

February 19, 2020

To: Dr. Mark Mone, Chancellor, UW-Milwaukee  
Dr. Joan Prince, Vice Chancellor, Global Inclusion & Engagement

From: UWM Multicultural Network (MCN) via the Advocacy & Resource Development Sub-Committee

## **Position Statement on BIPOC Student Success Needs**

### **Background**

The UWM Multicultural Network (MCN) is comprised of mostly professional staff (Appendix A) who work with and support students who identify as Black, Indigenous and/or People of Color (BIPOC)<sup>1</sup> and whose experiences are informed by such identification, among others, including multicultural. The missions of the MCN is to strategically advocate for resources and support services that contribute to the successful recruitment, retention and graduation of multicultural students. We strive to promote educational equity at UWM.

The MCN developed its three-year strategic plan in 2018 with a key intention to advocate for multicultural and marginalized student success. It is within this realm that the group determined a need to create this position statement.

The MCN has historically been aware of and connected to the variety of climate surveys completed at UWM, their outcomes and recommendations. Because creation of and support for a more positively inclusive climate/culture has been a consistent recommendation, and because the MCN holds the intention to advocate for multicultural and marginalized student success, the MCN welcomes learning about efforts that address inclusion.

To that end, a Student Focus Group report by Goal 3 of M<sup>3</sup> was presented to the MCN in May 2019. While the intent of the report was to address former Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) student perceptions related to English, Math and Science education as it connected to M<sup>3</sup>, it became clear that student perceptions related to campus climate were of utmost importance. The MCN has a strong concern that reports continue to show that many of our BIPOC students still desperately lack connection to campus.

While we support Chancellor Mone's leadership within the Higher Education Regional Alliance (HERA) as well as ongoing M<sup>3</sup> efforts, this statement addresses the long-standing concerns that require urgent action to implement systemic changes to UWM's climate as it relates to BIPOC students.

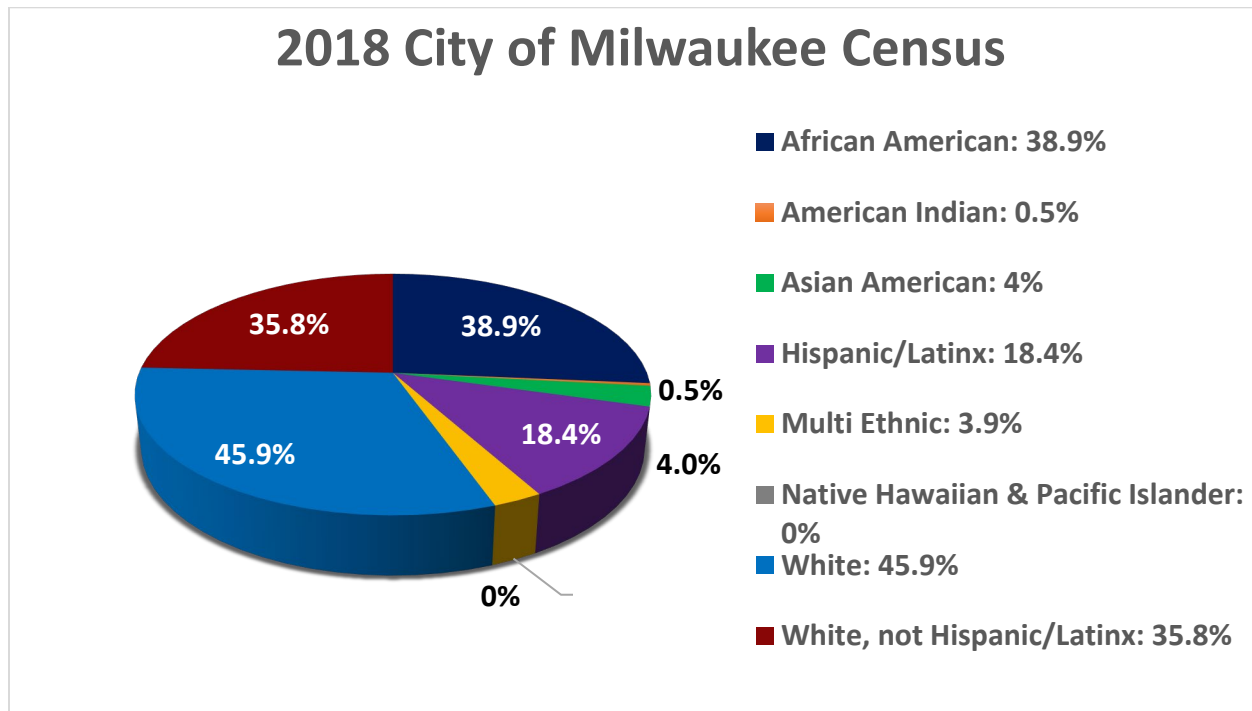
Creating a more inclusive environment for BIPOC students will contribute to enrollment, retention, graduation, and post-graduation success for all students. This statement includes clear recommendations from the MCN for UWM's leadership team to consider in creating a more inclusive environment for all students.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://medium.com/age-of-awareness/black-people-and-people-of-color-arent-interchangeable-ever-40cd3e0dabd8>;  
<https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-widatalla-poc-intersectionality-race-20190428-story.html>;  
<https://slate.com/human-interest/2019/02/people-of-color-phrase-history-racism.html>;  
<https://everydayfeminism.com/2016/08/poc-not-best-choice-of-words/>

