

Update to County Board Supervisors on the UniverCITY Initiative
28 September 2017

As you know, Dane County (through the Dane County Board Office) is this years' community partner with UW-Madison in the [UniverCITY Year](#) Initiative. According to UniverCITY Year, "The community partner identifies projects that would benefit from UW-Madison expertise. Faculty from across the university incorporate these projects into their courses with graduate students and upper-level undergraduate students."

The Dane County-UniverCITY effort involves four different subject areas: workforce/affordable housing; frequent users of county services in multiple systems; water quality and nutrient management; and economic development. These project topic areas were selected by the Executive Committee of the County Board. Students will deliver class presentations on their topics at the end of the semester (all county board members will be invited to attend these in-class presentations), and reports and posters will also be available for viewing by the County Board after project completion.

Each project has an internal team consisting of County Board Office staff, at least one County Board supervisor, and relevant county department staff. In addition each team has a group of UW-Madison faculty it is working with to accomplish the goals of the UniverCITY Initiative. This project is also a vehicle for County Board staff development. In addition to Lisa MacKinnon, our Sustainability and Program Evaluation Coordinator who routinely manages all of the County Board Office program evaluation projects, Lauren Kuhl, the County Board Office's Legislative Management System Specialist, is further honing her considerable project management skills. Lila Walsh is the Election Specialist for the County Clerk's Office, but also provides policy analyst support to the County Board Office a quarter of her time. And many of you may recall Ela Kakde, our 2016 graduate student Innovation Intern. We have again retained Ela to lead the Economic Development team.

County Board Office staff and their teams worked during the summer to prepare scopes of work, resources and materials, and coordinate with UniverCITY administration and UW faculty for the fall launch of this project. The project is now commencing with team visits to classes to introduce the projects, which includes educating students about Dane County government structure and process and why these topics are important to Dane County policymakers.

A. Closing the Housing Gap—Dane County Workforce/Affordable Housing

Lisa MacKinnon is the staff team lead on this project. Other team members are: Supervisor Mary Kolar, Dane County Housing Authority Executive Director Rob Dicke, and Dane County Planning and Development Department Director Todd Violante and Senior Planner Olivia Parry. Faculty and five classes from the UW Business School/Real Estate, Engineering School, and Urban and Regional Planning are participating in this project.

Part of the Planning Department's assistance on this project entails a geographic information system (GIS) analysis. The goal of the analysis is to narrow down places in Dane County that could theoretically make good locations for workforce / affordable housing. The product of the analysis is being provided to UW faculty on this project to use with their students for educational purposes only in the following courses: URPL 611 Urban Design, Theory and Practice; Real Estate 420, Urban and Regional Economics; Real Estate 365, 765 Residential Health Care Property Development; and Real Estate 611, Residential Property Development.

As a part of their assignment, some faculty are asking students to conduct interviews of key people who are experts on land use, economic development, and local affairs throughout Dane County communities in order to obtain relevant information from a variety of perspectives. We hope that the findings of this project will provide Dane County communities with helpful information and resources addressing the countywide housing gap.

We believe this is an important class assignment. Certainly, students will gain valuable experience by doing this research and presenting their findings to an audience of their peers and to the County. But we hope that this learning opportunity may also stimulate conversation in Dane County communities, and increase awareness about the workforce and affordable housing needs of Dane County employers and residents. It's likely that some of these students will become real estate and workforce housing developers, planners, local decision makers, or local employers. Exposing them to the complexity of these issues now and how to engage with local communities will be useful for them as future members of our communities, and in considering their career paths.

County Board Supervisors should be aware of this outreach element of the housing gap project in case you are contacted directly by your constituents about it. Feel free to contact Lisa MacKinnon at 608/267-1529 or mackinnon@countyofdane.com for more information on this project topic.

B. Frequent Users of County Services in Multiple Systems

Lila Walsh is the staff team lead for this project. Over half of Dane County's budget is allocated to Health and Human Services. A number of users of county services can be considered "frequent" or "super" users. Typically, these individuals struggle with multi-dimensional problems but they are not tracked across systems, making it difficult to identify these individuals and provide targeted, coordinated care. The county's ultimate goal is to enact intervention plans, so that repeated rounds of institutional and emergency care, as well as periods of incarceration, are avoided.

Lila is working closely with key staff within the Department of Human Services, with the support of its Director, Lynn Green. Supervisor Hayley Young is also a key member of this team. Earlier this year, through a UW-provided scholarship, Supervisor Young was able to attend the national Sustainable City Year Conference in College Station, TX, as the UniverCITY Program Year Dane County representative. She has provided valuable feedback from the conference, including that student projects have been most beneficial when they have followed written templates outlining clear course deliverables. This is something we have accomplished with detailed Scopes of Work for each course. This project area has partnered with two traditional fall semester courses as well as one week-long summer leadership course as part of the Global Health Institute.

In the Public Health Principles and Practice (MPH 780) course, three graduate students are conducting an extensive literature and information review on how other jurisdictions have defined "frequent users of services" and how these jurisdictions have better managed the care for these users. The project is focused on capturing best practices in data collection, data synthesis and successful data-to-action policy stories, including funding practices, from those pioneering jurisdictions.

Next, in the Concepts and Tools for Data Analysis and Visualization (J 677) course, upper-level undergraduates are looking at data generated from the Juvenile Court and Child Protective Services division of the Department of Human Services as a microcosm or proxy population of "frequent users of services." Mitigating the needs of vulnerable children most often entails meeting the immediate needs and providing resource connections for the whole family. Using available county data as well as other data sources,

students will develop four strategic communication pieces on: the Dane County Juvenile Court Program, Child Protective Services, a general look at income and poverty in Dane County, and finally, students will also geocode a map of human service locations and other resources across Dane County.

