



CAMPUS CLIMATE PROGRESS REPORT – SPRING 2018

UW–Madison is committed to providing a welcoming environment that enables all students, faculty, and staff to thrive. Individuals and groups from across campus have embraced this challenge and devoted significant time and energy to moving the campus forward. These efforts build on work begun through the campus Diversity Framework and its implementation plan, R.E.E.L. Change.

Here's some of what we've accomplished this past semester

- Results of UW–Madison's first-ever campuswide climate survey were released in November. Most students said they find UW–Madison to be a safe, welcoming, and respectful place. Most respondents also indicated they value diversity and that it's important to them that the university does, too. However, challenges remain. Students from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups, while reporting generally positive experiences on campus, consistently rated the climate less favorably than students from majority groups. Full results are available on the Creating Community website.
- The Our Wisconsin inclusion and community-building program, which aims to equip students with the skills to live and work effectively as part of a diverse campus, was offered to all first-year students. The expanded program held 134 workshops serving 4,300 students.
- The first cohort of 20 campus instructors completed The Discussion Project. The new initiative, designed by the School of Education, is a professional development opportunity to help faculty and academic staff members facilitate high-quality classroom discussions and create learning environments that are welcoming and inviting to all students. A second cohort of 24 instructors is participating in the training during the spring semester.
- UW–Madison adopted a new policy on sexual harassment and sexual violence that updates and combines previous policies into one easy to understand campuswide policy that applies to all employees, students, and visitors. The policy provides information on support resources and reporting offices and also makes clear the parties' rights and responsibilities in any investigation. It also includes the requirement that all students and employees must complete the campus-supported training on issues of sexual harassment and sexual violence.

A number of initiatives are moving forward over the academic year including:

- Chancellor Blank has called for a long-term solution on the issue of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) participants and worked with national higher education organizations like the Association of American Universities and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities to express her support for Dreamers. She has shared her views with congressional leadership on how this threatens a promising group of young people at UW–Madison and across the country. The Multicultural Student Center helps connect affected students with resources and support. The university will continue to be active on this issue.
- Campus leaders are working to implement a new UW Board of Regents policy on freedom of expression to meet the university's obligation to protect the First Amendment rights of all members of the campus community while recognizing concerns that underrepresented students could be particularly impacted. The university has published guidelines that state, "The university's commitment to free speech, teaching, research and safety will dictate its response to protests and demonstrations. Protests and demonstrations that do not diminish the university's ability to maintain these core values are a natural part of a vibrant campus community." Discussions with stakeholders, including shared governance, will continue this spring.
- An ad-hoc study group expects to finish its work this semester reviewing student organizations that operated on campus in and around the 1920s and that were named after or otherwise affiliated with the Ku Klux Klan. Chancellor Blank formed the group in October to evaluate the actions and legacies of those organizations and advise how the campus should acknowledge this history in light of the values the campus currently strives to maintain.

These actions build on steps UW–Madison has taken over the past several years that have improved recruitment and retention of students of color and expanded need-based aid. Among the outcomes that have improved:

- Over the last decade, we've gone from 11 percent students of color to 15 percent.
- We've gone from 15 percent faculty of color to nearly 20 percent.
- Our retention rate (freshmen returning for sophomore year) is now above 95 percent among both historically underrepresented students and all other students; we've closed the retention gap that used to exist.
- Graduation rates among all of our students have been increasing, but they are increasing faster among historically underrepresented students, which means we've made substantial progress on the graduation gap as well.

As Chancellor Blank has said, becoming a more welcoming and inclusive campus requires long-term engagement in a process of self-evaluation and change. This is not something that happens easily or quickly in some cases. Like many others, we have experienced setbacks. But the depth of commitment throughout the institution gives us the strength to continue moving forward.

For more information on these efforts, visit campusclimate.wisc.edu.



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