

Dear Friends,

For the last five years, it has been my pleasure to serve as Vice Provost and Chief Diversity Officer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. During this time, we built on our long-standing commitment to develop new collaborations, infrastructures, and initiatives to catalyze this great university toward an environment that is inclusive and excellent for all.

It is with a heavy heart that I will step down from my role, effective August 2nd, as I accept an unprecedented opportunity to serve the nation and the world's youth as the Senior Vice President for Programs, Training, and Youth Development with the Boys and Girls Club of America. I made this decision after careful deliberation and only in the presence of such an unparalleled opportunity to help vulnerable and underserved youth to develop the habits of heart, mind, and character that are so foundational to family, community, and career success.

As I reflect upon my time at UW-Madison, I am heartened by the many noteworthy accomplishments that we celebrated together. Notably, we further institutionalized several of our campus diversity programs and initiatives (PEOPLE, Posse, OMAI/First Wave, OED, CeO, and Wei LAB) forming them into the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement (DDEEA), putting us at the forefront of the nation in terms of our efforts to build a centralized infrastructure that works so powerfully with faculty, staff, students, and external community members.

We launched the Inclusive Excellence Winter Symposium, the Women in Leadership Symposium, and the Leadership in the New Economy (LINE) project, and we partnered with hundreds of leaders across campus and beyond. These efforts include our successful Faculty Diversification initiative with Vice Provost Steve Stern; the Close the Achievement Gap Project with the Delta Program; the launch of a hybrid scholarly and applied research center, the Wisconsin Equity and Inclusion Laboratory (Wei LAB) with the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research (WCER); the Hmong Student Excellence Proposal and the Academic Excellence Seminars with Professor Alberta M. Gloria; the Global Experience Pilot Initiative with the First Year Interest Group (FIGS); the launch of the L & S Center for Academic Excellence (CAE); the Beyond the Game Initiative with Intercollegiate Athletics and the Wei Laboratory; new partnerships to strengthen the diversity of our undergraduate student body with the Office of Admissions and Recruitment; and small grant support to more than 300 diversity innovation efforts that has unleashed an unprecedented level of creative energy as students, faculty, staff and community members carry the work forward in myriad ways. Indeed, in 2013, our VPCDO core-team programs touched more than 3,000 registered participants, and our divisional efforts touched thousands more.

During this time, we established new partnerships with organizations like the 100 Black Men of Madison, Centro Hispano, the NAACP, the Urban League, the Great Lakes Higher Education Foundation, The Links, Inc., the Hip-Hop Sisters Network, the YWCA of Madison, INROADS National Organization, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute, the Congressional Black Caucus, City Year, the New York Knicks, the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County, the National Diversity Council, and more.

And yet, as we look across the landscape of all that we have done, we know that our work is incomplete. We do not have nearly enough diversity in our student, faculty, or leadership ranks, and far too often, these communities are not embraced as full participants in our campus environment.

As a child growing up in West Dayton, the Boys and Girls Club was a part of a network of community organizations that provided me with a safe and positive environment. Like so many, I partially credit my success to a club experience that helped me to develop the early foundation for life success. This position will give me the unprecedented opportunity to touch over 4 million young people in nearly 5,000 clubs across the world. As a soon-to-be father, I am humbled by the opportunity to play even a small role in making a difference in the lives of so many.

My heartfelt thanks goes to my VPCDO core-team and leaders within the DDEEA, campus leaders, students, alumni, corporate partners, and community members that have played such a pivotal role in the successes that we have achieved. While the final impact of our efforts will unfold through the years, I know in my heart that we have moved this university in important and meaningful ways.

I will work with members of senior leadership and my colleagues both on campus and in the community to ensure a smooth transition in how this office will continue to make a difference campus-wide while simultaneously providing leadership to the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Educational Achievement (DDEEA).

Thanks for all of the great memories.

On, Wisconsin!

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