Wisconsin Center for Education Research

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

STRATEGIC WORK FY2022

JULY 1, 2021-JUNE 30, 2022
Progress Summary

Goal 1. Identify the knowledge, skills, and awareness of positionality needed to integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into the Center's daily operations

ACTION 1

Determine how WCER will use insights from individual and organizational learning literatures

1. Used external organizational expertise to create reorganization process that includes and takes account of varied colleagues' expertise and perspectives
2. Investigated three similar organizations to learn from them

ACTION 3

Create an infrastructure to sustain DEI work

1. Created structure within the new reorganization of WCER for a DEI leadership position
2. Developed position description for the DEI leader in collaboration with OEDI, WCER Change Team, and other stakeholders
3. Supported (and continue to support) researchers from historically marginalized groups through the PROWESS program to become effective grant getters; thereby creating a more diverse group of Center PIs

Goal 2. Improve and expand the Center's services equitably to students, academic and university staff, and faculty

ACTION 1

Improve the effectiveness of service units

1. The reorg core team had regular, frequent meetings to redesign organizational structures for the service units that considers the knowledge, talents, and goals of the staff in those departments
2. Learn@WCER sessions were conducted on purchasing, travel, and expense reports to instruct staff on how to work in compliance with university regulations and avoid common pitfalls

3. The transition to electronic format and filing of vital records was completed
4. A revised ASSA process was piloted to decrease burden on projects and increase capacity in procurement
5. Cross training and restructured workflows were provided to increase effectiveness in approval of purchases

ACTION 2

Operationalize a culture of learning and continuous improvement

1. To better serve faculty PIs, the business office worked collaboratively with departments and units to move flex funds to home departments, supporting transparency on balances, providing a single point of contact for faculty, and creating a clearer understanding of uses and deadlines
2. Three kinds of purchasing forms were combined into one. The form moved online to reduce paper use, facilitate automated approval processes, and create an electronic dashboard so that status information was in a single location. This change has resulted in improved customer satisfaction and a faster turnaround time for purchases.
3. Keeping the customer experience in mind, the business office split travel from the previous purchasing forms, which helped avoid confusion and aided in travelers' understanding what information was necessary to collect for travel
4. The tech services support team created and made available guides for the use of technology in conference rooms

ACTION 4

Address culture and climate issues

1. To address the siloed nature of the Center and to create social ties, ASAC hosted a series of meet-ups in parks around the Madison area to promote community building
2. The Center increased the focus of the administrative client services team to be responsive to the needs of projects and staff
3. The Center developed, piloted, and captured feedback on new onboarding processes for new staff (e.g., COO)
4. Implemented monthly service staff supervisor meetings

5. Service staff hiring search committees began having broader representation by including a representative from other service units and a project member for each search
6. Used a reorganization process that includes and takes account of varied colleagues' expertise and perspectives

Goal 3. Use problem solving, experimentation, learning from diverse experiences, and efficient transfer of knowledge to achieve our mission

ACTION 1

Design and implement professional opportunities for staff members

1. Created a list of professional development offerings to support operational staff
2. Incorporated funding for professional development across service units and for university/ academic staff in yearly budget
3. Continued ASAC lunch-and-learns to leverage cross-project professional learning

ACTION 2

Develop a plan for learning from similar centers across campus and the nation

1. Investigated three similar organizations to learn from them; bring lessons into reorganization
2. Conducted project survey regarding the quality of services; share data with all
3. Conducted technical services focus groups
4. A pilot test was conducted to determine if producing financial reports every other month instead of monthly would alleviate some work for the accounting team while still meeting the needs of the PIs
5. Interviews with PIs were held to ascertain how financial reports are being used, what additional information would be helpful, and an ideal frequency of receiving said reports

Goal 4. Promote high-quality, community-connected local, state, national and international research on education

ACTION 3

Broaden and deepen research and development support

1. Created a position in the new reorg structure to support project management of strategic funding
2. Supported PIs with a grant management colleague to help organize large grant submissions
3. Developed and strengthened relations with key community and local organizations stakeholders (e.g., One City Schools, Urban Triage, MMSD)
4. Developed and implemented curriculum to support and mentor early career PIs through the PROWESS program

Goal 5. Expand and diversify sources of funding for research

ACTION 1

Develop a strategy for winning high-return funding opportunities

1. Developed and implemented curriculum to support and mentor early career PIs through the PROWESS program
2. Strengthen relationships with internal (e.g., WFAA) and external organizations (e.g., funders, AIR, AACTE, National Academies) that will help expand and diversify funding

ACTION 3

Improve the success rate and diversification of funding

1. Gathered data related to success rate and types of funding at WCER

> *Reader note: The goals and actions referred to here can be found in their entirety in the [final report](#) of the Strategic Planning Process.*

STRATEGIC WORK FY2022

JULY 1, 2021-JUNE 30, 2022 | Progress Summary

Wisconsin Center for
Education Research
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON