



UW flexible option

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM

2019 - 2020

Annual Report

The global COVID-19 pandemic has proven that now, more than ever before, adult learners need online, flexible, and skills-based degrees and certificates. The challenge of our times will be rapidly retraining and upskilling millions to rebuild an American economy forever changed.

The University of Wisconsin Flexible Option — a collaboration across University of Wisconsin institutions — is uniquely positioned to rise to that challenge. The UW Flexible Option's portfolio of nine degrees and certificates are entirely online and designed with the flexibilities adult learners require. The UW Flexible Option is unique among competency-based education models across the nation.

Competency-based education focuses on students' ability to demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills that employers are looking for. The programs are asynchronous, and fully self-paced, making them ideal for those who are balancing work and family. Its flexible structure that is not bound by semesters, meaning those who are newly out of work can start any month of the year, and earn an accredited UW degree in less time than it would take in traditional semester based programs. That means our graduates — over 700 to date — can quickly transform their skills and get back into the workforce.

UW Flexible Option went through a period of program improvement during 2019-2020. Using the data from the first five years of the program, we redeveloped the UW Flexible Option to be even more flexible and scalable. Some of the several dozen improvements include a standardized academic calendar, a tuition-lock program for our students, and changing our accreditation status to more quickly build new programs.

In this annual report, you will see just a few of our student success stories highlighted. It is assuring and important to celebrate the success of our students during these uncertain times. These stories are a reminder, and inspiration, of the perseverance and fortitude of our adult learners. I hope you will find these stories equally inspiring.

After a year of intense program redevelopment, the UW Flexible Option is ready to rise to the challenge of our times. These programs are an affordable and flexible path for our students to earn a degree they otherwise may not have been able to, and are an invaluable tool for the UW System to continue supporting Wisconsin's citizens.



Aaron Brower, Ph.D.
Executive Director | UW Extended Campus
Senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs | UW System Administration

These innovative features make the UW Flexible Option a great choice for adult learners:

» **Start any month of the year.**

Instead of enrolling in traditional semesters, take advantage of flexible “subscription periods.” These are approximately 12 weeks long, and a new subscription period starts every month. This means you can earn your degree on your own timeline, and take breaks without penalty.

» **Study 100% online.**

Programs are fully online and asynchronous. This means there are no live class times, and you can complete your courses on your schedule.

» **Build on existing knowledge and experience.**

UW Flexible Option programs are competency-based. This means you are evaluated on your mastery of necessary knowledge and skills, not on how much time you spend in a class. If you already know the material, you can progress more quickly. If you are struggling with a concept and need more time to study before you complete an assessment, take as much time as you need.

» **Earn a genuine University of Wisconsin credential.**

All UW Flexible Option programs are offered by regionally-accredited University of Wisconsin institutions. They were created by the same respected UW faculty, using the same rigorous UW quality standards as on-campus programs. These are programs that employers will recognize and respect.

» **Your tuition will not increase.**

New this year is the Flex Tuition Guarantee: your tuition will not increase as long as you are actively enrolled in your program. With our popular flat-rate tuition model, what you see is what you'll pay from start to finish.

» **Receive personalized support.**

In UW Flexible Option programs, you progress through your coursework on your own independent schedule. Along the way, your dedicated mentor—called an Academic Success Coach—and your course faculty will ensure you have the level of support you need to be successful.

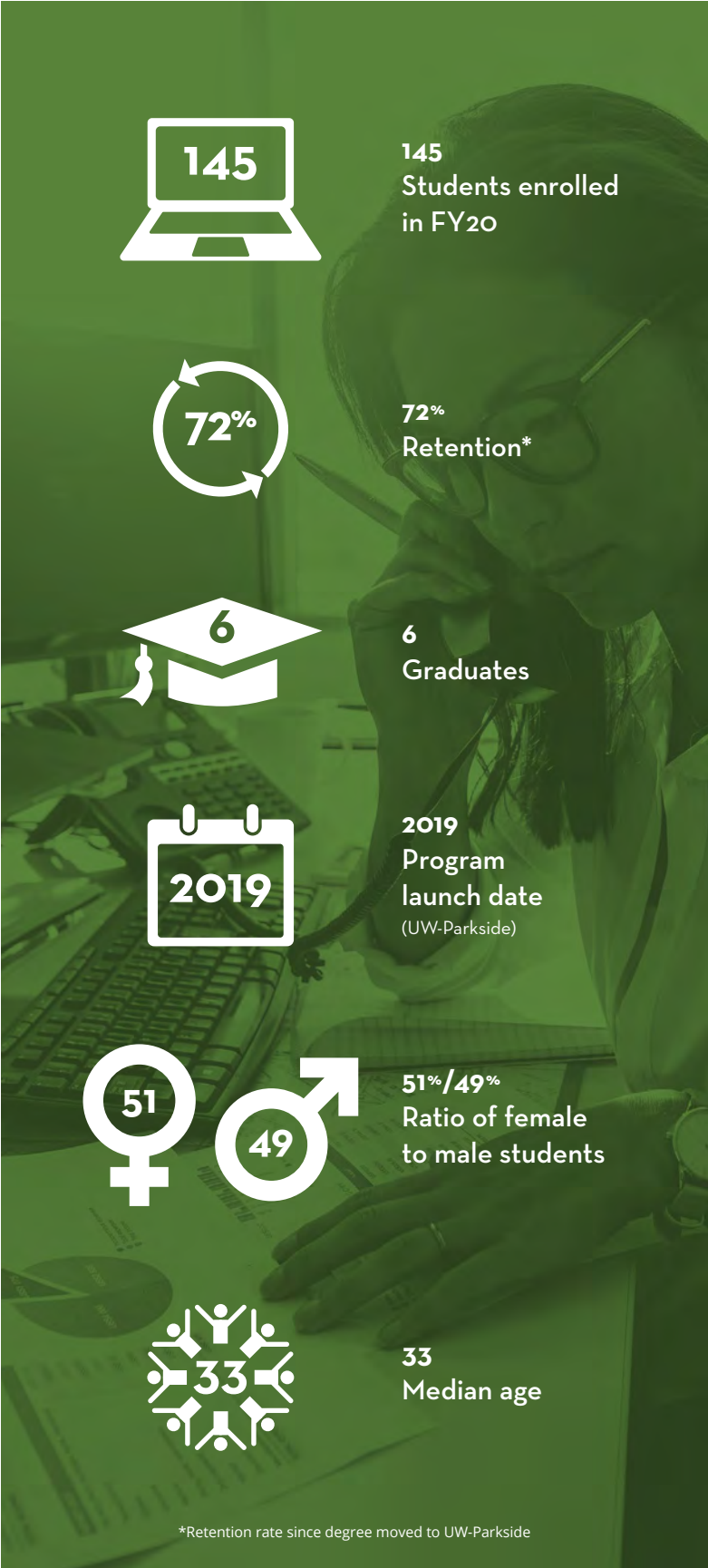
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration



