Request to Create the Institute for Systems Change and Peacebuilding at the University of Wisconsin -- Milwaukee

A. Proposed Name: Institute for Systems Change and Peacebuilding

**B. Brief Description, Purpose and Justification:**

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) and the Partners for Health schools and colleges, propose the establishment of the UWM *Institute for Systems Change and Peacebuilding* (The Institute). The Institute will build upon recommendations from the Master of Sustainable Peacebuilding 2019 five-year program review to develop robust university-community partnerships that strategically interconnect, align, and engage expertise and resources to tackle the complex and intractable challenges of the 21st Century – the need for which has been emphasized by disparities magnified by the ongoing pandemic, and racial equity and justice movements.

The Institute's primary goal will be to cultivate the deep and evolving dialogue among diverse community members, university faculty, students and alumni, which supports the relationships required to engage in the difficult conversations necessary to address the issues impacting sustainable peace. The Institute's activities will utilize participatory systems-thinking approaches to create shared understandings of context and theories of change on issues of importance to the community. These will in turn in serve as the foundation upon which to develop proposals for collaborative initiatives based upon aligned interests and collective action to promote and systems change.

The Institute will collaborate closely with existing undergraduate and graduate programs to provide opportunities for student experiential learning, professional training, and research. There is a great need for practitioners with the capacities to engage the multidimensional, highly dynamic problems where the interrelationship and interdependencies between social and environmental phenomena are present simultaneously and at multiple scales (e.g. violence, poverty, disasters, economic performance, public health, crime, inter-group relations, ecological damage, gender dynamics, political crises, etc.).

- *Vision:*
  - University and Community interests and assets aligned in equitable partnership and mutual vitality to engage the complex interacting systems that affect health, well-being and sustainable peace.

- *Mission:*
  - Convene and facilitate the deep and evolving dialog among diverse members of the community, university faculty, students and alumni that builds the relationships necessary to engage difficult conversations addressing issues important to the community;
  - Employ participatory systems-thinking approaches to co-create shared understandings of context and theories of systems change that support strategies and proposals supporting aligned actions for collective impact.

To address these challenges, the Institute will strive to bridge among diverse metaphors of knowledge, respecting both evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence to create spaces for campus and community to discover ways to co-create strategy, design for aligned action, evaluate for iterative learning, and adapt to achieve collective impact. The Institute is founded upon the principles of emergence in self-organizing systems, where change occurs through the pathways of relationships. To build sustainable partnerships, relationships must cultivate trust and advance equitable power dynamics. To build sustainable peace, partnerships must effectively learn, adapt, and be resilient in the face of challenges to bring about transformative systems change.
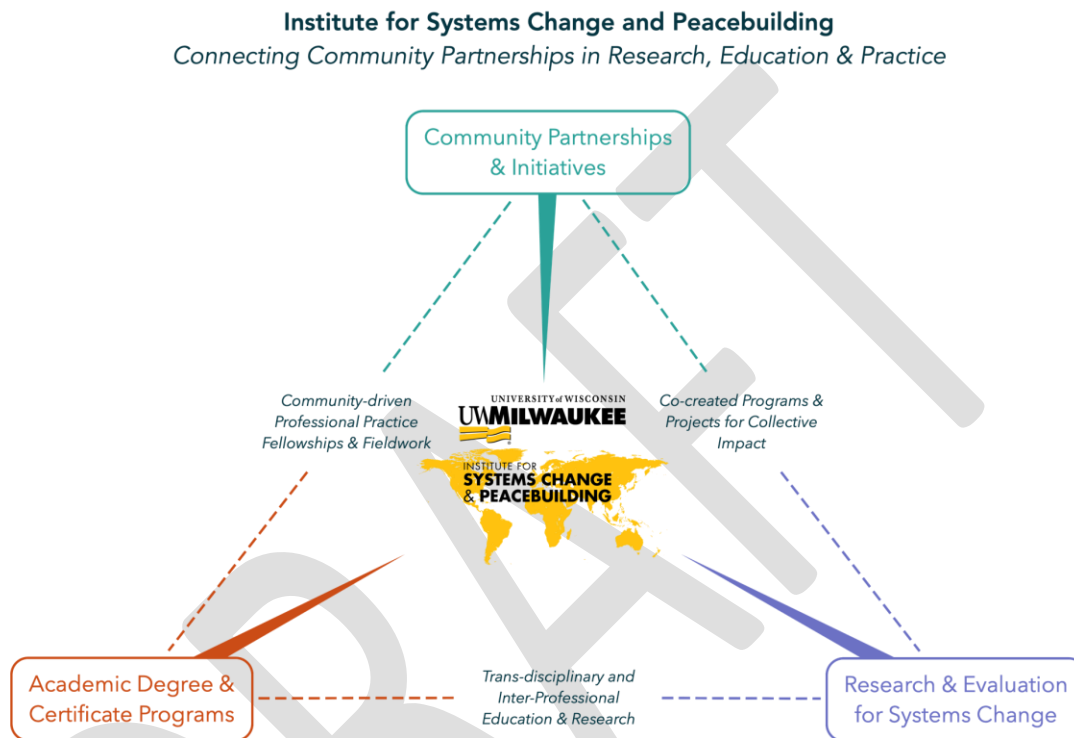
- *Outputs and Outcomes: (Measures of Success)*
  o Substantive long-term relationships and networks related to the systems impacting sustainable peace connecting UWM faculty, students, alumni, and community partners;
  o Sustained and sustaining co-created platforms for funded transdisciplinary multi-investigator research and teaching in support of community-driven goals and objectives;
  o Opportunities for graduate students to work shoulder-to-shoulder with community partners in order to gain first-hand professional practice and field research experiences that employ systems-change learning approaches.