## The Problem

Despite intentional, ongoing efforts by faculty and staff already connected to the MCN, as well as other areas of campus, there continues to be great gaps in student perceptions of inclusivity and sense of belonging, which contribute to success, or lack thereof. UWM expresses itself as the most diverse campus among all UW schools, however, it is still a predominantly white institution (PWI) that has yet to reflect the greater Milwaukee community.



**City of Milwaukee** – source: US Census Bureau 2018 (noted – this pie chart totals more than 100%, likely due to ethnicity identities that are not considered race identities being included in the overall population)

A clear gap regarding six-year graduation rates continues to exist between white students and BIPOC students (2012 cohort, OAIR Dashboard; Appendix B):

- African American Students – 22%-point difference
- Latinx (Hispanic) Students – 17.5%-point difference
- Southeast Asian American Students – 10%-point difference
- American Indian (Indigenous) Students – 9.5%-point difference

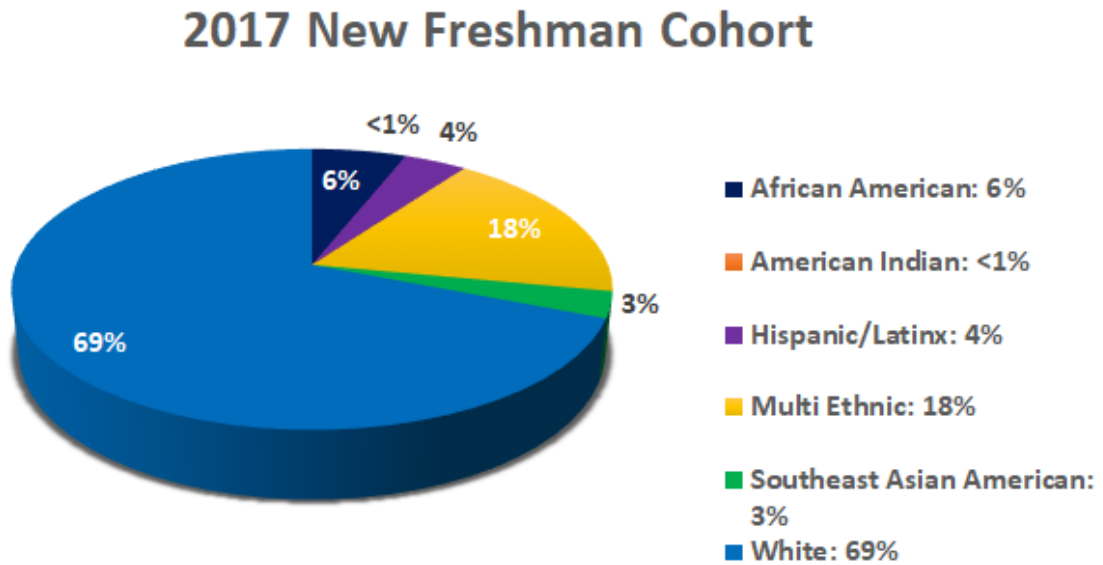
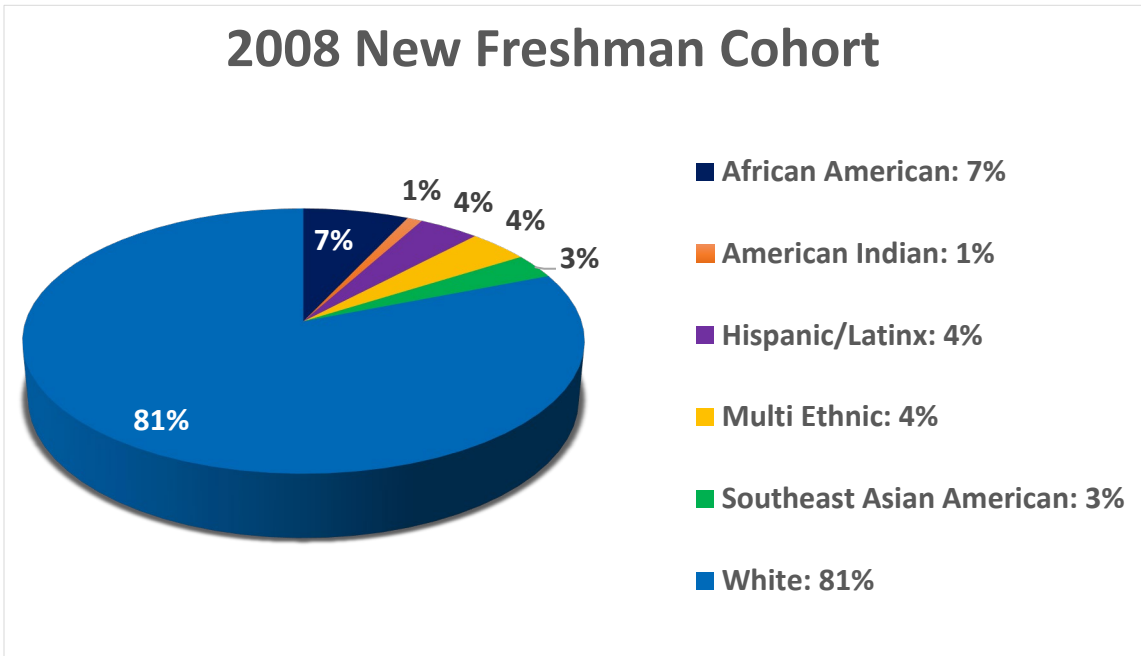
The graduation rates of BIPOC students remain well below those of white students, and despite multiple reports and recommendations to support inclusion and equity, UWM continues to struggle with providing BIPOC students with a sense of belonging.

Below are some brief highlights from past campus reports and concerns from students related to inclusion at UWM:

- “...like even though UWM talks about how it's the most diverse school I feel like it's not. It still seems very white to me. And I think that affects minority students a lot.” – MPS Graduate from Milwaukee High School of the Arts (M<sup>3</sup> Student Focus Groups Report).
