

**Offices of the Dean of Students
Madison Initiative for Undergraduates Proposal Form**

MIU Goals:

- 1) Preserve affordability of a UW-Madison education, primarily through expansion of need-based aid.
- 2) Generate faculty and instructional support, including hiring, to offer the courses, majors and experience students need
- 3) Expand best practices and innovation in teaching and learning, curricular design, and student services in order to enhance student outcomes.

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Proposal Title:	A Wisconsin Experience Seminar
Amount Requested:	Annual Totals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal Year 2009-2010 (Spring 2010): \$52,200 • Fiscal Year 2010-2011: \$130,600 • Fiscal Year 2011-2012: \$136,200 • Fiscal Year 2012-2013 (and onward): \$151,000
Abstract:	<p>The Center for the First-Year Experience seeks support to grow our for-credit course, “A Wisconsin Experience Seminar.” This is the only course on campus that explicitly addresses the topics of the Wisconsin Experience, Essential Learning Outcomes, and the qualities of a Liberal Education, and therefore affords an opportunity in a curricular setting to set a foundation for gaining the skills students need to acquire throughout their undergraduate education.</p> <p>The enhancement of this class will enable increased numbers of students to examine the Wisconsin Experience, liberal education, and the mission of a research university; the by-product of this depth of exploration will be increased probability that students maximize their learning in all courses of study.</p>

** Final proposal should not exceed ten (10) pages.*

1. Within MIU goals 2 and 3, stated above, identify the problem that your proposal will address in terms of undergraduate education, instructional quality and innovation, and access, and how the proposed hires/innovation/activities/effort will significantly impact this problem.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) launched a national initiative in 2005 geared towards aligning the goals of learning in college with the needs of the global century. This initiative, Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) "seeks to engage the public with core questions about what really matters in college, to give students a compass to guide their learning, and to make the aims and outcomes of liberal education – broad knowledge, intellectual and practical skills, personal and social responsibility, and integrative learning – the expected framework for excellence at all levels of education" (Kuh 2008, preface).

In an article titled *From "My Course" to "Our Program": Collective Responsibility for First-Year Student Success* (2006, Peer Review), a University of Michigan student is quoted as saying:

"So you get here and they start asking you, 'What do you want to major in? What courses do [you] want to take?' and you get the impression that's what it's all about – courses and majors. So, you take the courses. You get your card punched. You try a little this and a little that. Then comes GRADUATION. And you wake up and you look at this bunch of courses and then it hits you: They don't add up to anything. It's just a bunch of courses. It doesn't mean a thing."

We realize and recognize that new students are often unaware of the larger expectations of higher education. We wish them to be engaged in a program of education that links together coursework, experiences of engagement and involvement, and interpersonal interactions which provide learning opportunities to reflect on, make meaning of, and transfer to the life they will lead after this experience in college. The principles of LEAP encourage students to create a culture of integration, active involvement, and reflection that enhances learning and development.

Active involvement can be defined as "the amount of physical and psychological energy that a student devotes to the academic experience" (Astin, 1984). It would thus hold true that the more educators create conditions conducive to active participation in the academic experience during the first year, the more solid the foundation for future success in college. As noted by Kuh, "How frequently, and with what result, do students engage in educational practices – curricular, cocurricular, and pedagogical – that provide them with realistic opportunities to actually develop the kinds of learning they need? How does such participation relate to expected learning outcomes?" (Kuh 2008, p 2)

AAC&U has identified High-Impact Educational Practices that have been shown to benefit students from a variety of backgrounds in their development of active engagement. Among these teaching and learning practices are First-Year Seminars and Experiences, which "bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies" (Kuh 2008, p.9). The Center for the First-Year Experience actively enhances this high-impact practice on our campus through our for-credit course, "**A Wisconsin Experience Seminar.**" This is the only course on campus that explicitly addresses the topics of the Wisconsin Experience, Essential Learning Outcomes, and the qualities of a Liberal Education, and therefore affords an opportunity in a curricular setting to set a foundation for gaining the skills students need to acquire throughout their undergraduate education.