- *Enhancing Campus Networks:*
  o Work synergistically with the Community-Engaged Scholars Network (CESN), Institute for World Affairs (IWA), Center for International Education (CIE), Electa Quinney Institute (EQI), and the Center for Community-based Learning Leadership and Research (CCBLLR) to identify and engage faculty and community partners, and to nurture and maintain meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships.
  o Provide opportunities and funding for students as part of community-engaged programs across campus, including but not limited to the Master of Sustainable Peacebuilding (MSP), Master of Social Work (MSW), Master of Public Health (MPH), Master of Nursing (MN), and Professional Freshwater Science Masters (PSM).

- *The Systems-Change Learning Approach:*

The demands of complex environments often over-match traditional practices that tend to be overly linear, static, and dependent on a level of command and control that is unrealistic in such environments. The Institute is designed to help remedy this challenge through bridging theory and basic research into complex human and environmental systems with applied research and practice. To this point, a core operating tenet of the Institute is valuing practice-based evidence (local and traditional knowledge) as essential in building evidence-based practice (evaluation & research) throughout the *Systems-Change Learning Cycle*:

The Systems-Change Learning Cycle
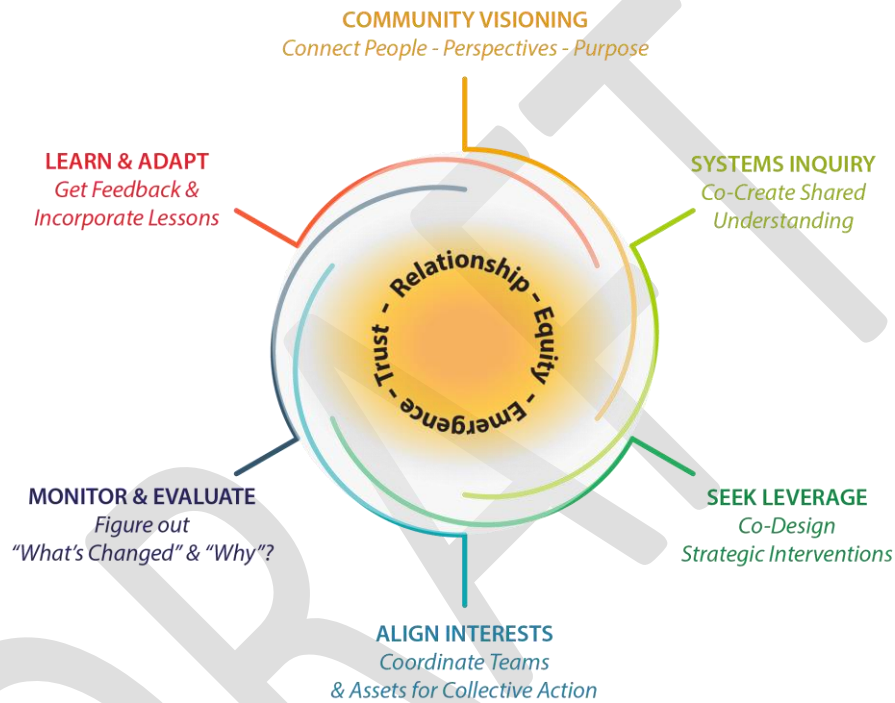
- o **Community Visioning** – Convene UWM and community members to facilitate conversations around shared challenges and shared future visions order to cultivate collaborative networks and enduring partnerships.
- o **Systems Inquiry** – Engage participatory methods and systems tools to develop shared language, explore theories of change, and create collective understanding of complex challenges.
- o **Seek Leverage** – Develop strategies for change and identify potential for co-designed initiatives that enhance equity, community resilience and wellbeing.
- o **Align Interests** – Enable coordinated and collective action, and pursue funding for community-driven projects that support inter-professional and transdisciplinary research and learning and that support professional practice.
- o **Monitor & Evaluate** – Employ holistic complexity-aware monitoring and evaluation methodologies using qualitative and quantitative methods that inform learning and adaptive changes based on the information gathered.
- o **Learn & Adapt** – Accompany UWM and community partners in communicating the information gathered, incorporating feedback, and re-evaluating vision and strategies for continued progress.

