

**BLACK COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE ON THE
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON CAMPUS
AD HOC STUDY GROUP**



**FINAL REPORT PRESENTED TO THE OFFICE
OF THE CHANCELLOR**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This executive summary synthesizes the critical findings and strategic recommendations from the Ad Hoc Study Group on the Black Community Experience at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, aimed at addressing the long-standing challenges faced by Black students, faculty, and staff on campus. Despite numerous initiatives and decades of advocacy, progress in enhancing Black representation and experience at the university has remained insufficient, with Black community presence consistently around 3%. Traditionally, the university’s responses to racial issues have been reactive, emerging only in the wake of significant racial tensions or incidents.



Under the leadership of Chancellor Jennifer L. Mnookin, this Ad Hoc Study Group was convened in response to the pressing need for comprehensive and lasting improvements to the racial climate for Black members at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, but also, in reaction to the student protests in Spring 2023 in response to a racist video posted online by a fellow student. Chancellor Mnookin tasked the committee with a strategic and layered approach: to develop tiered recommendations encompassing immediate actions she could implement unilaterally, collaborative efforts that might take longer to realize, and ambitious systemic changes that would require extensive time and resources to achieve. This charge underscores the commitment to pragmatic and phased solutions, recognizing the different scopes and timelines necessary to effect genuine transformation. Through this directive, the Chancellor encouraged the committee to prioritize actionable items that range from the readily achievable to more complex initiatives that address the root causes of the issues at hand, thereby paving the way for substantive and sustainable change.

To shift from reactive measures to a proactive and strategic approach, this report outlines several comprehensive recommendations. It emphasizes the need for targeted recruitment and retention strategies that include hiring Academic/Retention Specialists and expanding financial aid and scholarships to support underrepresented students effectively. Recognizing the importance of governance, it advocates for the creation of a Black Faculty/Staff Council



and a Black Student Council, with defined roles in university governance and scheduled meetings with the chancellor and senior leadership to ensure ongoing dialogue and action on issues affecting the Black community. Under new university leadership, there emerges a *sincere glimmer of hope* that heralds a potential shift towards meaningful institutional transformation.

The report also highlights the critical role of community and alumni engagement in improving the campus climate. This involves reconnecting with Black alumni and leveraging their experiences to mentor current students, as well as integrating the local Black community into campus activities more thoroughly. Related to academics, the study group calls for enhanced support for the Department of African American Studies and significant investments in the Center for Campus History to better represent Black history and contributions.

Accountability is a key theme of this report, advocating for the establishment of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals for all diversity initiatives, with progress to be tracked through a public scorecard. Additionally, the report suggests comprehensive policy enhancements to promote a respectful and inclusive campus environment, with clear expectations and penalties for breaches of conduct.

Through these measures, the University of Wisconsin–Madison will be able to harness this moment of potential change and the collective agency of the Black community—there is an opportunity to fundamentally transform the university’s climate. This involves moving beyond the sporadic and superficial responses of previous administrations to embedding these values into the fabric of university policy and practice. The University of Wisconsin–Madison is positioned to not only respond to past oversights but to proactively shape a future that honors and uplifts its Black community, aligning with the deepest values of the Wisconsin Idea—extending the boundaries of the university to the borders of the state and beyond, in service of enhancing the quality of life for all its citizens.



INTRODUCTION

This report emphasizes that the Black students, faculty, and staff hold significant power in shaping the discourse and driving the change necessary for a truly inclusive environment at the University of Wisconsin–Madison (UW–Madison). It asserts that their voices and actions have been, and will continue to be, central in holding the university accountable to its promises and obligations. Traditionally marginalized and facing challenges of being unseen, unheard, and unsafe, the Black community at UW–Madison has demonstrated resilience and tenacity, maintaining a persistent presence despite systemic adversities. We are still here. The recommended strategies in this report are aimed at fostering a university culture where Black individuals do not just survive but thrive.

In 1969, three years worth of organizing culminated in the Black Student Strike with 13 demands submitted to the UW–Madison administration. Fifty-five years and six (6) major reports, plans, and demands later (1987, 1988, 2008, 2010, 2020, 2023), the status of Black staff, faculty, and students at UW–Madison is one of troubling inertia. What have the past 55 years taught us? They taught us that at every major juncture, the UW–Madison has been confronted with its extreme disconnect between what it knows about the Black UW–Madison community and what it does in support of this community, and it has failed to act. This knowing-doing gap is most evident in that no sustained institutional transformation has occurred relative to the progress of Black student matriculation. As of 2020, the UW–Madison is dead last among its Big 10 peer institutions relative to the percent of Black students enrolled,¹ never exceeding 3.2% (combined undergraduate, graduate, and professional students) for 50 years.^{2,3}



Black UW–Madison members have repeatedly articulated what they want and need from the UW–Madison only to be met with partial response. For example, in the list of 13 demands posed in 1969, #10 called for Black students to have the power to hire and fire personnel involved in anything related to Black students. The UW–Madison may not have been able to act on that specific demand for numerous reasons. But could the UW–Madison have created a system for student oversight and input on personnel and programs that serve them? Demand #12: admit

¹ "Big Ten Enrolled Students by Level of Student and Race/Ethnicity," Big Ten Academic Alliance, n.d., <https://btaa.org/about/reports/impact/students>.

² "Access," Accountability Dashboard, June 12, 2024, <https://www.wisconsin.edu/accountability/access/>.

³ See Appendix 1, Figure 3.



to UW–Madison the 94 Black students expelled from UW–Oshkosh who wish to attend. What could the trajectory of UW–Madison have been relative to Black people had they agreed to admit the Black students expelled from UW–Oshkosh? One can imagine how their acceptance into UW–Madison, many of them who had junior or senior academic standing, would have changed the Black UW–Madison graduation rate, increased critical mass of the Black student population, increased the number of Black alumni, and perhaps even their children would have subsequently enrolled a generation later in honor of their parents. Moreover, how would their admission to UW–Madison have positively changed the reputation of this campus and its race relations in the greater Madison community and emboldened the Wisconsin Idea as a culturally relevant philosophy applicable to Black people? Sadly, the fate of the students expelled from Oshkosh to not be accepted to UW–Madison was decided by a margin of 6 votes at the Faculty Senate: 524 to 518. How disheartening was the outcome of this vote to the 518 supporting faculty? Yes, UW–Madison’s lack of action has harmed non-Black faculty, staff, and students as well. This faculty vote equated to a case of academic lynching to send the public message: individuals who protest against the institution will be educationally destroyed. This was indeed the case in that many of those protesting in 1969 and who were expelled from Oshkosh lost their academic scholarships, never returned to University of Wisconsin campuses, or never completed college.



We see beyond the specific demands by Black UW–Madison students over the years, to the true assertion underlying the demands. The spirit underlying the 13 demands in 1969 and in every strike and protest since then is one of Black agency—agency to articulate what one needs to thrive and flourish at the UW–Madison.

Had the UW–Madison truly committed itself to responding to the requests for Black agency and Black thriving, no legislative body of the state of Wisconsin would have been able to argue against the

economic, community, academic, and social impacts of Black thriving as it would have favorably changed the gross state product of Wisconsin and the status of its race relations.

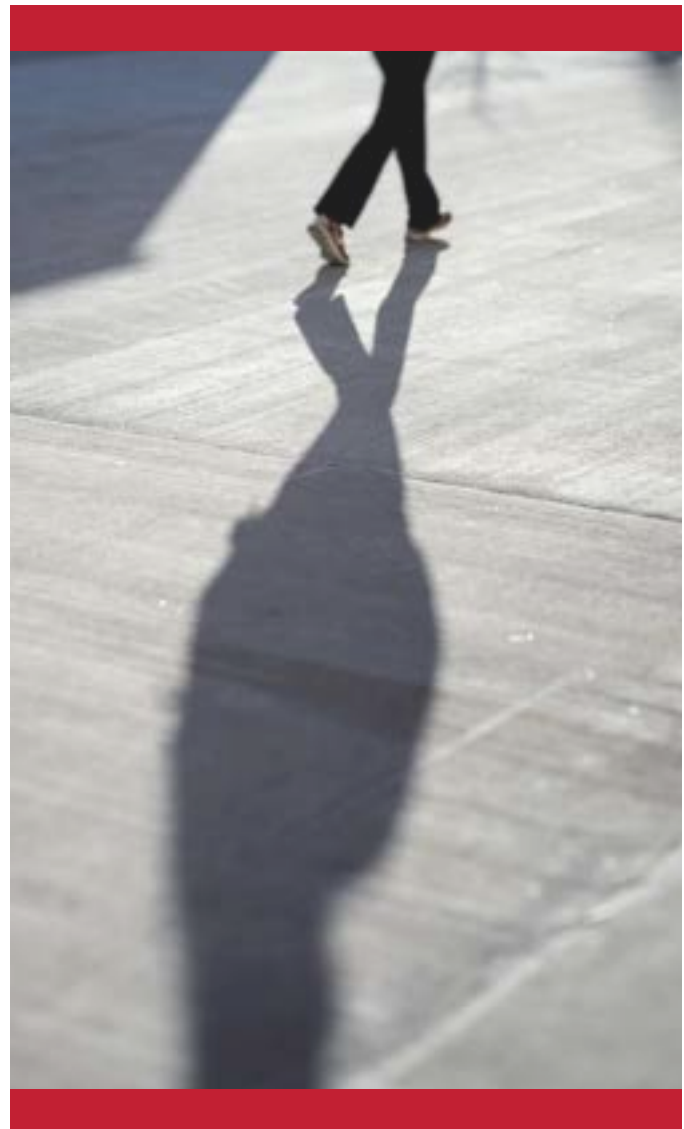
Why has the campus not made progress on the status of Black students, staff, and faculty despite numerous studies and reports? UW–Madison is a world-class research institution, because we systematically study social issues and natural phenomena in order to enhance the quality of life for Wisconsin and beyond;



this is the philosophical core of the Wisconsin Idea. But when we research the data and do not act on it, we compromise the very Wisconsin Idea by not benefitting the world with the knowledge that we have gained. That means that we either do not believe in the research or who we researched. The purpose of this report is not to motivate UW–Madison to act on behalf of Black people, but to demonstrate that it is in its current state relative to Black people because the campus has ignored and not listened to Black people. There is much discussion around the harsh treatment of UW–Madison’s diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts by the State legislature, however, UW–Madison’s racially charged environment predates the current political reality. Legislative pushback on DEI-support policies and practices is not the reason for the poor state of Black faculty, staff, and students decade after decade at UW–Madison. It is because UW–Madison has not respected nor fully responded to the articulation of Black agency. As such, a closer look at the lack of proper responses to the issues need to be owned and addressed by UW–Madison leadership. The question emerges: Is UW–Madison now ready to listen to the needs and demands of the Black population? And if not now, how many more micro and macro aggressions and racist experiences must one face on this campus before UW–Madison is ready?

