

CALL TO ACTION

Extension's Strategic Commitment to Inclusivity & Anti-Racism Work



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

AT A GLANCE: INITIATIVES

1. Expanded understandings of the Land-Grant System history in the U.S. and in Wisconsin
2. Learning community for inclusive organizational citizenship
3. Inclusive Excellence Mini Grant Project
4. Statewide anti-racism and anti-bigotry resource library
5. Develop additional Extension staffing capacity that is focused on teaching, learning, and culturally responsive practices and pedagogies (CRP)
6. Bias & hate speech reporting platform
7. Institutional position statement
8. Task force for inclusive recruitment, hiring, and retention strategies
9. Steering committee for the Wisconsin Idea Internship Program

As a part of the Land-Grant System, Extension professionals account for the largest corps of community-based educators and researchers across Tribal Nations, the U.S. and its associated territories. Given the important role Land Grant Universities play in meeting state and local needs, it is imperative for the Division of Extension to play an even more active role in redressing historical disparities, adapting to shifts in state demographics, and tailoring programming needs to address new and emergent issues.

Considering the Division of Extension's responsibility to remain relevant and responsive as a 21st century public-serving institution, we recognize the need for strategic and coordinated actions that help us form a more equitable, anti-racist, non-biased, and inclusive organization. Thus, we are committing ourselves to explicit action in the following areas:

1. Denouncing racism and bigotry on multiple levels and in all aspects of our work, and promoting a shared understanding of how they not only run contrary to our organizational values but undermine our institutional credibility for strengthening and maintaining trust with our partners and members of the public
2. Increasing our investment in staff's understanding of issues that shape the historical, social, political context of Extension in Wisconsin, and how they influence our capacity to serve the public good
3. Greater focus on reducing barriers and expanding access to Extension programs and services, with attention to Wisconsin residents and communities who have not historically benefitted from our current presence, programs, resources, and research in different areas of the state
4. Recognizing opportunities to redress long-standing gaps in attracting, hiring, and retaining a diverse workforce
5. Establishing greater accountability measures for generating positive, sustainable change that benefits Extension as a workplace, and the value and quality of our work

Taking affirmative next steps to create a stronger workforce and a stronger organization is a process that requires our collective intention, commitment, and effort. And as the first of many steps forward in this process, the Dean's Leadership Team approves and supports the following set of initiatives that focus on 1) professional capacity building and organizational development, 2) workplace safety, inclusion, and accountability, and 3) cultivating a 21st century workforce. These initiatives, in addition to specific efforts already being taken by Institutes and Areas, are structured to explicitly align our institutional commitment with institutional action.

The following set of nine strategic initiatives below are outlined with a conceptual level of detail. Many initiatives include a support structure (e.g. work group, steering committee, etc.) that will serve as a vehicle to guide action. This approach is intentional as it presents Extension colleagues with opportunities to be engaged in the work. Persons contributing to the support structures will play a key role in shaping goals, outcomes, action items, and accountability measures that are appropriate for each initiative and its objectives.

All support structures will be organized ad hoc; the organizational leads will assist in determining an appropriate timeline needed to accomplish the objectives and tasks for each initiative. The Interim Director of the Office of Access, Inclusion, and Compliance (OAIC) will provide an initial charge for each support structure and provide additional guidance as needed. Efforts of support structures will be accountable to the Dean's Leadership Team. Organizational leads, along with the input from the support structure members, will update members of the Dean's Leadership Team on the progress and completion of each initiative.

Demonstrating an institutional commitment to inclusivity and anti-racism work is a challenge for any organization, especially one that is as large, dynamic, and decentralized as ours. Therefore, we appreciate your commitment and contributions to the multiple ways we can move Extension forward, together.

DEAN'S VISION POINTS

1. Local and Statewide Presence

We maintain and develop strong and relevant local and statewide programming, presence, and relationships that demonstrate value and impact.

2. Scholarship

We are committed to leading-edge scholarship and research; we build programming on a foundation of evidenced-based research.

3. National Leader

We are at the forefront on programming, innovation, scholarship/research, securing funding, and publishing.

4. Workforce

We intentionally build and support a diverse and inclusive workforce of the best and the brightest.

5. Diversity

We develop programming to sectors of society. We thoughtfully engage and develop culturally responsive and translational resources to reflect our diverse constituency across rural and urban environments.

6. Partnerships and Funding

We continuously seek new partnerships and funding; a diversified funding base and continuous partner engagement supports our innovation and our work across diverse program topics and geographies.

7. Multidisciplinary

We foster interdisciplinary approaches in all organizational strategies. We use a multi-faceted approach to tackle ongoing and new challenges.

8. Innovation

We foster innovation by allowing risk-taking throughout our organization.

9. Effective and Efficient

We focus on effective and efficient means to maximize the impact of our work.

10. Continuous Improvement

We intentionally adopt and cultivate a mindset of continuous improvement.

PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Initiative 1: Expanded understandings of the Land-Grant System history in the U.S. and in Wisconsin

Core purpose/objective	To provide new Extension colleagues, as well as current colleagues, with an expanded perspective of the Land-Grant System history in the U.S. and in Wisconsin. This will include greater attention to how part of the current U.S. Land-Grant system (1862s, 1890s, and 1994s) was founded upon ideas that perpetuate institutionalized forms of racism and settler colonialism.
Initiative launch date	August 2020
Organizational lead(s)	Director of New Colleague Onboarding, Director of Tribal Relations, OAIC
Recommended support structure for implementation	Steering committee
Alignment with Dean's Vision Points	Vision Point 1 Local and Statewide Presence, Vision Point 5 Diversity

Initiative 2: Learning community for inclusive organizational citizenship

Core purpose/objective	To establish an organization-wide, cohort-based, learning and training platform for Extension colleagues, with specific attention to deepening understandings of power and privilege, racialized Identity, intersectionality, Whiteness, anti-Blackness, inclusive leadership practices, and other issues.
Initiative launch date	August 2020
Organizational lead(s)	Human Resources, OAIC staff
Recommended support structure for implementation	Steering committee
Alignment with Dean's Vision Points	Vision Point 4 Workforce, Vision Point 5 Diversity

Initiative 3: Inclusive Excellence Mini Grant Project

Core purpose/objective	In addition to existing opportunities available from within Institutes, this initiative would create a platform and process for allocating resources from the Dean's Office to fund educational initiatives and research projects. This would include, but not be limited to, efforts that focus on countering the systemic effects of racism and bigotry.
Initiative launch date	January 2021
Organizational lead(s)	TBD
Recommended support structure for implementation	Work group
Alignment with Dean's Vision Points	Vision Point 1 Local and Statewide Presence, Vision Point 3 National Leader, Vision Point 5 Diversity

Initiative 4: Statewide anti-racism and anti-bigotry resource library

Core purpose/objective	To develop a comprehensive set of educational resources that are available to Extension colleagues for self-directed learning opportunities.
Initiative launch date	July 2020
Organizational lead(s)	OAIC staff
Alignment with Dean's Vision Points	Vision Point 2 Scholarship, Vision Point 4 Workforce, Vision Point 5 Diversity

Initiative 5: Develop additional Extension staffing capacity that is focused on teaching, learning, and culturally responsive practices and pedagogies (CRP)

Core purpose/objective	To leverage disciplinary expertise that supports the cohesive and consistent design and delivery of culturally responsive curricula and educational programming.
Initiative launch date	January 2021
Organizational lead(s)	Dean, Associate Deans, OAIC Interim Director
Recommended support structure for implementation	Search and screen committee
Alignment with Dean's Vision Points	Vision Point 4 Workforce, Vision Point 5 Diversity

WORKPLACE SAFETY, INCLUSION, & ACCOUNTABILITY

Initiative 6: Bias & hate speech reporting platform

Core purpose/objective	In alignment with the objectives of UW-Madison's Bias & Hate Incident Form, this initiative will develop a formal mechanism that allows Extension professionals to report issues that undermine our commitment to promoting a safe and inclusive environment for all employees, volunteers, and participants.
Initiative launch date	August 2020
Organizational lead(s)	Human Resources, Educational Technology Services, Dean's Office
Recommended support structure for implementation	Work Group
Alignment with Dean's Vision Points	Vision Point 4 Workforce, Vision Point 5 Diversity

Initiative 7: Institutional position statement

Core purpose/objective	To develop an institutional statement that clarifies and underscores Extension's position and commitment to inclusivity and engaging in anti-racism work.
Initiative launch date	August 2020
Organizational lead(s)	Office of Communications & Stakeholder Engagement
Recommended support structure for implementation	Work group
Alignment with Dean's Vision Points	Vision Point 3 National Leader, Vision Point 5 Diversity

CULTIVATING A WORKFORCE FOR 21ST CENTURY NEEDS

Initiative 8: Task force for inclusive recruitment, hiring, and retention strategies

Core purpose/objective	In alignment with a recommendation from a recent HR report on racial and ethnic disparities in Extension's employee base, this task force will support efforts for improving and expanding strategies that attract, build, and sustain a more diverse workforce.
Initiative launch date	September 2020
Organizational lead(s)	HR Director
Recommended support structure for implementation	Task force
Alignment with Dean's Vision Points	Vision Point 4 Workforce, Vision Point 5 Diversity

Initiative 9: Steering committee for the Wisconsin Idea Internship Program (WIIP)

Core purpose/objective	The WIIP was cancelled for summer 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This steering committee will help build upon the initial momentum and expand opportunities that cultivate a more diverse talent pool of summer interns for summer 2021.
Initiative launch date	November 2020
Organizational lead(s)	Dean's Leadership Team, Human Resources, OAIC staff
Recommended support structure for implementation	Steering committee
Alignment with Dean's Vision Points	Vision Point 4 Workforce, Vision Point 5 Diversity

See updates on the initiatives by visiting the Office of Access, Inclusion, and Compliance website



go.wisc.edu/extensioncalltoaction



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