- *Institute Programs and Activities:*

  - **Thematic Systems Workgroups**:
    - A foundational activity for the Institute is to hold the container that facilitates critical conversations on and around core themes of concern to the Community, employing a variety of methods that may include circle dialog, world cafe, & participatory mapping among others.
    - Workgroup activities will be structured and operated under guidelines that ensure equitable voice, minimize power differentials, and to engage diverse perspectives.
    - Workgroups will initially engage the first 3 phases of the Systems-Change Learning Approach (Community Visioning – Systems Inquiry — Seeking Leverage). As initiatives develop over time, sub-teams may transition forward to focus around the next 3 phases (Aligned Action — Monitoring and Evaluation — Learn and Adapt).
    - The specific topics for Thematic Systems Workgroups will be identified by the Steering Council. Suggestions for themes the first year, based on existing work include:
      i. Disparity and Equity
        - *Criminal Justice & Decarceration*
        - *Eviction & Homelessness*
      ii. Polarization and Governance
        - *Rural-Urban | Racial Divides*
      iii. Community Wellness and Well-being
        - *Health Food Access*
        - *Youth Leadership Development*
        - *Maternal-Child Health & Birth Outcomes*

  - **Proposal Development and Operations**:
    - As understandings coalesce and ideas for proposals form, Sub-teams from the Workgroups may begin proposal development related to programs and projects. Proposals will be developed in coordination with the Shared Office for the Administration fo Research (SOAR), Office of Sponsored Programs and/or the UWM Development Office (UWM Foundation) as appropriate.
    - Thematic Workgroups may choose to continue to engage with and be participants in proposals and funded programs/projects. It is expected that all associated costs will be incorporated into the proposal budgets.

  - **SCP Community Fellows Program:**
    - SCP Community Fellows are UWM graduate students identified and employed by UWM to fill a specific need of a Partner organization. The development of a position description and selection of a suitable Fellow follows a process agreed upon by the Partner, the Institute Director and Program Coordinator for their degree. All Fellows must be current UWM graduate students or have been admitted for the following academic year at the time of selection.
    - Fellows provide support for ongoing Partner initiatives, while also bringing the new skills and perspectives that they are learning in their community-engaged program. In some cases, Fellows are selected for a specific task (e.g. evaluation, facilitation), while in other cases they are engaged in broader roles to support the Partner's programming. The Partner provides a position description for the Fellow, which is approved by the Institute Director prior to initiating the contract.
    - The most current synopsis of the SCP Fellows program for potential partners to this proposal as Appendix A.

C. Organizational Structure:

- *Membership*:
  - Membership is open to any UWM Faculty, Staff or Alumni, or community-engaged organization who embraces the core tenets of the vision and mission of the Institute. Requests for membership are submitted to the Institute Director and approved by the Steering Council.