Momentum: it is hard to start things that have stopped, and it is hard to stop things that have started. The reason why 55 years after 1969 the campus has relatively the same percent of Black students, faculty, and staff (around 3%) over this time period is because UW–Madison has never committed to momentum in support of Black agency since 1969. UW–Madison did not admit the expelled UW–Oshkosh Black students. The university has disrespected the brilliance of its own Black alumni and then wondered why it cannot re-engage them after graduation. As UW–Madison Admissions Director, Andre Phillips, said in 2022, “Folks don’t forget, especially people of color don’t forget if it feels like a slight. Things have shelf life, but memory runs long”.⁴ The UW–Madison must change this trend of stagnation and troubling inertia and commit to real action for the long haul.

⁴ Devi Shastri, Journal Sentinel, “UW–Madison’s Black Student Enrollment Has Never Exceeded 3%. Why Does the School Make so Little Progress, Decade After Decade?,” Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, June 2, 2022, <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/education/2022/06/02/university-wisconsin-madison-struggles-recruit-black-students/7171091001/>.





We, the Ad Hoc Study Group on the Black Community Experience at UW–Madison, imagined that our charge was merely to recommend actionable items that might somehow redeem UW–Madison’s checkered racial past and catapult us into a new reality of Black belonging on campus. What we have realized, however, is that our task is larger than that. Our charge is to recognize something that the 1969 and subsequent UW–Madison Administration and faculty failed to recognize; the humanity, intrinsic value, and self-agency of its Black students. In failing to do so, UW–Madison failed its own mission, vision, and the Wisconsin Idea. UW–Madison robbed itself of Black alumni who would have gone to any lengths to honor the words and sentiments of the alma mater song “Varsity” by igniting the world with proud Black Badgers who saw higher education as a true pathway to equality, success, and racial unity. We hope that the information in this report dispels misconceptions about the actual status of Black people in the UW community.

We dedicate this report to the Black women and men who risked their lives, freedoms, college degrees, and educational funding to make this university truly world-class and accessible to us. We also dedicate this report to current and future Black students, faculty, and staff who will persist in spite of the failings of UW–Madison relative to race-relations.



CHARGE TO THE AD HOC STUDY GROUP ON THE BLACK COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

The formation of the Ad Hoc Study Group was largely prompted by Black student leadership and activism coordinated by the Black Power Coalition, who emerged in response to a video of a UW–Madison white student using racial slurs and language that appeared online in May 2023. This activism led to demands for UW–Madison to acknowledge and redress racism on campus by taking actionable steps towards institutional and structural changes that ensure the well-being, success, and overall thrive of the Black campus community. At the direction of Chancellor Jennifer L. Mnookin, the Ad-Hoc Study Group on the Black Community Experience on the UW–Madison Campus, which began meeting August 24, 2023, is composed of Black students, staff, faculty, alumni, and community members. As a study group, our mission was to identify what holistic changes are needed to improve the experiences of Black students, faculty, staff, and alumni at UW–Madison and provide explicit recommendations for how all levels of the system from top campus leadership to schools, colleges, units, and divisions on campus can leverage their power and resources to enact the solutions we set forth.

THE AD HOC STUDY GROUP WAS CHARGED WITH:

REVIEWING relevant data regarding UW–Madison’s Black community and historical information about both UW–Madison’s challenges with incidents affecting the Black community experience on campus and UW–Madison’s efforts to address those challenges, including progress in response to demands made over the years, and programs to support the success of underrepresented minority students.

ADVISING on steps that UW–Madison could take, in light of its legal obligations as a public institution, to positively impact the Black community experience on campus, including both potential campus efforts as well as specific recommendations for engagement and coordination with community groups and initiatives.

Although the Study Group emerged in large part from Black student activism at UW–Madison in the spring 2023 semester, we assert the need for a holistic change such that Black students, staff, and faculty grow together at UW–Madison. We aim for the recommendations to “be grounded in data and the historic record”⁵ yielding bold and concrete action-focused solutions toward collective Black thriving.

⁵ Doug Erickson, “Ad-hoc Study Group Will Recommend Ways to Improve the Black Experience at UW–Madison,” UW–Madison News, September 19, 2023. <https://news.wisc.edu/ad-hoc-study-group-will-recommend-ways-to-improve-the-black-experience-at-uw-madison/>.



WE ARTICULATED SEVERAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO UNDERGIRD OUR WORK AS A STUDY GROUP. EXAMPLES OF THESE PRINCIPLES INCLUDED ASSERTING THAT:

1. Black people are not the root cause of the inequities we experience at UW–Madison.
2. We will not revisit in depth the extensive record of discrimination that Black people have endured at UW–Madison, as they have been documented through prior initiatives (e.g., the “Sifting & Reckoning Project”).
3. Significant institutional reforms must occur at UW–Madison to ensure fair treatment and equitable academic and professional outcomes for Black people.





LIST OF STUDY GROUP MEMBERS

TABLE 1: STUDY GROUP MEMBERS

MEMBER	AFFILIATION(S)
Angela Byars-Winston (Co-Chair)	Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor, School of Medicine and Public Health; Chair, Institute for Diversity Science, UW-Madison
Alexander Gee (Co-Chair)	CEO and Founder, Center for Black Excellence and Culture and Nehemiah Center, UW-Madison Alumnus
Ray Allen	President and CEO Specialized Business Services, UW-Madison Alumnus
Kaleb Autman	Undergraduate Student, Black Power Coalition Operations Director, UW-Madison
Michelle Behnke	Principal, Michelle Behnke & Associates, UW-Madison Alumna
Amaya Boman	Undergraduate Student, Associated Students of Madison Grant Allocation Committee Chair, UW-Madison
LaVar J. Charleston (Ex-Officio)	Deputy Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion, Vice Provost and Chief Diversity Officer, Elzie Higgenbottom Director of the Division of Diversity, Equity and Educational Achievement, UW-Madison
Karla Foster	Director of Student and Recent Graduate Engagement, Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association, UW-Madison
Jerome Garrett	Chief Administrative Officer, Department of Family Medicine, School of Medicine and Public Health, UW-Madison
Devin Henry*	Graduate Student, Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, School of Education, UW-Madison
Jennifer Horace	Assistant Director Bias Response, Student Affairs, UW-Madison
Spring Sherrod	Department Manager, English Department, UW-Madison
Michael States	Associate Dean, Law School, UW-Madison
Christopher Walker	Faculty and Director, Division of the Arts, UW-Madison
Anjalé (AJ) Welton	Faculty and Department Chair, Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, School of Education, UW-Madison

* Participated through Fall 2023

Note: Torsheika Maddox (Staff Lead), Senior Operations Officer & Chief of Staff to the Chief Diversity Officer, UW-Madison

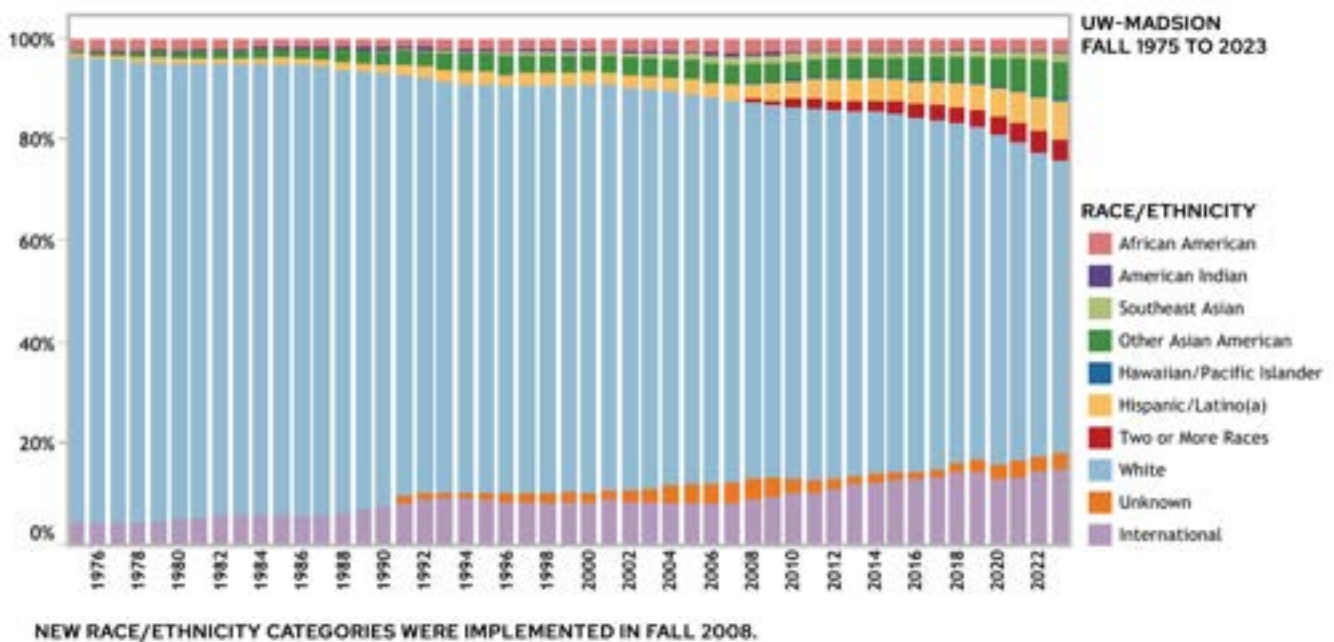


THE STATE OF BLACK UW-MADISON OVER TIME

In this section, we briefly summarize enrollment and employment data trends for Black students, staff, and faculty over the last few decades. Several existing resources have thoroughly captured the state of Black students, staff, and faculty through UW-Madison’s history, from the first known Black students enrolled and matriculated, to the student-led strikes in 1969, through the 2020s. Readers are encouraged to reference these resources and others like the Rebecca M. Blank Center for Campus History for more detailed statistics and background information on the state of Black UW-Madison over time.

