

From: [Campus Climate Proposal form](#)
To: [Libby Peterek](#); [Carrie Olson](#)
Subject: New submission from Campus Climate Proposals
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2016 2:04:42 PM

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

- Faculty

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

In the neurosciences, we make a critical distinction between declarative knowledge and procedural knowledge. Declarative knowledge is knowing about things while procedural knowledge is embodied skill learning. Intellectually understanding the value of respect and equality does not necessarily translate into a person who is respectful and inclusive in their behavior toward others, particularly toward members of an out-group. Universities are powerhouses of declarative learning but fail miserably at procedural learning. It is only through procedural learning that virtue and character and moral development can actually be learned. Over the course of 30+ years of my neuroscientific career, I have been led to the inevitable conclusion that virtue and character are skills that can be learned, but they are learned primarily through procedural learning mechanisms, not the declarative learning paradigm that is so much more familiar to us in the academy.

Your open letter invited proposals to help address the situation on campus. We at the Center for Healthy Minds consider this to be not only a critical issue for our campus, but a grand challenge nationally and globally to educate world citizens for the 21st century. We have a very specific set of proposals that are rooted in a program we are developing for Cultivating Healthy Minds that incorporates key elements of procedural learning that are derived from both ancient contemplative traditions and from modern science. There is already some scientific evidence that demonstrates that these practices significantly reduce implicit racial biases toward out-groups in training as short as 6 weeks, with one weekly class per week and 20 minutes of home practice each day.

How would this affect cultural change on campus?

The increased expression of hate and bias acts on university campuses, and especially here at UW-Madison is a grave and unfortunate development and we here at the Center for Healthy Minds share your concern. We believe that the constituents of a healthy mind include warm-heartedness, fundamental regard for basic human values and a shared understanding of innate basic goodness that reflects our common humanity. The embodiment of these values provides a direct and powerful antidote to hate and bias.

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?

Our Healthy Minds program will be largely on-line, easily scalable and will include rigorous assessment tools that are deployed on mobile devices and will provide a kind of "fit-bit for the mind" feedback to

participants as they engage in this sort of training and will include measures of implicit bias and other processes essential to specific moral virtues.

What resources would be needed to implement your suggestion?

Follow-up Needed

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

I should also mention that our Center is taking the lead on the development of a large-scale multi-university study to examine the impact of the kind of program I describe above. I've created a consortium of colleagues at UCLA, University of Virginia and UW-Madison, three of the best public universities in the nation. We've already had one meeting of this group in Charlottesville and we will be hosting a second meeting here in Madison in August. We view this as a great opportunity to make a difference of national import.