



September 14, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

As we begin our work together in the evolving *Division of Diversity and Climate*, I'd like to share a few thoughts about the reorganization and how we will approach the next several months and beyond.

First, it's important to emphasize that this move does not place singular responsibility for diversity on one office or division, or serve as a quick solution to challenges that candidly, must be engaged by every member of our community, if we are to be successful. To paraphrase our colleagues in the Office for Equity and Diversity, *this work must be done in community* – and that community must include more persons than simply those involved in this reorganization, and those who work in diversity offices, units, and committees across campus. From the exemplary work of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions recruiting the most diverse class in our University's history, to the committed efforts of Equity and Diversity Committees, student leaders like the Oneness of Human Kind, and faculty/staff champions like those involved with the Delta Program and elsewhere, it is clear that team work and community within a range of different partners is critical to our success.

At the same time, senior leadership authorized this reorganization as a key tactic of our new strategic framework, *For Wisconsin and the World*, where alignment of our diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts is identified as a major part of that plan's change agenda. While no magical elixir, a more closely connected diversity infrastructure creates greater potential for us to leverage existing resources, ensure accountability, universally apply evidence based practices, and create even more dynamic synergies across campus. While a relatively small number of units are directly affected by this move, those that have moved present us with incredible potential to align and more powerfully drive our inclusive excellence agenda of (1) diversifying our University community; (2) eliminating the graduation gap; (3) preparing the entire community for a world that is diverse, global, and interconnected; and (4) insuring an inclusive and supportive campus experience for every student, faculty, and staff member.

The second thing that I want to emphasize is my recognition of the numerous feelings that inevitably emerge with a change of this kind. For some it's a great sense of possibility and hope; for others, anxiety about the unknown; and for still others, a desire for things to be immediately different, or remain unchanged, despite the transition. Please know that I respect each of these perspectives and have them at the center of my thinking as we move into the next chapter of our journey together. To that end, Exhibit 1 presents several principles and priorities that I have shared in a number of meetings that I now share with you about the reorganization and some of the activities that you can expect in the future.

## Exhibit 1. OVPDC Strategic Themes

Strategic Priorities	Time Line	Description	Sample Projected Activities
<b>Stabilize the Transition</b>	August 2010- January 2011	Immediate and long-term activities to stabilize the transition in terms of human resources, physical space, fiscal infrastructure, communication, technology, and other areas	Provost Transition Meeting OVPDC Communication Memo – set big picture vision and general expectations moving forward Central Campus Communication Diversity Forum Session Key Stakeholder Communication (e.g. POSSE Foundation, diversity champions, others)  Unit Directors Meetings - Regular Unit Staff Meetings (September/October – OVPDC Meet with Individual Offices) Unit Director One-on-Ones (On-Going)  Transition Advisory Team Published Strategic Priorities Framework Hiring of New OVPDC Staff Establishing Financial Transition Protocols Establishing Technology Transition Plan Space Allocation (Select Personnel) Other
<b>Build the Division</b>	August 2010- Ongoing	Long-term activities designed to create an “OVPDC” divisional identity, culture, mission, vision, plan, principles of practice, etc.	Unit Directors Retreat All Divisional Retreat Student Townhall Meeting OVPDC Advisory Board Regular meeting schedule Professional Development Plan Develop a Principles, Values, and Purpose Document, Strategic Plan, and Finalized Organizational Chart “Divisional Branding Activities” Long-Term Space Utilization Plan Finalized (Red Gym, Bascom, etc) Fiscal Plan Technology Plan  Develop a Plan for Organizing – “Diversity, Learning & Community” work <sup>1</sup> Other
<b>Evolve/Optimize Unit Capabilities</b>	September 2010- Ongoing	Immediate and long-term activities designed to strengthen and evolve unit capabilities	Unit Mission Reviews & Alignment Plans Unit Advisory Board Optimization Unit – Hiring – OVPDC Involvement – in all full-time staff hiring Program Redesign Efforts Annual Reporting Framework Annual Performance Reviews Professional Development Develop a Plan for Organizing – “Diversity & Learning Work” Other

<sup>1</sup> In the OVPDC original plan from February 3, 2010 key strategies memo, this is referred to as “Diversity Education” and includes among others – SEED, Student SEED, Diversity Dialogues, Intercultural Dialogues, etc.