1. Recovering the history of UW-Madison’s first African American students ([University of Wisconsin-Madison News, July 12, 2016](#))
2. 1969 Black Student Strike ([University of Wisconsin-Madison News, 2024](#))
3. UW-Madison Black student enrollment has never exceeded 3%. Why does the school make so little progress decade after decade? ([Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, June 2, 2022](#)).

FIGURE 1: STUDENT ENROLLMENT AT UW-MADISON FROM 1975 - 2020 ⁶



⁶ "Access," Accountability Dashboard, June 12, 2024, <https://www.wisconsin.edu/accountability/access/>.



Sadly, there have been no substantial improvements in the proportion of Black individuals relative to the overall growth of individuals in each category of students, faculty, and staff. The flat growth curve of Black presence is particularly evident in the student body as shown in Figure 1 such that Black students have never comprised more than 3.4% of the overall UW–Madison student body for 50+ years.⁷ For example, even though there was a 53% increase in enrollment of Black first year students between 2017 and 2021, UW–Madison’s overall enrollment also increased substantially during that time. As stated by Andre Phillips, UW–Madison Director of Admissions and Recruitment, “We haven’t lost ground.” “But if anything, it feels like we are, we’re just trying to keep pace as opposed to showing some significant growth.”⁸ This trend of keeping pace rather than gaining ground appears to be the case for the presence and advancement of Black faculty and staff as well. For example, the first Black faculty member was hired in 1963 and 60 years later in 2023, there were only 75.⁹

Below are the percentages of Black students, faculty, and staff at the UW–Madison for the years 2008, 2014, and 2023. These time points roughly correspond to 20 years after the inception of the Madison Plan 1988, and 6 years after Plan 2008. The year 2023 is the most recent year for which university data have been published by UW–Madison and marks 36 years since the 1987 Holley Report. See Appendix 1 for a more detailed presentation of these data, including the actual numbers of Black individuals in each category and the total number of all individuals in each category.



⁷ “Access,” Accountability Dashboard, June 12, 2024, <https://www.wisconsin.edu/accountability/access/>.

⁸ Devi Shastri, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, “UW–Madison’s Black Student Enrollment Has Never Exceeded 3%. Why Does the School Make so Little Progress, Decade After Decade?,” June 2, 2022. <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/education/2022/06/02/university-wisconsin-madison-struggles-recruit-black-students/7171091001/>.

⁹ 2023–2024 Data Digest. Data, Academic Planning & Institutional Research. University of Wisconsin–Madison. March 2024. <https://data.wisc.edu/data-digest/>.



**FIGURE 2: PERCENTAGES OF BLACK STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF
2008, 2014, 2023**

CATEGORY	2008	2014	2023
STUDENTS			
Undergraduate	2.6%	2.1%	2.5%
Graduate	2.6%	2.4%	2.3%
Professional*	4.5%	3.1%	4.4%
FACULTY			
Total	2.2%	2.6%	3.2%
STAFF			
Total	2.1%	2.2%	2.9%

Source: Data Digest 2014-2015 was used to tally the 2008 and 2014 percentages, and Data Digest 2023-2024 was used to tally the 2023 percentages. UW-Madison Data, Academic Planning and Institutional Research.

**Note: Professional now called Clinical Doctorate. Data for 2008 were revised in subsequent Data Digests to reflect changes in federal reporting guidelines, shown here as reported in 2014.*

Rather than parse through existing UW-Madison enrollment and employment data, we briefly referenced these data in this report to illustrate the very real inertia relative to the numerical presence of Black people as members of the UW-Madison community. Without intentional and deliberate action, UW-Madison's own data sources predict that this inertia will continue. To be clear, UW-Madison must address not only the numerical stagnation relative to Black presence, but address the facilitating institutional and environmental conditions necessary for Black people to thrive. It is unacceptable to bring more Black people into a toxic environment and focus on creating more tools to adapt to the toxicity but ignore the metaphorical environmental campus clean-up so desperately needed.



PREVIOUS REPORTS AND PLANS RELATED TO THE BLACK EXPERIENCE AND OTHER DIVERSITY GOALS AT UW-MADISON

Through the years, there have been critical events on the UW-Madison Campus highlighting an environment that is not fully accepting of or appreciative of the diverse people on campus. Diverse students, staff and faculty have raised these issues to the attention of the UW-Madison administration through protest and dialogue. Often a study of the climate on campus has been “commissioned” after such events with lengthy reports and recommendations. The Ad Hoc Study Group reviewed these studies and reports to inform its work. Although this Ad Hoc Study Group’s focus is the Black experience and Black success, prior groups have been charged with examining diversity issues more broadly at UW-Madison.

HOLLEY REPORT-1987¹⁰

The Holley Report was the culmination of months of work by a committee of 25 members of the University community to address the issue of racism on campus. The work was undertaken by the Steering Committee on Minority Affairs which was charged with doing the work by then Acting Vice Chancellor, Phillip Certain.

The executive summary of the Holley Report captured the basis for the work as follows: “The University of Wisconsin-Madison has a national reputation as a leader in many disciplines in both teaching and research... Yet in regard to promoting a truly multicultural community of learning, UW-Madison has fallen far short of its stated goals and ideals. This is manifest in the low percentages of people of color among faculty, staff, and students despite decades of remedial efforts; in the low retention rates of minority group students and faculty; and in the content of the UW-Madison curriculum.”¹¹

The Report made clear that developing a multicultural appreciation of those other than Euro-Americans is important for preparing students to move into a diverse world. The report set forth the following recommendations:

- I. The University needs to appoint a Vice-Chancellor of Ethnic Minority Affairs/Affirmative Action to act as an institutional officer responsible for minority and affirmative action affairs. It is the recommendation of this Committee that this Vice-Chancellor appoint an individual to have primary responsibility for ethnic minority affairs and another individual to have primary responsibility for affirmative action matters. It is imperative that the highest priority be given to the appointment of a person of color to this position of Vice-Chancellor.
- II. The University must take immediate action to ameliorate the problems that plagued the recruitment and retention of ethnic minority students. The implementation must include the following steps:

¹⁰ Steering Committee on Minority Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Final Report, November 1987.

¹¹ Steering Committee on Minority Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Final Report, November 1987, 1.



1. Delineate clear lines of authority that control ethnic minority support programs. Only then will the University be able to develop sound management plans and allocate adequate resources to make these programs a success.
2. Develop appropriate incentives to encourage faculty and staff commitment to, and commitment toward, the needs of minority students.

III. The Chancellor must explicitly and forcefully establish goals to recruit, hire, and retain ethnic minority faculty members. These goals will be reached for the following actions:

1. All units must develop a substantial remedial affirmative action program with budgeting authority to guarantee equal "full utilization" of University resources by the year 2000.
2. Each college/school must develop affirmative action strategies in consultation with departmental members and the OAAC.
3. The University needs to create an Office of the Vice-Chancellor of Ethnic Minority Affairs and Affirmative Action that acts as the institutional ombudsman on affirmative action affairs.
4. The Office of Affirmative Action and Compliance must actively monitor the implementation of affirmative action programs and report its findings directly to the Vice-Chancellor of Affirmative Action.

IV. The University must establish an investigative body composed of faculty, minority staff, and students to conduct fact finding and to comprehensively address the concerns of minority non-instructional staff.



V. The University needs to establish a Multicultural Center to house ethnic minority student organizations, provide meeting facilities, and foster a receptive social environment supportive of ethnic minority students on this campus. The Vice-Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs and the Chairman of the Steering Committee on Minority Affairs shall appoint a Board of Directors to oversee the development, budgeting, and implementation of the Center.

VI. The University must implement a mandatory six credit ethnic studies course requirement; and create and develop various Ethnic Studies Programs. These measures will recognize the contributions of ethnic minorities of American society and promote cross-cultural understanding and respect among the entire student body.



VIII[sic]. The University must initiate a multi-faceted orientation program in order to increase the level of comfort of students of color and combat racism on campus. Educational programs will be designed to reach all members of the University community.

IX[sic]. The University needs to reach out to the minority community in Madison. It should establish and support an Office of Minority Affairs housed in the Multicultural Center. This office will develop and coordinate programs to encourage interaction between the University and minority community. Enhanced interaction and cooperation is essential for the development of a solid relationship based on mutual trust and support.¹²

THE MADISON PLAN 1988

Following the Holley Report, then Chancellor Donna Shalala issued what became known as the Madison Plan in 1988. The Madison Plan was “conceived to address the university’s lack of pluralism and ethnic diversity in a timely and comprehensive fashion.”¹³ The Madison Plan followed closely on the heels of the Holley Report and according to an oral history interview with Donna Shalala reported in the compilation titled “A Closer Look at UW–Madison’s Campus-Wide Initiatives” by T.J. Braxton, Shalala was not interested in wholesale adoption of the Holley Report recommendations because of her perspective that the recommendations took the University of Wisconsin–Madison in a more separatist direction and the recommendations were not comprehensive enough.¹⁴

In “Our Vision of the University,” the Madison plan outlines UW–Madison’s history and commitment to providing access and educational excellence, highlighting how these are jeopardized by financial barriers and limited diversity. The “Demographic Realities” section directly addresses the shifting family structures and the evolving ethnic composition of the college-age population, presenting statistical evidence to illustrate these changes. It discusses the transformation of the American family since the 1950s and the significant increase in the minority proportion of the college-age population, underlining the urgency for the university to adapt to these demographic shifts to maintain the university’s role in promoting social mobility.

