



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

August 1, 2023

To: Charles Lee Isbell Jr., Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
From: Karl J. Martin, Dean and Director, Division of Extension

Subject: Supplemental memo to the Division of Extension's 2023 EDIB Report

I respectfully submit the following memo as a part of the Division of Extension's 2023 EDIB Report. This memo provides supplemental information related to our Division's report, and specifically addresses questions and items outlined in the Provost's initial email request (April 7, 2023).

Overview of the Division of Extension

As a statewide engagement arm of UW-Madison, the Division of Extension embodies the Wisconsin Idea to extend university knowledge to every corner of the state. That mission started in 1912 with Extension's first agent making farm visits and continues today through our work with community, family, and business development; youth engagement; natural resources; and well-being programming all across Wisconsin. Extension delivers impactful programming in all counties across Wisconsin, including volunteer development, direct education, capacity building, and technical assistance. Our Division is comprised of 350 place-based educators, 160 research specialists, and more than 170 outreach specialists, program organizers, and support roles. Extension administers grants from USDA for community-based outreach including dedicated SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education) and EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) federal funding along with USDA capacity funding via the Smith Lever Act of 1912. Educators in county, Tribal, and regional offices are funded through varying combinations of state, federal, and county government funding and tribal Nation funding in accordance with the focus and location of the position.

Extension administers programming through six institutes: Agriculture, Community Development, Health & Well-Being (including FoodWise), Human Development & Relationships, Natural Resources, and Positive Youth Development (including 4-H). Extension creates programming for 575,000 participants annually, including 120,000 agricultural producers and farm technicians, 15,000 local and Tribal government officials and staff, 18,500 non-profit workers and support agency advocates, 18,000 business professionals and entrepreneurs, 148,000 young people, 42,000 seniors, and many more individuals across Wisconsin. We also partner with more than 2,000 community organizations and businesses, empower 24,000 youth 4-H members who contributed over 140,000 hours of volunteer time, and support 10,500 volunteers in their work equaling 420,000 hours of service.

Division of Extension
University of Wisconsin-Madison
432 N Lake Street Madison, WI 53706
info@extension.wisc.edu | extension.wisc.edu

Key goals for 2023-2024

- *Enhancing recruitment, hiring, and retention of a workforce prepared to serve a 21st century society*
Spanish and HMoob (Hmong) account for the second and third most spoken languages in the state after English. Additionally, speakers of these languages are the most [geographically distributed](#) relative to other community-based languages spoken in Wisconsin. The state's existing cultural and linguistic diversity has led us toward recruitment and hiring strategies that better position our workforce to reflect these demographics. In June 2023, the Dean's Leadership Team approved a strategy for assessing, titling, and compensating bilingual professionals who possess skills in high-need languages (i.e., Spanish, HMoob). The creation of a Language Proficiency Assessment will allow us to be more strategic in how we attract, hire, and retain bilingual professionals. The additional skills and assets of bilingual professionals enable us to better serve populations of culturally and linguistically diverse residents. This strategy aligns with one of the strategic issues published within Extension's Strategic Planning Progress Report (see next section).
- *Becoming the administrative home for the National Tribal Trial College*
In 2022, Extension was approached by the National Tribal Trial College (NTTC) and a member of the UW Board of Regents with a request for Extension to become the administrative home for the NTTC. The program has had a partnership with the UW-Madison Law School for many years but was managed exclusively by a non-profit organization. The organization desired to provide a stronger administrative home for the program to ensure its long-term viability. Working together, an MOU was signed in 2023 and Extension is now supporting this important work that benefits Wisconsin's Tribal Nations as well as others throughout the country.
- *Implementing a statewide strategy for campus' new digital accessibility policy*
Campus implemented a new [Digital Accessibility Policy](#) effective July 1, 2023. Over the course of the current year, we plan to develop an implementation strategy that is jointly managed between our Office of Access, Inclusion, and Compliance (OAIC) and Educational Technology Services (ETS). Goals for the current year include: 1) the identification of a Divisional liaison, 2) creating tools to support policy implementation, and 3) integrating a "digital accessibility audit" as a part of our existing Civil Rights Compliance review process.

