Creating Inclusive Places: Recommendations for Practice

In their 2012 book *Why Aren't We There Yet? Taking Personal Responsibility for Creating an Inclusive Campus,* Jan Arminio, Vasti Torres, and Raechele Pope encouraged readers to move from mere contemplation to specific action to create more inclusive and welcoming campuses. The authors argued that creating truly inclusive environments requires recognition that doing so is complex and necessitates acknowledgement of privilege and inequality in higher education. Further, they implored readers to recognize inclusion is predicated upon knowledge of and experiences with diverse others, and that universities must move beyond mere concern and toward concerted action. Fundamentally, the authors encouraged readers to acknowledge and address sources of inequity in higher education environments, asking questions about who is privileged and who is marginalized, and in what ways.

In the years since their book was published, university administrators and faculty have navigated complex and difficult terrain responding to demands for equity and inclusion from marginalized students. In 2015, for example, at the University of Missouri, a student activist group, *Concerned Student 1950,* organized protests after a racial slur was hurled at the student government president. After weeks of demonstrations and a much-publicized hunger strike by a graduate student, several high-ranking officials, including the university president, resigned. Other universities have faced similar issues, with students calling on universities to ban speakers because of hate-filled and discriminatory messages, address racist or sexist misconduct of student organizations, and discipline insensitive faculty who create unwelcome environments in their classrooms. More recently, the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 responses on communities of color have caused some students to allege the nation's universities did not

adequately consider the needs of those most vulnerable on our campuses when making decisions or operating plans. Additionally, if the impacts of COVID-19 were not enough, the reality of systemic racism simultaneously showed itself in the killings of several Black and African American citizens and in protests around the nation. At the heart of these concerns are issues of privilege and oppression. Questions about whose identities are privileged in certain spaces, and whose are oppressed, are essential to ask as universities adapt to changing student populations and needs.

As universities grapple with these questions, institutional leaders are increasingly being asked to consider ways their decisions impact marginalized students. How might speakers hired for orientation invite or inhibit students' sense of belonging? What messages do the names of campus buildings send to those who enter? In this article, we detail the process one university took to proactively and courageously seek answers to questions about equity and inclusion. We do so to highlight the potential for conducting such an assessment on other campuses and to encourage readers to think about the applicability of the process to their own institutions.

Case Study – University of Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Union – the entity responsible for managing facilities related to the Memorial Union, Memorial Union Terrace, and Union South at the University of Wisconsin in Madison - invited an external, multidisciplinary team to explore the extent to which its physical spaces, operations, offerings, and programs communicated a sense of belonging to students of color, and to others from historically underrepresented and oppressed groups. We approached our work as a case study – a bounded system that is interconnected with other systems – which was explained by Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2013) in their book *Negotiating the Complexities of Qualitative Research in Higher Education.* Our gaze homed in on the Wisconsin Union – by

and large considered the living room of the campus – and how it set a tone for experiences of inclusion or exclusion on campus. By sharing the story of this inclusion case study, our hope is that other institutions might consider adopting a similar framework to investigate how issues of privilege and marginalization manifest in physical spaces where inclusion and community-building are core goals.

Context and Historical Significance

The University of Wisconsin – Madison is a large, public, research extensive institution with an enrollment of about 45,000 students. At the time the study was conducted, the student population was comprised of 51% women and 17% students of color (2% Black/African American, 5% Hispanic/Latinx, 8% Asian, .2% American Indian, .08% Native Hawaiian, and 3% bi- or multi-racial). The Wisconsin Union has a notable history, having been founded in 1907 to connect students, faculty, staff, alumni, members, and visitors through shared events and experiences. Today its iconic spaces are often featured in institutional marketing and are viewed as meaningful symbols of the university. Throughout its history and still today, students are at the center of its purpose and participate in major organizational decisions. The Wisconsin Union is widely regarded as a national example of how a college union should operate and helped found the Association of College Unions International in 1914.