The Madison Plan articulated two overarching goals: “(1) providing access; and (2) providing an excellent and diverse education.”¹⁵

To address the first goal focused on access, the Madison Plan¹⁶ (hereafter referred to as “the Plan”) set numerical benchmarks for increasing financial aid, increasing minority recruitment, and increasing faculty diversity. For the second goal of providing an excellent and diverse education, the Plan focused on closing the retention disparity between all students and students of color. One strategy of the Plan was to increase racial/ethnic diversity of the student body through early exposure to UW–Madison via pre-college programs, specific “minority”

¹² Steering Committee on Minority Affairs, University of Wisconsin–Madison, Final Report, November 1987, 3–4.

¹³ The Madison Plan, Office of the Chancellor, February 9, 1988.

¹⁴ A Closer Look at UW–Madison’s Campus-Wide Diversity Initiatives, T. J. Braxton, May 5, 2021, 5.

¹⁵ A Closer Look at UW–Madison’s Campus-Wide Diversity Initiatives, T. J. Braxton, May 5, 2021, 6.

¹⁶ The Madison Plan, 6–11.



recruitment efforts, financial aid, targeted graduate fellowships etc., through a comprehensive strategy articulated through several key initiatives combined in the implementation of the FASTrack program. This program provided financial aid to economically disadvantaged students to enhance accessibility to higher education, established the Minority Merit Scholarships and Graduate and Professional School Fellowships, and the development of recruitment and outreach strategies aimed at significantly increasing the enrollment of minority students. Further, the Plan focused on enhancing the undergraduate curriculum to address topics of ethnic diversity and better prepare students for a multicultural world. This recommendation followed the Holley Report proposal to establish an Ethnic Studies Credit Requirement and the establishment of a Multicultural Center to act as a catalyst for creating a more inclusive campus community. The Plan created retention initiatives, such as New Student Orientation and Mentor Programs specifically designed to improve minority student retention rates. The Plan set a goal of doubling the number of undergraduate minorities within five years by Fall of 1993, and adding 70 minority faculty and hiring or promoting 125 minority academic staff positions within three years of the Plan's launch. The Plan called for UW–Madison to establish a non-discriminatory environment with a student conduct policy committee to oversee sanctions for violations of conduct rules.

The Plan¹⁷ set key dates for completion of specified goals with some goals being completed in September of 1988 (six months after issuance of the Plan) and other goals to be accomplished in three or five of the specified time horizons.¹⁸ According to T.J. Braxton, the Minority Coalition was vocally opposed to the Madison Plan because the Plan did not address the issues in a cohesive and unified manner.¹⁹ The Minority Coalition “rebuked the Madison Plan for being assimilationist and ...viewed the issue of racism as being reduced to minority students’ inability to adjust to a white institution.”²⁰



¹⁷ The Madison Plan, 12-17.

¹⁸ The Madison Plan, 21.

¹⁹ A Closer Look at UW–Madison’s Campus-Wide Diversity Initiatives, 7.

²⁰ A Closer Look at UW–Madison’s Campus-Wide Diversity Initiatives, 8.



PLAN 2008

In May 1998, the University of Wisconsin System (UW System) Board of Regents issued Plan 2008: Educational Quality Through Racial and Ethnic Diversity. This Plan was built on the Design for Diversity Plan to enhance opportunities for targeted people of color.²¹ The overall goal of Plan 2008 was to “build upon the experience gained in the past decade” to offer a vision for “a better, more diverse UW System for the decade ahead.”²² The UW System recognized that it still needed to provide “educational experiences, in and out of the classroom, that respect, cultivate and build upon the diversity that all groups bring (i.e., gender, religion, nationality, sexual orientation and differently-abled).²³ Plan 2008 was a decade long (1998–2008) framework for statewide strategic planning for racial and ethnic diversity in the UW System. Each UW system institution within the first year of implementing the plan was charged with discussing, debating, and developing its own diversity strategic plan.²⁴



According to T.J. Braxton’s research paper, UW–Madison’s Plan 2008 contained initiatives unique to Madison, but the overarching goals of the Plan were similar to the UW System Plan. There were seven goals in the UW System plan:

1. Increase the number of Wisconsin high school graduates of color who apply, are accepted, and enrolled at UW institutions.
2. Encourage educational partnerships and reach parents and children at a young age.
3. Close the gap in educational achievement; align graduation and retention rates for students of color and the student body as a whole.
4. Increase financial aid for the needy and reduce loan reliance.
5. Increase faculty, academic staff, classified staff, and administrators so that they are represented in the UW System work force and proportion to the current availability in relevant job pools. Also work to increase their future of availability as potential employees.
6. Foster institutional environments and course development that enhance learning and a respect for racial and ethnic diversity.
7. Improve the accountability of the UW System.²⁵

²¹ Plan 2008: Educational Quality Through Racial and Ethnic Diversity, May 1998, 4.

²² Plan 2008: Educational Quality Through Racial and Ethnic Diversity, May 1998, 2.

²³ Plan 2008: Educational Quality Through Racial and Ethnic Diversity, May 1998, 2.

²⁴ Plan 2008: Educational Quality Through Racial and Ethnic Diversity, May 1998, 2.

²⁵ Plan 2008: Educational Quality Through Racial and Ethnic Diversity, May 1998, 4–5.



R.E.E.L. CHANGE MODEL

In 2010, work began to create a new comprehensive plan across the UW–Madison campus. The new plan dubbed Affecting R.E.E.L. Change for Diversity and Inclusion was adopted in spring 2015.²⁶ The R.E.E.L. Change Model stands for retain, equip, engage, and lead.²⁷ This initiative, developed by the Division of Diversity, Equity and Educational Achievement (DDEEA), involves a three-phase, 18-initiative plan aimed at transforming the university’s approach to diversity and inclusion. The DDEEA encourages participation from the entire campus community and community partners to track and support the initiative’s efforts. The goals of the R.E.E.L. Change Model for diversity and inclusion focuses on creating a more inclusive and diverse campus environment through targeted initiatives. While the specific goals for each phase and initiative may vary, the overarching objectives of the R.E.E.L. Change Model can be summarized as follows:



RETAIN students, faculty, and staff of color by improving support structures, ensuring that retention rates for these groups align more closely with those of the broader university population. This includes employing data-driven analyses and support systems, like the Green Zone model, to identify and assist students facing academic challenges and to close the graduation gap.

ENGAGE the broader campus and community through strengthened partnerships, programming, and dialogues that promote diversity and inclusion. Initiatives under this goal include the annual Diversity Forum, the Leadership Institute, and the Diversity Inventory, all designed to foster a sense of community, promote dialogue, and encourage participation in diversity-related activities.

EQUIP the campus community with the tools, knowledge, and resources necessary to succeed and thrive in a diverse and inclusive academic environment. This involves providing professional development on inclusive teaching practices, enhancing STEM success through increased coordination and support, and ensuring that diversity and inclusion are integral to strategic planning across all campus units.

LEAD in the development and implementation of innovative approaches to diversity and inclusion.²⁸

²⁶ A Closer Look at UW–Madison’s Campus-Wide Diversity Initiatives, 18.

²⁷ A Closer Look at UW–Madison’s Campus-Wide Diversity Initiatives, 19.

²⁸ A Closer Look at UW–Madison’s Campus-Wide Diversity Initiatives, 19.



The R.E.E.L. Change Model was to be implemented in phases over a ten-year period with six initiatives implemented in each phase.²⁹

Accountability and measurement of success within the R.E.E.L. Change Model are articulated through continuous updates on each initiative, the creation of new positions and programs to support diversity efforts, and the involvement of multiple campus units and partners in strategic diversity planning. Success is also measured by tracking enrollment increases among diverse student populations, professional development participation rates, and the impact of strategic diversity plans across schools and colleges. The program also includes the use of surveys like the Student Campus Climate Survey and the Engagement, Inclusion, and Diversity (EID) Survey to assess perceptions of UW–Madison’s commitment to diversity and monitor progress over time.



Through these various plans, there has been little post-plan review or analysis of the effectiveness of the respective plans. In the conclusion of T.J. Braxton’s research paper, there is note and acknowledgment of the mixed results of these efforts, ongoing challenges, and the essential role of prioritizing diversity and actively involving minority students in the planning and implementation processes to achieve meaningful and lasting change on campus.

A core recommendation is for diversity and inclusion to be prioritized at all administrative levels, demonstrating a genuine commitment through clear communication and adequate budget allocations. This involves adopting a unified and cohesive strategy across the campus to ensure impactful and consistent change, rather than delegating specific measures to individual units or colleges. Enhancing communication and collaboration among high-level administrators, departments, and diversity offices is crucial for coordinating efforts and sharing a clear vision for the university’s diversity goals. Additionally, increasing budget allocation for diversity programs, including support for multicultural student centers and scholarships, is essential for the development and successful implementation of these initiatives.³⁰

The Ad Hoc Study Group was granted permission to access a comparison grid of the Madison Plan, Plan 2008, and the R.E.E.L. Change Model prepared by Taylor Bailey which was originally intended to be a part of the “Sifting & Reckoning Project.” The comparison grid is included with this report as Appendix 2.

²⁹ A Closer Look at UW–Madison’s Campus–Wide Diversity Initiatives, 19.

³⁰ A Closer Look at UW–Madison’s Campus–Wide Diversity Initiatives, 26.



STUDY GROUP STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES

STUDY GROUP OPERATIONS AND MEETING STRUCTURE

The study group adopted a hybrid meeting format, facilitating both synchronous and asynchronous work. In 2023, eight (8) planning meetings were held on September 11 and 23, October 3, 16, and 30, November 7 and 28, and December 13. Meetings took place at the Department of Family Medicine Building on the westside and at the South Madison Partnership on the southside, ensuring accessible parking. The meetings were predominantly in-person, supplemented by a hybrid option, with no more than three members participating online at any given time. Each meeting began with a shared meal. In 2024, seven (7) meetings were mostly virtual held on January 23, February 5 and 25, March 6 (in-person), March 11, and April 2 with a focus on planning and drafting the study group's report.

