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SCUP Fellows Application Submission from:

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#### Ramirez SCUP Fellowship Essay

I am from a place where only 11 percent of adults have bachelor's degrees. Most people worked blue-collar jobs and the only professionals I knew were the teachers in my public schools. I was fortunate that my mom made it clear that I was going to college. Going to a high-quality academic institution exposed me to ideas and people I would have never encountered otherwise. College changed my life. I am passionate about giving everyone the same opportunity to access high-quality higher education that I had.

I am now the director of budget and planning at the University of Wisconsin Colleges. UW Colleges is a system of 13 campuses committed to delivering a University of Wisconsin education in communities across the state. In my role, I am dedicated to understanding and applying best practices in higher education planning. My position is focused on financial planning and my passion about education has given me the opportunity to be an institutional point of contact on diverse academic initiatives, from efforts to reach out to rural communities in Wisconsin to international education. My work has included analysis and planning of components of the UW flexible option, dual enrollment, and remedial education. I am also a Ph.D. student at UW-Madison studying higher educational leadership. I am planning to write my dissertation on the impacts of financial management practices on academic quality. Through that process, I plan to research and understand planning and management best practices and contribute my work to the field.

SCUP is an organization whose professional development opportunities align with my interest in higher education administration. I look forward to learning from the experts what works and what does not. I want to better understand how to use best practices and new information to ensure students access quality educational opportunities. I bring to SCUP my passion and dedication to higher education. I also bring a diverse higher educational background. I have experience in an admissions office, the research and academic arms of a pharmacy school, as a researcher of higher education, and now a resource for my institution in budget and planning. This experience makes me keenly aware of the need for integrated planning and an eye towards the multiple goals of higher education – academics, research, and public service.

As a SCUP fellow, I would hope to work on one of three projects that would benefit the members of SCUP and give me the opportunity to use my research and analysis skills. Each proposal builds on an interest or project in my academic or professional portfolio. I would be interested in writing a literature review analyzing the multiple case studies of decentralized financial management practices, such as responsibility center management and incentive-based budgeting. I could also contribute a white paper on enrollment projections for two-year access institutions, which is based on a project that I have been working on for UW Colleges for the last year. Finally, I would also love to have the opportunity to be a session convener on a financial management topic, especially the relationship between financial and academic planning.