Key goals for the next 3 years (2023-2026)

- *Implementation plan for Extension's Strategic Planning process*
In May 2022, the Dean charged a 20-person team of Extension professionals to engage in a strategic planning exercise. Over the past year, this Core Planning Team (CPT) gathered input from internal and external stakeholders from around the state to identify and summarize a set of strategic issues. In May 2023, the CPT published a final progress report that identified nine (9) key issues to guide a multi-year, strategic advancement agenda for our Division. Included in the issues was the prioritization of reaching and partnering with more audiences who have been historically underrepresented and

underserved in Extension programs and services. Among other opportunities, this included:

- A focus on strengthening Extension's existing partnerships with Native Nations in Wisconsin (e.g., Menominee Nation, Lac du Flambeau, Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, Forest County Potawatomi)
 - Exploring new opportunities to expand Extension's relationships with the other seven sovereign nations located within our state's geopolitical boundaries.
- *Fundraising/Development: Inclusive and accessible educational programs as an identified priority*
We are developing a philanthropic program to raise private sector funding to expand our reach to historically underrepresented and underserved populations. While fundraising has been an emergent area of focus for Extension over the past few years, EDIB-focused programs are included among the areas of fundraising priorities. The Dean's Leadership Team has worked with our 6 Institute Directors to identify key programs that can support our mission to better serve historically underrepresented and underserved populations within the state.
 - *Continued advancement of EDIB strategic initiatives outlined within Extension's Call to Action*
The Division of Extension launched a [Call to Action](#) in August 2020. The Call to Action outlined nine (9) strategic initiatives that staged both short-term and long-term advancement goals around EDIB priorities. The Call to Action was created around 5 explicit imperatives, which included: 1) denouncing racism and bigotry across our organization, 2) investing in our staff's understanding of historical, social, and political issues that shape the context of our work, 3) reducing barriers and expanding access to our programs and services, 4) improving our practices for attracting, hiring, and retaining a diverse workforce, and 5) tracking our progress with clear measures of accountability. More information and updates on Extension's progress with its Call to Action initiatives can be found [here](#).

Key accomplishments (2022-2023)

- *Reporting system to address issues and incidents of bias and hate statewide*
In May 2022, Extension launched a [Bias and Hate Concerns Reporting Platform](#) to promote workplace safety, inclusion, and accountability. This initiative was identified through Extension's [Call to Action](#) (August 2020). The need for this platform was associated with Extension's statewide presence, and the limitations of the University's bias and hate reporting platform that is focused on the UW-Madison campus and surrounding community. Extension's platform has two primary objectives: 1) create a reporting mechanism that elevates issues that threaten Extension's standing as a safe and inclusive workplace, and 2) streamline the process for Extension administrators to respond to EDIB issues in a manner that is appropriate for each situation.
- *Increased accountability for completing EDIB training mandates*

Over the past year, the Dean's Leadership Team (DLT) approved a Division-wide mandate to complete a Civil Rights 101 non-discrimination training. This training mandate applies to all Division of Extension employees and is now established as one of the eligibility requirements for receiving performance-based and scheduled pay increases. The University's Cybersecurity Awareness and Preventing Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence are also included as a part of the training mandate for pay increases. Instituting this mandate has led to a significant increase in accountability among employees statewide (n= 670). As of July 2023, our employee completion rate of the Civil Rights 101 non-discrimination training exceeded 94%.

- *Board of Visitors representation*

In 2022, Extension added 2 new members to our Board of Visitors. In addition to the respective areas of expertise and experience these members add to our Board, their personal narratives also support our goal of having a Board that reflects the diversity of our state's populations. New members in 2022 include:

- [David O'Connor](#) (Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa), American Indian Studies Consultant, WI Department of Public Instruction
- [Marcelia Nicholson](#), Chair, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

- *Employee Resource Groups & Task Forces*

Extension's [Resource Groups \(ERGs\) & Task Forces \(TFs\)](#) represent a safe and supportive space for colleagues and allies to connect around a shared identity/affiliation.

- In 2022, three (3) new Employee Resource Groups were launched, increasing our total number of ERGs/TFs to seven. These new ERGs aim to support colleagues and allies from our Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA), LGBTQ+, and veteran communities.
- In June 2023, the Office of Access, Inclusion, and Compliance (OAIC) planned a first-ever ERG/TF Summit with support from the Dean's Office. Over 50 people participated in the two-day meeting that was held in Keshena, WI at the College of Menominee Nation (CMN). The Summit included place-based learning activities, networking, strategic planning, and opportunities to learn about CMN's mission as one of the state's two, 1994 Land-Grant Universities.
- Our ERGs/TFs contribute positively to professional learning for Extension colleagues. Our African American Black Employee Resource Group (AABERG) and our Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) Resource Group coordinated educational activities and speakers during their respective history/heritage months this past year.