INITIAL PHASE AND DATA COMPILATION

The study group established community agreements, set the workflow, and assigned members to review existing reports relevant to institutional diversity matters at UW–Madison. The first few meetings were crucial for setting the groundwork, involving a detailed review of existing reports, campus climate surveys, and studies related to the Black experience at UW–Madison. This early stage aimed to establish a comprehensive understanding by analyzing previous findings and identifying prevailing themes, trends, and gaps in the data. Recognizing these gaps was pivotal as it directed the study group's focus toward areas requiring fresh data or more in-depth analysis. A digital repository, primarily through shared Google folders, was created for efficient data management and access, facilitating both collective review and individual analysis.

DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDING QUESTIONS AND INFORMATIVE SOURCE ENGAGEMENT

Parallel, preliminary discussions shaped the guiding questions for the research, ensuring they were closely aligned with the insights from the compiled data and addressed the identified information gaps. The study group's creation of guiding questions shaped our research and interactions with informative sources. These questions were formulated through a careful review of existing literature and data, combined with thorough discussions to draw on the diverse expertise of the study group members. We utilized a shared Google folder for document management and collaboration allowing for the dynamic evolution of our guiding questions, ensuring they are precise and actionable.





To ensure an efficient data collection process, each question was categorized to identify the most informative source, whether from existing documents or data (D) or through personal interviews (P). These guiding questions directed our engagements with informative sources and were continually refined based on initial findings and feedback. This adaptive process ensured our inquiries were relevant and targeted, laying a solid foundation for a comprehensive and impactful final report. See Appendix 2 for the list of sample questions generated.

INFORMATIVE SOURCE ENGAGEMENT

The study group engaged with a broad and diverse range of informative sources across various sectors, encompassing academic affairs, diversity and inclusion, health services, campus safety, alumni relations, and student affairs. See Table 2 for a list of all sources engaged. Notable contributions and interactions have occurred with key

individuals and offices, enhancing the depth and breadth of our understanding, with several more pending. This diverse range of engagements ensured a comprehensive and multi-dimensional perspective, pivotal for the study group's work and the eventual formulation of insightful recommendations for the final report.



**TABLE 2: LIST OF INFORMATIVE SOURCES**

INFORMATIVE SOURCE	OFFICE, UNIT, AFFILIATION	DATA (D) OR PERSON INTERVIEW (P)
Alison Rice, Co-Chair	Office of Secretary of Academic Staff	P
Lauren Adams, Program Coordinator	The Black Cultural Center	P
Kacie Lucchini-Butcher, Director	Rebecca Blank Center for Campus History	P
Taylor Bailey, Assistant Director	Rebecca Blank Center for Campus History	P
Dr. Tony Chambers, Director	Community Well-being, Center for Healthy Minds	P
Reonda Washington, Health Equity Data Analyst	University Health Services	D
Lisa Imhoff, Member	UW Policing: Police Advisory Council	P
Stephanie Diaz De Leon, Member	UW Policing: Police Advisory Council	P
Joshua Woolfolk, Senior Director of Development	WAA, WFAA	P
Marcus Sedbury, Associate Director	Athletics	P
Dr. Danielle Pulliam, Assistant Director for Diversity and Inclusion	Athletics	P
John Zumbrunnen, Beth Meyerand	Provost Advisory Council	D
Lori Reesor	Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs	P
Karen Stroud-Phillips	Director & assistant Dean for Center for Academic Excellence	P
Patrick Sheehan	Chief Human resource Officer	P
Derek Kindle, Vice Provost	Enrollment Management	P
Abbey Thompson, Assistant Dean	Diversity, Inclusion and Funding: Graduate School	P
Mike Knetter, CEO & President	WFAA	P
Alisa Robertson, President and Chief advancement Officer	WFAA	P
Andre Phillips, Director	Admissions and Recruitment	P

REVIEW SESSIONS AND INFORMATIVE SOURCES MEETINGS

Time was devoted to reviewing and discussing previously published diversity reports which served as a platform to further refine the questions for the constituents we interviewed. The study group’s November meeting was significant, as we finalized our questions for executive leadership and completed the questions for the remaining informative source groups. Our first significant informative source meeting involved university leadership, including the Chancellor, the Provost, and the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration. This was the only informative source meeting attended by all study group members. Subsequent meetings were conducted by sub-committees.



REPORT DRAFTING AND SUB-COMMITTEE COORDINATION

As the study group transitioned to outlining the report in December 2023, the group decided to develop a preliminary report, completed in early February 2024 to align with the university's budgetary process and timelines for fiscal year 2025 decisions. The preliminary report included an 'early request' section populated with recommendations that had budget implications. This preliminary report was submitted to the Office of the Vice Chancellor. To facilitate this process, the study group was restructured into sub-committees, each focused on a distinct aspect or informative source group of the study. Members volunteered for sub-committees based on their expertise, interest, or prior engagement with specific informative sources. These sub-committees were tasked with conducting detailed interviews, refining the inquiry process based on the initial guiding questions, and synthesizing the information gathered into cohesive summary reports.

While original introductions to informative sources were provided by the DDEEA, each sub-committee operated autonomously, organizing their meetings, and maintaining rigorous documentation of their findings. The reports generated captured the essence of the discussions and the data collected. These reports were then shared with the entire study group through in-meeting presentations and on a shared Google Drive folder, ensuring transparency and collective review. The presentation of these reports commenced in a virtual meeting on January 20, 2024, and continued through the March 6, 2024 meeting.

During the last February meeting and the March meetings, the study group drafted the outline for the final report. For both the preliminary and final reports, the sub-committees' efforts were instrumental in enriching the reports with nuanced insights gained from the informative sources. Study group members were tasked to work asynchronously to complete the different sections of the reports in a shared google document.



The Study Group is aware of the current legal landscape that may attempt to challenge the UW-Madison response to the Study Group's report. However, in order to effectively address the decades long challenges faced by this particular group and to promote the significant institutional reforms that must occur at UW-Madison to ensure fair treatment and equitable academic and professional outcomes for Black people, the Study Group proffers actionable items described in the Recommendations section of this report.





FINDINGS

This section of the report includes observations garnered from the Study Group members of beliefs, attitudes, practices, and biases which may contribute to UW–Madison’s current racial environmental status or impede progress in rectifying it. The Findings described here are summarized by the Study Co-Chairs, Drs. Angela Byars-Winston and Alexander Gee, Jr., on behalf of and based on the Study Members’ discovery and conclusions reached from their interviews conducted with key UW leaders and officers for this study (see table 2). The Findings provide context for the content of the recommendations specified in the next section.



1. There is a general reactive versus proactive stance by UW–Madison relative to its Black members. Several key campus-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives were in response to a disturbance in the UW community, including a racist incident by a White UW–Madison fraternity, the photo cropping of a Black student into the University’s promotional brochure, and a video of a racist rant by a White woman nursing student. It appears that UW–Madison is motivated to act on behalf of its Black members when students’ responses to these problems rise to the level of a protest, sit-in, or walkout. It is demoralizing for Black faculty, staff, and students to sense that only when Black pain and suffering rise to a high enough level impossible to ignore, that the campus leadership activates in response. Further, UW–Madison’s reactive responses are incomplete as they lack the necessary work of repair and restoration to address actual harm to Black members of the university community. There is no culture of continuous improvement relative to the State of Black UW, to ensure that Black individuals are given forethought, not afterthought in reaction to incidents, in the UW–Madison community.

2. Black UW–Madison Alumni do not seem to be a strong partner with the University in addressing and solving these racial climate issues. We are not aware of any current thorough Black alumni recruitment or reclamation efforts. Many Black alumni find themselves aligning with UW’s adversaries as many of their (our) own personal and historic campus issues are still unaddressed. The collective and individual voices of UW alumni of color could possibly be a strong voice against legislative efforts to defund the campus’ DEI efforts, but they are not recruited, informed, or mobilized to act. It is also true that the local community does not seem to be in partnership with UW in addressing these issues, another possible direction for strategic engagement.



3. There is a grave disconnect between responsibility and accountability for DEI in general and for the state of Black UW in particular. For instance, in the Madison Plan, actual target numbers and percent growth in Black student enrollment and Black staff and faculty hires were specified, and leaders who were responsible for monitoring target goals were identified. When those targets were not met or maintained, who was accountable? To what extent were the performance evaluations, promotions, and reward structures for those responsible leaders attached to the target goals achieved? Moreover, there seems to be no collective belief that there is broad accountability for students (staff or faculty, for that matter) who commit egregiously harmful and discriminatory acts against communities of color.

When it comes to senior leadership, it seems apparent that there is no true accountability for deans and faculty concerning DEI efforts. Where does that accountability end up for each school and/or academic and administrative departments? The position of UW Vice Provost and Chief Diversity Officer has no line of authority for faculty and deans, the Provost does. How will the duties of the Provost align with providing the accountability that is needed for faculty and deans? Yes, UW is a large and complex organization. But the lack of accountability processes compromises our ability to achieve real DEI change and results in leaders monitoring and measuring change but not driving change.



4. To our knowledge, an outside expert consulting firm has not ever been hired to significantly investigate the opportunities and challenges at UW–Madison specifically related to DEI. The campus has generally relied on internal members of the community to, in essence, examine itself and self-assess. Relative to the state of Black UW–Madison, there is merit in bringing to bear the lived experiences of current and past Black faculty, staff, and students in identifying needed change and future directions. However, at its core, the transformation needed to significantly improve the status of Black people at UW–Madison and to sustain that improved status is a matter of institutional change. For instance, the Ad Hoc Study Group members wrestled with defining what Black success at UW–Madison means, what indicators would constitute success, and how to measure it. But, defining Black success and its indicators exceeded both the timeframe and the charge to the present group. It is clear, nonetheless, that without such definitions and a “North Star” articulation of Black success, the UW will continue to be limited in its advancement of its members who identify as Black. There are national experts that specialize in organizational transformation with an emphasis on DEI that could be engaged to bring an evidence-based DEI analysis and implementation strategy to UW to advance the state of Black individuals.



