The University of Wisconsin-Madison is the first university accepted independent of a campus museum to participate in the NSF-supported Portal to the Public program founded as the Wisconsin Idea STEM Fellows. UW-Madison joins two other university connected sites at the University of North Carolina and University of Michigan as Portal to the Public member institutions.

The primary goal of the Wisconsin Idea STEM Fellows program is to help researchers and STEM professionals share science with the public to promote appreciation and understanding of current science research. The program focuses on enhancing face-to-face interactions and assisting in design of table-top Exploration Stations with the outcome of a scientist interacting with a few people at a time rather than emphasizing mass communication.

The Wisconsin Idea holds that “the boundaries of the university are the boundaries of the state.” As such, everyone in Wisconsin is a co-owner of and learner in the university. UW President Charles Van Hise said, “I shall never be content until the beneficent influence of the university reaches every family of the state” in his 1905 speech to members of the Legislature and the Wisconsin Press Association.

2014-2015 Participants
Val Blair
Morgridge Institute for Research
Zachary Carroll
Environmental Engineering
Elizabeth Copehey
Wisconsin Geological & Natural History Survey
Amanda Dreinan
Hematology and Oncology
Tracy Drier
Chemistry
Kevin Galles
Infectious Disease Lab, Pediatrics
Maria Gracia Mendosa
Cell and Regenerative Biology, Keely Laboratory
Nasim Jama
Cellular and Molecular Biology
Jenn Kempf
Wisconsin Energy Institute
Jan Klaue\r
State Lab of Hygiene
Kathy Kline
UW Sea Grant Institute
Edward Leonard
Physics
Laurence Loew
Genetics, Systems Biology
Jay Ludden
4D Art
Carol McCarthy
Wisconsin Geological & Natural History Survey
Aaron Miller
WISCIENCE
Arianna Murphy
Geography
Dan Murphy
Morgridge Institute for Research
Elvin Morales Perez
Chemistry
Maja Papaj
Psychiatry / Neuroscience Training Program
Harshita Rajanala
Cell and Molecular Biology
Sri Ram
Systems Biology Theme, Wisconsin Institute for Discovery
Arnaldo Serrano
Chemistry
Ben Taylor
MRSEC
Kabao Vang
Morgridge Institute for Research
Tianqi Zhang
Chemistry

Wisconsin Idea STEM Fellow Program Impacts:
Impacts on Scientist:
- Creative outlet
- Highly comfortable engaging with public audiences
- Opportunities to meet BI requirements
- Effective communication of ideas
- Networking opportunities
- Talent, opportunity, gratitude

Impacts on public audiences:
- Face to face interactions that relate to real research
- Becoming a stakeholder in science research, accessibility
- Increase science savvy: exploration and inquiry
- High quality interactions showing creativity, ingenuity, community
- Access to researchers and other resources

Impacts on institutions and staff:
- Network of trained scientists for public engagement
- Value of outreach and communications for scientist professional evaluations
- University as a destination for life long learning
- Increased awareness about public programs and opportunities

Network as of March 2015

Program Leadership Team
Dave Carson, Michelle Carter
Maggie Honer, Wisconsin Institute for Discovery
Elizabeth Lian, WISCIENCE
Frank Sligar, Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF)

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Wisconsin Idea STEM Fellows Program is registered with the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) as Wisconsin Idea STEM Fellows and is not considered a tax-exempt charitable organization.