



## NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE:  
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### WOODROW WILSON FOUNDATION LAUNCHES WW ACADEMY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

#### ***WW Academy Seeks to Transform Policy and Practice for Teacher, School Leadership Prep Through New Graduate School, and an Ed Research Lab Developed in Collaboration With MIT***

PRINCETON, N.J. (June 16, 2015) – Launching a major national effort to dramatically improve teacher preparation and to help teaching and learning practices evolve for the 21st century, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation today announced the establishment of a new graduate school, the Woodrow Wilson Academy of Teaching and Learning (WW Academy).

The WW Academy is designed to transform teacher education as well as school leadership policy and practice nationally by providing competency-based master’s degree programs in teaching and school leadership. In collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the WW Academy will also serve as an incubator and innovation lab, studying what works and why in preparing teachers and education leaders, and offering new ideas and models to meet the needs of 21st century schools.

“Today is an exciting day for the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, for higher education, and for the teacher preparation field,” Woodrow Wilson Foundation President Arthur Levine said. “For too long, teacher education has relied on methods and approaches that simply have not adapted to reflect the challenges of the times. The Woodrow Wilson Foundation, in collaboration with MIT, seeks to offer real solutions that will help our nation’s universities, school districts, and educators. The WW Academy will ‘throw out the clock,’ shifting the focus of certification from ‘hours in class’ to proven competency in the skills and knowledge every teacher and education leader needs to succeed. At the same time, the WW Academy will conduct and disseminate research to help all those eager to improve teacher and school leadership education.”

The former president of Teachers College (TC) at Columbia University, Levine is the author of three reports on the state of education schools in America—*Educating School Teachers*, *Educating School Leaders*, and *Educating Researchers*. While at TC, Levine called upon schools of education to modernize, as they were outdated, products of a national, analog, industrial economy and were not built to meet the needs of a global, digital, information economy. The WW Academy is designed to meet the future needs of school districts and schools, ensuring prospective educators have the academic preparation, clinical experience, and supports necessary to succeed in a 21st century classroom.

In collaboration with MIT’s Office of Digital Learning, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation also intends the WW Academy to be the education equivalent of Bell Labs. Through controlled experiments on its

own activities, the WW Academy will serve as a laboratory for exploring what works in teacher and school leadership education.

These experiments will be designed in collaboration with researchers in the new MIT PK12 Initiative, which launches today with support from the WW Foundation. MIT Professor Eric Klopfer and Dr. Vijay Kumar, Associate Dean of Digital Learning at MIT, will lead the Initiative's work to promote new technologies, develop curricula, and conduct research related to educator preparation. The effort will focus on supporting teachers in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) for students from pre-Kindergarten through the senior year of high school.

"Hands-on, problem-focused, curiosity-driven learning is squarely at the heart of an MIT education, and it will be central to MIT's work with the Woodrow Wilson Foundation. Together, we will combine MIT's 'mind and hand' approach to learning with recent breakthroughs in cognitive science and digital learning to inform the Woodrow Wilson Foundation's efforts to develop and support excellent STEM teachers and school leaders," said MIT President L. Rafael Reif. "We are thrilled to begin this effort to reimagine the classroom experience."

The WW Academy has received initial support from a wide range of philanthropic organizations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Amgen Foundation, Simons Foundation, and Carnegie Corporation of New York. It has also received \$2 million in support from the Woodrow Wilson Foundation Board of Trustees.

The Amgen Foundation's support will fund the Amgen Biology Teacher Education Program. Part of the larger WW Academy, this program will offer cutting-edge, competency-based teacher education for the life sciences at the secondary school level.

"Teacher quality matters," Amgen Foundation President Eduardo Cetlin said. "Today's global economy requires innovative, evidence-based approaches to develop the strongest teachers, particularly in rapidly evolving scientific fields. We're proud to support the WW Academy to create the new Amgen Biology Teacher Education Program, with the ultimate goal of inspiring the next generation to harness science and innovation to dramatically improve lives."

The WW Academy's efforts are built, in part, on the Woodrow Wilson Foundation's ongoing efforts in teacher and education leader preparation. Currently, the Foundation partners with five states—Georgia, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, and Ohio—to offer the Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowships. Working with 28 universities in those states, the WW Foundation is redesigning teacher education to center on a master's degree program that integrates a yearlong clinical experience and three years of mentoring. The Foundation is also working in three states—Indiana, New Mexico, and Wisconsin—on the WW MBA in Education Leadership Fellowships, using a similar model to identify, recruit, and prepare the next generation of education leaders.

"Prospective educators enter the preparation process at different stages, with different sets of skills and abilities," Levine said. "With our competency-based model, by the time these students enter the job market, they and the schools that hire them can be confident they have the knowledge, skills, and experience to be successful teachers. Beyond this, the lab will study the student cohorts— tracking their time to completion, graduation rates, teaching performance and retention in the profession— with the goal of informing policy makers and practitioners about best practices."

As part of its commitment to teacher and education leader preparation, the WW Academy will seek to help transform teacher education policy and practice at scale by disseminating, publicizing, tailoring, and targeting its research to serve policy makers and higher education leaders who are eager for improvement in teacher and school leadership education. The WW Academy also intends to offer professional development programs and to serve as an examination and certification center for teacher and school leader licensure.

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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. Today, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation's more than 22,000 Fellows include 14 Nobel Laureates, 36 MacArthur Fellows, 18 Pulitzer Prize winners, two Fields Medalists, and a host of recipients of other awards.