Research Team

Following a 10-year construction and renovation period of both Union South and Memorial Union, the Wisconsin Union's leadership believed it important to ensure the organization's spaces, programs, and services were inclusive and inviting to all members of the university community. To move from contemplation to action - as Arminio, Torres, and Pope recommended – the organization issued a Request for Proposal and eventually hired Workshop

Architects to study the extent to which its physical spaces, operations, offerings, and programs engendered a sense of belonging for students of color and others from historically underrepresented and oppressed groups. Workshop Architects assembled a multidisciplinary team comprised of architects who understood facility design, codes, challenges, and possibilities; faculty and student affairs administrators who understood issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and student development; and social impact researchers who understood how campus physical environments influence the student experience. Specifically, the research team consisted of three faculty (two in higher education and one in architecture), two practicing architects, and one student affairs administrator. Several members of the research team authored this article (one higher education faculty, one architecture faculty, and one student affairs administrator), and the manuscript was reviewed for accuracy by two higher education administrators at the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

Conceptual Framework and Process

The team's research process consisted of document and website review, a two-day campus discovery visit, and administration of a survey designed to measure the significance students attach to the Wisconsin Union and other university spaces across the Madison campus. As a research framework, the team chose Carney Strange and James Banning's *Hierarchy of Learning Environment Purposes* (2001) model because of its attention to both the feel and construction of physical space, its grounding in higher education research and practice, and its goal of community development.

Figure 1:Hierarchy of Learning Environment Purposes (Revised from Strange & Banning, 2001)

Community

Involvement

Inclusion & Safety

The Strange and Banning model is adapted from Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, in which

various aspects of human motivation are arranged as building blocks in a stacked pyramid, with

more basic needs (e. g., sleep, food, safety) at the foundation level of the pyramid, and higher

order needs depicted on higher levels. Reaching each level of the model requires first fulfilling

preceding needs within the pyramid. Like Maslow's model, Strange and Banning's model is

organized with three levels: (a) safety and inclusion at the foundation, (b) involvement in the

middle, and (c) community at the pinnacle (see figure 1). Within each level, Strange and

Banning contend that there are four critical dimensions: physical, human aggregate,

organizational, and constructed. In other words, to understand the extent to which the campus

environment is inclusive and safe, educators must pay attention to what the physical dimensions

communicate, how the human aggregate (or collective characteristics of people within the space)

includes or excludes others, what the organizational dimensions promote, and whether the

socially constructed elements are sufficiently holistic for all community members. These same

criteria hold true for the next two levels: involvement and community. In sum, if the campus

environment is to engage students optimally in educationally purposeful ways, its various

environmental dimensions must also work in accordance with that aim. Because the Wisconsin

Union seeks to promote community on the Madison campus, this model served as a useful construct for the team's work.

In designing the study, the team was intentional about the rigor of study methodology and data collection, which occurred in two phases. We strove to "mirror the process of working qualitatively," a phrase that Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2014) coined to illustrate the importance of attentiveness to our reflexivity and positionality as we conducted our work. First, we spent two days on the Madison campus conducting focus groups, individual observations, intercept interviews, and campus tours. Next, we used a proprietary campus mapping survey to examine union spaces relative to other spaces on the campus. To prepare for the campus visit, we created two sets of focus group questions – one for students and a second for faculty and staff - to elicit perspectives about senses of safety, inclusion, engagement, and community within Union spaces. In total, the team conducted a total of 8 focus groups: 4 with 17 students, and 4 with 33 faculty, staff, and community members. In addition, in Union and other campus spaces we conducted 30 intercept interviews to hear perspectives on the same themes. Finally, we asked students to lead team members on 4 individual tours during which they visited areas within and outside of Union spaces that student tour guides believed communicated messages of inclusion or exclusion. During these interactions, team members took field notes on student comments and reflections to ensure later recall of information.

In addition to using written documents, the team administered a proprietary online campus geographic mapping survey to assess the significance that students attribute to Wisconsin Union facilities and other places on the Madison campus. A total of 1,818 students responded to the survey, with respondent demographics largely mirroring the UW-Madison population, except in the following ways: Asian, Multiracial, and female students were

overrepresented in the sample; and African American, Hispanic, International, and male students were underrepresented in the sample. The team was careful to qualify its survey analysis, and to triangulate interpretation with peer review and focus group information.

Key Findings

Initial analysis occurred in three stages: first, we met at the end of each campus visit day to discuss observations and insights. Next, each team member independently wrote a reflective summary document about what was heard and observed during the campus visit, organized within each level of Strange and Banning's Hierarchy of Learning Environment Purposes model. Finally, several weeks after the campus visit, the team met to discuss and code summaries to identify common themes and assure that observations were consistent among team members. In addition, the team reviewed results of the mapping survey to synthesize and develop overarching findings. With observations in hand from the document and website review, campus visit, and survey mapping, the team formalized recommendations for how the Wisconsin Union might best act on areas of need. A summary of findings and recommendations are offered hereafter.