The first bachelor's degree offered in partnership with UW-Parkside, the innovative Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) degree provides students a well-rounded business education. In this program, students master 20 competency areas that are essential to successful business administration. Students experience a project-based curriculum, which is designed to mimic scenarios that students will experience in their workplace.

Offered by the College of Business, Economics, and Computing, the BSBA degree is the first and only competency-based degree offered by an AACSB-accredited business school. AACSB International is the gold standard of business education accreditors, with fewer than 5% of programs internationally meeting their high standard. The degree was named the third most affordable online business school in the country by GreatBusinessSchools.org for 2020. Several faculty—like Dr. Chalasani and Dr. McGovern—received awards of excellence in teaching and research in their fields.

Since inception, the BSBA degree program has built a strong culture of continuous improvement. In 2019-20, the program team conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis on how students moved through the program, and identified several ways to make the program experience even stronger. As a result, the course-pathway was updated to better balance managerial, technical, and quantitative competencies; all courses in the BSBA program will have their first structural revision in the coming years; and the program faculty will be building a new introduction to business course in 2020-2021 to orient students to the profession.



First Business Administration Graduate Uses Degree to Further Dentistry Career

When Stacy Prodell was in high school, she already knew where she wanted to establish her career—the dental industry. During her senior year, she got on-the-job dental assistant training and after graduation began to work full time as a dental assistant.

Originally, Stacy planned to go back to school to become a dental hygienist, but she was surprised by her love for assisting. After 15 years in that role, she was promoted to dental office manager, where Stacy found a new passion in the business side of dentistry. However, with these new responsibilities, she knew she needed to step up to the plate and grow, and obtaining her bachelor's degree was crucial.

During her search, a [UW Flexible Option Bachelor of Science in Business Administration](#) (BSBA) ad grabbed Stacy's attention. Unlike the previous classes she took, this program was 100 percent online, which appealed to her even more.

"The next thing about this program that really sold me was that it is self-paced," Stacy said. "I knew I could complete my degree as fast or as slow as I needed, and that really fit my life because I didn't know how taking on coursework and projects were going to affect my family and career."

Today, Stacy is proud to be the first graduate of this UW-Parkside BSBA degree, offered in the UW Flexible Option format, and she hopes other adult learners with busy jobs and families know that they too can get a degree on their own time.

Students in the UW-Parkside BSBA degree, offered through the UW Flexible Option, have the ability to learn when and where they choose. Progress is not limited by a traditional semester or term-based schedule, and students are allowed to take breaks throughout their studies as needed.

Through an [innovative curriculum](#), students focus on mastering competencies and skills by completing projects and passing assessments assigned to specific areas such as finance, operations management, information systems, supply chain management, and more. With this format, students are able to expand upon and apply their current knowledge and previous education to progress more quickly through the program.

Upon graduation, students receive their bachelor's degree from UW-Parkside, which is among the [less than 5 percent of business degrees](#) worldwide that are accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

Taking advantage of UW Flexible Option's self-paced learning modality, Stacy successfully navigated life's unpredictable road bumps, while still staying on track with her degree. Instead of being an extra stressor when other areas of her life needed more attention, Stacy found peace of mind thanks to the program's flexibility. For example, there were a few times when her father was in the hospital and her priorities shifted.

"It was nice to know during that time that it was OK if I didn't get everything done during subscription periods," Stacy said. "If I didn't finish a project, I could take an 'in-progress' grade and then pick up where I left off. Or, in some cases I knew when I needed to work ahead on assignments. If I had hard deadlines or needed to meet in-person for classes, I wouldn't have been able to, so I am grateful that UW Flexible Option was made for people like me."

With such a positive online degree experience behind her, Stacy is now ready to take on her next adventure: an online master's degree in business administration (MBA) from UW-Parkside. Stacy admits that she had no intention of going on to graduate school, but after earning her bachelor's degree, she wanted to keep the momentum going. Additionally, Stacy's employers at Elite Smiles Dental have been incredibly supportive of her ambitious drive to continue her education through UW Flexible Option and now for her MBA.