- *Membership Categories and Roles:*
  - o Community-engaged Faculty, Staff and Existing Campus Institutes and Centers: Facilitate connections and synergies with University initiatives and resources. The UWM Office of Research lists 78 active Centers and Institutes (https://uwm.edu/centers-institutes/), many of which have vision/mission that may overlap with the interests of sustainable peacebuilding and systems change.
  - o Community Partners: Community members will be drawn from organizations and agencies spanning the diverse sectors of practice, issues and engagement relevant to Milwaukee and globally with intent to assure the relevance of the Institute programs to community needs. Individual persons unaffiliated with specifics organizations may also request membership.
  - o UW-Milwaukee Alumni: Advise on program and quality of student preparation for entry into professional practice.

- *Governance and Steering Council:*

  - o **Institute Staff:**
    - Institute Director: The Wm. Collins Kohler Chair in Systems Change and Peacebuilding (The Chair) will serve as the Director of the Institute. This position is supported by an endowment administered through the UWM Foundation. The Institute Advisory Board will serve as a Search Committee to submit recommendations to the Deans Council of the Partners for Health Schools and Colleges. Upon nomination by the Deans Council, The Chair will be appointed by the Provost to serve a 5-year term. Appointments are renewable as specified in the Donor Agreement with the UWM Foundation.
    - Partnership Coordinator: A Partnership Coordinator will work closely with the Institute Director in support of managing partnership development. Funding for the Coordinator position will be shared between the Institute and participating Deans from the Partners for Health Schools and Colleges. Allocations from funded projects and programs may also be directed in support of the Coordinators position.

  - o **Community Steering Council:**
    - A Community Steering Council for the Institute (Council) will provide guidance and assist in establishing priorities for program activities and actions. The initial Council consist of between 6 to 8 members from each of the following membership categories:
      - Community Partners
      - UW-Milwaukee Faculty and Staff
      - Alumni

    The initial Steering Council will be chosen through group discernment from founding Institute membership and members will serve staggered 3-year terms. New/replacement Council members will be nominated by the Institute membership and selected through a group discernment process with the Council. The Board may decide to modify the size and/or composition of the Council upon approval by vote of a majority of the Institute Membership.

Ex officio voting members of the Council include the Institute Director, the Executive Director of the Center for Community-based Learning Leadership and Research (CCBLLR), and Program Director (or Coordinator) of the Master of Sustainable Peacebuilding (MSP).

Steering Council's responsibilities includes:
- Identify and prioritize topics for Thematic Systems Workgroups.
- Advise and assist in development and promotion of initiatives that emerge from the Thematic Workgroups, including grant writing and donor relations.
- Advise the Chair on budget priorities and resource allocations.
- Approve new requests for membership in the Institute and selection of new/replacement members of the Steering Council.

The Institute Director will serve as interim Council Chair for the first year or until such time as the Council selects a Chair.

Institute for Systems Change and Peacebuilding Organizational Chart
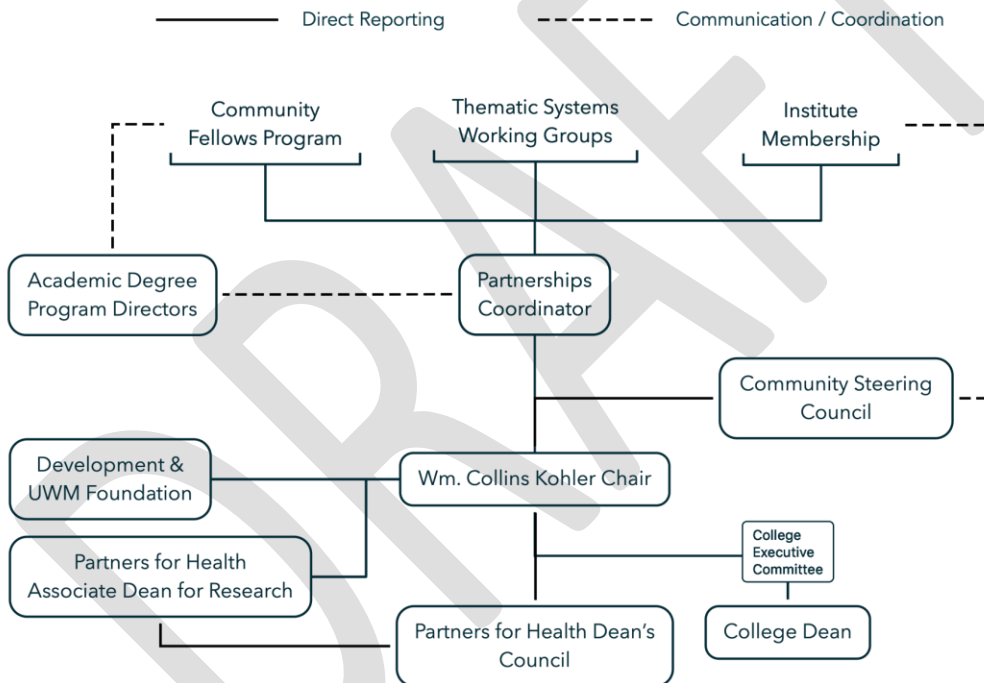
D. Committed Resources