Undergirding all findings was the team's appreciation for the Wisconsin Union's courage to commission this study, and to learn how the organization does or does not fulfill its mission to be a place of inclusion and belonging. It is unusual for an organization to conduct such deep and possibly difficult self-exploration. The research team noted that the transparency of Union leadership, and the participation of so many faculty, staff, and students in the process, illustrated that the organization deeply values inclusion, equity, and diversity. The team also acknowledged the Union's strong commitment to student-centered experiences at all levels of the organization, as illustrated by the following: 1) the existence of numerous avenues and opportunities for student participation in decisions (such as the organization's student governing board and the

student employee advisory board) and 2) the broad range of entertainment and educational programing created by students and student organizations advised by Union staff which celebrated diverse social identities. Finally, the team asserted that the Wisconsin Union and the University of Wisconsin are like most longstanding institutions of higher education in the United States in that it needs to do more to achieve greater levels of diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging, but unlike many in that it acted on its values and courageously invited its community to help it better achieve university and societal goals. In the remainder of the section, we detail study findings, organized by levels of Strange and Banning's model, from the base level of safety and inclusion to the middle level of involvement, and finally to its pinnacle level of community.

Safety and Inclusion. Perhaps not surprisingly for a predominantly white institution, students who reported the strongest feelings of safety and inclusion within Wisconsin Union facilities identified as cisgender white students. Those who identified as students of color; as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender; as from lower socioeconomic backgrounds; or with disabilities; expressed less of a sense of safety and inclusion. Several students of color referenced that alcohol service in Union facilities sometimes fuels negative behaviors from white students, including microaggressions and harassment. Some students mentioned that checking identification for lawful enforcement of the drinking age by uniformed campus police was too aggressive or simply uncomfortable for students of color, many of whom often feel targeted on campus and in society. Students also mentioned that the Union's dining menu choices reinforced a dominant European, white, Germanic/Western, Wisconsin/Midwest, male culture, and lamented that when menus reflect diversity or other cultural choices, these attempts are largely infrequent and inauthentic

Other barriers to strong feelings of safety and inclusion included concerns about physical accessibility, availability of social and cultural programming space, limited staff diversity, and the names of various interior rooms and spaces. Some students remarked that a broken wheelchair lift, which was also observed by the team during its first campus visit, was long inoperable and signaled lack of regard for individuals with mobility challenges. Other students mentioned that the scarcity of gender-inclusive restrooms or private reflection spaces discouraged them from using Union facilities altogether. While still others referenced how important it is to see diversity among staff as symbolic of organizational commitment, and how powerfully negative or positive the existence of symbols, artwork, artifacts, and space names are on students' feelings of inclusion. As is the case at many institutions in the United States, some space names and artifacts reflected a largely white, male, western, heterosexual, and able-bodied history. For some students, space names influence their sense of belonging, and for others they create a more visceral sense of identity and safety. In sum, the research team verified that the often more subtle cues of space names, menu offerings, policy enforcement, and staff demographics are powerful influences upon an organization's messages and an audience's perspectives.

Involvement. Once feelings of safety and inclusion are satisfied, Strange and Banning suggest students can achieve a fundamental level of university involvement, which Astin and other researchers suggest leads to a host of desirable educational outcomes. As might be the case at most universities, once we dug slightly below initial observations, our research team discovered somewhat paradoxical findings related to involvement. During focus groups, intercept interviews, and campus tours, researchers generally met demographically diverse groups of students who were highly involved with Union committees, operations, and programs

(e.g., committee members, organizational employees). These students described numerous ways in which they were consulted, felt included, and were given an appropriate balance of support and autonomy in programmatic and financial matters. However, these same students reported occasional lower levels of influence on decisions related to Wisconsin Union spaces, policies, and operations.

In addition, despite a high level of engagement among a core group of Wisconsin Union student leaders, the general university student population was less engaged with the organization and its facilities. Indeed, intercept interviews revealed that students were unsure about how to become involved with, or to influence, Wisconsin Union practices and operations.

Community. Achieving a sense of community is the pinnacle of Strange and Banning's model. At this level people, spaces, organizational dimensions, and the environment signal full membership in the community, with conflicts and accommodation organizationally and intentionally managed, and organizational practices in place to support equilibrium between individual perspectives and the common good. It is difficult to achieve this level of the hierarchy, as it is predicated on assuring that individuals feel a foundational sense of safety and inclusion, along with meaningful and legitimate forms of organizational involvement.