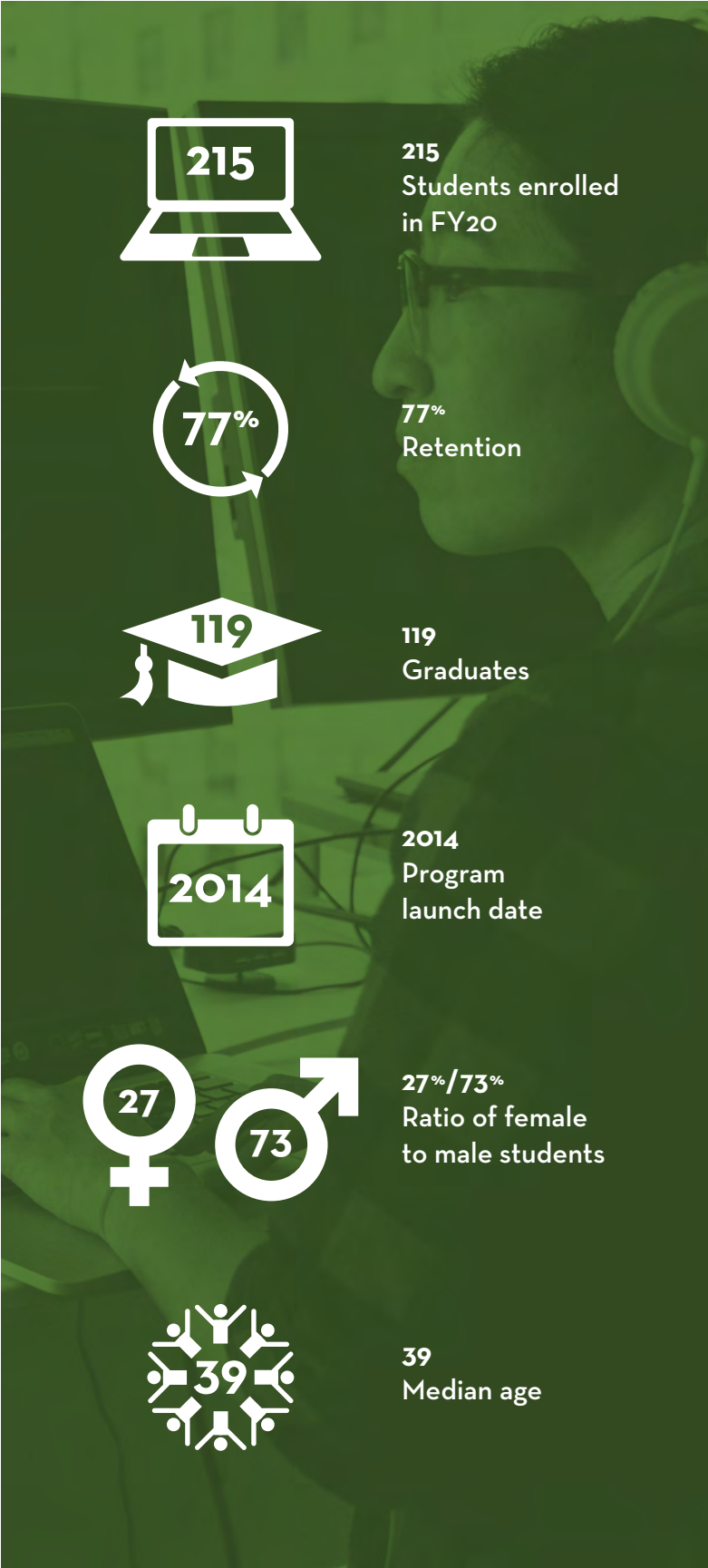
Reflecting on her experience, Stacy has a few pieces of advice for prospective students: "If you were like me—really afraid of how much time getting your degree is going to take away from your family life—just know that it didn't impact mine even a quarter as much as I thought it was going to. I think there's a lot of people like me who would really benefit from an online program like this. It has changed my life, so why not yours too?"

Bachelor of Science in
**Information
Science &
Technology**



The Bachelor of Science in Information Science & Technology (IST) program, offered by UW-Milwaukee's School of Information Studies, prepares students to be IT leaders in this increasingly digital economy. This curriculum emphasizes core IT skills like front-end web design, and database management, information architecture, human-computer interaction, information organization, storage and retrieval, and applications of the Internet. This program is specifically designed for industry professionals with at least one year of IT experience, and its competency-based environment is ideal for these professionals to leverage their experience to more quickly progress toward their degree.

This year, this program surpassed the 100-graduate mark as it continues to be a reliable resource for IT professionals to upskill. In addition, a unique opportunity within this program is that students have the option to use some of their elective credits to earn the Business & Technical Communications certificate, also through the UW Flexible Option. This offers an additional competitive advantage to students in the workplace because effective technical communications is a high-demand skillset. This UW Flexible Option Information Science & Technology is the only IST program of its type in the UW System.



**UW Flexible Option's First Applicant Graduates with Information
Science and Technology Degree**

At least two nights a week, Aaron Apel sat on the sidelines of his daughters' volleyball practices, squeezing in three hours of coursework and readings. This was where he found focus and time to push forward in pursuit of earning his bachelor's degree. Often, his studying would continue later into the night after the rest of his family went to bed.

And this spring, it all paid off.

Aaron is now a proud [University of Wisconsin Flexible Option](#) graduate of the online [Bachelor of Science in Information Science and Technology](#) (IST) program, part of the UW-Milwaukee School of Information Studies.

"I'm the first college graduate in my family," Aaron said. "I've had this personal goal to achieve and prove to myself, and now to have completed my degree—it has finally come full circle."

Being "first" at something seems to be Aaron's specialty. He was also the first person to apply for a UW Flexible Option degree back in 2014. Motivated to advance his career as an IT project manager and business analyst at UW-Madison Office of the Registrar, he learned of UW Flexible Option through contacts at the university, and the flexibility of the online program caught his attention.

"I work full time, and I have three teenage daughters who are heavily involved in club sports, which turns into a year-round endeavor," Aaron said. "We are all extremely busy, so knowing I would have the ability to work at my own pace was really appealing."

UW Flexible Option IST students, like Aaron, have the ability to learn when and where they choose. Progress is not limited by a traditional semester or term-based schedule, and students are allowed to take needed breaks throughout their studies.

