



**Graduate School**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** 6 September 2016

**TO:** UW-Madison Graduate Student Community

**FROM:** William J. Karpus, Dean of the Graduate School  
Marsha R. Mailick, Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education

**RE:** Graduate School Commitment to an Inclusive Research and Learning Environment

For generations, University of Wisconsin - Madison has produced thinkers, leaders, creators, scientists, and innovators who shape and transform our world. As UW-Madison graduate students, you are part of this proud tradition. Historically, our success derives in part from our collective openness to different ideas, perspectives, and people. Maintaining UW-Madison's greatness requires that we create an inclusive and welcoming environment for people of all backgrounds. Doing so ensures that all graduate students can engage in creative and productive scholarly activity and realize their potential to push the boundaries of research and other artistic and scholarly output.

Unfortunately, at times there can be threats to the inclusive environment we value, such as acts of hate or bias. Because they create a hostile environment, these actions undermine the inclusivity that is at the core of UW-Madison's identity. There has been much discussion about this problem on campus during the past year and all members of the campus community have a responsibility to work on addressing it. The Graduate School will continue to work consistently to ensure that the needs of graduate students are integrated into campus efforts to create inclusion and address actions, intentional or otherwise, that harm our campus climate. You can learn more about the overall campus efforts by visiting [campusclimate.wisc.edu](http://campusclimate.wisc.edu). The Graduate School thanks those of you who have also voiced your concerns to the Chancellor and other campus leaders to reinforce the importance of this key segment of the student community.

Part of making our campus a welcoming place for students of all backgrounds demands that we work to recruit and retain a diverse graduate student body. In the Graduate School, we see this as part of our mission, and we oversee a host of programs that aim to diversify our graduate student population and build and maintain an environment where all of our graduate students can thrive. Some examples are:

- Funding provided by the eight Graduate Research Scholar Communities. These communities play key roles in supporting underrepresented students academically, professionally, and socially at UW-Madison.
- Activities through the Multicultural Graduate Network (MGN). This year the MGN piloted a new series of mixers and luncheons to help students of color connect with others, ideally lessening the isolation many feel daily on our campus. The MGN also recently hosted an initial discussion

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on hate and bias response and intends to hold similar events to provide students space to discuss their experiences.

- Partnerships with other offices on campus that support underrepresented students. We worked with the Multicultural Student Center (MSC) and University Health Services (UHS) to incorporate their expertise on supporting students of color with our knowledge of graduate student needs.
- Implementation of intentional initiatives to collect feedback from all graduate students on their experiences. The Graduate School shares de-identified student exit survey data with graduate programs to help program leaders and faculty understand the student climate at the program level. The Graduate School has also partnered with the leaders of the NIH-funded TEAM-Science program to examine experiences of students in cohort-based initiatives that provide mentoring to students compared to those who do not. The results of this survey will be used to provide recommendations to those initiatives and all academic programs on promising practices to support graduate students, especially those from underrepresented groups. Discussion groups led by the Graduate School dean and associate deans were also piloted in Spring 2016, and ensuring diversity in these groups is a key to ensuring we hear experience of and ideas from students of all backgrounds.

Although we are proud of these programs, we know that they are not sufficient, and in the coming months we are committed to enhancing them. Among other things, the Graduate School will explore how we can work with graduate programs across campus to develop more effective admissions processes to ensure a diverse applicant pool. We will also support programs to celebrate our diversity as we are attempting to increase it. As we move forward, we are open to any suggestions you have to guide our efforts.

Beyond what we can do for our students, we know that we must re-examine ourselves and more actively pursue our goals. In this context, the leadership of the Graduate School will participate in bias and cultural sensitivity training programs offered on campus. The Graduate School is deeply committed to supporting all graduate students by improving our campus climate.