Not surprisingly, and as intimated earlier, the research team found a strong sense of community associated with the Union for some students, faculty, staff, and alumni; however, there also existed substantial variation by social identity. The strong normative culture of Union spaces that helps some students feel a sense of belonging, community, tradition, attachment, affinity, and inclusion, also serve to exclude other students who do not see themselves as part of that same normative culture. Adding complexity to the sense of exclusion that some students felt, was a legacy of exclusion that was communicated or passed along within identity groups. Some

students reported not socializing in union spaces precisely because older friends or alumni had indicated these spaces were not inclusive for students of color or other minoritized identities. In contrast, these same students described other campus spaces as providing them with a stronger sense of community, including and especially the Red Gym, a building near the Memorial Union where many offices that serve and support minoritized social identities were located (e.g., Multicultural Student Center, International Student Services, and LGBT Campus Center).

  Campus Survey. To administer the campus capital mapping survey, an email was sent to the entire population of University of Wisconsin-Madison students, with an invitation to identify locations where they experienced any of four forms of personal capital: social capital (places to bond with friends), intellectual capital (places to study, collaborate, and create), restorative capital (places to relax, de-stress, and revitalize), and symbolic capital (places that embody what it means to be a member of the UW-Madison community). Although these forms of capital may conjure notions of Pierre Bourdieu's Cultural Capital theory, or Tara Yosso's Cultural Wealth model, because of the use of the word 'capital' in this context, they are distinct from those theories in that they focus on the connection between the student and the physical environment, with less emphasis on power as Bourdieu and Yosso used the word capital. Survey results largely confirmed what the inclusion inquiry team observed and heard during its campus visit, providing yet another form of study validation; in sum, white students felt a stronger sense of connection (particularly in social capital) to Wisconsin Union spaces, while students of color, international students, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students reported either more affinity to only one of the spaces, or to other spaces altogether.

Recommendations

After analyzing all the data, the research team formulated recommendations to increase the likelihood of community for students of color and others from historically underrepresented and oppressed groups. As with findings, recommendations were organized within the Strange and Banning hierarchical framework and may also serve as helpful suggestions to other institutions seeking to accomplish the same objectives as the Wisconsin Union. The following recommendations reflect a sample of what was offered, are highly summarized, and are offered with nuanced context which is difficult to convey without additional institutional knowledge. Nevertheless, they exemplify the connection between findings and recommendations, and provide suggestions for the kind of analysis readers might do on any campus.

Safety and Inclusion. As described earlier, Strange and Banning envision the environment as being comprised of four components: physical space, human aggregate (people's collective characteristics), organizational dimensions, and collective perceptions (of the environment's context and culture). The team's recommendations were offered within Strange and Banning's environmental components for each of the model's three levels.

Consistent with the intent of the Strange and Banning model, in which lower-level needs must be satisfied before higher level aspects can be achieved, the research team suggested Wisconsin Union leadership first focus on improving and signaling commitments to safety and inclusion, before or simultaneous with attending to higher level recommendations regarding involvement or community. This suggestion undergirded the idea that involvement and community could not be achieved if certain segments of the student population felt unsafe or excluded.

Physical space. As noted earlier, our findings illustrated that there were dimensions of the Wisconsin Union's physical environments which impeded some students' sense of safety and inclusion. First, and regularly cited by many students, were persistent questions about two spaces named for individuals alleged to have been long ago linked to the Ku Klux Klan. Because Wisconsin Union leadership had already begun addressing these concerns, our team endorsed that work and encouraged the Union administration to seek institutional support to implement actions previously outlined by the Union *Council Resolution Regarding Named Spaces in Memorial Union*. To do so, we suggested, would immediately illustrate seriousness of commitment. We also recommended that action be taken to repair non-functioning wheelchair lifts and elevators, and that a plan be established and publicized to prioritize maintenance and operational training, particularly with regard to spaces and equipment which signal to underrepresented and minoritized populations. Again, our findings illustrated that when these systems do not properly function, students perceived even unintentional signals of exclusion.

