

APPENDIX E:



***Report of the
Subcommittee on Human
Resources and Diversity Issues***

Putting People First: Strengthening University Citizenship

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Introduction

“We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality.” Martin Luther King’s observation pertains to the more than 13,000 people who comprise the staff of the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Yet King was referring not merely to the inner workings of a modern, complex institution. He meant that the capacity of any one of us to contribute, to achieve, and to excel can only be as great as the opportunities that the rest of us have to do likewise. He also meant that we must remember how our daily work and decisions are inevitably related to people in the local and global societies to which we are tethered.

This chapter revolves around the concept of strengthening citizenship as a way to address issues related to human resources and diversity in the next ten years at the UW–Madison. The challenge is to maintain a professional culture that fosters the rights and responsibilities of membership, a culture that offers personnel at all levels the basic respect as well as the knowledge, training, tools, benefits, and incentives that can release their potential and keep them productive. Strengthening citizenship also means strengthening our commitment to fair play and democratic principles. It requires a ceaseless search for expanding access and opportunity, especially among members of historically under-enfranchised groups. And it requires us to dispel the fear of difference. With the phrase “strengthening citizenship,” we wish to capture the work that must be done to diversify the workforce, deepen leadership skills, and create institutional structures that more regularly unleash and more equitably reward talent. We are a public institution whose prime business is education. We must recognize that our final product—an educated and civil citizenry—can only be as sound as the environment that produces it. “You can never be what you ought to be,” wrote Dr. King, “until I am what I ought to be.”

A diversity of human resources is also fundamental to our accomplishing our other missions; teaching, research, service, and the search for new knowledge. If our walls are truly to be the borders of the state, nation and world, as we state in our historic commitment to “the Wisconsin Idea,” then we must establish the best possible communication with the state’s citizens. The citizens of the state are progressively becoming more diverse and these demographic changes will demand that we ourselves have the cultural diversity that will facilitate our effectively serving the population of the future. The search for new knowledge will benefit from breaking down those cultural barriers which limit our knowledge base. The university’s teaching and research mission will also benefit from our having the widest, most diverse pool from which to draw the scholars of the future. Finally, maintaining the highest of research standards demands that all university citizens be provided with the best possible tools for their

investigations and be challenged to succeed.

What we advocate in this chapter is not easy. Putting people first will at times require bucking powerful economic and cultural trends. These include, most recently, shrinking state support for higher education, a smaller faculty, growing investments in technology, a creeping reliance on temporary employees, and judicial retreats from affirmative action. As an academic culture, we are in a difficult struggle to balance tradition and change, individual autonomy and collective accountability, multiple missions and shared aims. This report does not try to wish away or legislate away these inevitable tensions. Rather we hope to provide ways of understanding how these features of life on this campus sometimes create unnecessary barriers for current and prospective personnel and undermine the vitality of our common mission. At the same time, we hope to show how—with imagination, strong leadership, candor, and will—these tensions can be redirected into opportunities for improvement.

The report begins with a historical overview of past efforts to improve diversity at UW–Madison, with a discussion of the importance of diversity in maximizing our human resources. We then discuss more recent strategies and innovations employed as part of our *Vision for the Future*. Next, we provide a description of the scope of the committee’s investigations over the last ten months, followed by discussions of the three major divisions of personnel: faculty, academic staff and classified staff, with recommendations specific to each group. A section on leadership and professional development precedes a summary of recommendations.

Part I: History

“We have to encourage a sense that belonging to UW–Madison involves membership in a learning community. . . .” - *A Vision for the Future*

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The University of Wisconsin–Madison has sustained a formal commitment to racial and ethnic diversity for well over 30 years. Broadly defined, the objective is a campus environment in which the presence and contributions of people of color are sought, affirmed, and valued. Therefore, the initial focus of innovative programs organized in the early 1960’s was increasing minority participation in undergraduate, graduate, and professional study. Beginning with the Dean of Women’s recruitment of black students in 1964, the University’s efforts received a boost in 1966 with the establishment of the Academic Advancement Program (AAP) for student support services. Throughout the 1970’s and early 1980’s, minority student programs were organized within schools, colleges and academic units. These programs have since been broadened to include the recruitment and retention of minority faculty and academic staff.