This course is team taught by an Instructor and undergraduate Peer Leader, which has been shown as an effective pedagogy. The instruction team ensures that students not only connect well with a faculty or staff member in their first semester of college, but that they also connect with an upper-level student who has successfully transitioned to UW-Madison. These learning experiences with adult and peer mentors has shown to lead students to develop their own supportive peer groups during the first-year, which can assist students in successfully engaging in the academic experience (Tinto, V. *Reconstructing the First Year of College* (1996, *Planning for Higher Education*, 25, no. 1).

Through funding we seek to expand the number of sections offered of "A Wisconsin Experience Seminar," which in turn will increase the number of individuals participating in this high-impact educational experience.

2. Describe how progress is to be measured, demonstrated, and reported; that is, provide metrics and timelines to evaluate project success.

“A Wisconsin Experience Seminar” is evaluated currently through a variety of methods. Students complete a pre-assessment during the first day of class which asks questions regarding student involvement in high school and desires for continued participation in college, a definition of a “successful” first semester at UW-Madison, the reasons why students chose to enroll here, what they expect to learn from the course, a description of the mission of UW-Madison, to explain what is meant by a “liberal education,” and to describe the rationale for their past academic success. This information is gathered for each student and compiled across all sections. Students then complete a post-test examining their responses at the conclusion of the course, which allows CFYE to examine not only student satisfaction with the course, but also the refinement of understanding of what it means to be a student at UW-Madison.

Weekly journals provide students an opportunity to evaluate their own learning and development throughout the course.

Students complete a “Significant Learning Project” as a concluding project for the course; students present (in whatever method desired) what they have learned from the course. Presentations have included the production of board games, multimedia presentations, artwork, and songs. Students have embraced this mode of reporting their learning in the course. The final presentation is accompanied by a paper detailing why the project showcases their learning and reflects on its future application. This type of experience is identified as a high-impact educational practice by AAC&U (Kuh 2008, p 11).

Instructors and Peer Leaders are observed by the course coordinator. Peer Leaders and Instructors provide written and oral feedback at the conclusion of their instruction time to evaluate each other as well as the course.

Three of our sections are offered exclusively to residents of Ogg, Witte, and Sellery Halls. In a study conducted in fall 2008 by University Residence Halls, students in Residence Hall Class Sections (n=444) reported significantly greater experiences/outcomes than students enrolled in the same traditional classes on campus (n=380) on factors such as:

- Stronger sense of community in class – “knew the names of my classmates; developed friendships with classmates.”
- More engagement outside of class – “interacted with classmates outside of class; discussed something learned in class with other classmates outside of class; studied with classmates outside of class.”
- More depth and diversity with peer interactions – “had discussions with classmates whose personal values differ from yours; talked about personal lifestyles/customs with classmates”

While residence hall sections of “A Wisconsin Experience Seminar” were not included in this survey, Residence Life feels strongly that these outcomes are applicable to other nested courses.

Finally, we have and will continue to track GPA and progress towards graduation for students who enroll in all sections of this course and compare results with a matched sample.

3. For proposals that request new hires:

- Describe how they will significantly impact student access and the ability of departments to allow their faculty to teach undergraduates.
- Describe the proactive steps that will be used to identify and recruit a diverse pool of candidates.

In this proposal, CFYE is seeking support for 1 FTE academic staff member who would co-coordinate “A Wisconsin Experience Seminar;” including development of the companion Peer Leader course and training curriculum for undergraduate students. This individual would work with the Coordinator of Academic Initiatives to enhance existing training and development, while seeking additional undergraduate applicants across a broad spectrum of the undergraduate population. Expansion of the number of sections requires an additional person to work on items such as:

- Work related to the timetable and course schedule
- Enrollment management (ensuring students are registering for the course during SOAR, which includes providing updates to advisors)
- Selection and training of peer leaders
- Data analysis of course evaluation methods
- Trouble-shooting throughout the year
- Maintaining current content for the Wisconsin Experience Seminar website
- Co-instruction of the Peer Leader companion course

The enhancement of “A Wisconsin Experience Seminar” sections will enable increased numbers of students to examine the Wisconsin Experience, liberal education, and the mission of a research university; the by-product of this depth of exploration will be increased probability that students maximize their learning in all courses of study.