Through a [self-paced curriculum](#), students focus on mastering competencies or skills by courses and passing assessments assigned to specific education areas such as web design, systems analysis, database information retrieval systems, and more. With this format, students are able to expand upon and apply their current knowledge and previous education to progress through the program. Upon graduation, students receive their bachelor's degree

from the [UW-Milwaukee School of Information Studies](#) and are prepared to take on a [variety of IST roles](#) across diverse industries.

With IT work experience, an associates degree from Northeast Iowa Community College, and transfer credits from UW-Platteville, Aaron was able to jump into the program.

Aaron works as an IT project manager and business analyst at UW-Madison's Office of the Registrar.

"All of my professional work has revolved around information technology, and the IST Flex program really aligned not only with the work I'm currently doing, but also with where I'd like to develop and advance in leadership," Aaron said. "The fact that it is a UW degree—not a piece of paper from a diploma mill with asterisks and small print—that really made a huge impact on my decision to apply and get started."

Aaron credits the program's advanced information science courses for helping him strengthen his project management and development skills. Already used to spending full work days on a computer, he was very comfortable using the program's online learning management system.

When Aaron became the first UW Flexible Option applicant, one phrase from UW System President Ray Cross stuck in his mind: "If you know it and prove it, you can do it. You can get this degree."

Taking that promise to heart, Aaron is not only excited about being a UW Flexible Option graduate, but he is also looking forward to what the future holds: "This degree is really going to open some doors to advance my career," Aaron said. "It is exciting to see it happening already."

If he can impart some wisdom on prospective UW Flexible Option students, Aaron wants them to know that they too will find success in the program if they dedicate time to it.

"Don't let your anxiety hold you back," Aaron said. "If you have a goal to complete a degree or need one to advance your career, just go for it! The UW Flexible Option has support systems in place and people who are ready to help you navigate through all of your questions and concerns. So if you're hesitant, don't be. Go for it!"

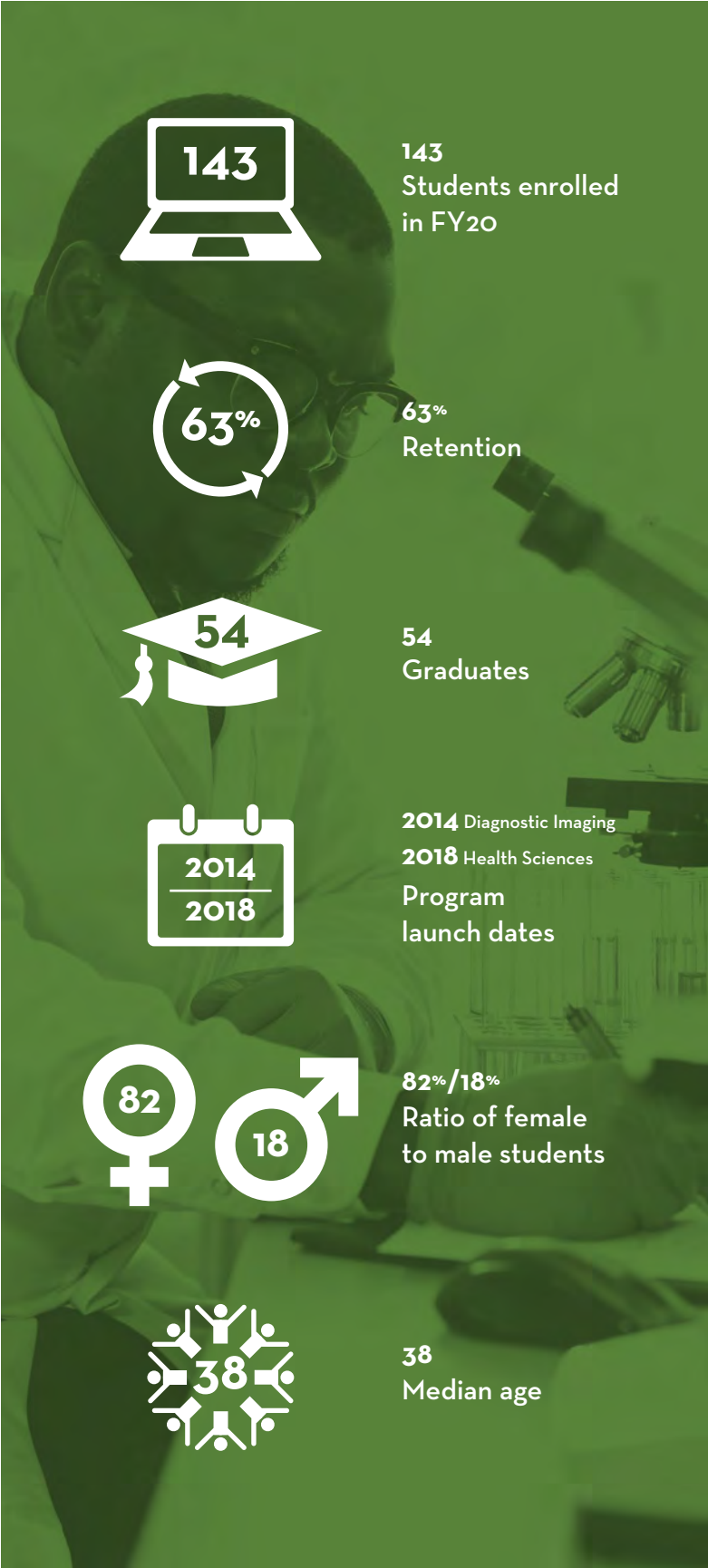
Bachelor of Science in
Biomedical Sciences:
Diagnostic Imaging

Health Sciences



The Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences: Diagnostic Imaging, offered by UW-Milwaukee College of Health Sciences, is a degree-completion program for medical imaging professionals. Building off of an active registry in the field, this degree prepares sonographers, radiologists, MRI technicians, and other imaging professionals to take their career to the next level. In the curriculum, students study a range of skills—such as healthcare leadership, client diversity, and human pathophysiology—which ensures students are staying on top of the in-demand skills that employers need from their future leaders. The UW Flexible Option Diagnostic Imaging program had a major milestone this year by celebrating its 50th graduate (and counting!).

