



NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE:
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WOODROW WILSON ACADEMY RECEIVES INFORMAL APPROVAL FROM MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION TO LICENSE STEM TEACHERS

Competency-Based Graduate School and Education Research Lab Partners with Five Leading School Districts, Accelerates In-Service PD Efforts

WW Foundation Reaches Halfway Mark of Total Fundraising Goal to Make Groundbreaking Program Reality for 2017

PRINCETON, NJ (July 20, 2016) –As the next phase in its bold national effort to dramatically improve teacher preparation and to help teaching and learning practices evolve for the future, the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation announced that its Woodrow Wilson Academy of Teaching and Learning (WW Academy) has received informal approval from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to offer an initial, post-baccalaureate license for middle and secondary school teachers in biology, chemistry, and math.

In 2015, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation revealed its plans to develop competency-based master's degree programs in teaching and school leadership, in partnership with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Applications for degree-granting approval and accreditation are in process. The WW Academy remains on track to name its first cohort of Fellows for the 2017–18 academic year.

“A year ago, we announced plans to chart a new course in educator preparation, one focused on what aspiring teachers know and are able to do,” Woodrow Wilson Foundation President Arthur Levine said. “Today, working with MIT, our efforts in competency and curriculum development, licensure and accreditation, strategic partnerships, program development, and fundraising have made great strides. The Woodrow Wilson Academy will open its doors to its first class in the summer of 2017.”

Draft Competencies Developed, Challenge-Based Curriculum Established

During the past year, the WW Academy has developed its competencies for beginning teachers. Specific content knowledge competencies have been built for biology, chemistry, and mathematics. Competencies are currently under review by teacher educators, subject-matter experts, and K–12 teachers.

The competencies are the basis of an interactive, challenge-based curriculum designed to ensure prospective teachers can demonstrate both what they have learned and how they use it in a classroom setting. MIT has been an integral part of developing and prototyping the WW Academy “Challenge” model. The WW Academy will publicly unveil its first biology-related challenge in fall 2016.

As part of its efforts, MIT has also been developing a suite of teacher education-focused games and simulations for the Academy. It is also helping to build the technology infrastructure on which the entire WW Academy program will be offered.

Initial School District Partnerships Established

To ensure a robust clinical experience for all students enrolling in the graduate program, the WW Academy has established strategic partnerships with five local school districts in Massachusetts—Burlington, Cambridge, Natick, Revere, and Somerville. In addition to providing classroom-based experiences to WW Academy students, each of the districts has identified exemplary STEM teachers to participate in the WW Academy effort.

This summer, 22 of these STEM teachers will take part as Design Fellows in a summer workshop developed to ensure WW Academy students have experienced educators to work with, mentors who can help bridge current school environments with new competency-based approaches. The mentorship efforts will be modeled on the Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship program. This advisory group of teachers will also help to shape the clinical program.

“The need for highly qualified STEM teachers in the public schools has never been greater,” Cambridge Public Schools Superintendent Jeffrey Young said. “Cambridge, MA—a hub of the STEM industry—is proud to partner with the WW Academy to strengthen teaching and learning in this critical area. We are enthused about this work, not only for our teachers but also for our students, who will be the beneficiaries of this project and eventually the people who will fill those STEM jobs in our community.”

In-Service PD Efforts Accelerated

In its 2015 announcement, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation noted its intention to develop in-service teacher programs and micro-credentialing opportunities based on its competency-based approach. Following strong urging from education leaders, the Foundation has decided to accelerate PD development, launching an effort concurrent with graduate program development. These offerings, also part of the MIT collaboration, will be developed as inaugural projects in the Walter Buckley Teaching and Learning Lab, which will 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.

“Based on the feedback we have received to date, there is a strong demand for STEM content-focused, competency-based professional development for educators across the country,” Levine said. “Using our competencies and challenge-based approach, we can develop meaningful PD offerings that allow teachers to build their knowledge and skills and demonstrate to their schools and their profession the abilities they bring to their classrooms.”

With \$35 Million Total Project Budget, \$17 Million Raised to Date

The Woodrow Wilson Foundation also announced that it had officially reached the halfway mark toward its \$35 million goal to develop and launch the WW Academy and the Walter Buckley Teaching and Learning Lab. Phase two supporters include the Bezos Family Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Nellie Mae Education Foundation, and several anonymous large donors.

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.

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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. Today, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation's more than 22,000 Fellows include 14 Nobel Laureates, 36 MacArthur Fellows, 16 Pulitzer Prize winners, two Fields Medalists, and a host of recipients of other awards.

About the Woodrow Wilson Academy for Teaching and Learning

The Woodrow Wilson Academy of Teaching and Learning seeks to transform teacher education by creating a model to prepare teachers and school leaders to succeed in the diverse classrooms of today and to shape and lead the schools of tomorrow.