

**From:** [Campus Climate Proposal form](#)  
**To:** [Libby Peterek](#); [Carrie Olson](#)  
**Subject:** New submission from Campus Climate Proposals  
**Date:** Thursday, April 21, 2016 6:03:41 PM

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**Group name (if applicable):**

Office of Undergraduate Advising

**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.**

Funding is requested by the Office of Undergraduate Advising (OUA) to support, sustain, and grow dialog-based cultural literacy learning communities for campus employees in undergraduate advising roles. There are more than 500 employees at UW-Madison with an undergraduate advising role.

Sustained learning in stable groups (communities) capable of building trust is required to learn about complex issues centered around identity, power, and privilege. Such communities are also required to unlearn the patterns of behavior and implicit biases that most inhibit our ability to effectively communicate across boundaries and barriers defined by identity, power, and privilege. This type of learning takes time, not unlike the learning necessary to master an academic discipline such as history or physics. A one-time training or workshop alone, even if required for all, will not change the campus climate in significant ways. According to the Learning Communities for Institutional Change and Excellence (LCICE) website: Through dialogue, one learns how to engage in transformative changes of behaviors, policies, and procedures that collectively impact the campus climate for ALL community members. This proposal is submitted in collaboration with LCICE.

In 2010 the UW-Madison advising community adopted a set of "Guiding Principles" <<http://go.wisc.edu/187j0l>> that include the principle that:

"Advisors encourage students to consider their own cultural backgrounds; to develop intercultural knowledge and respect for differences; and to take action on behalf of justice and equity."

The advising community also adopted a set of eleven "Core Competencies for Academic Advising" in 2013 that hold cultural competency/literacy as a core competency for faculty and staff who serve in an advising role at this university.

"Cultural competency (examples: engage in self-reflection; are aware that cultural identities [nationality, race, social class, ethnicity, religion, ability, sexual orientation, etc.] influence thinking and behavior; exhibit the relational skills to advise effectively across differences."

Over the past year the Office of Undergraduate Advising has redirected its efforts to expand and enhance the advising community's cultural literacy from event-based, one-time programs to sustained, longer-term, dialog-based learning communities. These efforts include two major pilots conducted this year – the nine-month long “First Generation Gatherings” and the seven-week long “Art of Advising.” To repeat, sustained learning in stable groups (communities) capable of building trust is required to learn about complex issues centered around identity, power, and privilege. Such communities are also required to unlearn the patterns of behavior and implicit biases that most inhibit our ability to effectively communicate across boundaries and barriers defined by identity, power, and privilege. Both of the pilots OUA initiated this year have shown tremendous promise (see participant quotes below) and real impact on the thinking, awareness, behavior, and cultural literacy of advisors who participated in and co-facilitated the pilots

"[Through the Art of Advising pilot program] I have learned to recognize how my identity shapes how I experience advising sessions and this recognition has allowed me to pause in my work and really open up to whatever experiences students bring into my office. I have learned that recognizing bias in myself, those I work with and my students is a process that is never over and that I need to bring curiosity and a sense of freshness to each and every appointment..."

"The Art of Advising pilot program has pushed me to be more courageous in pushing my unit to consider identity and bias on campus. I feel a sense of community with those I participated in the training with that helps me feel more capable of creating change..."

"It has been exceptionally valuable to have space [through the First Generation Gatherings] to reflect with others in order to translate [my learning] into improved services for current first-generation students."

"The community that you have built extends beyond finding strategies for just our students, but personal growth in all aspects of our lives."

"This is the only place on campus that I feel I can be my authentic self."

The ability to sustain and expand this promising trend toward building a more inclusive, welcoming advising community and campus climate requires a full-time staff member with experience in advising, community building, and anti-racism work. The Office of Undergraduate Advising does not currently have the in-house capacity to sustain these important, high impact efforts. Sustained, dialogue-based learning requires focused engagement and significant time and energy investment on those coordinating and co-facilitating this work. As indicated by a participant in the Gatherings “Having a thoughtful caring, professional facilitator is critical to the success of this group.” Funding through the Campus Climate initiative would, in conjunction with our partnerships with LCICE and others noted below, not only enable the OUA to continue these two initiatives, but would also allow us to expand our cultural literacy efforts to reach more advisors and positively impact the campus climate and experiences of all undergraduates at the university.

#### **How would this affect cultural change on campus?**

Expanding dialog-based cultural literacy efforts in the advising community will prepare advisors to talk about climate, social justice, and identity issues with both majority students, and students in under-represented populations. Increasing advisor readiness in this way fosters both prevention of hate and bias behavior through education and more effective support and referrals for students impacted by hate or bias incidents.

An equally important benefit of expanding dialog-based cultural literacy efforts in the advising community is strengthening the ability of advisors to communicate and strategize with other advisors, faculty, and staff on campus (who may be different from themselves). A stronger and more inclusive community will serve to both retain high performing advisors (many from underrepresented populations themselves) and strengthen the advising safety net for all students, but particularly for under-represented students. As mentioned by a participant in the pilot “these gatherings provide a space for staff representing different programs to build trust and talk about how to best serve our students. We can then refer students to

each other because that trust has been built.”

The direct impact of these efforts on advisor cultural literacy will be ongoing and will build quickly over time as more advisors participate. Advisors who have participated in the learning communities often emerge prepared to serve as co-facilitators for future learning communities. A relatively small initial investment can start a movement by which the capacity of members of the advising community to teach and train others will multiply exponentially.

**What resources would be needed to implement your suggestion?**

We are requesting an on-going investment of \$60,000 in salary, one FTE, and \$10,000 in supplies and services funds to provide focus, leadership, and sustained effort to improve and enhance the cultural literacy of academic and career advisors at the university. With these funds we will continue and expand the successful learning communities already underway as pilots in the OUA – the First Generation Gatherings and Art of Advising--enhance the cultural literacy of all programs and communications sponsored by the Office of Undergraduate Advising.

The position would be funded through the Office of Undergraduate Advising but have a strong connection, and perhaps be co-located and co-supervised with the LCICE office.

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

The following have provided consultation and support in the development of this proposal. Letters of support are available upon request.

Learning Communities for Institutional Change & Excellence (LCICE)  
Academic Advising Policy Leaders (AAPL) Committee  
Advisory Board for Advisor Training (ABfAT)  
Council on Academic Advising (CAA)  
Multicultural Disadvantaged Coordinator (MDC) Working Group  
Multicultural Student Center (MSC)  
Orientation Advising Team (OAT)  
Advising Architecture Review Board (AARB)  
Bioscience Advising Team (BAT)