- *Internal grant opportunities that elevate and amplify EDIB work*

Extension's Innovation Awards is one example of how internal grant opportunities enhance our EDIB work. Innovation grants reinforce community connections through Extension research, education, and outreach across the state. In 2020, a focus on EDIB was incorporated as one of the three priority areas for awarding projects. Since then, we have seen a steady increase in projects that are targeted toward improving and

enhancing access to Extension programs and initiatives. The increased focus on EDIB is evidenced by the range and depth of projects funded during the [2022-2023 grant cycle](#).

- *Extension's EDIB unit reaches new milestone*
Our Office of Access, Inclusion, and Compliance (OAIC) was established in November 2019. As Extension's EDIB unit, OAIC provides integrated and holistic support for Extension professionals in all program areas across the state. As a service-support unit housed within Operations, OAIC is a nationally recognized model by Extensions of peer Land-Grant Universities. Our EDIB unit is acknowledged for its innovative leadership in professional expertise, resources, training, and services to improve the quality and accessibility of Extension programming. OAIC has provided support for over [1000 Extension projects and programs](#) statewide.

Key challenges (2022-2023)

- *Challenging climate related to promoting, advancing, and sustaining an institutional commitment to EDIB work*
In the past year, cuts to the UW System's 2023-25 budget, the Supreme Court's decision in *Students for Fair Admissions v. President and Fellows of Harvard College*, and legislation that restricts the use of certain curricula and educational materials pose significant challenges to our institution's commitment to EDIB work. Navigating these issues and challenges makes it difficult to promote, advance, and sustain the work of EDIB units and professionals on all levels of the University. Challenges within the current climate raise legitimate concerns about future funding and support for EDIB initiatives and activities. In addition to the ways these issues impact campus climate, their effects are also felt at the local level in different areas of the state. Extension has a statewide presence. At times, we are faced with responding to, and managing, EDIB concerns that originate at a local level. In some cases, our local constituents and partners are the ones who raise concerns over the University's work and commitment to EDIB issues, creating challenging environments in which our educators develop and deliver educational programs and services.
- *Perceived discontinuity in institutional messaging around the value, purpose, and place of EDIB work*
Extension acknowledges the importance of clear and consistent communication that reinforces our institutional commitment to EDIB work, both on campus and across the state. Our internal and some of our external stakeholders have expressed interest in more institutional messaging that articulates the positive benefits of our EDIB values and underscores our commitment to EDIB initiatives. A centralized "main street" communication strategy to promote positive and constructive messages around EDIB values and work would help mitigate the otherwise ominous narrative being cast within the current public discourse.

Other highlights and accomplishments (2022-2023)

- The Division of Extension is proud of its partnerships with faculty across multiple Schools and Colleges. These partnerships also include representatives from community-

based organizations, state, Tribal, and Federal entities. Extension's role as a collaborator contributes meaningfully to innovative research, scholarship, and outreach strategies that improve the lives of Wisconsin residents. Most of the projects below are supported with grants from institutional and Federal sources (e.g., USDA/NIFA, CDC, and others). The projects described below highlight some of our partnerships with the School of Education, School of Nursing, College of Agricultural & Life Sciences, School of Medicine and Public Health, and School of Human Ecology.

- Educator capacity-building for Latinx students in rural Wisconsin (SoE)
- End-of-life planning initiatives that are culturally responsive and linguistically appropriate for Wisconsin's HMoob communities (SoN)
- A dual-language (English-Spanish) video game application that trains dairy workers on safe animal handling techniques (CALS)
- Extension Collaborative on Immunization Teaching & Engagement (EXCITE), an initiative that aims to address health disparities among rural and other underserved communities (SMPH)
- "The Black Fatherhood Podcast," a research-informed podcast that supports the parenting skills of Black fathers and their role with their child's emotional development (SoHE)

Cc: Eden Inoway-Ronnie, Provost Chief of Staff
LaVar Charleston, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Diversity & Inclusion
Dominic J. Ledesma, Chief Diversity Officer, Division of Extension