



Making Excellence Inclusive in the University of Wisconsin System

- ❖ As 2012 begins, the University of Wisconsin System is well into the second phase of its participation in AAC&U's ten-year *Liberal Education and America's Promise* or LEAP Campaign.
- ❖ **LEAP Wisconsin** is:
 - a shared conversation throughout the UW System and parts of Wisconsin;
 - the means to an end, the end being the goal of full participation by America's populace in quality higher education and all that it has to offer—both as a private good for individuals, and a public good vital to American civil society and democracy;
 - a broad and coordinated set of activities, delivered statewide through campus action and public outreach and advocacy.
 - to learn more, go to: <http://liberaleducation.uwsa.edu/>
- ❖ In the vision of AAC&U, the LEAP Campaign calls for higher education institutions to act as catalysts for educational, social, civic, and economic transformation.
- ❖ Only then can the goal of full participation in quality higher education—what we call **inclusive excellence**—be realized.
- ❖ **Inclusive Excellence** as the watermark that needs to be visible and present in all that we do as a public system of higher education.
- ❖ **Inclusive Excellence** is:
 - the UW System's emerging strategic framework for its engagement with diversity and equity;
 - a belief that there is no excellence without diversity, equity and inclusion;
 - a process, a philosophy, and an end goal.
- ❖ **Inclusive Excellence** entails:
 - a dual focus on building greater structural diversity *and* improving the learning environment and institutional culture;
 - comprehensive, widespread institutional engagement and commitment;
 - close attentiveness to the student experience;
 - equity-mindedness; and
 - the joint pursuit of equity and excellence as core to mission and a shared responsibility.

The central premise of **Inclusive Excellence** holds that UW System colleges and universities need to intentionally integrate their diversity efforts into the core aspects of their institutions—including academic priorities, budgeting, leadership, quality improvement initiatives, decision-making, day-to-day operations, and organizational cultures—in order to maximize their success. Institutional and campus plans are under development and implementation throughout the System.



- ❖ **Inclusive Excellence** informs and is in dialogue with other, major UW System initiatives:
- ❖ the ***Growth Agenda for Wisconsin***, the UW System’s strategic framework offers a blueprint for developing the state’s human potential, creating new jobs, and strengthening the local communities that sustain citizens and businesses alike. It calls for a series of actions that will educate a wider and deeper cut of Wisconsin’s population for life and work in the 21st-century global society. (<http://www.wisconsin.edu/growthagenda/>)
- ❖ the **Equity Scorecard**, an action inquiry process developed by Estela Mara Bensimon at the University of Southern California’s Center for Urban Education. The Equity Scorecard is a data sense-making tool, a cultural practice, a leadership approach, and a theory of change. Thirteen of the UW System’s 15 institutions have participated or are participating in the Equity Scorecard, conducting fine-grained analysis of student data, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, to determine equitable practice in terms of access, enrollment, retention, and completion. The process develops goals and benchmarks towards the achievement of equitable outcomes for students of color. More than any other initiative in which we have been involved, the Equity Scorecard has helped us learn that transformation cannot be achieved without inquiry and practice informed by *disaggregated* data. It has also led us towards overcoming the inclination to blame the student as the problem to be fixed, and instill equity—in outcomes not just access—as the gold standard for measuring student success.
- ❖ In 2009, the UW System signed on to the Education Trust/National Association of System Heads initiative ***Access to Success*** and, concurrently, identified a second phase of the ***Growth Agenda*** focused on significantly increasing the number of Wisconsin residents who have college degrees by 2025.
- ❖ The ***Give Students a Compass*** project, a signature component of LEAP Wisconsin, served as a model for how best to strategically coordinate and integrate the change work at the heart of LEAP and Inclusive Excellence. Over the course of the three-year grant project, completed in 2011, three UW institutions—UW-Eau Claire, UW-Milwaukee, and UW-Oshkosh—each focused on particular high-impact practices (HIPs) and under-served student populations in the effort to meet the curricular redesign goals of the project. At this point in time, every UW campus is engaged in Compass-like work. (<http://www.wisconsin.edu/vpacad/compass/>)