- **Space**:
  - Cunningham Hall 4th Floor, Offices and Collaboration Center (Room 495)
- **Staff**:
  - Director -- Wm. Collins Kohler Chair (Endowed)
  - Partnerships Coordinator (Co-funded by Partners for Health Deans)
- **Budget**:
  - Kohler Endowment:
    - W.C.K. Chair ($100,000 per year from endowment)
    - Program Operations ($75,000 per year for 3 years)

- o <u>Donor Gifts (UWM Foundation Accounts):</u>
  - SCP Fellows (Currently $82,000 funding 4 Fellows)
- o <u>Outreach Services Agreements, Contracts and Grants</u>
  - OSAs for 2020-2021:
    - Milwaukee Housing Authority | Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation | Catholic Charities of Milwaukee | Riverwest Food Pantry | NextDoor Foundation | Walnut Way Conservation Corp. | Groundwork Milwaukee | Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition | Milwaukee Food Council / Wisconsin DHS
- o **Administrative Support:**
  - o Shared Office for Administration of Research (SOAR): Contracts and grants
  - o College of Nursing Business Office – for Outreach Services Agreements and SCP Fellows appointments
  - o UWM Foundation: Donor relations and fundraising

E. Associated Community Partners, University Centers, Faculty and Staff

Community Organizations *(Invited)*	Contact
Milwaukee Evaluation	N. Robinson
Urban Ecology Center	B. Heller
The Omidyar Group	R. Ricigliano
MKE Office of Violence Prevention	R. Moore
Housing Authority City of Milwaukee	P. Williams
MKE Food Council	D. Nabak
Silver Spring Neighborhood Center	D. Hudson
Silver Spring Community Nursing Center	J. Bell-Calvin
Walnut Way	A. Butts
Community Advocates	C. Williams
MKE Muslim Women's Coalition	J. Najeeb
Catholic Charities	C. Reuning
WWBIC/KIVA	K. Jackson
Safe & Sound	B. Spencer
Nextdoor Foundation	T. Sparrow
Riverwest Food Pantry	V. Noth
African American Leadership Alliance Milwaukee	D. Powell

Centers, Institutes & Programs *(Invited)*	Contact
Center for Community-based Learning, Leadership and Research	L. Marks
Electa Quinney Institute	M. Noodin
Institute for World Affairs	D. Savage
Center for Economic Development/MIED	L. Williams
Lubar Entrepreneurship Center	B. Thompson
UW Freshwater Collaborative	M. Jablonski
School of Architecture and Urban Planning	Arijit Sen
Center for Global Health Equity	A. Dressel

Institute for Children and Family Wellbeing	D. Topitzis
Community Engagement & Education	M. Sandy
Zilber School Public Health	E. Ngui
Social Work (HBSSW)	D. Pate

MSP Program Staff

Bridget Brown	Program Coordinator
Lynne Woehrle	Program Director
Joanne Lipo Zovic	Instructor