- “Even though none of our questions asked about students’ perceptions of UWM’s diversity, students in every focus group brought up the lack of cultural diversity. There were several comments about not feeling welcomed, missing the level of diversity and dialogue about diversity that they experienced in high school. Compounding this, several of these students are commuting and feel disconnected from campus activities.” (M<sup>3</sup> Student Focus Groups Report).
- “I’m used to being in a larger class with more diversity. When I was in class, I was uncomfortable on campus because I was one of few students of color on campus. I always felt as if someone was watching what I did at all times.” – MPS Graduate from Rufus King High School (M<sup>3</sup> Student Focus Groups Report).
- “We heard from multiple students that while UWM may be the most diverse campus in Wisconsin, it was much whiter and less diverse than the city surrounding campus and often the high school they recently attended. For those students, they felt that UWM was being disingenuous in how it was selling itself and that it was startling how often they felt isolated in classrooms as a student of color at UWM.” (Student Success Work Group 2019 Report).
- The *Student Success Work Group 2016 Report* also included the recommendation that additional diversity and inclusion educational programming be developed and required for all faculty and staff.

### Addressing the Paradigm of Student Success

Enrollment trends indicate an anticipated increase of BIPOC students at UW-Milwaukee, considering the anticipated decrease of white student enrollment. Therefore, the MCN wants to ensure that students are truly being *served*, and not just enrolled. The graphs provided below indicate a significant increase in multi-ethnic identities, a majority of which are reported by UWM as Latinx/Multiethnic (OAIR Dashboard).



