

# WISCAPE

Wisconsin Center for the Advancement  
of Postsecondary Education

## **WISCAPE SUMMIT EDUCATING A DIVERSE WISCONSIN**

**Lake Mendota Room, DeJope Residence Hall  
640 Elm Drive  
Madison, Wisconsin 53706**

**Thursday, April 26, 2018**

### **PURPOSE**

#### **A CALL TO EDUCATE AN INCREASINGLY DIVERSE WISCONSIN IN OUR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

**By Clif Conrad, WISCAPE Faculty Director**

While Wisconsin is rapidly becoming a more diverse state, this diversity is not reflected across our colleges and universities. Underrepresented populations in our institutions of higher education include, for example, Latinx/Hispanic, Black/African American, American Indian, Hmong, adult, low-income, rural, and returning veteran students. If we are to provide enhanced educational opportunities for our increasingly diverse population to survive and thrive in college and beyond, our institutions of higher education need to move beyond mainstream practices.

It is imperative that our colleges and universities develop a deeper understanding of the challenges facing underrepresented and often marginalized populations and, in turn, identify and implement promising ideas for enrolling, educating, and graduating a diverse Wisconsin. The purpose of the WISCAPE Summit is to enhance awareness of Wisconsin's underrepresented populations and to cultivate spirited dialogue among conference participants—including faculty, administrators, staff, students, and policymakers—focused on sharing and developing ideas for galvanizing and educating our diverse state. Summit participants will share their ideas with respect to promising campus practices, programs, and policies for strengthening underrepresented students' college access, learning, persistence, and graduation.

Why the urgency? First and foremost, our colleges and universities have an obligation to provide “equal educational opportunity” to all residents of Wisconsin. Second, if our colleges and universities pursue initiatives that substantially increase the number of underrepresented students who enroll, persist and succeed in college, Wisconsin's workforce and economy will grow. Third, having far more underrepresented youth and adults obtain a postsecondary education certificate or degree will contribute to the “public good,” resulting in such benefits as an increase in civic engagement, a reduction in income inequality and poverty, and improved health. Fourth, drawing on the life experiences, perspectives, and ideas of traditionally underrepresented students greatly enriches the learning experiences of all students.

The time has come for our colleges and universities to seize greater responsibility to educate an increasingly diverse Wisconsin.