



The Graduation Project

Yes, you can graduate! Come back. We'll help.

Indiana University – Project Complete Scholarship Regional Demonstration Program Jury Panel Evaluation College Stop-Out Recovery Initiatives with Scholarship Programs August 13, 2008

Culver Funds: Hope for Graduation Project Students

- Privately funded scholarship
- No state funds for Graduation Project scholarships

Mr. Craig Culver, Co-founder of Culvers, Inc., located in Wisconsin, is a board member of the UW Oshkosh Foundation. Our Chancellor of UW Oshkosh gave presentation on Graduation Project to the Foundation members.

- Mr. Culver expressed interest in helping needy students
- Liked idea of assisting students who are poised to finish
- Thought the Graduation Project was a good business efficiency model – helped solve some of our education issues in Wisconsin
- Gave \$10,000
- Did not define how the funds were to be used
- Funds were initially used just for books
- July 07 got clarification of his interest/intentions
- Expanded use of funds

Student Scholarship Selection

- Scholarship fund managed by UW Foundation
- Director of Nontraditional Student Resource Office recommends students for scholarships and gets confirmation from Provost
- Four scholarships issued since July 07
- Need based
- Other financial resources considered – Check eligibility for Financial Aid/ need to be enrolled minimum of 6 credit hours for Financial Aid
- Try to help those who slip between the cracks - especially helpful for those only needing one course or able to take one course
- Generally pay for one course and fees/books – Will consider funding for other needs
- Students can take course elsewhere and be granted scholarship if they live in a state that has Culver restaurants

Motivation to find your own Culver – the right thing to do

Quotes from GP students

"Finally getting my degree feels like a tremendous burden has been lifted. The Graduation Project staff really took a personal interest. They did everything they could to make sure I finished."

- MM, *Psychology graduate*

"I feel like the work I'm doing in school now is something I can really be proud of ... I had always planned to return to school, but being approached by the Graduation Project was really the push that I needed to finally finish. It's definitely tough juggling all of the other elements I have going on in my life right now, plus adding school obligations, but it was a decision that I think will lead to greater things for myself and my family."

- MF, *Radio TV Film graduate*

"If it wasn't for my advisor I wouldn't have finished. I can't tell you how instrumental Liz was—she turned into my friend."

- LY, *Journalism graduate*

Outside Funding – Staffing – 3 years

- 1.0 FTE Project Appointment – Outreach Specialist
- .25 FTE -- Academic Advisor
- .25 FTE – Student Mentor
- .40 FTE Director (one year)

Outside Funding – Non-staffing

- Development of online courses
- Development of Credit for Prior Learning implementation process
- Travel
- Supplies

In-kind – University Resources

- Program Assistant
- Second Student Mentor
- Director of Nontraditional Student Resource Office (two years) and staff
- Director of Advising and staff
- Director of Admissions and staff
- Registrar

Activities

- New Online courses
- Graduation project website
- Dedicated academic advisor (.25 FTE for Graduation Project)
- Project brochure and website
- Outreach visits with students
- Mentor students
- Visit prospective students in their communities, info and pre-advising
- New phase invitation sent out annually
- Exit interviews of selected GP students
- Culver scholarship
- Committee meetings to discuss relevant issues and policy implications
- Getting GP “counted” on UW stats, percentages, etc..

Impact on Policy and Operations

- During the time period of the project, UW Oshkosh has reviewed various academic policies. The effort of policy review and revision is ongoing.
- Revisions to the “Course Repeat” policy – provided expanded flexibility to allow students to complete high-demand courses in order to make progress toward degree completion.
- Establishment of an “Academic Amnesty” policy – facilitated students return to the University without using past performance as a barrier to re-entry.

Credit for Prior Learning Policy

- Recently restructured and used for GP students starting in fall 2007

Graduation Project Profile

The Graduation Project at the University of Wisconsin is an intervention program to find and help former students complete their baccalaureate-level studies. It grew out of an effort to address the fact that Wisconsin has relatively fewer baccalaureate degree holders than other states.

Concerns for Wisconsin

- In top 10 states in high school graduation rate
- 5th in % of high school graduates who immediately enroll in college
- 7th in the nation for its high % of associate degree holders
- 35th in % of bachelor's degree holders in adult population

Growth Agenda – Is there a brain drain?

- Needs 70,000 more adults with a bachelor's degree to reach the national average
- Major reinvestment is necessary to help restore quality and to continue providing "Brain DEVELOPMENT" solutions
- Graduation Project is one of these efforts

Graduation Project – Started with Pilot project 2004

- **Committee on Baccalaureate Expansion (COBE)**
 - ◊ Funded for two years (06-08)
 - ◊ \$75,000 per year, total of \$150,000
 - ◊ Local initiatives to get more graduates as economic driver for state
 - ◊ State allocation of funds
 - ◊ Competitive grant process
- **President of UW System, Dr. Reilly, Special Funding**
 - ◊ Funded for two years (07-09)
 - ◊ \$100,00 per year, total of \$200,000 at our Chancellor's request
 - ◊ Give the project a boost
 - ◊ Support Growth Agenda

Graduation Project: By the Numbers

- 283 responded to invitation
- 80 graduated (38 in 07-08)
- ~~280~~ in pipeline
203