The MCN understands the sense of community and belonging for students, faculty and staff is deeply intertwined, and cannot be addressed separately. For BIPOC students to be successful, retained and graduated, UWM needs greater levels of faculty and staff representation to make connections and to do the work the institution is expected and asked to do by the community. In some instances, faculty and staff leave UWM for better opportunities elsewhere. To encourage BIPOC faculty and staff to stay at UWM, the climate needs to improve on campus for all.

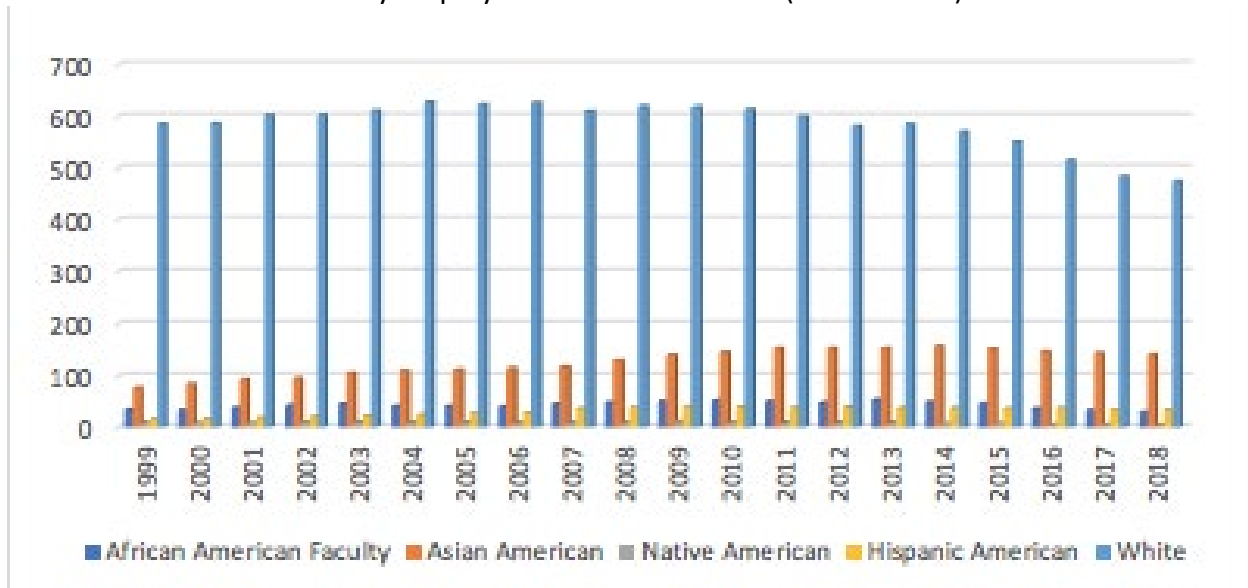
As stated in a 2016 US Department of Education Report, *Advancing Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education: Key Data Highlights Focusing on Race and Ethnicity and Promising Practices*, “Research shows that campus leadership, including a diverse faculty, plays an important role in achieving inclusive institutions. For example, faculty members’ curricular decisions and pedagogy, including their individual interactions with students, can foster inclusive climates. Also, students report that it is important for them to see themselves reflected in the faculty and curriculum to which they are exposed to create a sense of belonging and inclusiveness.” (p. 2-3).

The chart below shows UWM faculty data based on race/ethnicity. The diversity of faculty has improved from 81% white and 19% BIPOC in 1999 to 69% white and 31% BIPOC in 2018.

Although the percentage of BIPOC faculty increased, nearly 65% of the increase is a result of faculty represented as Asian. While we applaud the success and gains of Asian faculty, we recognize that the term Asian for faculty includes international faculty, as well as Asian American faculty who are NOT Southeast Asian American, which is the group of students recognized federally as ‘underrepresented’. As such, the Asian faculty at UWM do not reflect the Southeast Asian American student body.

We would be remiss without also mentioning the gap in the employment of African Americans, Native Americans and Hispanic/Latinx faculty. A more in-depth analysis shows that African American faculty has decreased from 5% to 4.4 %; Native Americans from 1% to .6%; and a slight increase for Hispanic/Latinx Americans from 2% to 5%. We acknowledge that the overall number of faculty has decreased which may not clearly indicate the severity of loss among BIPOC faculty.

