



# CAMPUS CLIMATE PROGRESS REPORT

FALL 2023

UW–Madison is committed to fostering an inclusive environment where students, faculty and staff feel welcome and supported. Since 2014, this work has been guided by the [campus Diversity Framework](#) and its 10-year implementation plan [R.E.E.L. Change](#).

As R.E.E.L Change enters its final year, we continue to strive to meet the four priorities reflected in this progress report.

- **Build a culture of organizational learning** deeply committed to the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging for all, alongside a commitment to free expression and civil engagement across differences;
- **Foster a culture of belonging** to enhance the recruitment and retention of students, staff and faculty, especially those from underrepresented and underserved populations;
- **Facilitate an effective model of distributed strategic diversity leadership** for shared visioning and implementation;
- **Utilize and maximize data** to inform equity-minded policies, practices, and decision-making.

Individuals and groups from across campus have embraced this work and devoted significant time and energy to making systemic change. Below are some recent examples of the efforts in these areas.

## **Bucky's Pell Pathway furthers socio-economic diversity**

This fall, the first recipients of [Bucky's Pell Pathway](#) will begin classes at UW–Madison. The initiative, [announced in February by Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin](#), pledges to meet the full financial need for four years for new first-year Wisconsin resident students who qualify for Pell Grants, the federal program that plays a critical role in expanding college access for students from the country's lowest-income households. Transfer students from Wisconsin meeting the same criteria will receive two years of full-need funding. Bucky's Pell Pathway covers not just tuition and fees, but also housing, meals, books and most other educational expenses.

## **Web hub promotes free expression, viewpoint diversity**

The results of a [student survey on freedom of speech](#) released by UW System in February reinforced the importance of UW–Madison's ongoing efforts to ensure students feel a sense of belonging on campus, while also embracing the values of free speech and respect for viewpoint diversity. As part of its longstanding commitment to free speech and civil dialogue, the university recently launched a new web hub at <https://free-expression.wisc.edu> that includes FAQs and policies on free expression.

## **Rebecca M. Blank Center for Campus History opens**

On July 1, the new [Rebecca M. Blank Center for Campus History](#) opened, expanding on the work of the university's well-received [Public History Project](#). The permanent center's full-time staff will work to educate the campus community about the university's past in ways that enrich the curriculum, inform administrative decisions, and bolster efforts to achieve a more equitable university. The new center is housed within the Division of Teaching and Learning.



## **New Indigenous living and learning community established**

In fall 2022, Academic Coaching to Thrive & Succeed (ACTS) in the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement (DDEEA) launched the [Network for Development and Growth of Indigenous Scholars](#) (NDGNS UW). This program supports Indigenous students with academic, cultural, and community events on campus. NDGNS UW welcomed 30 scholars in their first cohort. ACTS and NDGNS partnered with University Housing and established a living and learning community for Indigenous students and allies. This community will open this fall in [Merit Residence Hall](#).

## **Institute will advance diversity science research**

UW–Madison’s new [Institute for Diversity Science](#), launched in February, will serve as a hub for researchers on campus interested in advancing evidence-based solutions to diversity-related challenges. Diversity science as a discipline seeks to identify the most effective ways to allow all people to thrive and succeed. It spans fields of study, including everything from reducing educational achievement gaps to improving hiring and retention in the workplace.

## **New major in Chican@ & Latin@ studies**

Starting this fall, the Chican@ & Latin@ Studies Program will offer [an undergraduate major in Chican@ & Latin@ studies](#). The new major was approved by the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents in March. This will be the first such major offered at a university or college in Wisconsin. Creating a Chican@ & Latin@ studies major was among the goals of the movement for Chicano Studies on campus.

## **MENA Heritage Month returns to campus**

During March, UW–Madison welcomed the return of [Middle Eastern North African \(MENA\) Heritage Month](#), a celebration that had not been held on campus for several years. Students led and planned a series of nine cultural events, which were sponsored by the [Multicultural Student Center](#) in Student Affairs and attended by nearly 700 people. MENA Heritage Month joins other heritage months that are celebrated annually on campus, including [Latinx Heritage Month](#) (Sept. 15–Oct. 15), [Native November](#) (November), [Black History Month](#) (February), and [Asian Pacific Islander Desi American \(APIDA\) Heritage Month](#) (April).

## **New position supports accessibility for campus visitors**

The McBurney Disability Resource Center recently expanded the university’s commitment to inclusive programming by adding the position of [visitor and program participant access consultant](#). This new role supports campus partners in ensuring that campus visitors with disabilities have equal access to programs offered by the university, including workshops, summer camps and continuing study classes.

## **New emergency fund to support students in need created**

The Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement (DDEEA) hired an Education and Wellbeing Coordinator to work closely with students and program staff to provide [emergency funding to assist students](#) with food, housing, and other basic essential needs. In addition, this role will develop workshops, trainings, and events focused on academic, professional, and financial skills development.

## **Ho-Chunk Clan Circle dedicated on campus**

Members of the Ho-Chunk and UW–Madison communities gathered on May 4 to dedicate the Ho-Chunk Clan Circle, a series of sculptures representing the 12 clans of the Ho-Chunk Nation. The space outside the Bakke Recreation & Wellbeing Center was created in partnership with Ho-Chunk artist Ken Lewis and other advisors representing the Ho-Chunk Nation. UW–Madison occupies ancestral Ho-Chunk land, a place the Ho-Chunk Nation calls Teejop.