5. The magnitude of the scope and scale of addressing racial climate at UW–Madison feels overwhelming to many campus administrators and faculty. Yet, there seems to be a sincere glimmer of hope in Chancellor Mnookin, by staff and Black alumni, that has not been evident in recent years. We must make the most of this moment in the University’s history and leverage this opportunity into something meaningful, long-lasting and promising. There is hope that there will be a culture shift under the current UW–Madison Executive Leadership.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the Findings summarized in the previous section and our collective experience as a Study Group, the Recommendations look back and look forward. They capture both restoration and repair work that UW–Madison needs to initiate in mending actual past harm to Black members of the UW community and they capture prospective opportunities for the University to positively impact thriving for Black students, staff, and faculty. While the Study Group is aware of the current legal landscape in Wisconsin limiting some DEI efforts, we still firmly believe that there are specific actions UW–Madison can take to positively impact the Black community. Our recommendations challenge UW–Madison to increase Black thriving by implementing new recruitment strategies, including the Black community in decision-making, amplifying the research that comprehensively tells the story of the Black experience at UW–Madison, and focusing on retaining and advancing the careers of Black faculty and staff and students.

1. We recommend 2-3 seasoned Academic/Retention Specialists with a proven track record in understanding the needs and experiences of Black students and whose responsibility supports Black student needs and retention. (This would be the counterpart to the Black student recruitment team.)
 - A. As with Black students, there are parallel needs among Black faculty and staff. Therefore, we request 2-3 Retention Specialists that address the needs and experiences of Black faculty and staff as well.
2. The formation of both a Black Faculty/Staff Council and a Black Student Council. Establish that the Black Faculty/Staff Council and Black Student Council meets with the Chancellor/Executive Leadership Team biannually to hear and elevate the needs and concerns of these councils to the relevant campus governing bodies or administrative units.
3. Unrestricted budget to compete for talented Black students who are not need dependent (merit-based aid).
4. Support a reclamation of Black alumni initiative to hear their experiences (positive and negative) and their needs in order to re-engage them as renewed alumni.
5. Engage Black faculty on initiatives that can be funded by WFAA, especially funds that may come via the donations from Black Alumni.
6. Resources to add two more Posse cities, or some comparable significant recruitment strategy, to aggressively pursue underrepresented students.
7. Add a staff member who could coordinate recruitment across the 130 UW pre-college camps and programs.
8. Pursue an initiative commissioned by the Chancellor that would aim to increase the cultural diversity of the campus.



9. Resources to recruit students and inform high school counselors, in Milwaukee, Madison, and other schools with high numbers of Black students. Chartering a bus to bring the counselors here for a day of programming would be a start. Resource a recruitment initiative that engages high school counselors as well as students in Milwaukee, Madison, and other school districts with high numbers of Black students to host counselors on campus in a “Badger Preview Day” to equip partners to jumpstart the recruitment process.



- A. Increase strategies and efforts to recruit all college-bound, UW–Madison-ready Black high school seniors in Dane county.
- B. Actively recruit Black college-bound, UW–Madison-ready high school seniors of UW–Madison Black alumni, staff, and faculty nationwide.
10. Partner with UW Foundation to create positions dedicated to:
 - A. Mentor matching and coordination with Black alumni to facilitate Career Mentorship for Black students at UW. This position will guide Black alumni to offer mentorship and thereby improve the Black student experience on campus and allow Black alumni to give/support programming that is meaningful to the Black alumni (e.g., internships and job opportunities).
 - B. Create a Staff position who will facilitate Cultural Mentorship and city-wide socialization for UW staff, students, and faculty with the Black community in Madison to enhance cultural resilience (e.g., Black Chamber of Commerce, Urban League Network of Black Professionals, Center for Black Excellence, other professional groups).
11. Partner with WFAA to provide training for Schools, Colleges, Units and Divisions to engage prospective donors interested in supporting the needs of the campus community to advance and promote thriving for Black people and other minoritized constituents (e.g., Department of African American Studies).
 - A. Establish a Board of Visitors for the Department of African American Studies to provide a clear mechanism for soliciting and/or receiving donations from interested individuals, key partners, and alumni.



12. A seasoned staff member with lived relevant experience with African American alumni should be employed to focus on Black alumni relations, local Black community relations, and liaison to Black students and families starting with MMSD/MPS for pre-college program recruitment.
13. Provide substantial response and intentional addressing of the issues, concerns and needs outlined in the results of [the Color of Drinking Survey](#).
14. Invest in the Center for Campus History by increasing funding for operations; enhancing budget for staffing and exhibit Space (e.g., funding for specialized staff such as technology and archival resources; community engagement programs and research and project funds).
15. Develop a plan to ensure all student-facing student affairs staff are accountable for contributions to the Division's identity and inclusion efforts.
16. Develop a concrete plan for professional development that addresses the needs of Black faculty and staff.
17. Explore the creation of a physical space for Black faculty and staff to gather and build community, on or off campus.
18. Acknowledge and honor the former students and campus constituents who spearheaded the 1969 Black Student Strikes with meaningful recognition.
19. Create an integrated and accessible repository/database to effectively track the enrollment and graduation of Black students.
20. Translate all recommendations from this report into specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals with clear accountability standards.





OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FROM AN ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Given the historic nature of the UW–Madison Department of African American Studies and place it has provided for the minds and hearts of many UW Black students, we, the Study Group, thought it would be important to explore the role that such an academic department might continue to have on providing intellectual space for Black students, faculty, staff, and community partners, and ally development strategies for non-Black students, faculty, and staff.

To ensure UW’s receptiveness to Black student concerns in particular, we sought insights from Dr. Christy Clark-Pujara, a prominent Black faculty member and Chair of the Department of African American Studies. We inquired about the resources her department would require to enhance inclusivity and address the needs of Black students effectively.



The Department of African American Studies requires several structural resources to enhance its potential and retain recently recruited junior faculty:

1. SENIOR FACULTY HIRES

The department urgently needs 2 to 3 senior faculty members due to the strain on existing personnel. With only 5 tenured faculty members, everyone is stretched thin with multiple responsibilities. Senior hires in various disciplines, including Social Sciences, History, English, Theater, and Art History, are essential to broadening course offerings and providing mentorship to early career faculty and students in the department. In addition, four senior faculty in the Department have indicated upcoming retirement plans in the near future, and they need to be replaced by senior hires in order to maintain effective department functions and institutional obligations.



2. ADDITIONAL STAFF

Permanent funding is needed for the Communications Specialist position, crucial for managing department communications and outreach. Additionally, a part-time financial staff member is desired to handle growing fiscal responsibilities, especially with anticipated changes to the current temporary arrangement for the department's purchasing card management.

3. COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Course releases are necessary to sustain the Department's high-impact, high-visibility community engagement efforts with local organizations like the Nehemiah Foundation's Justified Anger initiative.

4. ENDOWED FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

Endowed professorships and chairs are a vital necessity to retain talented junior faculty members and support talented senior faculty, respectively, providing them with critical funding to advance their scholarship.

Christy Clark-Pujara, PhD, Chair and Professor, Department of African American Studies, emphasizes these needs to ensure the department's success and growth.





CREATING A CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The primary outcome of this report is that the Black community within or affiliated with the University of Wisconsin–Madison thrives. Through our comprehensive review of data and interviews with numerous stakeholders, the committee identified significant gaps that have impacted the Black community’s experience at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, which were the foundation for the committees’ strategic recommendations. In light of our findings and recommendations, the committee urges university leadership to consider the following insights in order to advance and address the long-standing challenges faced by Black students, faculty, and staff at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Accountability has arisen as a key theme of this report based on the committee’s findings. It was evident that the university lacks clear expectations and accountability mechanisms across its community, which has hindered progress. Accountability necessitates specifying the intended outcomes and who is responsible for realizing those outcomes, and then making both of these factors transparent. This commitment to transparency (i.e., visibility of the goals and responsibility) facilitates a culture of accountability and allows for communication on the university’s progress to and from campus and community stakeholders. By fostering a culture of accountability, the university can clarify roles, unify efforts towards collective goals, and significantly advance the thriving of Black community members, while also cultivating a supportive and inclusive environment for all its members.

Additionally, the report suggests comprehensive policy enhancements to promote a respectful and inclusive campus environment, with clear expectations and consequences for breaches of conduct. It is imperative that there are explicit guidelines on trust, respect, and decorum to foster a campus culture where professionalism and courtesy prevail in all interactions among students, faculty, staff, and administrators. This also extends to clearly communicating the policies addressing hostile and intimidating behavior for faculty, staff, and students, and procedures for effective reporting. Again, this is to ensure all community members feel safe and respected while promoting a positive campus climate at UW–Madison.





Lastly, it is evident that there is a great need for representation of Black faculty, staff, and students on campus and in key shared governance bodies - such as the Faculty Senate, Academic Staff Assembly, University Staff Congress, and Associated Students of Madison. This inclusion will enrich decision-making processes with diverse perspectives and ensure that Black voices are integral to shaping policies and initiatives that support thriving within the university community.



Overall, the committee's findings and recommendations underscore the importance of proactive measures to support Black students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni at UW-Madison. By embedding accountability, promoting respect and inclusion, expanding policies, and enhancing

representation in governance, leadership can pave the way for a campus environment that will incrementally shift us away from the past so that in the next 175 years, not only Black people will thrive, but anyone who experiences our campus community will thrive.



CONCLUSION

We conclude this report similar to where we began the report in the Introduction: attesting that the success of Black students, faculty, and staff is integral to UW–Madison being a truly inclusive university environment. Anything less is an existential threat to the UW–Madison mission as a public research university whose purpose is to provide an environment in which faculty, staff, and students “help ensure the survival of this and future generations and improve the quality of life for all.”

The recommendations outlined in this report of the Ad Hoc Study Group on the Black Experience at UW–Madison hold immense potential for increasing the university’s capacity to facilitate the full membership of the Black campus community. The recommendations are aimed at intensifying efforts and optimizing the conditions that cultivate the ability of Black students, staff, and faculty to learn, work, and discover. We envision several important outcomes by implementing these recommendations.

We envision a campus in which Black students “realize their highest potential of intellectual, physical and human development,” as stated in the UW–Madison mission statement, in a safe environment that is free of anti-Black racism. This environment will facilitate Black students’ ability to fully participate in university life with dignity and a sense of belonging, thereby, increasing their ability to innovate, create, and serve.

We envision a campus where the recruitment and promotion of Black employees—staff and faculty—are maximized as they contribute to the teaching, research, and service activities that advance UW–Madison’s mission. Such an environment includes an intentional and coordinated institutional retention strategy that is culturally relevant to the talent development needs of Black faculty and staff at predominantly White institutions like UW–Madison.