Faculty Employment Trends at UWM (1999 – 2018)



## **Moving Forward**

Consistent with UWM's mission, vision and guiding values, current efforts to create an inclusive climate must be expanded. Additional resources and support are required for the expansion. This work cannot continue to be done only by the existing leaders in these areas who are often overworked and continue to be tokenized. There must be campus-wide commitment across all departments, schools and colleges. Below are our recommendations and their direct alignment with the Strategic Directions outlined by Chancellor Mone. This list of recommendations does not represent the entirety of what is needed but does reflect what we deem as feasible next steps toward the vision of a more welcoming campus climate.

### **A More Welcoming Campus Climate Means:**

#### ***BIPOC Students See Themselves Reflected on Campus and Are Supported.***

##### ***To this we recommend:***

- Recruiting and hiring more BIPOC students as employees, particularly in areas that have a strong student interaction component like Campus Ambassadors, Peer Mentors, Resident Assistants, within the Klotsche Center, and within student-facing offices like Advising and Career offices and Tutoring Centers. *Aligns with Strategic Directions: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Outstanding Learning Environment; Community Engagement and Talent Pipeline; Sustainable Future for the Campus.*
- Hiring more BIPOC professional student support staff on campus, outside of the Multicultural Student Centers in Bolton Hall. As one example, there is an urgent need for additional BIPOC counselors/therapists at Norris to provide mental health services. *Aligns with Strategic Directions: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Outstanding Learning Environment; Community Engagement and Talent Pipeline; Sustainable Future for the Campus.*
- Increasing culturally diverse food options available on campus. *Aligns with Strategic Directions: Equity and Inclusion; Outstanding Learning Environment; Sustainable Future for the Campus.*
- Hiring more BIPOC faculty/instructional staff to teach ethnic/race-related courses currently offered at UWM via departments and programs such as African/African American Diaspora Studies, American Indian Studies, Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies, Comparative Ethnic Studies, Latino Studies, etc. Most of these courses are currently taught by white faculty/staff. *Aligns with Strategic Directions: Equity and Inclusion; Outstanding Learning Environment; Research Excellence; Community Engagement and Talent Pipeline; Sustainability for the Campus.*
- Increasing research opportunities for BIPOC students. *Aligns with Strategic Directions: Equity and Inclusion; Outstanding Learning Environment; Research Excellence; Community Engagement and Talent Pipeline; Sustainable Future for the Campus.*
- Forming student voice groups that have a direct line of communication with the Chancellor and UWM's leadership team for BIPOC students. *Aligns with Strategic Directions: Equity and Inclusion; Outstanding Learning Environment; Sustainable Future for the Campus.*

### **BIPOC Faculty and Staff Are Supported and Heard.**

#### **To this we recommend:**

- Hiring an external organization with expertise in operating within a racial/ethnic equity evaluative framework to fully evaluate and assess UWM's practices and policies regarding recruitment, search and screen, hiring, onboarding, and retention (Appendix B). *Aligns with Strategic Directions: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Outstanding Learning Environment; Research Excellence; Community Engagement and Talent Pipeline; Sustainable Future for the Campus.*
- Resources be designated to support the hiring of more BIPOC faculty in areas that do not currently reflect the racial/ethnic makeup of the UWM student body nor greater Milwaukee. This would include hiring from the Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Indigenous and Southeast Asian American communities. *Aligns with Strategic Directions: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Outstanding Learning Environment; Research Excellence; Sustainable Future for the Campus.*
- Each school, college, department and/or unit be charged to create a racially and ethnically diverse group of academic advisors and support staff. This would include hiring from the Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Indigenous and Southeast Asian American communities. *Aligns with Strategic Direction: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Sustainable Future for the Campus.*
- UWM's Leadership Team commit itself to becoming an adequately representative group that includes more BIPOC. *Aligns with Strategic Direction: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Sustainable Future for the Campus.*
- Reopening and completing a successful search to hire the Senior Equity & Diversity Officer. *Aligns with Strategic Direction: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Sustainable Future for the Campus.*
- Funding be provided for identity-based Employee Resource/Affinity Groups that already exist and for those that need to be created (Appendix D) - suggested beginning amount \$2,000 per year per group to support networking events, professional development and mentoring. *Aligns with Strategic Directions: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Outstanding Learning Environment; Research Excellence; Community Engagement and Talent Pipeline; Sustainable Future for the Campus.* (See Appendix)