In order to recruit a diverse pool of applicants for this position, this position would be posted in a variety of online locations, including the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) Job Board, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) job site, the First-Year Experience listservs run through the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, Diverse Issues in Higher Education’s online job search, in addition to processes available within UW-Madison.

4. Identify cross-college partnerships and/or campus collaborators needed to ensure success (between schools and colleges, with other major units, such as libraries, Dean of Students offices, IT, Housing, Enrollment Management, Union, etc.)

A Wisconsin Experience Seminar is housed under the School of Education in the Counseling Psychology department. We currently support 2 graduate student and 14 academic and classified staff members as Instructors; additionally, undergraduate students serve as Peer Leaders who co-facilitate the course alongside the aforementioned Instructor.

Instructors are currently from a variety of offices on campus, including:

- ODOS units, including Central Administration, the LGBTCC, and ASM
- UW Libraries
- Enrollment Management
- College of Engineering
- College of Letters and Science
- The Connections Program
- Counseling Psychology
- Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

In our proposal, we seek to increase the number of sections offered of this high-impact experience for undergraduates through continued partnerships with University Housing, the Offices of the Dean of Students, the University Libraries, and the Counseling Psychology department. We look to forge new partnerships with academic and administrative departments across campus and increase the number of individuals applying to serve as Instructors and Peer Leaders.

5. Include a detailed budget and budget narrative, identifying infrastructure need/cost, such as physical space and facilities, technology, other academic support services, etc.

The Center for the First-Year Experience, in order to increase the number of sections offered of "A Wisconsin Experience Seminar," seeks the following funding:

- 1 FTE, academic staff member to assist in the coordination and implementation of the course. This individual would be hired at **\$35,000/year + \$14,000 benefits (40%)**
- Additional office space to accommodate 1 FTE, academic staff member
 - Ideas for spaces include the following:
 - Borrow space from Business Services (space within 21 NPRK Street)
 - Request space from Research and Sponsored Programs (space within 21 NPRK Street)
 - Rent space from the facility next to 21 NPRK Street (Private building)
- \$800/Instructor of S&E funding to incentivize instruction
 - \$800 X 4 Instructors (Spring 2010) = **\$3,200**
 - \$800 X 27 Instructors (Fiscal Year 2010-2011) = **\$21,600**
 - \$800 X 34 Instructors (Fiscal Year 2011-2012) = **\$27,200**
 - \$800 X 40 Instructors (Fiscal Year 2012-2013) = **\$32,000**
- \$5000/Graduate student in Counseling Psychology to provide Instructional opportunities
 - \$5000 X 2 Graduate Students (Fiscal Year 2010-2011) = **\$10,000**
 - \$5000 X 2 Graduate Students (Fiscal Year 2011-2012) = **\$10,000**
 - \$5000 X 4 Graduate Students (Fiscal Year 2012-2013) = **\$20,000**
- Administrative costs related to the course: **\$5000/year**

Annual Totals

- Fiscal Year 2009-2010 (Spring 2010): **\$52,200**
- Fiscal Year 2010-2011: **\$130,600**
- Fiscal Year 2011-2012: **\$136,200**
- Fiscal Year 2012-2013 (and onward): **\$151,000**

6. What are the anticipated learning outcomes as a result of this proposed initiative?

A Wisconsin Experience Seminar (Counseling Psychology 125) is designed for students who are in their first year at UW-Madison (which includes transfer students) to explore the transition to college and the research university.