The UW-Milwaukee College of Health Sciences offers a second degree-completion program in the UW Flexible Option, a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences: Health Sciences. This program is for students who currently have 60 credits, or an associate degree, and are looking to finish their bachelor's degree. This broad-based health sciences degree is ideal for students who are looking to advance their career in a diverse array of healthcare settings, such as hospitals, general care facilities, public and private agencies, nonprofits, and other health-related organizations. This degree can also be the foundation for students interested in advanced healthcare degree programs. Having just launched in 2018, this Health Science degree is still growing, and this year had its first graduate (read on to see her story)!



**First Health Sciences Graduate Says UW Flexible Option Was the
‘Best Decision’ for Her Career**

When Jordan Schumacher called an enrollment adviser to learn more about [UW Flexible Option's online programs](#), she didn't know what to expect. Working as a physical therapist assistant at an outpatient clinic in Washington state, Jordan had a fully stacked schedule, and the idea of going back to school was daunting.

Her previous online learning experience wasn't ideal either. While she enjoyed the information she learned in the online BS in Nutrition program, the courses were structured like on-campus classes with inflexible deadlines, which didn't align with her full-time work. After completing a few courses, Jordan decided to take a break.

A couple years later, Jordan began researching online programs again. In her spreadsheet of contenders, the UW Flexible Option made the list.

"I had my first call with a UW Flex enrollment adviser, and it was phenomenal!" Jordan said. "I told her I wasn't looking to change my career, but that I wanted to finish my degree so I could have more options in my future. The enrollment adviser brought up the [UW Flexible Option Health Sciences](#) degree, and it literally sounded perfect for me."

Jordan was so blown away by her initial phone call that her program search ended. Ready to give online learning another go, she applied. This year, she became the first graduate of the 100% online UW-Milwaukee Bachelor of Sciences in Biomedical Sciences: Health Sciences degree offered through the UW Flexible Option.

Through an [innovative curriculum](#), students focus on mastering competencies and skills by completing projects and passing assessments assigned to specific health science areas such as nutrition, technical writing, human pathophysiology, professional development, and more. In this flexible format, students are able to expand upon and apply their current knowledge and previous education to progress more quickly through the program.

Upon graduation, students receive their bachelor's degree from the [UW-Milwaukee College of Health Sciences](#), which is widely recognized by employers for offering the largest number of health-related degree programs in Wisconsin. The research conducted by the UW-Milwaukee College

of Health Sciences [faculty and staff](#) encompasses groundbreaking urban and population studies, biomedical research, advances in movement science, rehabilitation research and development, applied clinical technologies, and disease-prevention approaches.

The UW Flexible Option Health Sciences program was "night and day" compared to Jordan's previous online education experience. With the "pay-as-you-go" option, she was able to accelerate her pace and complete assessments at a speed that worked with her job and responsibilities, not against them.

She started with the human pathophysiology courses, because she felt like she could find a balance of learning new concepts while applying her knowledge from working in physical therapy. To keep herself on track, Jordan created a calendar where she devoted specific times to finish assessments. This helped her see the big picture, all while feeling in control of her learning experience.

Two courses in particular, "Disability, Society, and the Person" and "Inclusive Disability," directly applied to Jordan's work, and she was able to use what she learned right away with her patients. "I learned really beneficial information," Jordan said. "It strengthened my perspective and how I communicate with people who have different needs."

With her bachelor's degree now completed, Jordan feels accomplished, but she isn't ready to slow down. Now, she wants to switch up her focus. Instead of prioritizing her own learning, she is eager to help teach others—particularly the student interns who come through her workplace.

"My next goal is to find a way to teach in a physical therapist assistant program and to become more involved with the educational side of my work," Jordan said. "I have my degree and a job that I love, and now I am confident in branching out to other opportunities. The UW Flexible Option has been the best decision in the world for my life and career!"

