

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **NEW MBA FELLOWSHIP IN EDUCATION LEADERSHIP TO PROVIDE NEW MODEL FOR HOW INDIANA AND THE NATION PREPARE SCHOOL LEADERS**

***Master's program at University of Indianapolis will blend clinical practice in schools  
with innovative business school coursework and international experience***

PRINCETON, N.J. (December 11, 2013) – To close achievement gaps not only between America's lowest- and highest-performing schools but between our top-performing schools and those around the world, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation announced today that it has partnered with the University of Indianapolis to create a new MBA school leadership program, one of the first of its kind and a model for a planned national expansion.

The Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellowship in Education Leadership, intended for aspiring principals and superintendents, will blend transformational education coursework and a tailored business curriculum with intensive clinical experience in schools, corporations and nonprofits, as well as involvement with innovative schools abroad. Fellows will take 12 to 15 months of courses focused on education and equivalent in rigor to traditional MBA programs. Offered through business schools, collaborating in some cases with education schools, the program is designed to prepare leaders who will drive innovation, expand the use of analytics and evidence-based practices, raise student performance to international standards, and improve the quality of school systems and teaching over time.

UIndy's 13-month program was designed collaboratively by faculty from the School of Business and School of Education, drawing from best practices in both disciplines to craft a groundbreaking approach that helps educational leaders face the new landscape of school choice and competition.

"Recent studies show that principals' and superintendents' jobs are increasing in challenge and complexity, and yet many programs around the nation that prepare school leaders still don't fully address those challenges," said Arthur Levine, president of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation and author of an influential national study that called for dramatically changing how the United States prepares school leaders. "We need a new way of thinking about how school leaders learn to address the issues they now face. This new MBA approach is intended not only to prepare strong leaders for Indiana, but also to provide a new national model. It will demonstrate how a high-value education MBA can provide an alternative to and perhaps replace both the M.Ed. for principals and the Ed.D. for superintendents."

Unlike programs that recruit career changers from other fields to work in schools, the Woodrow Wilson MBA Fellowship is intended for education professionals nominated by their school districts or charter school leaders. In essence, those school systems will partner with participating universities to

establish internal pipelines and cultivate new leaders. Fellows selected will have demonstrated effective leadership and will use their knowledge of school culture to help transform them from within. Each will receive a \$50,000 stipend, which in the UIndy program covers full tuition, technology, some living expenses and international travel. In exchange, each fellow agrees to serve in a leadership role in a school or district for at least three years, with Foundation-supported mentoring.

“UIndy has been a leader in collaborating across disciplines to create new programs that are relevant to community needs, and this effort from our schools of business and education is a prime example,” university President Robert Manuel said. “Also, our strong relationships with local schools and districts will allow us to provide the immersive field experiences that are so vital to this program. We are grateful to the Foundation for recognizing these abilities and partnering with us to build leadership capacity for Indiana schools.”

The WW MBA Fellowship in Education Leadership program addresses twin problems in American education: On the one hand, well-resourced U.S. schools still rank below schools in countries such as Finland and Singapore on measures of student achievement. On the other hand, too many of the nation’s high-need urban and rural schools still fall too far below domestic benchmarks for student achievement.

“Research shows that school leaders play a [demonstrable and critically important role](#),” said Dr. Ryan Olson, team leader for education reform at The Kern Family Foundation, which partially funds the program. “Equipping the rising generation depends upon character formation and our students’ competitiveness internationally, especially in math and science. We are excited about the work Woodrow Wilson and these universities are undertaking together, and are pleased to support it.”

Two institutions—UIndy and the Milwaukee School of Engineering—are participating in the launch of the MBA in Education Leadership. At UIndy, the WW MBA Fellows in Education Leadership will work on the international achievement gap at high-performing schools, an approach funded through the Kern grant, while also developing school leadership skills essential to urban charter and turnaround schools, an emphasis supported by both Kern and the Walton Family Foundation.

The national director of the program, LeAnn Buntrock, previously headed the acclaimed education leadership program at the University of Virginia’s Darden School of Business. Based at the Foundation’s Princeton, N.J. office, Dr. Buntrock oversees the Indianapolis and Milwaukee programs as well as several expansion efforts currently under consideration. She has worked closely with Dr. Levine to shape and implement the program in accord with his previous findings.

“As schools face a wide array of changes, school leaders have to find new ways to engage strong teachers and help them drive student achievement. What makes the WW MBA Fellowship distinctive is that it really focuses on transformational leadership—different techniques for spotting and diagnosing issues, solving problems, motivating others to go beyond the status quo,” said Dr. Buntrock. “It’s also very unusual for leadership programs around the country to partner with school districts and education organizations to identify relevant projects that will give candidates actual in-school experiences. The fact that UIndy already does this will help us demonstrate new ways to prepare school leaders.”

The University of Indianapolis will partner with a variety of area school districts and charter schools to develop partnerships that will sustain clinical placements—that is, in-school learning arrangements—and mentoring opportunities for the WW MBA Fellows. Fifteen Fellows will be selected for the program, with the first class announced in late spring 2014 and beginning the program in summer

2014. The candidates the program will produce, say local officials, are the kind of leaders their schools need.

“Now more than ever, educational leaders are being called upon to use a set of skills they may never have had the opportunity to learn or exercise,” said Superintendent Margaret Hoernemann of Avon Community School Corp. “For Avon Schools to be given the opportunity to collaborate with UIndy, to ‘grow our own’ leaders who are prepared to confront the changing educational environment, is exciting.”

The WW MBA in Education Leadership draws on the Foundation’s experience with its state Teaching Fellowship, which recruits very able candidates to teach math and science in high-need schools, and also works to transform teacher education. UIndy was one of four Indiana universities selected to pilot the Teaching Fellowship, which since its 2009 debut has expanded to 23 universities in five states.

Applications to the WW MBA Fellowship in Education Leadership are available by nomination only, with nominations and applications for the first class now open. To learn more about the WW MBA in Education Leadership, visit <http://woodrow.org/fellowships/ww-ed-mba>.

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#### **About the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation**

Founded in 1945, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation ([www.woodrow.org](http://www.woodrow.org)) identifies and develops the nation’s best minds to meet its most critical challenges. The Foundation supports its Fellows as the next generation of leaders shaping American society.

#### **About the University of Indianapolis**

The University of Indianapolis is a private, comprehensive institution of higher education founded in 1902, with a home campus of 5,400 students and partnership sites around the world. UIndy offers a strong liberal arts foundation along with cutting-edge business and professional preparation in a close-knit community that enjoys the opportunities and amenities of a major city. The university’s challenging undergraduate, master’s and doctoral programs include nationally ranked offerings in the health sciences. Its mission is to prepare graduates for responsible and articulate membership in society and for excellence and leadership in their professional and personal lives. More information is available at [www.uindy.edu](http://www.uindy.edu).