This course represents an educational best practice designed to engage students in the academic experience early in their college career through intensive discussion with classmates and individual dialogue with instructors. Students explore the structure of a research university and examine the purpose of the Wisconsin Experience and Liberal Education. Individuals participating in this course develop competencies foundational to their academic and social success. The course provides an opportunity to examine the individual's attitudes and values regarding learning while encouraging critical thinking, reflection, and active engagement in the undergraduate experience.

Students are expected to hone their written and verbal communication skills through discussion, weekly writing assignments, in class activities, experiential assignments and a final paper and presentation. In each assignment and discussion they are asked to formulate and express a point of view, and question current knowledge and the view points of others. The intense writing and discussion focus of the courses allows for continuous experimentation, refinement and development of these critical liberal arts emphases.

Secondly, the topic of cultural identity and our multicultural society is a major focus of the course. Participating in a critical analysis of the book *A Hope in the Unseen*, allows students to view the high school to college transition process through the eyes of a severely disadvantaged young African American student. For most students, this perspective on the transition is very different from their own experience. By analyzing the experience of the text's protagonist and comparing it with their own, deep issues of privilege, social justice, and a more complete understanding of cultural and personal values emerges.

Finally, the course is an excellent introduction to the "habits of the mind" of a liberal arts education. Introducing students to these goals during their freshman year can set them on a path for greater engagement and participation in a liberal arts curriculum throughout their years at UW-Madison.

As noted by AAC&U, "participation in these [types of] activities provides opportunities for students to see how what they are learning works in different settings, on and off campus. These opportunities to integrate, synthesize, and apply knowledge are essential to deep, meaningful learning experiences" (Kuh 2008, p 17).

UW Essential Learning Outcome	Demonstration
Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World	Discussion of the text <i>A Hope in the Unseen</i> , woven throughout the class but noticeably the following: Class #2 (Cedric and his character); Class #4 (Cedric as a critical thinker); Class #5 (Reflection of Cedric's choices); Class #6 (Totality of <i>A Hope in the Unseen</i>); Class #7 (Identity tied to Cedric's experiences)
	Exploration of the transition to college, including examination of the questions "What does transition to college mean? What is College? Who am I? "What does the community of UW-Madison mean to me?"
UW Essential Learning Outcome	Demonstration
Intellectual and Practical Skills	Weekly Assignments, including: weekly journal submissions; 3 paper submissions (encouraging students to critically reflect on the transition to college); library visit (focused on understanding the purpose of libraries on a research university and gaining information literacy); student organization paper (students explore involvement on-campus in areas identified as outside their comfort zone. Done in partnership with another classmate which allows for teamwork and problem-solving); faculty interview paper (assists students in understanding the significance of knowing your faculty members. Also encourages boundary breaking for many new students).
	Oral Class Presentations; includes Faculty Interview and Significant Learning Project (final presentation for class - a project of their choice to showcase what they have learned from the class experience. Encouragement is given to creativity and personal exploration)
	Learning Tools for academic success, including reading and note-taking; includes partnership with GUTS, (CCAS Exploration Center and L&S Career Services partnerships with the Transfer student section)
UW Essential Learning Outcome	Demonstration
Personal and Social Responsibility	Course readings, including textbook and novel, provide opportunity to expand on foundational knowledge
	Exploration of identity woven throughout the course
UW Essential Learning Outcome	Demonstration
Integrative Learning	Students examination of the Research University, the Wisconsin Experience, and the qualities of a Liberal Education are done throughout the course, and students learn how to apply this foundational knowledge to the rest of their undergraduate experience
	Tracking of growth and personal transition from high school (or previous institution) to UW-Madison

Dean's Comments:

Signature _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____ Title: _____

Dean's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Additional Signatures:

References:

Astin, A. W. (1984). Student involvement: A developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 25, 297-808

Evenbeck, S. and Hamilton, S. (2006). From "my course" to "our program": Collective responsibility for first-year student success. *Peer Review*, 8, no. 3

Kuh, G. (2008). High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter. AAC&U: Washington

Tinto, V. (1996). Reconstructing the First Year of College. *Planning for Higher Education*, 25, no. 1