

From: [Campus Climate Proposal form](#)
To: [Libby Peterek](#); [Carrie Olson](#)
Subject: New submission from Campus Climate Proposals
Date: Thursday, April 21, 2016 9:22:53 AM

First name:

██████

Last name:

██████

Email address:

██████████

Phone number:

██████████

Group name (if applicable):

Black Graduate and Professional Student Association (BGPSA)

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

- Student (including undergraduate, graduate, professional)

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

I'd like to propose a Black Graduate Student Preview Weekend for all self-identified Black/African American prospective graduate students. These would be students who have applied to UW Madison and have either been accepted to a department or are looking to secure a spot in a graduate program. I've heard that the terms of acceptance varies from department to department. Ideally, this Preview Weekend would be from Thursday evening to Sunday Morning and happen in either March or Early April before the deadline to formally commit to a University occurs. During this weekend, the Black community both at UW-Madison and in the greater Madison community would have an opportunity to showcase what they have to offer. A sample agenda is shown below:

Thursday: Prospective students arrive; Welcome Dinner/Reception featuring the Chancellor and/or the Provost(s), Black faculty, and staff

Friday: Campus tour, attend classes in their respective departments, talks and breakout sessions by school/department lead by faculty members; networking with the Madison Network of Black Professionals (MNBPP) at their Monthly First Friday Event

Saturday: Black Graduate and Professional Student Association (BGPSA) Grad Student panel about life in Wisconsin; breakout sessions featuring other campus organizations such as Medical Students for Minority Concern (MSMC), Diversity in Business, and the Black Law Students' Association (BLSA), Science and Medicine Graduate Research Scholars (SciMed GRS); Mingle with other Black graduate/professional students at Res IPSA, the BLSA's Bi-annual Party

Sunday: Farewell Brunch; prospective students depart

Other resources that could be provided to these students in a Black at UW-Madison Packet/Folder could include:

A list of popular events that occur in the community such as MNBPP's First Fridays,

The Madison Black Business Booklet by the Madison Black Chamber of Commerce, which includes information on Black-owned businesses, Black churches, and Black hair salons/barbers

Resources and important offices on campus (i.e., UHS, Financial Aid), important deadlines such as when to register for classes and when to apply for dissertator status for example

Suggestions for places to live

A list of Black Graduate Student Representatives by Department from the BGPSA network who have volunteered their contact information for prospective students to contact if further questions arise

I personally helped start a similar program at my alma mater, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for prospective Black freshmen to tour the campus the week before they arrived with the rest of their potential classmates for the Campus Preview Weekend. The MIT weekend agenda is attached in the final section of the proposal. During MIT's Black Preview Weekend, prospective students would stay with current Black undergraduate students, participate in a variety of events hosted by Black undergraduate organizations (e.g., the Black Student Union, or the National Society of Black Engineers) with the culminating event of the weekend being an annual Black tie gala co-hosted by the Black Student Union and the Black Graduate Student Association called Ebony Affair. One student who participated in this program wrote, "My recruitment experience at MIT differed from the others [preview weekends] because students led my experience of campus. This led me to meet many more people who truly believed that MIT was not only the best school for me, but also the best home and community. While the students wanted to impress us with MIT, they told honest stories about how difficult MIT was, what had helped them, their regrets, and their joys. The program achieved an unprecedented yield rate of over 94 percent because it provided community without fanfare. The friends I made at Ebony Affair are the foundation of the friend group I have today. I chose to come to MIT because of my experience during the fly-in program." More about her experience can be read in an article she wrote in the MIT newsletter found here: <http://tech.mit.edu/V136/N7/bsu.html?comments#comments>

The primary difference between MIT's Black Preview Weekend and the Black Graduate Preview Weekend that the UW BGPSA is proposing is the lodging and programming offered. At MIT, the prospective students resided with current undergraduates, thus sparing hotel expenses. Also, for undergraduates, less emphasis is placed on academics at a departmental level. However in graduate school, your home department is where you will be spending the majority of your time and therefore, comfortable interactions with students within that department are vital. This is the main reason why we'd still like our prospective students to participate in both their department's normally scheduled preview weekend and also our community based preview weekend. This way students can form well-rounded opinions of both the UW-Madison academic and social environment.

