The University of Wisconsin-Extension hires new manager for its online Bachelor of Science in Health and Wellness Management Program

Theresa Islo joins Division of Continuing Education, Outreach & E-Learning as Program Manager

Madison, Wis. – (February, 13, 2014) – The University of Wisconsin-Extension welcomes Theresa Islo as the new manager for its online Bachelor of Science in Health and Wellness Management program. Islo joins the UW-Extension’s Division of Continuing Education, Outreach & E-Learning (CEOEL) from the Wellness Council of Wisconsin, where she served as director of operations.

The UW Health and Wellness Management Bachelor of Science program is an online, multi-campus collaborative, degree-completion program, created through partnerships between UW-Extension and UW-La Crosse, UW-River Falls, UW-Stevens Point, and UW-Superior. It is designed for students who want to complete their bachelor’s degrees, or students with bachelor’s degrees who want to make career changes. The program’s unique, collaborative structure draws on the expertise of faculty from campuses across the UW System. The program focuses on providing students with the skills necessary to take leadership roles related to health and wellness, including positions such as health coaches, wellness managers, worksite wellness coordinators, and directors of sports, fitness and wellness.

As program manager, Islo will work alongside faculty and staff to establish and monitor systems, policies, and practices that support the UW Health and Wellness Management program’s goal to prepare students to address the challenges of rising healthcare costs by taking leadership positions that promote comprehensive wellness programming.

“I am thrilled to be a part of the UW-Extension’s Health and Wellness Management program,” Islo says. “Graduates from the online UW Health and Wellness Management Bachelor of Science program will be prepared to embrace the challenge of the changing health and wellness fields through their abilities to design, develop, implement, and maintain health and wellness programs for their employers.”

Islo brings tremendous experience in the health and wellness field after working for nearly a decade with the Wellness Council of Wisconsin, an affiliate of the Wellness Council of America (WELCOA). Islo began at WELCOA in 2005 as associate director before taking over director duties in 2008. Her primary responsibilities included managing the marketing and coordination of worksite wellness events around the state. Prior to her time with the Wellness Council, Islo worked in benefits for a Milwaukee-based healthcare system, and served as an employee benefits consultant for several years. She says her career path has provided the opportunity to see firsthand the increasing demands organizations feel when incorporating health and wellness into the company culture.
“There is a growing awareness in the business community of the need to foster healthy lifestyles among the workforce,” Islo says. “Increasingly, employers realize the need to integrate worksite wellness into their organizations, and the value of having a trained professional lead the initiative. I look forward to helping our graduates prepare to step into these roles.”

George Kroeninger, Assistant Dean for Program Development and Management at UW-Extension, Continuing Education, Outreach & E-Learning, says Islo’s strength in understanding the skills employers seek as they look to hire health and wellness-trained employees will be an asset to the program and students.

“Theresa brings over 20 years of experience in the employee benefits and wellness fields to this position,” Kroeninger says. “Her deep understanding of the field of worksite wellness will be invaluable as we continually seek to improve the UW Health and Wellness Management program.”

In her role, Islo will look to maintain the momentum the UW Health and Wellness Management program has built since its launch in 2011. In just one year, program enrollments grew from 272 in spring 2013 to 401 in spring 2014. Kroeninger says that this growth in enrollment speaks to the quality of the program as students look to take advantage of more than 20 percent employment growth expected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in the health and wellness fields.

“If a student is looking to lead worksite wellness programs or provide significant support to assist a company’s wellness efforts, this is the program for them,” Kroeninger says.

To learn more about the UW Health and Wellness Management program, visit http://hwm.wisconsin.edu/, email hwm@uwex.edu, or call 1-877-UW-LEARN.

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