



*Office of the Chancellor*

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President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

December 15, 2015

Dear President Obama,

We are excited to participate in **#uifresh (University Innovation Freshmen)**, an initiative spearheaded by the University Innovation Fellows program as a means to expand the participation and retention of incoming first-year STEM students. The initiative will help young students see problems as opportunities that should be approached with fresh eyes and an entrepreneurial mindset.

As part of the initiative, University Innovation Fellows and Pathways to Innovation Program teams will work to integrate entrepreneurship, design thinking, creativity and innovation into the freshman experience as part of orientation, a single class, or a series of classes that help students solve real-world problems and connect first-year students to peer communities of makers and innovators in STEM.

The initiative was developed in response to findings published by the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology in a report titled "Engage to Excel: Producing One Million Additional College Graduates With Degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics." The report indicates that 60% of U.S. freshmen (in aggregate) who arrive to college intending to major in STEM change majors to non-STEM disciplines. The report also cites the importance of a student experience that is both intellectually and personally engaging and fosters "identification with a STEM field." This can be established by connecting freshmen with a community of STEM professionals, and fostering meaningful relationships with both peers and instructors.

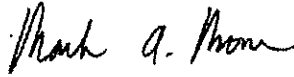
University Innovation Fellows and Pathways to Innovation Program teams will work with their faculty, administrators and staff to implement fun and engaging experiential learning opportunities that expose 100% of the incoming freshmen class to the institution's community of makers and innovators, with the goal of collectively reducing the national percentage of STEM attrition by half in five years.

We believe that early exposure to entrepreneurship, innovation, creativity and design thinking are powerful tools to engage and retain not just STEM students, but innovative and entrepreneurial students from all majors. Rather than STEM alone, multidisciplinary collaborations and networks more accurately describes our ecosystem. Many arts, architecture and business students, faculty and staff

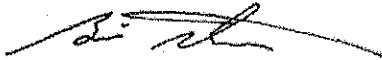
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play proactive role in our entrepreneurial campus initiatives. We are excited to work with the University Innovation Fellows and Pathways to Innovation Program, initiatives of the NSF-funded National Center for Engineering Pathways to Innovation (Epicenter), to enhance student attraction and retention to ultimately meet U.S. workforce needs and strengthen our national competitiveness.

Sincerely,



Mark A. Mone, Ph.D.  
Chancellor  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee



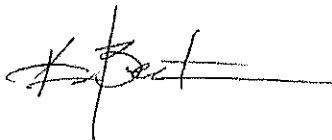
Brian D. Thompson  
President, UWM Research Foundation, Inc.



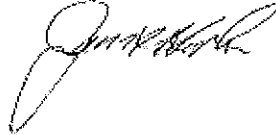
Ilya V. Avdeev, Ph.D.  
Director, I-CORPS Site/Student Startup Challenge  
Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering  
College of Engineering & Applied Science  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee



Dr. Nathaniel Stern  
Associate Professor of Art and Design  
Head of Digital Studio Practice  
Student Startup Challenge Co-Founder  
Global Studies and Engineering Lecturer  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee



Kim Beckmann, Associate Professor  
Design and Visual Communication  
Design Entrepreneur Showcase Co-Founder  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
Peck School of the Arts, Department of Art & Design



James H. Hunter  
Entrepreneur-in-Residence & Adjunct Assistant  
Professor  
University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee




Alex Francis  
PhD Student of Mechanical Engineering  
University Innovation Fellow  
Founder Isopoint Technologies



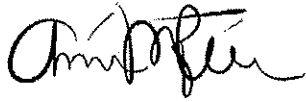
Rob Salamon  
Student of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering  
University Innovation Fellow  
Founder Smallwaukee Properties



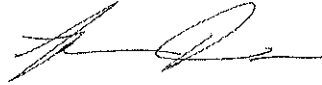
David Gallegos  
Masters Student of Biomedical Sciences  
University Innovation Fellow  
Founder dg1 Technologies



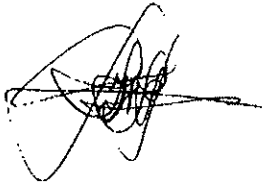
Nicole Green  
Masters Student of Management  
University Innovation Fellow  
Co-Founder REDSKYTEK



Amin Mojtahedi  
PhD Candidate in Architecture  
University Innovation Fellow  
Co-Founder AIM



Aaron Davis  
TEDxUWMilwaukee Executive Director  
UWM Research Foundation:  
Technology Transfer Intern  
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Garry Jean-Pierre  
Student of Electrical Engineering  
University Innovation Fellow



Tahereh A. Hosseini  
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