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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM FLEXIBLE OPTION PROGRAM

Dr. Aaron Brower, Interim Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin Colleges and UW Extension, will provide an overview of the UW Flexible Option Program. This program is a partnership between University of Wisconsin System campuses and UW-Extension; it offers a more personalized, convenient, and affordable way for adults and other nontraditional students to earn a University of Wisconsin degree or certificate while balancing work, family, and other commitments. The UW Flexible Option includes self-paced, competency-based degree and certificate programs that allow students to make progress by demonstrating what they know, whether that knowledge was gained through prior coursework, military training, on-the-job training, or other learning experiences. By emphasizing *what you know* rather than *how much time* you spend learning, the Flexible Option lets students advance toward a UW degree at a pace they set.

Rather than create courses, expert faculty from University of Wisconsin System campuses identify competencies—skills and knowledge—that they consider necessary to earn a UW degree. Students make progress by mastering these competencies and passing assessments that demonstrate their mastery. Along the way, students may draw upon existing knowledge to complete assessments at their own pace, whenever they are ready. To prepare for assessments, students will learn and receive support from a variety of sources, including a dedicated mentor called an Academic Success Coach. UW-Milwaukee and UW Colleges are the first UW institutions to offer programs in the new Flexible Option format. Several other UW System institutions, including UW-Parkside, are working to offer UW Flex options for their degree programs in the future.