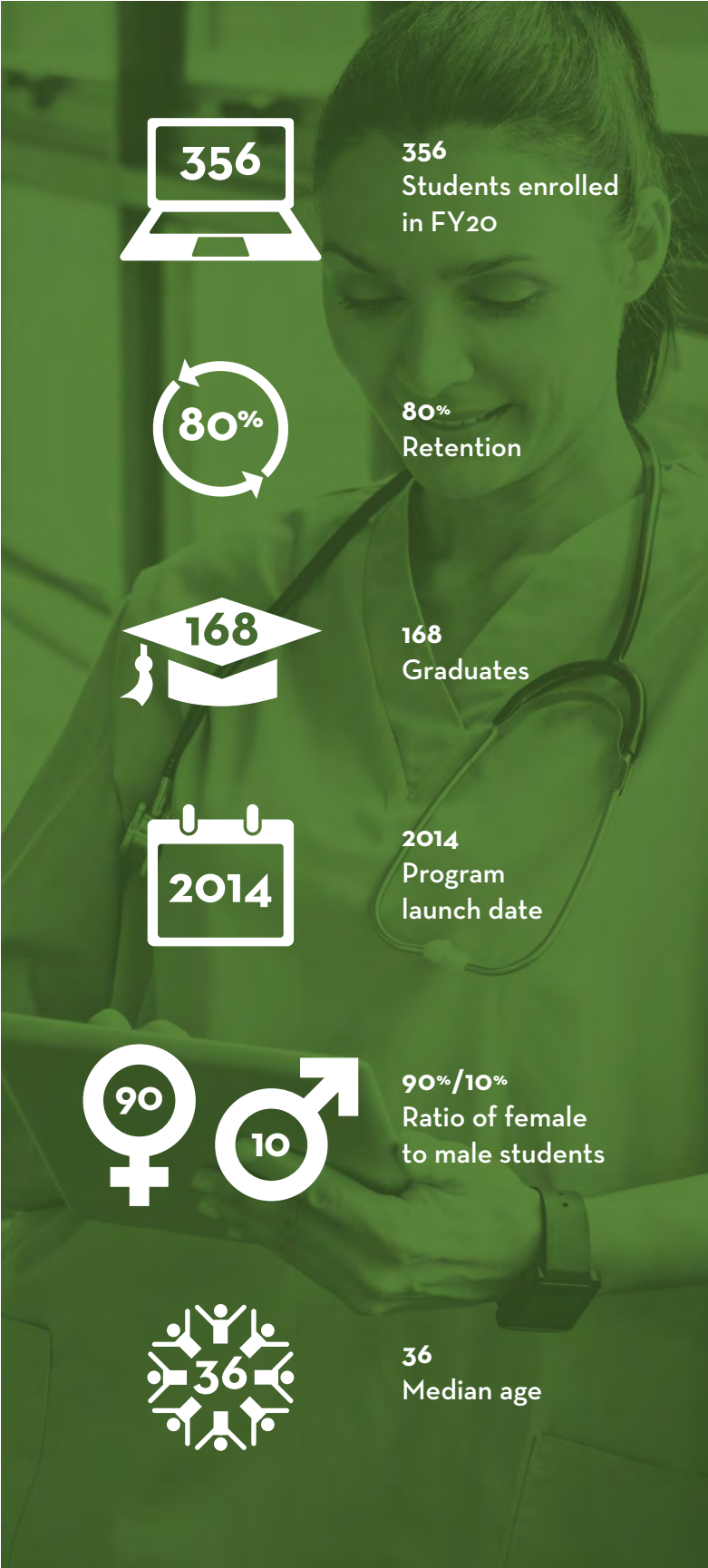
Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN to BSN)



The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program is a convenient, innovative option for RN licensed nurses to earn their bachelor's degree. Offered through the UW-Milwaukee College of Nursing—a nursing college in the top 15% of the nation—this program helps nurses build on their work experience and their associates degree to more quickly earn their BSN. Students master a range of competencies that are in demand from hospitals and clinics, such as evidence-based practice, community health nursing, and chronic care management.

This award-winning program is continually recognized for its excellence in nursing education, and 2019-2020 was no exception. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) awarded the *2019 Innovations in Professional Nursing Education Award for Public Colleges and Universities* to this UW Flexible Option program. This award is a major accomplishment in the industry. Further, our academic program director and faculty member, Lisa Mihlbauer, received the Daisy Award for Extraordinary Nursing Faculty. This prestigious award showcases the high caliber of instructors in this program, and is a major accomplishment for Lisa.

This year, the UW Flexible Option RN to BSN program expanded its ability to serve nurses in the Milwaukee area by earning the Aurora Preferred partner status. This status allows nurses in the Aurora network to use additional workplace reimbursement to earn their BSN. There were 48 graduates from this program in FY20, and with an average of over 200 active students, this program has a demonstrable impact on Wisconsin's nursing workforce.



Infusion Nurse Earns BSN at Her Own Pace Through the UW Flexible Option

With the UW Flexible Option, students aren't tied to semester schedules and instead choose their own pace to complete their degrees. Alumna Denise Herriges chose to finish her RN to BSN degree in two years.

Denise had planned to attend college right after high school. But life took some twists and turns and she instead spent much of her life in Paris. At age 42, Denise returned to the U.S. along with her three daughters, wondering how she would provide for her young family as a single mother.

It wasn't until she watched a hospice nurse care for her father that a lightbulb went off.

"Right then, I knew I wanted to become a nurse. I thought, 'I'm compassionate, I'm smart. I can do this.'"

To support her household, Denise earned an Associate Degree in Nursing from Moraine Park Technical College in 2011. Soon after, she became an infusion nurse at Kraemer Cancer Center, part of the Froedtert Network.

Then at age 49, Denise decided to pursue her bachelor's degree.

She researched nursing degrees and discovered the UW Flexible Option competency-based RN to BSN program. Students progress at their own pace and aren't confined to a rigid weekly or semester-based schedule. Instead, they plan their education in twelve-week subscription periods.

The curriculum is developed by University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee faculty—the same faculty who teach on-campus and online nursing courses. The degree is the same well-respected traditional University of Wisconsin degree on-campus and online students earn.

"The lack of classroom time appealed to me most. I was raising three kids by myself. I live 45 minutes from UW-Milwaukee so going to campus wasn't an option. And this is a reputable degree! It's not from some obscure, online no-name institution."

Denise made a plan to graduate in two years. Typically, she took three courses each subscription period. In the summer, though, she only took two courses so she and her children could enjoy their much-anticipated, annual camping trips.

With the UW Flexible Option, Denise was able to use her knowledge and experience as a nurse to progress more quickly through some of the curriculum.

"I'm a member of the Ethics Committee at the hospital. My experience helped me tremendously with a course titled Global Health: Ethics and Human Rights. I wrote papers on leadership and chronic care that used real oncology examples related to policy changes and caring for terminally ill patients. I definitely got through some courses faster than others because of my nursing knowledge."

Denise credits her degree for her increased influence at the Kraemer Cancer Center.

"I enjoy my job so much more. Infusion nurses already have a great deal of responsibility administering chemotherapy. In addition, I'm now able to handle patient education. When someone is newly diagnosed with cancer, I explain the treatment, what side effects patients can expect, and how to cope. I wouldn't have the opportunity to do this with just an associate degree."