We envision a future where Black alumni feel more connected to and a stronger sense of belonging, ownership, and pride in their alma mater. This increased connection and sense of ownership may lead to more generous relationships with the UW Foundation, further supporting the university’s ability to realize its mission and initiatives. A connected and proud Black alumni base can build important bridges between the UW–Madison and organizations and individuals in local and regional Black communities. Indeed, a proud cohort of Black alumni can serve as a powerful force in standing in solidarity with the university during times of political pressure, legislative defunding threats, and attacks on higher education’s diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

The proposed recommendations are not only vital for enhancing the experiences of Black students, faculty, staff, and alumni but also for strengthening the resilience and integrity of UW–Madison as a model institution committed to equity and justice. We remain vigilant in UW–Madison realizing these recommendations, acting decisively upon them, and living out the truest expressions of the Wisconsin Idea in a manner which is honoring to the entire University community locally and around the globe.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: DATA TRENDS

**APPENDIX 2: COMPARISON TABLE OF PREVIOUS
REPORTS AND PLANS RELATED TO DIVERSITY GOALS
AT UW-MADISON**

APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



APPENDIX 1: DATA TRENDS

The data presented in this section are summarized from sources published by the UW–Madison Data, Academic Planning, and Institutional Research unit. The primary source from which the data in this section are summarized is the annual publication, Data Digest, publication years 2014–2015 and 2023–2024.³¹ The university has used the racial categories of Black and/or African American in the Data Digest over the years. For the illustrative purposes of this report, the data we highlight reference only those individuals who report as identifying Black/African American only. The UW–Madison does report an aggregate group of multi-racial individuals (i.e., “2 or more races [non-Hispanic]”) that does not parse out those who identify as Black/African American and another race. We acknowledge there are Black/African American individuals who identify with more than one race.

We examined the university’s annual data on Black students enrolled and Black individuals employed across 35 years from 1988 to 2023. When we tallied the average number of Black people in any category in any 10-year period between 1988 and 2023 accounting for the overall growth of all people in a given category, the pattern was the same: a relatively flat line. For example, from 1999 to 2008, the number of total undergraduates remained constant at roughly 29,000 students enrolled annually. Over the same time period, the number of Black undergraduate students increased from 573 in 1999 to 765 in 2008. But, this “increase” corresponds to a change from 2.0% to 2.6%, an actual change for the larger number of Black students who are educated at UW–Madison, but hardly a significant change in their share of the 29,000 total undergraduate students enrolled. For this reason, we highlight data for Black students and Black employees at UW–Madison for the years 2008, 2014, and 2023. Figures 3 and 4 show the percent of Black students and Black employees at UW–Madison for these three years.



³¹ 2023–2024 Data Digest. Data, Academic Planning & Institutional Research. University of Wisconsin–Madison. March 2024. <https://data.wisc.edu/data-digest/>.



FIGURE 3: PERCENT BLACK STUDENT ENROLLMENT, 2008, 2014, 2023, UW-MADISON

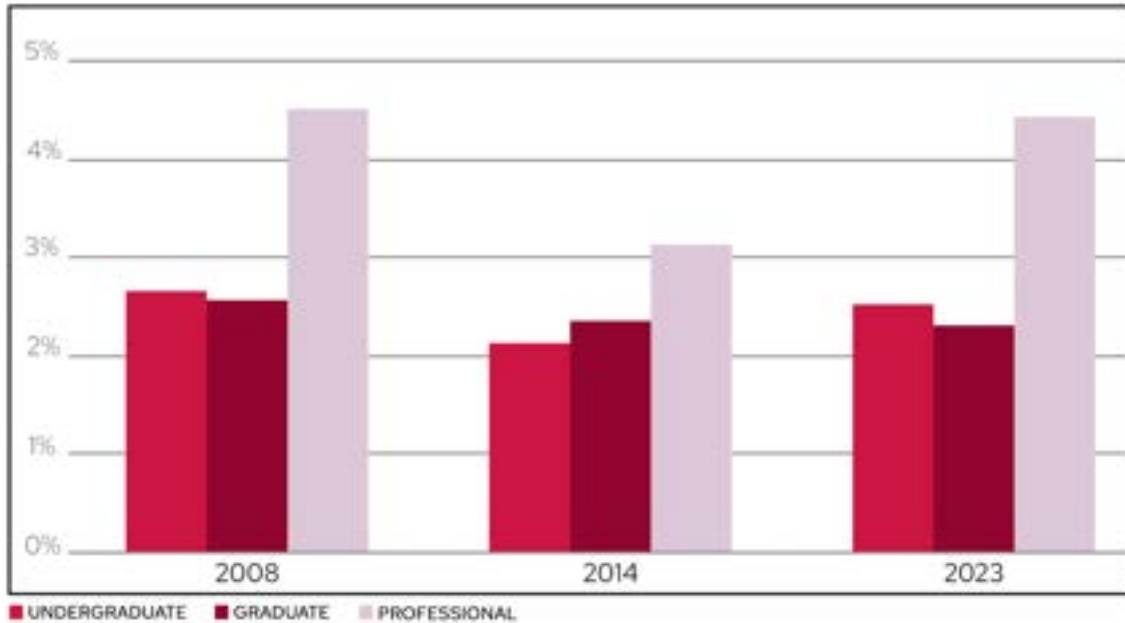
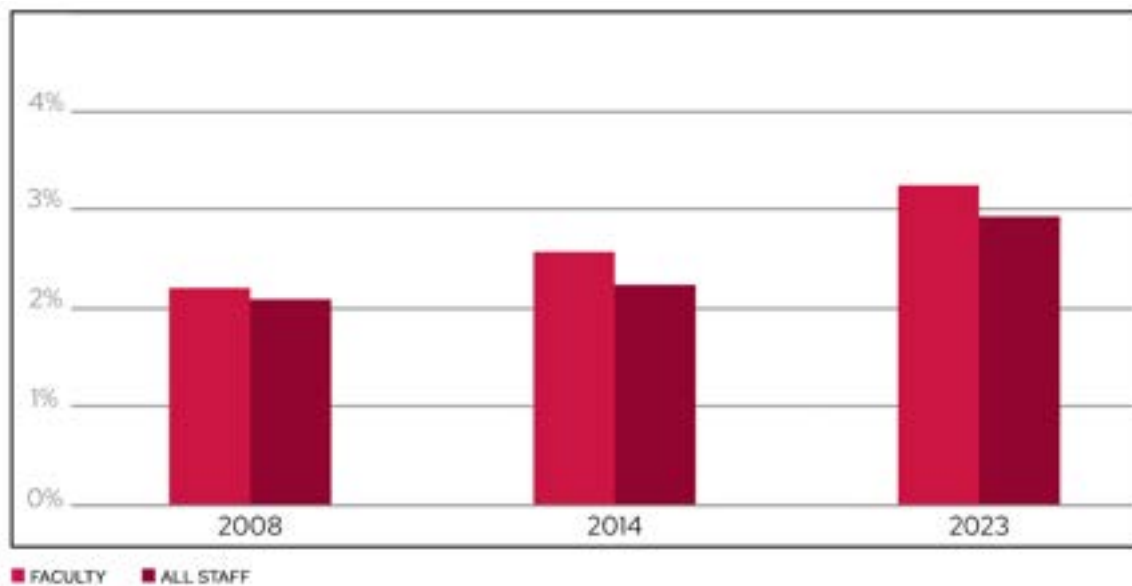


FIGURE 4: PERCENT BLACK EMPLOYEES, 2008, 2014, 2023, UW-MADISON



2008:

STUDENTS. In 2008, there were 29,153 undergraduate students at the UW–Madison. Of this total, 765 or 2.6% of them were categorized as Black/African American. There were 8,814 graduate students enrolled at the university. Black/African American students comprised 225 or 2.6% of all graduate students. There were 2,466 professional students at the university. The number of individuals identifying as Black/African American were 112 or 4.5%. The combined average percent of Black/African American students enrolled across these three categories is 3.2%.



■ **FACULTY.** In 2008, there were a total of 2,178 faculty members at the UW–Madison. Of this total, 48 or 2.2% were categorized as Black/African American.

■ **STAFF.** The UW–Madison has a range of staff categories that employ individuals across instructional, research, support, and service areas. These categories broadly include Limited Staff, Instructional Academic Staff, Other Academic Staff, University Staff, and Post-Degree Training Staff. In 2008, there were 13,505 individuals employed as staff. Of this total, 283 of them or 2.1% were categorized as Black/African American.

2014:

■ **STUDENTS.** In 2014, there were 29,302 undergraduate students at the UW–Madison. Black/African American students totaled 620 or 2.1%. There were 9,445 graduate students at the university. Of this total, 222 or 2.4% were categorized as Black/African American students. There were 2,459 professional students at the university. Black/African American individuals totaled 77 or 3.1% of this category.

■ **FACULTY.** In 2014, there were a total of 2,220 faculty members at the UW–Madison. Of this total, 58 or 2.6% were categorized as Black/African American.

■ **STAFF.** In 2014, There were a total of 14,249 staff employed at UW-Madison. Black/African American individuals totaled 320 or 2.7%

2023-2024:

■ **STUDENTS.** In 2023, there were 35,665 undergraduate students at UW–Madison. A total of 892 or 2.5% were categorized as Black/African American. There were 10,241 graduate students at the university. A total of 236 or 2.3% were categorized as Black/African American students. There were 2,574 professional (clinical doctorate) students at the university, and 114 or 4.4% were categorized as Black/African American.

■ **FACULTY.** In 2023, there were a total of 2,318 faculty members at the UW–Madison. 75 or 3.2% were categorized as Black/African American.

■ **STAFF.** In 2023, the total number of staff employed was 18,701. Black/African American individuals totaled 549 or 2.9% of all staff.



