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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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News Release

Wisconsin's higher education partners hold statewide Equity in the Classroom Conference

MADISON, Wis.—Approximately 500 college and university instructors attended today's Equity in the Classroom Conference, which took place at Madison College with keynote presentations livestreamed to four additional sites across the state: Northcentral Technical College, UW-Eau Claire, UW-Milwaukee, and St. Norbert College. The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), and the University of Wisconsin System (UW System) jointly organized the event as part of Wisconsin's attainment goal, 60 Forward. The 60 Forward initiative — named to reflect the state motto, "Forward" — seeks to raise the proportion of Wisconsinites aged 25-64 with an education credential beyond high school to 60 percent by 2027.



"In higher education, we focus on student access and student success," said WTCS President Morna Foy. "If we expect incoming students to be *college* ready, we have to commit to being *student* ready to afford them the greatest chance for success in the classroom and in their chosen career."

"60 Forward is an all-hands-on-deck initiative, and no one sector and no one leader can accomplish this work alone," said WAICU President Rolf Wegenke. "Equity plays an important role in achieving our attainment goal. We will never achieve our ambitious goal if we do not break down barriers to opportunity."

"Today's focus on postsecondary attainment is needed more than ever to build better communities and improve lives for people across Wisconsin," said UW System President Ray Cross. "This is especially important at a time when our population is aging and most experts agree that jobs in the future will increasingly require a high-quality postsecondary credential."

Wisconsin is one of 42 states to have set an attainment goal backed by the Lumina Foundation. The Lumina Foundation emphasizes that education beyond high school is key to increasing economic opportunity and social mobility. In order to achieve the 60 percent goal, Wisconsin must address attainment gaps in underrepresented populations.

To learn more, visit www.60forward.org/.

About WAICU: The Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU) is the official organization of the 24 independent (or private) institutions of higher learning in Wisconsin. Membership is limited to accredited, nonprofit institutions, headquartered in Wisconsin. WAICU members collectively enroll 56,000 students and graduate almost 14,000 each year. WAICU members offer over 420 academic programs and produce 24 percent of all the bachelor's degrees and 35 percent of all the advanced degrees awarded in the state. WAICU's mission is: "Working together for educational opportunity."

About WTCS: The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) consists of 16 colleges that enroll more than 300,000 students each year in over 500 programs. The colleges award associate degrees and short-term credentials – boasting 94 percent graduate placement in Wisconsin – as well as dual credit to high school students and instruction for registered apprenticeships. Because the System is a major talent pipeline and premier provider of customized instruction and technical assistance for Wisconsin employers, 98% say a technical college is important to the success of their business.

About UW System: The University of Wisconsin System serves approximately 170,000 students. Awarding nearly 37,000 degrees annually, the UW System is Wisconsin's talent pipeline, putting graduates in position to increase their earning power, contribute to their communities, and make Wisconsin a better place to live. More than 80 percent of in-state UW System graduates stay in Wisconsin five years after earning a degree. The UW System provides a 23:1 return on state investment. UW System institutions also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin's culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy.

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