



May 9, 2017

As the semester ends and we look forward to celebrating 8,000 UW-Madison graduates, we'd like to take a moment to reflect on some of the accomplishments and challenges of the past academic year with respect to diversity and inclusion.

First and foremost, diversity is a source of strength, creativity and innovation for our campus – that idea is now enshrined in UW-Madison's [institutional statement](#) on diversity. And the university's efforts are ongoing. The [R.E.E.L. Change implementation plan](#), adopted in 2014, specifies 18 goals. This year marked the end of Phase One of the implementation plan, with the following successes:

- We completed the first-ever campus climate survey, with 20 percent of the university's 43,000 students responding. A task force will meet this summer to review the results and make recommendations, which we expect to announce in the fall.
- We dedicated a new Black Cultural Center, located in the historic Red Gym and part of the Division of Student Life, on February 28. The center offers programming about African-American culture and serves as a resource for all students.
- We launched Our Wisconsin, a series of workshops for incoming freshmen designed to build community on our diverse campus so that all students are welcomed, valued and supported. Last fall 1,000 freshmen experienced Our Wisconsin; this fall it will be offered to all 7,000 incoming freshmen.
- Chancellor Blank asked all units across campus, including her leadership team, to engage in some form of discussion and training on issues of inclusion and diversity. House fellows also participated in training.
- The Division of Student Life hired a full-time Bias Response and Advocacy Coordinator to respond to bias incidents and resolve them quickly.
- University Health Services hired two full-time community health specialists to provide additional counseling services for students of color. Additionally,

we're adding a second day to this fall's Diversity Forum with programming focused on cultural competency for mental health specialists, student service professionals and advisors.

- Chancellor Blank appointed a Community Advisory Council, a group of community leaders who meet regularly with her to discuss campus climate issues.

While those accomplishments are laudable, by no means is the journey to make UW-Madison a more diverse and welcoming place complete.

We realize that for too many students, life on our campus continues to be harder than it should be. Differences – whether of race, gender, religion, nationality, physical ability, politics or sexuality – too often cause divisions. That's why addressing the concerns of all our students and challenging the status quo is central to our mission. We're focused on listening to and learning from our students and community members and taking the right steps to improve the campus climate. Please know that we're committed to this vitally important work, and to inspiring others to join us in taking it up.

To learn more about diversity programming at UW-Madison, visit <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>. For additional information, visit <https://campusclimate.wisc.edu>.

On, Wisconsin!
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