

From: [Campus Climate Proposal form](#)
To: [Libby Peterek](#); [Carrie Olson](#)
Subject: New submission from Campus Climate Proposals
Date: Thursday, April 21, 2016 11:09:55 PM

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Group name (if applicable):

Multicultural Learning Community

What is your affiliation with UW-Madison? For group submissions, please respond for main contact.

- Limited Appointee

Describe the concept. If already in use here or elsewhere, please indicate this.

"A place to learn. A place to call home. A place to test the boundaries of inquiry and challenge one another. A place to grow academically, socially, and intellectually. A place that respects and values all members of the community." This description of the desired campus climate is fully embodied in the Multicultural Learning Community (MLC) at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. This proposal requests to enhance the impact of its services offered to students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends. To advance this aim, the MLC requests \$40,000 from Summer 2016 – Summer 2017 to:

- advance our research and strategic planning capability (research design, data collection, instrumentation, analysis, and impact reporting)
- increase its staffing support (add another Program Assistant and a Graduate Assistant)
- enhance the Student Seminar (test an early-warning system which could be utilized at the institution given the populations served)
- strengthen programmatic efforts (Peer Mentoring, Academic Success Initiative, Faculty/Staff/Alumni Engagement), and
- further community service by engaging within communities and Native American Reservations across Wisconsin

How would this affect cultural change on campus?

The overall mission of the MLC directly correlates and strategically aligns to this request for campus climate proposals as the MLC has a proven track record of enhancing cultural and curricular change. The MLC was established in 1995 and is one of 12 residential learning communities within the Division of University Housing. The mission of the MLC is to provide students with an inclusive experience rooted in social justice and identity development. The goals of the program are to:

- Create a safer space for a diverse group of students to come together
- Build a community and support one another in academic and personal growth
- Foster increased understandings of one's own and others' beliefs, ideas, identities, behaviors, and understandings of social issues
- Facilitate all residents' success on and off campus
- Examine the dynamics of current power structures and how life experiences are shaped by factors at

the individual, societal, institutional and structural levels.

- To develop an understanding of social justice and the skills to become an engaged community member.

By providing funding for this request, there would be an expansion of services provided which will further strengthen the opportunity for Badgers to access these resources and meet these goals as well as their own personal goals, through their commitment to various MLC academic, programmatic, and mentoring functions. Additionally, these efforts and initiatives support early alumni engagement, academic achievement, and build social capital. Our community beyond campus would also benefit as the reach of our students extends beyond campus as they aspire to be exemplary Badgers in the classroom, on campus, within the community, and across the globe.

For new ideas, how would you propose piloting this idea to see if it would work? If the idea is already in use at UW-Madison, how would you propose expanding or altering this program for greater impact?

The MLC has an established track record as a transformative learning community at UW–Madison. It was established to improve the campus climate by intentionally positioning all students to be academically successful and feel safe and comfortable on campus. In so doing, the MLC holistically supports students and increases the rates of retention for students of color. We would like to embolden the ability to discuss the impact we have on campus, which advancing our research capability would achieve. At present, we are collecting data through University Housing to better understand our students' experience in the residence halls for which the following are underway:

- Learning Community Survey – conducted by our Academics & Inclusion office each fall
- House Fellow Survey – conducted by our Academics & Inclusion office each fall
- Educational Benchmarking Inc. (EBI) Student Satisfaction Survey – conducted in the spring

Research findings would also inform a strategic planning phase with regards to a possible next step after students complete their residency in the MLC. To successfully scale the impact of this culturally-relevant learning community, increasing the infrastructure, services, and support simultaneously is critical. Because the history of this learning community is embedded in Chancellor action, we would be able to provide additional platforms for student engagement and empowerment; the extension of networks, relationships, and resources; overall academic success and student retention; and the cultivation of leadership development skills.

What resources would be needed to implement your suggestion?

There are five key ingredients that comprise the \$40,000 request to expand the mission and reach of the MLC and further proliferate its impact for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and stakeholders of UW-Madison. The MLC is an evidence-based platform and requires a strengthened ability to conduct longitudinal, original, and assessment/evaluation research. In so doing, the MLC can further translate the impact its resources, curriculum, and services have on and beyond campus. This data and information provides actionable knowledge that will inform strategic planning and programmatic scaling.

This funding request also seeks to enhance its curricular platform by growing the support for the Seminar and its inaugural Academic Success Initiative. This new initiative was well received by students and creates several empirical occasions to not only evaluate and measure its impact but also pilot a possible early-warning system. This is significant given the populations served and their relationships to various types of campus deans, advisors, and support staff. Additional programmatic support enhances the peer mentoring capability which is growing in need given the complex academic terrain students navigate across disciplines at UW-Madison. Additional programs have been suggested by the MLC Steering Committee to implement next academic year which include alumni engagement, faculty and staff engagement, relationship building, and professional development opportunities. It is therefore crucial to build infrastructure by adding a Graduate Assistant and an additional Program Assistant who can further support the Faculty Director, Program Coordinator, Area Coordinator, Residence Life Coordinator, and Steering Committee.

If this proposal was developed in partnership with any other organizations, please list them below.

Wisconsin's Equity and Inclusion Laboratory (Wei LAB), housed within the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER), designs, conducts, and disseminates research that informs policymakers,

practitioners, and concerned citizens on how to best promote equitable and inclusive learning and work environments in education in general, and higher education in particular. For the past three years, the Wei LAB has supported the MLC by engaging on the Steering Committee with a specific interest in its assessment and evaluation efforts, original research projects, and future strategic planning efforts. Due to the impact the MLC has on students, the Wei LAB would like to expand this partnership to include the youth civic engagement of MLC students in Madison, across the state, and within Wisconsin's Tribal Communities as aligned with a broader research agenda on social problem-solving.

Please use this space for any additional information about your proposal that you wish to share:

The MLC is an established learning community that was originally created to improve the campus climate, and has been successful at achieving this ambitious goal and consistently creates a positive experience for its residents. The MLC program positions all involved students for academic success through the evidenced-based learning community approach. The community also allows students from diverse backgrounds to feel at home and contributes to the retention of students of color. All students connected with the MLC – including those from majority backgrounds – are thoughtfully educated about multiculturalism, which empowers all students to engage with issues of social justice on campus and in the larger community. For years, we have seen those associated with the MLC enact change on this campus, which is why the MLC considers it a responsibility to respond to this call for “on-campus activities that specifically aim at expanding... competence to live, work, and learn inside our community.” This is what we do every day; help us work toward expanding our efforts so that every student on this campus can benefit from the strategies we've already put in place.