MSP Advisory Committee	College
Anne Dressel	College of Nursing
Lucy Mkandawire-Valhmu	College of Nursing
Heidi Luft	College of Nursing
Julie Lynn Ellis	College of Nursing
Margaret Noodin	L&S / American Indian Studies
William Wood	L&S / Anthropology
Garry Davis	L&S / Linguistics
Marie Sandy	School of Education
Margret Petrie	School of Freshwater Sciences
Jacques Du Plessis	School of Information Studies
Dimitri Topitzes	School of Social Welfare
Linnea Irina Laestadius	Zilber School of Public Health

F. Five-Year Plan

**Year 1 Focus – Steering Council Formation, Membership & Institute Visioning**
- Membership Visioning and Discernment of Steering Council
- Development of shared language through participatory asset mapping by membership
- Creation of online presence for communication and marketing
- Formation of Workgroups around initial Systems Themes. Ideas currently under discussion include but will not be limited to:
  1. Community Wellness & Neighborhood Resilience
     - *Silver Spring/ Westlawn Gardens (Food Systems, Maternal-child health)*
  2. Conflict, Violence and Restorative Justice
     - *Wisconsin Decarceration Workgroup & Reentry Council (Incarceration & Eviction*)
  3. Systems Change Innovation and Education in Peacebuilding
     - *Map The System (Oxford Global Challenge) competition*
       - *To be offered in partnership with Lubar Entrepreneurship Center*
- Strengthening Community Fellows initiatives and Funding

Year 2 Focus – Engagement & Process Development
- Refine the processes & structures for navigating the barriers and opportunities to transdisciplinary, community-driven research, teaching and accompaniment.
  a. Engage and develop Thematic Systems Working Groups
  - Identify Aligned Interests and Opportunities for Collective Action Projects

Years 3-5 Focus – Alignment and Collective Action
- Deepening Partnerships around aligned interests for collective action — supporting:
  a. Joint funding proposals
     i. Programs & Projects
     ii. Conferences
     iii. Public engagement events
  b. Expanding funding for Community Fellows
  c. Strengthening Systems Change Curriculum and experiential learning connections with MSP and Other Programs

Aligning Interests through Partnership Development
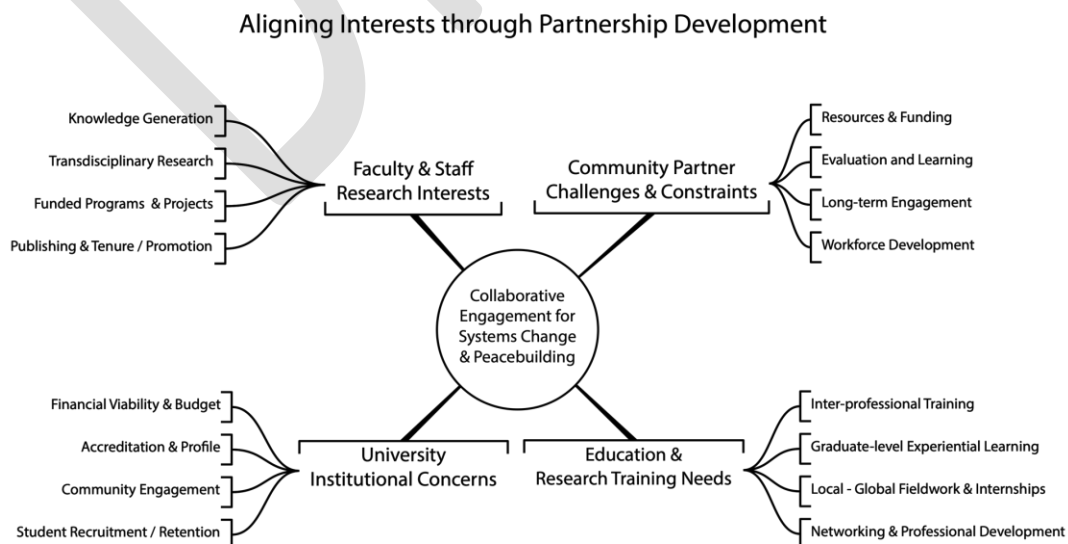
G. Description of Collaborations and Overlaps with Existing Centers and Institutes and Relevant Educational Programs at UWM