"I highly recommend the UW Flexible Option for nurses who work full-time and need to go at their own pace."

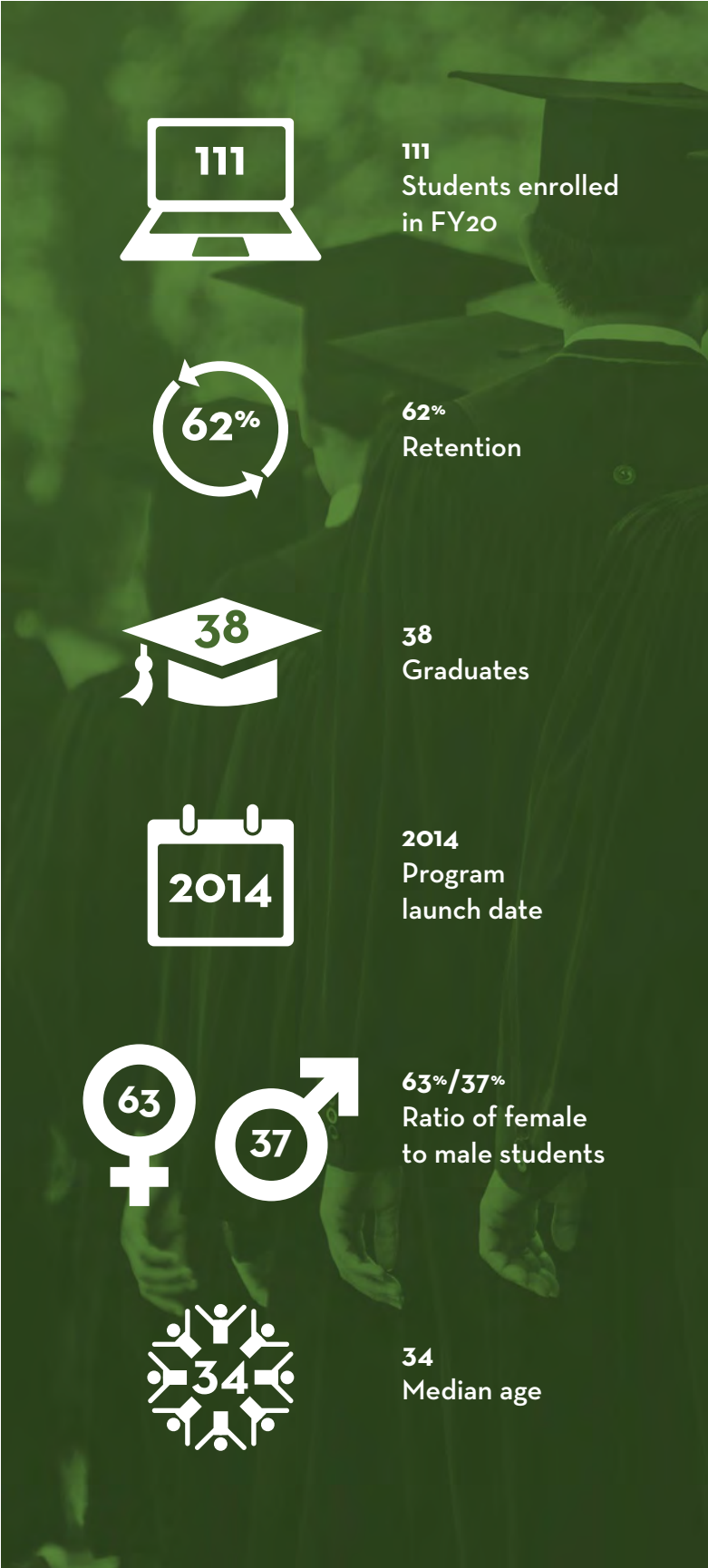
Associate of
Arts & Sciences



The Associate of Arts & Sciences (AAS) is a broad-based liberal arts degree that gives its graduates a strong foundation for success in both the workplace and in future academic pursuits. AAS students demonstrate essential skills in critical thinking, communication, as well as a breadth of content-specific knowledge in social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, mathematics, and fine arts. This academic year, 2019-2020, was the first year this degree program was offered by UW-Milwaukee College of General Studies (having previously been offered by the UW Colleges).

The AAS degree is ideal for students who plan to pursue a bachelor's degree but need to first satisfy general education requirements: it can be applied to over 200 baccalaureate majors at all thirteen UW System schools. That makes this program an excellent choice for adults who are looking to go back to school and make progress toward a bachelor's degree, but maybe are not sure of which bachelor's degree they want to choose.

In 2019-20, this program redesigned a half dozen of its courses to ensure they are up to date and using the latest learning tools. A new course, Spanish 102, is under development and will launch in Fall 2020. Additionally, this year's academic assessment of AAS students found that its students perform as well or better than a nation-wide sample on quantitative reasoning and written communication. Enrollments considerably increased this year as more and more adult students realize the value an associate degree has in helping them meet their professional and personal goals.



UW Flexible Option Grad Finds Her Passion in UW Health and Wellness Management Program

Katie Limberg is grateful that she took the step to advance her education through UW Flexible Option, especially because her college journey hasn't always been clear. After graduating from high school, Katie attended UW-Stevens Point for one semester, but she soon realized she wanted to be closer to home with her sisters. There were also a lot of new developments in her life, including her fiancé landing a new job that required a move. About two years after leaving UW-Stevens Point, Katie was ready to go back to school, and she knew an online program would better fit her needs.

With the ability to transfer her previous college credits and the freedom to complete lessons and assignments on her own schedule, Katie decided that the [UW Flexible Option Associate of Arts and Sciences](#) (AAS) degree was right for her.

