allows them to interact and debate the merits of online exhibits.

“We became interested when we found museums on the web in every single subject,” says Cathy Washabaugh. “We knew this offered our kids the possibility of learning higher order critical thinking skills as well as being intriguing to them. And it’s wonderful for our students to work with UWM students. We have a wonderful cross-fertilization of ideas.”

At the same time UWM students enrich their learning, according to Mary Roffers, a doctoral candidate in anthro-

![UWM graduate student Mary Roffers works with a Riverside student.](image)

pology who has been working with the Riverside students on computer proficiency. She believes that the partnership yields an array of important benefits for the high schoolers, among them early and positive exposure to the university and the stimulus for picturing themselves as college students down the road.

In addition, she says, “They’re starting to think more critically on their own. I believe that translates into anything they can do, not just using the computer. I don’t think they’ve been asked to do much critical thinking before or had a chance to learn the skills to do so.”

If that’s the case, this innovative learning partnership is achieving one of its major goals. Another — making sure that students develop strong computer skills — is also well on its way to being met. The Riverside students are showcasing their virtual museums with PowerPoint presentations they’ve created for the Milwaukee Public Museum’s “Spice of Life” program later this spring.

The project is also strengthening a partnership the two institutions forged in 1984 when they agreed to develop a relationship that would enrich learning at Riverside by making UWM’s resources available to the high school’s faculty and students. “We feel we’re doing something important to fulfill the promise we made almost 20 years ago,” Washabaugh says. “And that’s very exciting.”

Riverside Principal Rosanna Benishek couldn’t agree more. “The more we work with UWM and their students, the better it is for our students. It’s real exciting to have them here.”

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City Librarian; Howard Fuller, Director, Institute for the Transformation of Learning, Daniel Finley, Waukesha County Executive, Ramon Wagner, Milwaukee Alliance for Children and Families; Nancy Zimpher, Chancellor, UWM; John Stollenwerk, President, Allen Edmonds Shoes and Jeanette Mitchell, Helen Bader Foundation.

The conference runs from 7:30-4:30 p.m. Cost, including lunch is $50. For more information please call the Center for Urban Initiatives and Research, 414/229-5916 or visit www.uwm.edu/Dept/CUIR and click on events.
In the spirit of The Milwaukee Idea: UWM students travel the world for Habitat for Humanity

UWM students work on houses across the country during the “Collegiate Challenge”, an Annual Habitat for Humanity alternative spring break trip. UWM students traveled to Colorado, Florida and Mississippi to build for Habitat and will travel to South Africa this summer to work on 100 homes through the Jimmy Carter Work Project.
Healthy choices to research student drinking and driving
Adapted from the Center for Addiction and Behavioral Health Research Newsletter, Winter 2002

The Social Norms Marketing Research Project, part of the Milwaukee Idea’s Healthy Choices Initiative, will study how to reduce drinking and driving accidents among 21-to-26-year-old UWM students. The research is supported by a $6,000 grant from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

“This is especially pressing at an urban campus such as UWM where the vast majority of students—88 percent—live away from campus,” says Carol Ott, assistant professor in the UWM School of Nursing. Ott is a co-principal investigator along with Carol Haertlein, associate professor of occupational therapy in the UWM College of Health Sciences.

“The high percentage of non-residents suggests that UWM students may use their cars more than students do at a residential campus and thus are especially vulnerable to the risks associated with drinking and driving,” Ott says.

The new study is part of the Social Norms Marketing Research Project, which aims to correct students’ misperceptions about drinking on campus so they will be motivated to drink less. Baseline data on student drinking behaviors was collected before the launch of last fall’s “Just the Facts” marketing campaign, a three-year educational effort funded by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and the U. S. Department of Education. “Just the Facts” inundated the campus—from student union kiosks to bathroom stalls—with posters and flyers bearing the simple message, “sixty-seven percent of UWM students have 0–4 drinks per day.”

Haertlein notes that the Healthy Choices initiatives has made it possible to study the health of UWM students through the collection of data, coordination of prevention efforts and the offering of a personal health course. Says Ott, “We know we are getting through when students start asking, ‘What does the statistic 0–4 mean? Is that a lot or a little?’ That gives us the opportunity to reinforce the message that most people do not think it is a lot and that you don’t have to drink to fit in.”