- Current Partnerships established though Master of Sustainable Peacebuilding Program:
  - Center Community-based Learning Leadership and Research (CCBLLR)
  - Electa Quinney Institute (EQI)
  - Institute for Child and Family Well-being (ICFW)
  - Center for Global Health Equity (CGHE)
  - Institute for World Affairs (IWA)
  - Center for 21st Century Studies (C21) / Digital Humanities Lab
  - Center for Water Policy (CWP)
  - Center for Economic Development (CED)
- Potential Future Collaborations:
  - Lubar Entrepreneurship Center (LEC)
  - Institute for Intercultural Research (IIR)
  - Center for Urban Population Health (CUPH)
  - Center for Aging & Translational Research (CATR)
  - Socially Responsible Evaluation in Education (SREed)
  - Disruptive Technologies Laboratory (SOIS)

H. Signature Page from Participating Deans

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
UWMILWAUKEE

INSTITUTE FOR
SYSTEMS CHANGE
& PEACEBUILDING

UWM Partners for Health
Cunningham Hall, Room 717
1921 E. Hartford Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53211
Office: 414 229-4358
Email: ehlinger@uwm.edu

Systems Change & Peacebuilding (SCP) Fellows Program
Information for Prospective Community Partners (2020-2021)

Background and Context
In January 2020 The UWM Partners for Health schools and colleges established the Wm. Collins Kohler Endowed Chair to serve as the Director for the Institute for Systems Change & Peacebuilding (**ISCP**). The ISCP's mission is to align university and community interests in equitable partnership toward collective impact on the systemic drivers that affect health, well-being and sustainable peace. The primary role of the ISCP is to collaborate with partners to co-create community-based projects to engage complex social-ecological challenges with holistic systems thinking and participatory processes. *The Systems Change & Peacebuilding Fellows* (**SCP Fellows**) program was created to provide opportunities for students to work side-by-side with community partners while building critical leadership skills in systems change, facilitation, strategic planning and evaluation.

SCP Fellows
An SCP Fellow (Fellow) is an UWM graduate student selected and employed to fill a specific need of Partner organization. The development of a position description and selection of a suitable Fellow follows by a process agreed upon by the Partner and the ISCP Director. All Fellows must be current UWM students or have been admitted for the following academic year at the time of selection. Fellows provide support for ongoing Partner initiatives, while also bringing the new skills and perspectives that they are learning in the coursework. In some cases, Fellows are hired for a specific task (e.g. evaluation, facilitation, strategic planning), while in other cases they fill roles in support of the organization's ongoing programming. The Partner provides a position description for the Fellow, which is approved by ISCP prior to initiating the contract.

Structure and Financing
SCP Fellows are hired and paid through UWM through a fixed-price Outreach Services Agreement with the Partner. Contracts can be structured for the academic year or full calendar year, and for either 33% (13.5 hours per week) or 50% (20 hours per week) full-time equivalent (FTE). Some Fellows are provided an office or workspace on site with the partnering organization, while others are provided a workspace on campus. These details are determined on a case-by-case basis and depend on the needs of the community partner in addition to financial and other resources available from the partner and ISCP at the time of the contract. The financial investment by the community partner is negotiated between ISCP and the partner and depends on resources available from the partner and MSP at the time of the contract. The table below provides total costs per year for the most common Fellowship placements, not including cost-share options.

Table 1. Annual costs associated with the four most common SCP Fellows types.

Fellowship Appointment Type	Time Commitment	Salary & Benefits	Tuition	TOTAL
33% Academic Year (9mo.)	13.5 hrs./wk. Sep-May	$9,783	$8,400	$18,183
33% Calendar Year (12mo.)	13.5 hrs./wk. Sep-Aug	$11,957	$8,400	$20,357
50% Academic Year (9mo.)	20 hrs./wk. Sep-May	$14,823	$8,400	$23,223
50% Calendar Year (12 mo.)	20 hrs./wk. Sep-Aug	$18,116	$8,400	$26,516

Process and Contact Information
To inquire about creating an SCP Fellow position with your organization please contact Timothy Ehlinger, W.C. Kohler Chair (ehlinger@uwm.edu | (414) 243-7672) or Laura Hermanns, SCP Partnerships Coordinator (herman26@uwm.edu). Agreements can be initiated at any time of year. Fellow positions are typically filled by May for a start date in September, though the timeline can vary depending on the Partner's needs and availability of students to fill the position.