OUR HISTORY
A 1971 merger created the University of Wisconsin System, and the consolidation of public service and outreach functions resulted in a new stand-alone institution known as UW-Extension. In 1985, UW System leaders sought to strengthen these functions by shifting faculty and staff positions back to the 26 individual UW campuses. This led to the creation of the Division of Continuing Studies, which develops programs and services specifically for lifelong learners at UW-Madison.

OUR FUTURE
Demographics are shifting. Technology is evolving. Along with these changes come new educational needs and expectations. More adults are pursuing degrees and certificates later in life. Emerging workforce trends require people to retool for different careers. More international students are seeking the prestigious UW experience.

Serving these students requires new services, policies, technologies, and partnerships. Continuing Studies leads the charge to prepare for these changes with Lifelong Learning 2020, a campus-wide strategic framework that calls on UW-Madison to:

- Create transformative learning experiences
- Reach more lifelong learners
- Generate new revenue

VISION
By 2020, Continuing Studies will be recognized as a global leader in connecting lifelong learners with knowledge and skills that enable them to be enlightened and productive members of their communities.

“Lifelong learners need courses that are flexible, diverse, affordable, and available at convenient times and places. The Division of Continuing Studies enables any person in the state and beyond to connect to the university. We’re all on a journey to build knowledge, and our team is committed to making sure that happens—whether your journey is for personal enrichment or to acquire new workplace skills in a changing economy.”

—Jeffrey S. Russell
Vice Provost for Lifelong Learning and Dean of Continuing Studies
The University of Wisconsin-Madison is the birthplace of the Wisconsin idea—a philosophy that our public university must reach beyond its boundaries to serve every person. That is the driving force behind the Division of Continuing Studies and our service to lifelong learners.

While traditional college students come to campus fresh out of high school and leave four years later, lifelong learners represent a broader group. They may be 16 years old or 60. They may have never earned a diploma or they could hold a graduate degree. They might live in Madison, Manitowoc, or even Manhattan, and want to take courses on campus or online. They all share a desire to learn and grow.

Continuing Studies offers more than 650 courses and conferences each year that empower lifelong learners to enrich their lives, fuel their curiosity, and advance their careers. In addition, UW-Madison’s 13 schools and colleges offer an array of continuing education and outreach efforts. Continuing Studies provides funding, planning, research, and program development support for this vital public service mission.

INTRODUCTION
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MISSION
Advocate for and engage lifelong learners through high-quality and innovative programs and services.

LIBERAL ARTS AND APPLIED STUDIES DEPARTMENT
Many students who take programs through Liberal Arts and Applied Studies are focused on their career aspirations or personal growth. Tenured and tenure-track faculty, academic staff, and university staff work together to develop and deliver face-to-face, blended, and online classes, and help students find the best fit—whether that is a single course, multi-day conference, or complete certificate. Admission to the university is not required, but students benefit from the outstanding learning experience that is a UW-Madison trademark.

Social workers, counselors, therapists, psychologists, and educators rely on Continuing Studies to hone their skills and keep up with the latest trends. We sometimes teach via distance education, and also instruct others in using distance education to foster effective learning. Most courses offer continuing education units (CEUs) or professional licensure credit.

Classes in painting, music, theater, dance, and writing stimulate creative expression. Programs in language, film, history, and literature broaden personal horizons. Educational travel provides an immersive learning experience.

We also serve the community through our award-winning UW Odyssey Project, which helps adults begin the journey out of poverty through free access to higher education and professional development opportunities.

Our approach to all of our students is deeply personal, and our goal is to help them thrive.

ADULT CAREER AND SPECIAL STUDENT SERVICES
Adult Career and Special Student Services (ACSSS) staff are the friendly faces who greet visitors to Continuing Studies. We also work to strengthen the university’s connection with global partners and other lifelong learners.

ACSSS is the first stop for students who seek access to credit courses at UW-Madison but do not have degree status here. These University Special students include:

• Visitors from other colleges, professionals seeking to expand or update their knowledge, and prospective graduate students completing prerequisites; their ages span from high schoolers to senior citizens.
• College students from around the globe who enroll in the Visiting International Student Program (VISP) to study with our world-class faculty for one to two terms before returning to their home university.
• Adults who enroll in Capstone Certificate programs for post-baccalaureate education in a specific professional area.

Career counselors offer individual sessions, group workshops, and a weekly job search support group to help adults assess their interests and research career and educational options. Additionally, through the generosity of individual donors and organizations, ACSSS administers a $100,000+ scholarship and grant program to support adults returning to college for graduate or undergraduate study.

EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION
Educational Innovation is a campus-wide initiative that serves lifelong learners. This unit helps UW-Madison schools and colleges design, promote, and launch new programs offered in flexible formats—including evening, weekend, online, and compressed programs—perfectly suited for the working adult.

We also serve graduates and undergraduates who want to accelerate their progress. Six out of 10 UW students participate in Summer Term. With more than 1,000 courses available on campus and another 100 online, Summer Term allows students to have a more focused learning experience, complete their degree faster, and enter the workforce sooner.

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are unique learning experiences available at no cost to anyone around the world. Educational Innovation staff led the development of UW-Madison’s MOOCs; in two years, we reached more than 200,000 learners from 50 states and more than 140 countries.

INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS
In support of lifelong learning programs offered by Continuing Studies and other departments across campus, the Integrated Marketing Communications team provides marketing strategy, research, public relations, graphic design, web development, direct marketing, and more. We tell the inspiring stories of students and faculty, and motivate others to become part of the Continuing Studies experience.