### **UWM is Anti-Racist.**

#### **To this we recommend:**

- Training and/or re-training UWM's Leadership Team, other top-level administrators (i.e. Deans, etc.), and human resource departments in anti-racist education. *Aligns with Strategic Directions: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Outstanding Learning Environment; Research Excellence; Community Engagement and Talent Pipeline; Sustainable Future for the Campus.*
- Require the Teaching for Multicultural Inclusion and Equity (TMIE) Workshop and Certificate Program in the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) for all faculty and instructional staff including TAs after hiring new CETL staff to facilitate the workshop. We recommend new staff be hired since current and historic efforts to provide this kind of educational experiences have overburdened existing BIPOC faculty and staff by recruiting them to volunteer their time to develop, plan and facilitate the sessions. The

TMIE workshops have fallen into this pattern as well without understanding how staff and faculty might be recognized for their collaboration efforts. Most of the staff who volunteer for this activity are doing this above and beyond regular duties, without compensation. *Aligns with Strategic Directions: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Outstanding Learning Environment; Research Excellence; Community Engagement and Talent Pipeline; Sustainable Future for the Campus.*

- Making the effort to become anti-racist evident to all campus and Milwaukee community in an intentional, regular manner beyond brief mentions in speeches or emails addressing diversity. The effort must be seen at all levels in all areas. *Aligns with Strategic Directions: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Outstanding Learning Environment; Research Excellence; Community Engagement and Talent Pipeline; Sustainable Future for the Campus.*

### **Final Statement**

The Chancellor's Strategic Directions of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Outstanding Learning Environment; Research Excellence; Community Engagement and Talent Pipeline; Sustainable Future for the Campus are all initiatives that are vital to the success and sustainability for UWM. Each one of these initiatives has specific goals with action steps and BIPOC students, faculty and staff need to be more included in the processing and implementation of them.

We must, as an institution, work strenuously to create an inclusive environment for our BIPOC students, faculty and staff in order to change the current dynamics. UWM's success is dependent upon improving its retention and graduation rates, and to that extent, decreasing and eliminating the gaps that currently exist between BIPOC students and their white peers is of greatest importance.

The sub-committee respectfully requests a written response to this statement by Thursday, March 19th. Additionally, an in-person meeting with members of the Advocacy & Resource Development Sub-Committee of the MCN and UWM's Leadership Team is requested to occur by the end of the Spring 2020 semester.

Respectfully submitted,



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*On behalf of the Advocacy & Resource Development Sub-Committee*

Multicultural Network

UW-Milwaukee



## Appendix

A. The following UWM divisions/departments/offices/units are represented and actively participate within the Multicultural Network:

- Athletics
- American Indian Student Center
- Black Student Cultural Center
- Career Planning and Resource Center
- Center for International Education
- Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies
- College of Letters & Science
- Cultures & Communities
- Dean of Students
- Department of Financial Aid
- Diversity Center at UWM-Waukesha & UWM-Washington County
- Educational Psychology
- Electa Quinney Institute
- Global Inclusion & Engagement
- History
- Inclusive Excellence Center
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus Resource Center
- Libraries
- Life Impact Program
- Lubar Entrepreneurship Center
- Lubar School of Business
- Military and Veterans Resource Center
- New Student Programs
- Norris Health Center
- Office of Graduate Diversity and Inclusion
- Office of Undergraduate Admissions
- Office of Undergraduate Research
- Pathway Advising
- Roberto Hernández Center
- School of Freshwater Sciences
- Socio-Cultural Programming
- Southeast Asian American Student Center
- Student Affairs
- Student Involvement
- Student Success Center/MKE Scholars
- TRIO Student Support Services
- WiscAMP
- Women's Resource Center

B.