APPENDIX 2: COMPARISON TABLE OF PREVIOUS REPORTS AND PLANS RELATED TO DIVERSITY GOALS AT UW-MADISON

Taylor Bailey, Assistant Director of UW–Madison’s Rebecca M. Blank Center for Campus History, authored a document with summary tables comparing the three UW–Madison diversity plans to date.³² With her permission, we include her document largely in its entirety as a reference source summarizing the intended Goals, actual Outcomes, and the Responses to the plans from various members of the Black UW community in particular, and individuals from marginalized communities in general.

At the end of this section, we list the citations referenced by Taylor Bailey in her document. They are listed in their original numerical order as they appeared in the summary tables of Bailey’s documents. Thus, numeration starts at 359.

THE MADISON PLAN

In February of 1988, Chancellor Donna Shalala released the Madison Plan, the university’s first formal diversity plan. The plan took certain ideas from the “Holley Report,” like the establishment of an ethnic studies requirement and a multicultural student center but changed or omitted others in effort to make the plan more palatable. The Madison Plan took a quantitative approach to measuring the improvement of diversity on campus. Chancellor Shalala was praised for what seemed like a quick response to the racial tensions on campus, but the Minority Coalition – a group of student activists – criticized the Plan for being assimilationist. They argued that Shalala’s Madison Plan explained away racism on campus as the inability of students of color to adjust to a white institution. Further, they noted that the Plan’s policies were not cohesive and did not include any real attempt to stop racial harassment. Racist events continued to plague UW–Madison in the wake of the Plan’s implementation.



³² Taylor Bailey (2021). “Comparing Diversity Plans.” Sifting & Reckoning: UW–Madison’s History of Exclusion and Resistance. 12 Sep 2022– 23 Dec 2022, Chazen Museum of Art, Madison, Wisconsin, Unpublished.



TABLE 3: THE MADISON PLAN, COMPARISON TABLE

GOAL ³⁵⁹	OUTCOME ³⁶⁰	RESPONSE
Increasing student financial aid: The Plan aimed to provide FASTtrack financial support for 150 economically disadvantaged students every year starting in the fall of 1988.	The Plan succeeded in its financial goals, offering 164 first-year students aid under the FASTtrack program in the fall of 1990, which surpassed their goal of 150, but the majority of these recipients were non-minorities.	The students in the Minority Coalition found Shalala’s Madison Plan to be patronizing and thought her goals reduced their issues as trivial and personal. ³⁶¹ The Coalition also found that the Plan did not adequately address issues of racial harassment that plagued the campus minority communities and created a hostile environment. Many racist events, like the Zeta Beta Tau (ZBT) slave auction party featuring cultural appropriation and blackface, continued to occur. ³⁶² University administrators cited free speech as a means to avoid subjecting ZBT to disciplinary action. ³⁶³
Increasing minority recruitment: the Plan aspired to double the number of undergraduate minorities over the following five years, bringing the fall of 1993 entering group to 400.	The Plan failed in doubling undergraduate minority enrollment over five years. There were 238 minority enrollments in 1993.	
Increasing faculty diversity: the Plan intended to add 70 minority faculty over the following three years.	The Plan did succeed in overseeing the addition of 70 minority faculty members, however it took five years to do so and the goal was three (and the number of minority faculty decreased following the fifth year due to budget cuts).	
Closing the retention gap: the Plan aimed to close the retention disparity between all students and students of color.	The retention gap between minority students and the entire student body was not equalized, but minority retention rates were increased.	
Creation of ethnic studies requirement: the Plan sought to institute an undergraduate ethnic studies requirement by the fall of 1989 in order to enhance the breadth of students’ education.	The ethnic studies requirement was successfully implemented.	
Addition of a Multicultural Student Center: the Plan adopted the suggestion from the Steering Committee on Minority Affairs to create a Multicultural Student Center.	The Multicultural Student Center was created.	





PLAN 2008

In 1998, the UW System enacted the decade-long endeavor, Plan 2008, to address diversity in the UW System at large. For UW–Madison, as it continued to reel from the shortcomings of the previous Madison Plan, this diversity initiative marked another institutional attempt to address stark disparities among the student body. Similar to the Madison Plan, Plan 2008 fell short of enacting lasting change to the culture of the campus regarding racial and ethnic diversity.

TABLE 4: PLAN 2008, COMPARISON TABLE

GOAL ³⁶⁹	OUTCOME ³⁷⁰	RESPONSE
Increasing in the number of Wisconsin-based high school graduates of color: Plan 2008 sought to increase the number of graduate students of color from Wisconsin in applying to, being accepted to, and enrolling at UW–Madison.	There was a 65% increase in targeted minority enrollment and e in the number of prepared Wisconsin-based high school graduates enrolled at UW–Madison.	Though Plan 2008 had some small successes, the collection of student diversity perspective data in 2006 showed that the Plan did little to address racism on campus and racial harassment on campus persisted in spite of the implementation of this diversity plan. ³⁷¹ Students in opposition to the Plan formed the 2008 Coalition. These students did not believe Plan 2008 would be effective because it could not adequately ensure the retention of students of color and it also had no formal accountability structures in place. ³⁷² They also believed that Plan 2008 did not promote financial aid opportunities and thought the Plan looked very similar to previous failed diversity initiatives. ³⁷³
Closing the retention gap: the Plan sought to close the gap in educational achievement and retention for students.	Plan 2008 failed to effectively address and close the retention gap between students of color and the general student body.	
Improving recruitment: the Plan wanted to encourage educational partnerships and outreach to parents and their children at an early age.	Plan 2008 failed to adequately fulfill the recruitment needs of African American and American Indian students, though it did meet the recruitment needs of Asian American and Hispanic students.	
Increasing financial aid: the Plan sought to increase need-based financial aid and reduce loan reliance.	Need-based financial aid remained stagnant. Students of color were more likely to graduate with debt than the general student body. Several pipeline and diversity scholarships were added to the financial support opportunities available to students of color, though.	
Increasing minority faculty and staff: Plan 2008 planned to increase the number of faculty, staff, and administration of color.	There was an increase in the percentage of faculty and staff members of color.	
Promoting multicultural education: the Plan sought to foster institutional environments and course development that promoted respect for racial and ethnic diversity.	The three-credit undergraduate ethnic studies requirement was implemented.	
Improvement in the accountability of the UW System.	UW–Madison also hosted various diversity forums, orientations, and training to promote racial understanding and inclusion.	



THE R.E.E.L. CHANGE MODEL

The current diversity plan at UW–Madison is titled Affecting R.E.E.L. Change for Diversity and Inclusion or “The R.E.E.L. Change Model.” R.E.E.L. is an acronym for “retain, equip, engage, and lead” which serve as the primarily goals for the Model itself. The R.E.E.L. Change Model marked yet another shift in the ways UW–Madison sought to lessen racial and ethnic disparities on campus through non-quantitative measurements of improvement. The R.E.E.L. Change Model focuses on collecting data on campus climate from student, faculty, and staff perspectives while also making the data accessible online and readily available to the community. Since the R.E.E.L. Change Model is still ongoing as of 2024, the successes and shortcomings of its initiatives cannot be fully determined.

TABLE 5: THE R.E.E.L. CHANGE MODEL

GOALS ³⁷⁵	OUTCOMES ^{376 377}	RESPONSE
Promoting diversity: the R.E.E.L. Change Model seeks to promote the shared values for diversity and inclusion.	The Phase 1 results note an implementation of the campus diversity climate survey.	The R.E.E.L. Change Model, however, was met with salient critiques from students and faculty. One of the most prominent criticisms was of the vagueness of how the R.E.E.L. Change Model would be measured for successes since it included no quantitative benchmarks or specific budgeting. ³⁷⁸ In addition, the Ad Hoc Committee that created the basis of the R.E.E.L. Change Model has little to no contact with the committees and offices that would be integral to the implementation of the R.E.E.L. Change Model itself– like the Multicultural Student Center, Gender and Sexuality Campus Center, or the Office of the Dean of Students– which made minority faculty, staff, and students apprehensive regarding the R.E.E.L. Change Model’s commitment to prioritizing the voices of marginalized communities. Many students and faculty feared that the R.E.E.L. Change Model would mimic the same or similar missteps from its two predecessors, while also noting that there seemed to be more attention to the optics and aesthetics of the R.E.E.L. Change Model rather than actual sustainable and lasting change. ³⁷⁹
Improving diversity planning: the R.E.E.L. Change Model seeks to enhance the coordination of campus diversity planning.	The first ever Chancellor’s Community Advisory Committee was created to address and strengthen relationships with the campus and community partner.	
Engaging campus leadership: the R.E.E.L. Change Model seeks to engage the campus leadership for diversity and inclusion.	A consistent message regarding diversity and inclusion was established. The annual Diversity Forum was established and was reported to have a 279% increase in attendance from 2015–2020.	
Improving institutional access: this seeks to improve institutional access through recruitment of “diverse” faculty, staff, and students.	The R.E.E.L. Change Model strengthened the Shared Governance committee which institutes ongoing professional development for faculty and academic staff.	
Improving retention: this R.E.E.L. Change Model seeks to improve the retention rates through institutional success.	No data regarding retention has been published.	



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APPENDIX 3: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

To support our Study Group’s process of interviewing informative sources, we collectively drafted questions and jointly agreed upon them in order to be consistent and comprehensive in our interviews with UW–Madison staff and administrators. Below are a few sample interview questions related to the experiences and needs of Black students, staff, and faculty at UW–Madison:

TABLE 6: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SAMPLE QUESTIONS RELATIVE TO BLACK STUDENTS:
1. What barriers are you facing as it relates to serving black students on this campus?
2. How do you see your line of authority for being able to help with the thriving of Black students. Are there barriers to your success? Do you have the budget? What do you need to ensure you black students thrive? If there are 3 things that you could do - what would they be?
4. Do you have a yearly process to review impact on black students and inroads you are making to that community?
5. Are there programs that help to connect black students on campus with local organizations and communities?
SAMPLE QUESTIONS RELATIVE TO BLACK STAFF AND FACULTY:
1. What commitments do you have to Black staff - support and professional development of Black staff?
2. Have there been any initiatives or strategies in place to address the concerns of Black staff? Black faculty?
3. What are your initial thoughts about the campus structures that need to be addressed or changed to facilitate Black success?
4. What are cohort hiring practices for faculty and staff? How do these practices relate to data around the outcome of cluster hiring?



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