

UW-Madison: Badger Promise program

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MADISON – A new program, “Badger Promise,” will provide free tuition to qualifying Wisconsin students to help them pursue their dream of a four-year degree, UW-Madison Chancellor Rebecca Blank and UW Colleges and Extension Chancellor Cathy Sandeen announced Friday.

Blank proposed the program earlier this year with the goal of expanding access to lower-income Wisconsin residents and preparing the Wisconsin workforce to meet employers’ changing needs.

“Badger Promise will help put a four-year degree within reach for Wisconsin high school students who want to or need to start at a two-year school,” said Blank. Blank and Sandeen unveiled the program at UW-Waukesha and UW-Fox Valley today.

The program builds on successful existing partnerships with the two-year UW Colleges and the Wisconsin Technical College System. It targets Wisconsin students who want to transfer to UW-Madison and who are the first in their families to earn a four-year degree.

“As a first generation college student myself, I know firsthand the critical difference a program like this will make in the lives of students,” said Sandeen. “The UW Colleges serve 58 percent first-generation students; one-third of our students receive the Pell Grant. As the Badger Promise program grows, it will have the potential to affect hundreds of our transfer students each year.”

All first-generation transfers will receive one year of free tuition. Badger Promise students who are eligible for federal Pell Grants will receive two years of free tuition. First-generation students are more likely to enter UW-Madison as transfer students. Although they face unique challenges, they are also high performers with strong potential.

Blank highlighted student Kim Krautkramer, who grew up on a farm near Marathon City and graduated at the top of her high school class. Concerned about college costs, Krautkramer attended UW-Marathon County for her first two years and transferred to UW-Madison. There, she worked nearly 30 hours a week in various jobs just to earn enough to pay for school. After earning her undergraduate degree, she remained in Madison for graduate school. In May, she earned a doctorate in biochemistry while also on her way to a medical degree.

“We are proud of Kim’s achievements. But we also know it shouldn’t be that hard,” Blank said. “And we know that there are students like Kim all over Wisconsin, from rural communities to the suburbs and the cities.”

“Students like Kim are not unusual in the UW Colleges,” added Sandeen. “A staggering 81 percent of our students work – and 16 percent of those students work full time. We also know that 72 percent of students who transfer from UW Colleges to a UW System school will go on to graduate from that institution with a bachelor’s degree or higher. A program like Badger Promise will support our efforts to raise that number.”

The financial aid package is being provided this semester to 139 new transfer students. The university expects the number of eligible students to remain approximately the same in future years.

Each student will receive whatever award is needed to cover the full amount of their tuition and fees. For the first cohort of Badger Promise students, the average award will total approximately \$4,800 in new funding per student. This is on top of any other sources of need-based aid for which a student may qualify.

For additional details, please visit
www.financialaid.wisc.edu/types-of-aid/badger-promise.