## Principles of Reorganization

- Reorganization is a **journey and not a destination – our work is just beginning, to create new possibilities**. Reorganization was easy – reframing our strategy, relationships, roles, and strategic capacity is where the real work comes into play;
- **First we try and then we do** – everything will not happen over night – we have to put time on our side. Hence, while you may want things to happen at laser speed – we all are engaged in a number of projects. As a result, we will be deliberate and take demonstrative steps, but the key is to put something together that makes sense and will give us greater capacity moving forward – not to move fast;
- For the most part – **day-to-day activities will remain the same**, unless specific transitions are expected – OVPDC will communicate these shifts moving forward if they have not already occurred;
- We need to **get broad engagement** from the divisional community and others on bringing this divisional infrastructure to life. We will spend time together, taking our first steps as a community this semester, and into the semesters and years ahead;
- Respect for **history and tradition will be tantamount** even as changes are envisioned, and we find new ways of adding value and achieving impact in our efforts. While inevitably change will occur – the goal will always be to do it with a high level of sensitivity and respect for what existed in the past.

## Strategic Priorities

- **Stabilize the transition** through a number of “immediate activities” that will allow a high level of program continuity through the first 4-6 months of what has become a destabilized dynamic;
- **Build the divisional infrastructure** for long-term success and more powerful outcomes campus wide;
- **Evolve and optimize units** to insure synergies, utilization of best practices, responsible financial stewardship, and maximization of program outcomes.

These ideas are at the heart of this reorganization, as new possibilities will only emerge if those of us within the division, in close alignment with our key partners University wide, define a clear vision for how this infrastructure can lead to new gains over time. The ultimate success of this reorganization will only be defined by our ability to create and humble ourselves to new possibilities, collectively commit to these possibilities, and powerfully move forward with rigor, discipline, and focus – together.

Given the timing of the move, my central staff in the OVPDC and others are working hard to stabilize and stage on what will be a phenomenally busy and exciting year filled with retreats, working groups, and considering ideas ranging from the name of the division, to writing a formal mission statement, to a plan for professional development, and a divisional strategic plan.

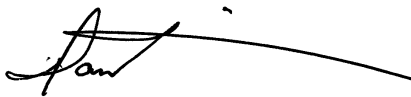
To that end, I invite you to attend the campus Diversity Forum, “Cultivating Excellence, Nurturing the Seeds of Success,” scheduled for September 30 at the Memorial Union. In addition to the lunch keynote speech by Arthur Coleman, Managing Partner of Education Counsel, LLC, in Washington DC and presentations by a number of your peers, I will also provide a major campus update on diversity, where I will talk about several new initiatives taking place across campus – and more details regarding next steps with the reorganization. You may see a full schedule and register for the Forum here:

<http://www.diversity.wisc.edu/forums.php>

Please know that I will be working through your directors and meeting with each of your teams in September/October, anticipating that we will have an all division retreat this semester – an event that is currently under development. Additionally, I will appoint a transition advisory group that I anticipate will begin meeting in October to help advise the retreat and priorities moving forward.

I personally go into this next phase of our journey with an incredible respect for each of you and humble anticipation of the new possibilities that this move provides. We have tremendous strengths to build upon and clear opportunities to get even stronger. We have great people, the most passionate hearts, and a special opportunity to make life better for every member of our community. I look forward to working with you to build on our strong foundation and to take each of your efforts to the next level of greatness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Damon', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Damon A. Williams, PhD  
Vice Provost & Chief Diversity Officer

CC: Chancellor Bidy Martin  
Provost Paul DeLuca  
Vice Chancellor for Administration Darrell Bazzell  
University Committee Chair Judith Burstyn  
ASEC Chair Heather Daniels  
Dean Julie Underwood  
Assistant Dean Ruttanatip Chonwerawong