

NEWS RELEASE

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

Master's program at Milwaukee School of Engineering will blend clinical practice in schools with innovative business school coursework and international experience

PRINCETON, N.J. (December 10, 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 the creation of a new MBA school leadership program at Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE). The new program for preparing principals will blend college coursework and a tailored business curriculum with intensive clinical experience in schools, corporations, and nonprofits, and involvement in innovative schools abroad.

The Woodrow Wilson (WW) MBA Fellowship in Education Leadership will recruit and prepare experienced educators, who will take 12 to 15 months of executive-style MBA courses. The program, one of the first in the nation, will be offered through MSOE's Rader School of Business and will be equivalent in rigor to traditional MBA programs. It is designed to prepare leaders who will drive innovation in schools, 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.

"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 Wisconsin, but also to provide a new national model. It will demonstrate how a high-value education MBA can replace the M.Ed. for principals and give Wisconsin school leaders the wherewithal to be more effective."

Unlike programs that recruit career changers from other fields to work in schools, candidates will be nominated by Wisconsin school districts, as well as choice and charter schools. Fellows selected will have demonstrated key characteristics of effective leaders and will be experienced with the culture of schools to be able to help transform them from within. They will receive a \$50,000 stipend that includes tuition assistance for the master's program, along with mentoring and opportunities for international experience in innovative schools in other countries. In exchange, Fellows will serve in leadership roles in identified schools for at least three years.

“MSOE offers a very pragmatic and hands-on education. Our students learn to identify and solve problems and create long-lasting solutions. We have a proven track record of graduating students who have career practice and are able to immediately apply what they’ve learned,” said Dr. Hermann Viets, MSOE president. “It is a natural fit for MSOE to be offering the MBA in Education Leadership and enabling school leaders to drive innovation. We are raising the bar in education standards and schools that have WW MBA graduates on staff will greatly benefit.”

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 like 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.

Two institutions—MSOE and the University of Indianapolis—are participating in the launch of the WW MBA in Education Leadership program. The MSOE program will focus entirely on eradicating the international achievement gap. According to McKinsey & Company, the United States’ economy loses as much as \$2 trillion annually because its schools lag behind those in such countries as Finland and Singapore.

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, as this program will.”

MSOE will partner with 10 to 12 area school districts 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.

The WW MBA Fellowship 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. The Teaching Fellowship is now operating in four states with 23 universities.

Applications to the WW MBA Fellowship in Education Leadership are available by nomination only. To learn more about the program at MSOE, visit www.msoe.edu/mbaeducationleadership. Go to <http://woodrow.org/fellowships/ww-ed-mba> to learn more about the Foundation’s work in leadership preparation.

The program is under review for approval by the Higher Learning Commission, with a final decision expected in summer 2014. It is also under review by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction with a decision expected by early 2014.

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About the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation

Founded in 1945, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation (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 Milwaukee School of Engineering

Milwaukee School of Engineering (www.msOE.edu) is an independent, non-profit university with about 2,600 students that was founded in 1903. MSOE offers bachelor's and master's degrees in engineering, business, mathematics and nursing. The university has a national academic reputation; longstanding ties to business and industry; dedicated professors with real-world experience; a 96% placement rate; and the highest average starting and mid-career salaries of any Wisconsin university according to PayScale Inc. MSOE graduates are well-rounded, technologically experienced and highly productive professionals and leaders.