

Calls to action detail Extension's commitment to inclusivity and antiracism

As a part of the land-grant university system, Extension professionals account for the largest corps of community-based educators and researchers across the country. In Wisconsin, the UW-Madison Division of Extension embodies the Wisconsin Idea – leveraging world-class university research to create practical solutions for communities, tribal nations, businesses, nonprofits, and families. We recognize the need for strategic and coordinated actions that help us form a more equitable, anti-racist, non-biased, and inclusive organization, and we are embarking on a series of calls to action to:

- Denounce racism and bigotry on multiple levels and in all aspects of our work, and promote 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.
- Increase 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.
- Put a 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.
- Recognize opportunities to redress long-standing gaps in attracting, hiring, and retaining a diverse workforce.
- Establish greater accountability measures for generating positive, sustainable change that benefits Extension as a workplace, and the value and quality of our work.

"Using our partnerships in local communities and our statewide network across Wisconsin, Extension is creating a framework to address, call attention to, and ultimately create change in the areas of inclusivity and antiracism. These are difficult, longstanding issues that we are committed to addressing," said Karl Martin, Dean & Director of UW-Madison Extension.

Extension's framework includes nine initiatives (detailed below) that Extension staff and leadership will be coordinating across hiring, onboarding, programming, and other areas.

"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, Extension is spurring action around nine initiatives to explicitly align our institutional commitment with institutional action," said Dominic Ledesma, Interim Director of Extension's Office of Access, Inclusion, and Compliance

Extension's Call to Action initiatives are:

- 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 and 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**

You can read more about each initiative and get updates on their implementation here:

www.go.wisc.edu/extensioncalltoaction.