

**Profile of the
Master of Science in Education-Adult Education
University of Wisconsin-Platteville
2009 Regents Diversity Award Recipient—Institution Category**

Department Facts, Activities, and Resources

Overview

- The off-campus Master of Science Adult Education program builds on the School of Education theme, “Good Teachers Make the Difference.”
- The School of Education, Office of Continuing Education, and other academic departments across campus collaborate to serve distance students via distance face-to-face classes.
- The program began in 1995, when the Office of Continuing Education, working in partnership with the Institute of Adult Learning, a Madison non-profit organization, piloted a program designed to meet the needs of a diverse population of bachelor-level human service workers who required additional post-bachelor’s education.
- In 1998, the School of Education and Office of Continuing Education partnered with Southwest Technical College, MATC-Madison and others, to offer graduate courses faculty to earn a master’s degree that combined core education classes with their own certification classes.
- These two strands were combined into one graduate degree program.
- The 32-credit degree program has two concentrations: Human Services and Vocational/Technical Education.
- Classes are offered on weekends (Friday evening and all day Saturday, for four weekends) and use interactive television.
- Recruitment is done via word of mouth, education fairs, and informational sessions, and reaches a small, niche market of students.
- Current interactive television sites are in Madison, Beloit, Racine, Milwaukee, and Platteville.

Staff

- The program coordinator is a full professor whose primary assignment is to advise the students, coordinate the program, and teach courses in it. Patricia Bromley received UW-Platteville’s Faculty Award for Teaching Excellence in 2003 and the University Continuing Education Association’s Distance Learning College Course Award, a national design award, in 2004.
- Recruitment and Retention Specialists assist in Racine and Milwaukee.
- Most faculty are on-campus professors, who travel to the sites to teach over interactive television.

Students

- The program currently serves 125 students.
- In 2007-08, 40% of registrants were African-American and 9% were Hispanic or Latino/a students. The Milwaukee and Racine groups have an even higher representation of minority students.
- Students bring into the program co-workers, members of their churches, and family members.

Fostering Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Sustainable Impact on Institutional Change in the Area of Diversity

- Because the program is minority-friendly, the entire campus is developing that reputation. A number of students from Milwaukee and Racine have in recent semesters grouped up to drive over to campus to take classes in Counselor Education and Education that are not offered in their cities. Their presence enriches these on-campus classes.
- Milwaukee Recruitment and Retention Specialist Troy Cobb, a member of the first graduating class, has been instrumental in assisting Professor Joe Lomax in bringing speakers to campus and hosting a conference on the plight of the African-American male. Thus, the program has enabled UW-Platteville to bring together a group from across the state, to study and address issues facing African-American males.
- Although pay is low, travel is required, and interactive television adds an extra layer of complexity, instructors are enthusiastic about teaching in the program. The reason for this is that these classes provide a rare opportunity to experience racial diversity. In the Milwaukee and Racine classes, the largest racial group in classes is African-American. In some of the Milwaukee classes, Hispanic/Latino/a students have outnumbered all other groups. This leads to extremely interesting and lively discussions. Faculty from campus find themselves learning as much as the students from these interactions.

Accountability

- The program uses course evaluations, surveys of alumni and current students, and focus groups as needs arise. The most recent survey identified strengths of the program (weekend format, location of classes, level of service provided by coordinator/advisor and Racine recruiter).
- The extent to which the curriculum maps onto the learning objectives for the program was assessed by the faculty, and adjustments were made.
- Student attainment of the learning objectives is assessed by a portfolio assignment, where two artifacts and reflections of each of the learning objectives are required. The program's assessment plan and progress following prior assessments are evaluated annually by the Graduate Council.

Intersections Across Multiple Dimensions of Diversity

- Survey and focus group comments consistently praise the program's diversity in race, in socioeconomic status, in age, in geographic region, in profession, in faculty, and in ideas presented.

In the Words of the Department's Students (from focus groups)

- "In undergrad, I was the only minority. Nobody knew where I was coming from. Here, they do. And this program makes us feel valued and important." – *Racine student (male)*
- "A lot of us have a fear to learn. We didn't grow up in households where we were told we could learn. Here you know you can compete, can learn." – *Milwaukee student (male)*
- "I experienced being the only Caucasian in the room. It was a big learning experience for me. Instructors are diverse, they come from different parts of the county and different educational backgrounds. They have different philosophies and ways of teaching." – *Madison student who commuted to a Milwaukee class (female)*
- "This program makes us feel comfortable and appreciated. Our education is important to UWP." – *Milwaukee student (female)*