In 1988, the commitment to diversity was unequivocally confirmed when the Future Directions Committee Report identified “Ensuring an Environment of Equity and Diversity” as one of six essential directions the University should take into the twenty-first century. That same year, then-Chancellor Donna Shalala launched the major five-year diversity initiative that became widely known as the Madison Plan.

The Madison Plan began by recognizing that the “limited ethnic and cultural diversity of the University’s faculty, staff and students. . . seriously compromised. . . the quality of the educational experience.” Therefore, if continued, the University should place “a greater emphasis on ethnic diversity in the curriculum and a more consistent consideration of ethnic diversity in the selection and retention of faculty, staff and students. . . [as] crucial to the university’s pursuit of educational excellence.” The University has the responsibility of “enriching the lives of tomorrow’s citizens and leaders of society by exposing them to the ideas and experiences that broaden their world view and ensure a deeper appreciation for cultural and ethnic differences.” The University consequently committed itself to increasing “access to the University for those who are gravely under-represented throughout our community: Blacks, Hispanics, American

Indians and Asian Americans.” This initiative was supported by §.36.12, *Wisconsin Statutes*, the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents Policy 88-12, and UW System Administration’s 1988 comprehensive Design for Diversity.

In 1993, the last year of the Madison Plan, David Ward assumed the post of Chancellor. Serving earlier as Provost, he had been the chief administrative officer in developing and implementing some of the Plan’s most prominent programs. In anticipation of its final year, he pushed for the creation of working committees to evaluate the gains, strengths and weaknesses of the Madison Plan, with the intention of “institutionalizing the successful parts of our past efforts. . .and strengthening those parts that were less effective.” Identifying the Madison Plan’s top-down implementation as a point of weakness, he called for faculty leadership in the University’s re-commitment to diversity. In response, the Faculty Senate appointed two standing committees to examine minority student concerns and minority faculty and staff issues. Further, drawing on the Madison Plan’s comprehensive approach to increasing minority participation at all levels, the Chancellor’s administrative team restructured the coordination of key areas for minority faculty hiring, curriculum development and student retention.

“The Madison Commitment”

On April 4, 1994, the Faculty Senate received and unanimously endorsed “The Madison Commitment: A Reaffirmation of University Goals for Minority Programs.” Listed as Faculty Document No. 1064, the Madison Commitment comprises the reports and recommendations of the Committee on the Academic Affairs of Minority and Disadvantaged Students, the Committee on Minority Faculty and Academic Staff, and Student Services Directors. Meeting throughout academic year 1993-94, these working groups established the foundation and form of the University’s renewed commitment to diversity.

The Madison Commitment’s main emphasis is “the pursuit of diversity as a permanent feature of the University’s programs and activities.” Acknowledging the gains from specifically targeted initiatives under the Madison Plan, the Chancellor now seeks to generate a new dynamism through systemic change by “institutionalizing” the commitment to diversity. Thus, in the same way that educational excellence is embedded in the institution’s core values, the commitment to diversity will be incorporated into mainstream programs and activities and accepted in all areas of campus life as integral to the University’s mission.

As such, the Madison Commitment defines new levels of mutual obligation and credibility. This policy document reflects the findings and recommendations of representative cross-sections of faculty, students and staff and extends accountability for diversity goals to middle-level management. Unanimously endorsed by the University’s governance bodies, its ownership is shared at a fundamental level by the entire University community. Thus, the Madison Commitment empowers each member of this campus to contribute toward creating a respectful and welcoming community.

Emerging Themes

The recommendations outlined in this chapter are inextricably linked to several themes that emerged from the subcommittee’s ten-month study of the university’s diversity and human resource practices. First, the subcommittee recognizes the University’s substantial efforts to increase the demographic diversity on campus and effectively recruit, retain, and develop a highly skilled workforce. Our study revealed an impressive array of campus, school/college, and departmental initiatives. We must praise the hard work of many faculty and staff and want to inventory and implement best practices across campus.