Multiple programs exist on campus that are similar to this proposal, but each have distinct differences. The Office of Multicultural Affairs of the School Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) hosts a Second Visit where they fly in prospective first year multicultural medical students who have been accepted and are interested in learning more about UW. This program is called a Second Visit because it is a second visit to the University, one geared solely for the recruitment of minority students. This year the students arrived on Thursday March 31st and departed on Sunday April 3rd. I obtained a copy of their agenda, and I've included in the final section of this proposal. A few of the highlights are a welcome dinner on Thursday, an opportunity to shadow 1st year medical students, attend a panel discussion, tour the facilities, and enjoy a reception with faculty, staff, and current students in the SMPH on Friday. Other talks and breakout sessions followed by a social and designed time with student organizations and interest groups that occur on Saturday, and finally a farewell brunch on Sunday. The Black Graduate Preview Weekend would most resemble this program in the sense that we'd like to bring in the prospective students during the same time of year and host similar events, except it would be solely for self-identifying Black prospective graduate students across all schools and departments University wide. Many of the colleges on campus and graduate programs, have what I refer to as a pre-Preview Weekend programs for minority students, that are coordinated with minority outreach programs including Graduate Engineering Research Scholars (GERS) and SciMed Graduate Research Scholars (SciMed GRS). Examples include OPPortunities in Engineering (OPPs) <http://gers.engr.wisc.edu/opps.php> and Opportunities in the Biological Sciences (BOPs) <http://www.biopreview.wisc.edu>. These events host undergraduate juniors, seniors, and other prospective graduate students for a long weekend enabling them to visit the UW-Madison campus and explore multiple graduate programs. Both of these programs provide excellent opportunities for minority undergraduate students to get a brief introduction to what the University has to offer academically, but since the focus is designed to highlight the research and graduate programs, neither of these programs truly give the students a chance to see what the

University or the Madison community has to offer culturally, socially, or professionally.

Both programs pay for all travel, food, and lodging expenses, which the Black Graduate Student Preview Weekend would do as well. It is important to note this weekend should in no way take the place of the usual open houses/preview weekends that exist in most departments on campus. Those weekends are vital because they give Black prospective students an opportunity to meet faculty members, future classmates, and tour the departmental facilities. The Black Preview Weekend would supplement this experience, not taking away from the time allotted to interact with prospective departments and not forcing students to choose between their academics and their culture. All students are entitled to both.

How would this affect cultural change on campus?

Tensions on this campus are dangerously high from various hostile incidents that have involved Black students as targets. Conversations that have been taking place on campus regarding these incidents have systematically excluded graduate students. This is alarming given the fact that UW is not only a flagship state university but an R-1 institution, which boasts to support all of its students not just the undergraduates.

Given these circumstances, the small percentage of students at the intersection of being Black and a graduate student have been left to feel particularly vulnerable. Programs do exist that support minority graduate students, and while these programs are making significant inroads recruiting students, we would like to see an even better outcome for black graduate students. As a result, we believe black students will have a lower likelihood of feeling isolated within these minority communities. Various departments on campus appear to be content with the "diversity" provided by such programs, but the University should continue to develop new initiatives directed to recruit black graduate students and provide support for them once they arrive on campus. Currently, prospective students arrive unaware of what the Black Community has to offer and are forced to find their own way and identity alone on this campus. Minimal time allotted or emphasis has been placed for them to discover such communities. The Black Graduate Student Preview Weekend would help mitigate this disconnect by making the establishment of community the essence of the visit.

Hosting this Preview Weekend during the time period when students are starting to hear back from other Universities competing for their attention would be the most ideal. The money spent would be on students who have already expressed a concerted interest in UW, and the effort put forth by the University to convince them to choose UW would be at a time of year when campus experiences are fresh and close to the day students must decide on a graduate program.

Research has shown that Black students often face additional roadblocks than their white counterparts experience. Although the University cannot instantly remove these obstacles, it possesses the power to show Black graduate students that they are deserving of a place at the table, that they are desired here at UW, that their stories are heard and understood, that they will be supported on campus, and that a community exists both in the academy and in the community to provide such support. A Black Graduate Student Preview Weekend is one of the many steps that will help convince prospective students that the University of Wisconsin-Madison has their best interests in mind and a community to offer them.

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?

There are a couple of ways that this program could be piloted. But in fact, it has already been tested by the Office of Multicultural Affairs of the School Medicine and Public Health (SMPH) with their Second Visit weekend. The similar but more targeted proposed weekend could be implemented in stages for specific Schools, Colleges, or major field areas such as STEM.

What resources would be needed to implement your suggestion?