<b>Fall 2012 New Freshmen Population: 3,434</b>	
African American	250
American Indian	13
Southeast Asian American	132
Hispanic/Latinx	112
Multi-Ethnic	319
<b>Total Under-Represented/BIPOC Population</b>	<b>826 (24% of Freshman class)</b>
<b>Graduation Rates of New Freshmen who entered Fall 2012</b>	
<b>African American/Black (AA)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
4-Year AA	4.8 %
5-Year AA	16%
6-Year AA	26%
<b>African American/Black (18% lower than overall 6-Year)</b>	
<b>American Indian</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
4-Year American Indian	15.4%
5-Year American Indian	30.8%
6-Year American Indian	38.5%
<b>American Indian (6% lower than overall 6-Year)</b>	
<b>Southeast Asian American (SEAA)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
4-Year SEAA	9.8%
5-Year SEAA	25.8%
6-Year SEAA	37.9%
<b>Southeast Asian American (7% lower than overall 6-Year)</b>	
<b>Latinx</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
4-Year Hispanic/Latinx	8.9%
5-Year Hispanic/Latinx	25.9%
6-Year Hispanic/Latinx	30.4%
<b>Latinx (14% lower than overall 6-Year)</b>	
<b>Multi-ethnic</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
4-Year Multi-ethnic	12.4%
5-Year Multi-ethnic	24.4%
6-Year Multi-ethnic	30.9%
<b>Multi-ethnic (11% lower than overall 6-Year)</b>	
<b>White</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
4-Year White	20.9%
5-Year White	40.8%
6-Year White	47.9%
<b>White (4% higher than overall 6-Year)</b>	
<b>Overall</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>4-Year Overall</b>	<b>18.2%</b>
<b>5-Year Overall</b>	<b>36.6%</b>
<b>6-Year Overall</b>	<b>44.1%</b>

- C. UBUNTU Research & Evaluation is the recommended local organization for this evaluation (<https://www.ubunturesearch.com/>). UBUNTU is headed by a UWM alum who has recently partnered with various UWM departments and centers including: Black Student Cultural Center, Cultures & Communities, MKE Scholars, Women's Resource Center, and the LGBTQ+ Resource Center.
- D. Employee Resource/Affinity Groups are a low-cost means of creating community. Research supports that faculty and staff who can build community are less likely to leave and will better support students. When an organization actively builds community, it is less likely to see staff attrition and people become more committed, want to develop further, attitude and morale is better, etc. the students will ultimately benefit from a more supportive environment.

Groups that currently exist at UWM:

- Asian Faculty & Staff Association
- African American Faculty & Staff Council
- LGBT Faculty Staff Caucus
- Wisconsin Women in Higher Education Leadership (WWHEL)
- American Indian Faculty Staff Committee

Those who do not yet have groups in existence at UWM:

- Hispanic/Latinx
- Military Veterans

## STUDENT FOCUSED SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee (UWM) Multicultural Network (MCN) continuously strives to promote and facilitate BIPOC student achievement, and as such, delivered a position statement to campus leadership February 2020, that included multiple recommendations for increasing the inclusive nature of campus for BIPOC students, faculty and staff. The recommendations were based on the following information.

Graduation rates for UWM students who identify as Black, Indigenous and/or People of Color (BIPOC) are well below those of their white counterparts. UWM, a predominately white institution (PWI), needs to better support BIPOC students by fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity necessary for overall student success.

Despite multiple surveys, reports and recommendations that demand improving inclusion and equity at UWM, the institution continues to struggle with welcoming BIPOC students as valued members of the campus community. Students who see themselves reflected in various roles on campus feel more supported by their institutions, which then positively impacts matriculation, retention and graduation rates.

The MCN was made aware of and connected to several UWM climate surveys with recommendations to support a more inclusive climate/culture for BIPOC students. An M3 (MPS/UWM/MATC) student focus group report was presented to MCN in May 2019. Though the focus group's original intent was to address the concerns and perceptions of former Milwaukee Public School (MPS) students regarding their academics, students responded to questions with expressions of perceived racial inequity on campus. Students repeatedly described their feelings of being excluded in classes and in co-curricular environments, creating a sense of disconnection from UWM.

Though the MCN strongly believes all recommendations made in the aforementioned [February 2020 statement](#) are equally important and necessary for sustained organizational change, it was tasked with providing a summary focus on the student recommendations. The following have been identified as being immediately vital to the creation of a more welcoming campus climate for UWM's BIPOC students:

- Forming student voice groups *[exclusively BIPOC]* that have a direct line of communication with the Chancellor and UWM's leadership team for BIPOC students.
- Recruiting and hiring more BIPOC students *[with competitive pay]* as employees, particularly in areas that have a strong student interaction component like Campus Ambassadors, Peer Mentors, Resident Assistants, within the Klotsche Center, and within student-facing offices like Advising and Career offices and Tutoring Centers. *[Requiring inclusivity training of existing staff and accountability for organizations that do not follow this directive]*
- Increasing faculty-led research opportunities for BIPOC students. *[Ideally lead by BIPOC faculty.]*