"I'm a planner, so I was motivated to put a calendar together of all of my coursework in order to stick with it," Katie said. "While I was in UW Flex, I learned that the time you put into the work really shows in the grade you get out of it. There

were definitely nights where I had a lot of work and I wanted to do other things. But knowing my work would pay off in the end—that kept me going."

In December 2017, Katie obtained her Associate of Arts and Sciences degree through UW Flexible Option. She gathered so much momentum from the online structure that she knew she wanted to dive right back in. A year later, she enrolled in her first semester of the 100% online UW Health and Wellness Management program.

"Having gone through UW Flex was a huge benefit to me," Katie said. "I learned how to navigate online coursework and work out a schedule that I really thrived in, and I was able to take that experience into the UW Health and Wellness Management program."

Read Katie's full story on the [UW Health and Wellness Management website](#).

After earning this AAS through the UW Flexible Option, students have a wide range of online bachelor's degrees they can choose from across the University of Wisconsin System. Here are just a few examples:



Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences: Health Sciences



Bachelor of Science in Health and Wellness Management



Bachelor of Science in Business Administration



Bachelor of Science in Sustainable Management



Bachelor of Science in Information Science & Technology



Bachelor of Science in Applied Computing

Substance Use Disorders Counselor Certificate



In partnership with UW-Madison's Division of Continuing Studies, this noncredit certificate is specifically designed for practitioners in Wisconsin looking to become certified as a Substance Abuse Counselor (SAC). In a recent [DHS report](#) on the state of mental health and substance abuse, 78% of those who needed substance use treatment in Wisconsin did not receive it. That's over 355,000 individuals statewide. These staggering statistics represent a major loss of life, opportunity, and economic potential in Wisconsin. Every community in the state—and especially rural ones—have an increasing need for Substance Abuse Counselors to help close the treatment gap.

This highly successful program has graduated over 300 professionals so far, with dozens more actively enrolled. It is designed for human service professionals with a bachelor's degree in a behavioral health related field, who can use this certification to build off their existing counseling training to more efficiently help address substance use disorders. In this past fiscal year, the program piloted a new program where it directly partnered with agencies, and provided a discount to agencies looking to train several staff. This program pilot was widely successful, and will be continually expanded in the next year.

UW Flexible Option Partners with Health Agencies to Help Prepare Substance Abuse Counselors

Substance abuse disorders affect millions of people nationwide each year—whether through an individual's experience, an impacted family, or the broader cost to society. Helping people overcome substance abuse disorders requires a qualified, trained [Substance Abuse Counselor](#) (SAC). And demand for those counselors is increasing. The US Department of Labor predicts a [22 percent increase](#) over the next six years in Wisconsin.

That's why UW-Madison's [Substance Use Disorders Counseling Certificate](#) program—offered through the UW Flexible Option—is now partnering directly with agencies, clinics, and mental health providers. This certificate provides the 360 specialized-educational hours required to earn a SAC license. After finishing the program's first 100 hours, students are eligible to sit for their Substance Abuse Counselor-In Training license (SAC-IT).

Unified Community Services is the county behavioral health agency for Iowa and Grant counties, and was one of the first agency partners with the UW Flexible Option. Jeff Lockhart, Agency Director, shared that Unified Community Services recently transitioned its mental health and Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) programs into a combined behavioral health program. The goal of this move is overcoming treatment

silos and providing integrated dual-diagnosis treatment.

"The challenge has been hiring clinicians who are dually credentialed, as there is a significant shortage of such," Jeff said. "The Substance Use Disorder Counseling Certificate program has been the solution to this, allowing our mental health clinicians to obtain their SAC-IT certificates."

As a [competency-based](#) program, the Substance Use Disorder Counseling Certificate is ideal for mental health professionals looking to become dually-licensed. Students move entirely at their own pace—100% online—through the 24-week program. There are no live log-on times or set course deadlines.

It's those attributes that make the Substance Use Disorder Counseling Certificate a great option for partnering with rural agencies.

"While there is a significant shortage of mental health providers, the shortage of AODA providers appears to be far worse; and the shortage of dually-licensed clinicians worst of all," Jeff said. "This program and others like it can help to fill this gap while simultaneously dismantling the silos between mental health and AODA treatment."



Business & Technical Communications Certificate



In today's economy, it is more important than ever for workers to have a diverse array of skills and be flexible in their professional areas. The Business and Technical Communications Certificate takes an innovative approach with helping students develop practical skills in writing, research, communication, and technologies that will enable students to improve their skills for working. Over six courses (18 credits), students master skills in strategic writing, technical communications, project management, and information design. This certificate can either be taken as a stand-alone credential, to supplement a different bachelor's degree, or to satisfy elective requirements in other UW Flexible Option programs.

Project Management Certificate



Project management skills are essential in nearly every industry, and they increase the value of employees regardless of their formal title. As a result, today's employers are looking for employees who can independently manage complex projects both large and small. This certificate is focused on the knowledge and skills necessary to competently manage projects from start to finish. The curriculum covers both the technical and interpersonal skills managing projects and project teams. This certificate can be earned as a stand-alone credential. Additionally, students enrolled in UW-Parkside's Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, also offered in the UW Flexible Option, can earn this certificate as part of their bachelor's degree to satisfy elective credits. In 2019-2020, the faculty worked on a substantial curricular redesign of this certificate which launches September 2020.

Ready to Learn More?

Here's how you get in touch.

Interested in pursuing a program?

Call **608-262-2011** or email **flex@uwex.edu** to speak to an adviser.

Interested in partnering with us?

Email **flex@uwex.edu**

98% of Flex graduates
recommend
their program*



UW flexible option
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM

flex.wisconsin.edu

University of Wisconsin Extended Campus
5602 Research Park Blvd., Suite 303
Madison, WI 53719