The collaboration of multiple offices on campus would be necessary to implement this proposal as they would need to provide financial support. The majority of funds would go towards travel and lodging for the prospective students. Other expenses include meals and space for panels, discussions, and dinners. This event is relevant to all departments on campus as the percentage of African American graduate

students on this campus is well below the proportion of African Americans in the United States; however, specific offices on campus that might want to take part in this event are all seven of the Graduate Research Scholar communities, the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Education Achievement, the Division of Student Life, the Admissions Office, and the Graduate School. There is a need for more African American representation on all levels. One of the many ways to address this problem is to increase efforts to encourage prospective students who are applying to Wisconsin, to choose Wisconsin. Current practices have been proven to be ineffective. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] have repeatedly expressed how unwelcoming the campus is, their dissatisfaction with how long it took for them to find community, and their disappointment that they had no formal introduction to the Black community when they arrived on campus. The Black Graduate Student Preview Weekend is a more intentional attempt to remedy this and to showcase all of the Black excellence that already exists on campus.

Other sources of income may include Black alumni. Some of these alumni have already reached out to me personally stating that "I remember well the atmosphere on campus when I attended a few decades ago and it appears from what I am reading and hearing in the media that the situation has become worse. As a graduate of the university, I am disappointed and embarrassed at these repeated incidents...[and] until substantive actions and changes are made, my friends are withholding all donations to the UW including their posthumous contributions." Donations are a vital part of the UW budget, and although it is unfortunate that faithful alumni are withholding such contributions, I am eager to present the creation of a Black Graduate Student Preview Weekend to earn back these pledges.

For any event that desires campus wide recognition or awareness, a certain level of publicity and professionalism is required. To assist with materials and resources given to the prospective students in the form of an information packets/folder, we'd like to utilize the University's graphic designers. To disseminate this information all of the organizations listed above and their associated networks would be tapped, including but not limited to all the GRS communities, the BGPSA, MSMC, MSB, BLSA, and MGN.

It is important to note that although we are asking for financial support, this weekend also requires the University's assistance in organizing and staffing these events. Black students have constantly demonstrated their vested interest in improving the campus climate and creating a welcoming environment for all, however this responsibility is chiefly the University's.

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

This proposal was developed on behalf of the Black Graduate and Professional Student Association, however the follow offices/organizations have expressed interest in supporting this initiative:

Science and Medicine Graduate Research Scholars (SciMed GRS)
Dr. Cherri Rossi and Dr. Arrietta Clauss, UW Department of Chemistry
The UW Black Law Students Association (BLSA)

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

Below is MIT's Fly In Program 2015 Agenda:

2015 Ebony Affair Fly-In Program
Friday, April 10 – Sunday, April 12, 2015

Friday, April 10
1:00-7:00pm Terminal E, Airport Students arrive/shuttles depart for campus
2:30-8:00pm West Lounge Students Check-in
5:30-7:30pm Building 10 (Room 250) Black Graduate Celebration, Keynote, Dr. Carol Espy-Wilson
8:00-9:30pm West Lounge Welcome
9:30-10:30pm West Lounge Desserts & Games
10:30pm West Lounge Meet Hosts & Depart for Dorms

Dinner

Saturday, April 11

8:30-9:30am BSU Lounge (50-105) Breakfast

9:30-10:30am BSU Lounge (50-105) Prof. Wesley Harris, Aeronautics & Astronautics

10:30-10:45am BSU Lounge (50-105) Break

10:45-11:30am BSU Lounge (50-105) Young Alumni Panel

11:30-12:30pm BSU Lounge (50-105) Lunch & a Student Experiences Dialogue

12:30-2:00pm BSU Lounge (50-105) Campus Tour

2:00-3:00pm BSU Lounge (50-105) Interphase & Academic Resources Discussion, Assoc. Dean Tammy Stevens, SB '96

3:00-4:00pm BSU Lounge (50-105) Darcy Prather, President of Kalion Inc., SB '91

4:00-6:00pm Break

6:00-9:00pm Morss Hall (Building 50) The Ebony Affair

Sunday, April 12

8:00-11:00am West Lounge Breakfast/Early Departures

11:30am West Lounge Shuttle departs for the airport

--

Below is UW's Office of Multicultural Affairs' Second Visit 2016 Agenda:

Thursday 3/31

6:00pm Dinner and Welcome Best Western InnTowner (2424 University Avenue)

Friday 4/1

8:30am Hotel guests at Best Western should board the shuttle to the HSLC

8:50am Meet 1 st Year medical students to attend class with them

12:00pm Panel Discussion with medical students and lunch

1:00pm Depart HSLC for a visit to Medical Science Center Anatomy Lab

1:10pm Arrive at Anatomy Lab

2:00pm Free time

5:00pm Reception with faculty, staff and current students

Saturday 4/2

8:00am Second Visit - Registration & Breakfast in the HSLC

8:45am Full day of talks, panel discussions & break-out sessions. Lunch provided.

2:00pm Ice Cream Social and time set aside to meet with student orgs & interest groups

Sunday 4/3

9:30am Wrap up brunch and farewell

Best Western InnTowner (2424 University Avenue)

--