This spring, studies will be conducted to determine what impact the campaign has had on student perceptions and actual drinking behaviors. Based on the results, a new communication effort will follow.

Get connected to UWM!

The Milwaukee Idea office and the UWM Alumni Association are showcasing some of the best of UWM and we want you to be a part of it. Join us at our upcoming “Connections” program on Saturday, June 1 at the Great Lakes WATER Institute. You’ll peer beneath the waves to learn about Milwaukee’s watery resources and gain insights about their ecological health. Don’t miss this chance to tour the Institute’s research facility and boat, the Neeskay. For more information, or to register, please call the Alumni Office, 414-906-4667. Register early! Space is limited.
Living The Milwaukee Idea . . .

The Milwaukee Idea continues to find voice in many new community-university projects and partnerships. Here’s a sampling:

Partnerships for Healthy Milwaukee is an innovative and ambitious venture to better the health of the community. It brings together UWM, the United Way of Greater Milwaukee, City of Milwaukee Health Department, Milwaukee County’s Division of Health Related Programs, Wisconsin Health and Hospital Association and the Medical College of Wisconsin. Partnerships for Healthy Milwaukee envisions a community where health care is accessible, comprehensive and prevention oriented, and where community education and awareness contribute to healthful behavior. To achieve this vision, Healthy Milwaukee is building alliances among different groups to strengthen the community’s capacity to address health concerns, providing communities and consumers in the Milwaukee area with information and resources to promote healthy choices and advocating on behalf of Milwaukee residents to for healthy public policies. For more about Partnerships for Healthy Milwaukee, contact Lora Taylor, 414-229-2961.

UWM’s Center for Volunteerism and Student Leadership links students, faculty, staff and alumni with volunteer opportunities. Since opening in spring of 2001, the Center has connected over 400 students with short and long term volunteer experiences. Recently, student volunteers mounted a campus book drive that collected over 1,300 books for a “giving library” at Next Door Foundation. The students delivered the books to the agency, sorted them and conducted a reading session for kids. For information on the Center for Volunteerism, call 414-229-3162; lmarks@uwm.edu.

Students from UWM’s Habitat for Humanity chapter are raising money to build a Habitat house in Milwaukee’s midtown area. “This is an amazing initiative, says Laurie Marks, director of UWM’s Center for Volunteerism and an advisor to the group. “The students are raising the money themselves and will lead our campus in the building of the home.” The students have already raised over $12,000 toward their $45,000 goal and are being aided in their efforts by the local chapter of the National Society for Fundraising Executives. Also working with the group is the Milwaukee Idea office and the School of Architecture and Urban Planning. To learn more about Habitat, visit www.uwm.edu/StudentOrg/habitat or call 414-229-4366; email Habitat@uwm.edu.
New Milwaukee Idea fellows program to help boost local development

The recently announced Milwaukee Idea Economic Development Fellows Program will offer an innovative way of helping local community based organizations achieve economic development goals while training future community leaders.

A project of The Milwaukee Idea’s Consortium for Economic Opportunity, the Fellows program is offering returning Peace Corps and other public service volunteers a chance to combine graduate study at UWM with work on economic development projects in the community. Fellows will be assigned to a community organization where they will work side by side with agency leaders and staff.

The program, which is supported by a $270,000 grant from the Helen Bader Foundation, will provide much needed technical assistance to metro Milwaukee organizations.

“These individuals have demonstrated their commitment to service and their ability to work in challenging environments,” says Lisa Heuler Williams, Program Coordinator. “We believe they will be an excellent addition to the student body and will move The Milwaukee Idea’s goal of community engagement forward.”

The Consortium for Economic Opportunity is dedicated to building partnerships with nonprofit organizations and small businesses to extend the benefits of economic growth to all of metropolitan Milwaukee, particularly to the city’s low and moderate income neighborhoods. The Consortium focuses on increasing family supporting jobs and employment-generating businesses through a number of efforts, including services and resources provided by its Small Business Development Center and with applied policy research. In addition, the Consortium aims to enrich the educational experience of UWM students and faculty by integrating real-world urban issues into the curriculum.

For more information about The Milwaukee Idea Economic Development Fellow Program, please contact Lisa Heuler Williams, 414/229-6155; heuler@uwm.edu.