Finally, in times of limited funds for professional development, the Global Health Institute offered two scholarships for a Department of Human Services mental health program specialist, Carrie Simon, and program analyst, Jenna Ramaker, to attend the Quality Improvement Leadership Institute on UW-Madison's campus. This conference occurred in July, and feedback from the Institute's Director is that all participants benefitted from learning about Dane County's comprehensive services approach and that Carrie and Jenna explored different service approaches within their teams.

We do not currently anticipate any public outreach element in this project area. However, if you should have any questions at all, free free to contact Lila Walsh at 608/266-4122 or walsh.lila@countyofdane.com on this project topic.

C. Water Quality/Nutrient Management

Lauren Kuhl is the staff team lead for this topic area. Dane County wants to support its defining industries in dairy and agriculture while protecting water quality and open space—both factors that contribute to the county's high overall quality of life. The county has been successful both in collaborative outreach with stakeholders to mitigate manure and nutrient management as well as innovative with utilizing business prospects for waste-to-renewable energy/products through public-private partnerships. Many of the student projects and outcomes are tying the existing report goals and plans together into prescriptive recommendations for implementation. The Department of Land and Water Resources, the Lakes and Watershed Commission, and the County Board's Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee will use the information gathered to consider policy decisions. Additionally the range of funding and outreach options will allow the County Board to set aside the necessary funds to achieve these goals and create additional public-private partnerships to aid county goals.

Lauren is working closely with key staff within the Land and Water Resources Department, with the support of its Interim Director, Laura Hicklin. Supervisor Nikki Jones is also a key member of this team. Each of the three classes that have been identified for this topic area has developed a Scope of Work that outlines the details and requirements for each project.

Environmental Studies 402 – *People, Environment, and Sustainability* students will be selecting projects in the first week of class. For this topic area, three projects were submitted: Identifying innovative approaches to phosphorus and other nutrient management, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, and identifying economically viable strategies for nutrient management and approaches to cost sharing. Teams of four to five undergraduate students from varying majors will work on these projects.

Environmental Studies 972 – *Conservation Planning* is a graduate level course that will be working on two conservation plans for the Dorn Creek and Door Creek areas of the Yahara watershed. There are two teams of five students working on these plans.

Engineering 601 – *Interdisciplinary Design for Energy and Sustainability* will be working with Dane County, and also with Clean Fuel Partners (owner/operator of the Waunakee digester), to identify other alternative uses of biogas for the digesters and to design a system to utilize biogas in "behind-the-meter" applications with minimal upgrading to determine whether it can compare favorably in economics to conventional uses of biogas while remaining safe and eco-friendly.

We do not currently anticipate any public outreach element in this project area. However, if you should have any questions, feel free to contact Lauren Kuhl at 608-266-5758 or kuhl.lauren@countyofdane.com on this project topic.

D. Economic Development: Communicating the County – Workforce and Entrepreneurial Outreach

Ela Kakde is the staff team lead on this project. Other team members are: Supervisor Shelia Stubbs and Supervisor Robin Schmidt along with Dane County University of Wisconsin Extension (UWEX) CNRED Agent Sharon Lezberg. Faculty and three classes from the UW Business School, Department of Applied Agricultural Economics, and Department of Consumer Sciences are participating in applying the lens of economic development to their student projects. Economic development works to bring jobs and build tax base, which create additional revenue for the county. With Dane County unemployment hovering at around 2%, businesses are struggling to find the workforce to meet their existing demand and unable to expand at the pace they desire. Additionally, to meet the county's goal of equity and inclusion, how can the county connect underserved populations to jobs and use its resources so that all populations are encouraged to participate in entrepreneurial activities? Students will research out-of-the-box models in use elsewhere to inform county policy and suggest applications to county resources to these two areas.

Applied Agricultural Economics 323 – *Co-ops*, taught by Courtney Berner and Anne Reynolds of the UW Center for Co-ops, is focusing on co-op models for food systems entrepreneurship (which potentially can be adapted to other entrepreneur market models), land acquisition for mobile homes for vulnerable populations (ex-offender, homeless, veteran), and neighborhood partnerships around community needs, *i.e.*, childcare. Students and Faculty have received a primer on the county functions and the resources utilized by the county. Students will research best practices to look at what other places have done to remove policy barriers to encourage co-ops in the entrepreneurial ecosystem along with what county resources could be targeted to encourage asset development in underserved neighborhoods and target populations.

Consumer Science 340 – *Building Financial Assets and Capability for Vulnerable Families* will involve teams of 3-5 students working collaboratively to understand the needs of the county programs or suite of resources, and then develop a deliverable over the course of about 4 weeks. The county liaisons will participate in 2-3 planning conference calls/meetings in November, and a final presentation (in person or online) with students by early December. The deliverable is expected to be something that can be immediately used in the community such as infographics, a social media campaign plan, handouts, a video or narrated slide show, animated online presentation, or a proposal for a program targeted to a specific population. In particular, students will be designing the above materials with the aim of communicating Dane County's microfinance fund to different segments of underserved populations and adapting entrepreneurial roadmaps. County departments of UW Extension and the Office of Economic & Workforce Development have identified current stakeholders to whom these materials would be directly applicable.

Business 600/Environmental Studies – *People, Environment & Sustainability* engages a mix of graduate and undergraduate students from a wide variety of majors. Teams of four to five students will work on researching on innovations and best practices around workforce outreach to particular populations, identifying partnership models in financing economic development programs, creating social media marketing and financing campaigns for crowdfunding to assist applications for microfinance monies and policy suggestions for pop-up markets. They will then make recommendations based on the county's context and how these models can be adapted for the county's use.

Feel free to contact Ela Kakde at 614/572-9138 or elaska75@gmail.com for more information on this project topic.