Human aggregate. Human aggregate aspects of safety and inclusion reflect how physical spaces communicate feelings of belonging or exclusion to the collective characteristics of people. Several informants mentioned how the Memorial Union renovation had naturally displaced use by historically underrepresented and minoritized populations. They further explained that its closure for renovation resulted in the need to find other campus spaces for events, resulting later in the visible absence of people of color after it reopened. Thus, the research team recommended that the Wisconsin Union actively invite, and even incentivize, use of Wisconsin Union spaces by these same groups to restore their sense of connection and the Union's visible commitment.

Organizational dimensions. Whereas some organizational dimensions unequivocally communicated safety and inclusion, others suggested the opposite. The Wisconsin Union Directorate (WUD), the organization's student governing board, gave students a direct and legitimate form of involvement in Union decision making, and was comprised of students who were diverse in race, ethnicity, gender expression, and other dimensions of social identity. Most students involved in the WUD reported a strong sense of involvement and personal agency in union decisions. Even so, some WUD students reported being simultaneously subject to microaggressions, insensitive comments, or other exclusionary actions perpetuated or passively observed by others. Thus, the team recommended that student and staff diversity training be enhanced, and that appropriate responses to harassing incidents be assured. Moreover, as both a legitimate and symbolic measure, we recommended Union staff conduct an annual "safety and inclusion walk" in and around Wisconsin Union facilities to invite feedback and ameliorate conditions that inhibit feelings of safety and inclusion.

Constructed Environment. The collective perception of the physical environment's values, culture, and organizational climate (or what Strange and Banning referred to as the constructed environment), is a powerful tool for communicating safety and inclusion. The palpable and beloved sense of tradition in Wisconsin Union spaces necessitates attention be paid to how those spaces also communicate messages of inclusion or exclusion. Thus, we recommended that Wisconsin Union staff create a working group comprised of WUD students, Union staff, students from historically underrepresented and minoritized groups, University of Wisconsin Police Department, colleagues from identity-related offices in the Red Gym (e.g. Multicultural Student Center), University Health Services, and others on campus who could help consider how to address Union traditions and spaces (specifically, the Union Terrace and

Rathskeller) to create more welcoming environments. The research team proposed that issues might include, for example, alcohol enforcement efforts and differences in perception among those with varying social identities, and menu and hospitality traditions in Union dining spaces to broaden cultural inclusion and authenticity

In sum, feelings of safety and inclusion are sometimes invisible to observers (including those of us responsible for campus life) but are powerfully influenced by more tangible aspect of the physical environment, such as space names, equipment operability, facility use patterns, training availability, and visibility of response when organizational values are confronted. Moreover, although all levels of the Strange and Banning model have equal value, prioritizing efforts in this most fundamental level is a prerequisite to typically more programmatic involvement and community efforts.

Involvement. With foundational aspects of Strange and Banning's model underway, the research team suggested Wisconsin Union administration could then turn its attention to involvement recommendations; these are present hereafter, once again within Strange and Banning's environmental components: physical, human aggregate, organizational, and constructed.

Physical/Human Aggregate. Involvement recommendations pertaining to the physical and human aggregate emerged from evidence that there seemed to be a relational gap between university staff with offices in the Red Gym (the building adjacent to the Memorial Union) and the students who access them, and Wisconsin Union staff. Although unintentional and always cordial, this gap was particularly troubling because offices located in the Red Gym were those which typically served students with minoritized identities (e.g., International Student and Scholar Services, Multicultural Center). Thus, we recommended that to achieve inclusive

involvement goals, Wisconsin Union leadership develop stronger relationships with colleagues in offices throughout the Red Gym. The ideal outcome of strengthened relationships would be to increase collaborative opportunities which better serve students, and to open new pathways to understanding about how all students experience the Wisconsin Union.

*Organizational***.** Involvement recommendations were developed with the goal of broadening the number of leadership opportunities available to students, while also deepening these students' influence beyond financial decisions and financial sponsorship. Specifically, the research team recommended that the Wisconsin Union Directorate develop an organizational structure which constructs new partnerships with underrepresented student groups, learn more about their interests and needs, and leverage those partnerships to support programming for a wider array of students.

In addition, we recommended that the Wisconsin Union administration, in collaboration with students (inclusive of but also beyond the Wisconsin Union Directorate), conduct a "policy and systems audit" to consider if organizational policies, procedures, or practices create unexpected or unintended barriers to student involvement (e.g., meeting room reservation process and/or fees). During focus groups and intercept interviews, we heard occasional comments about reservation practices being sufficiently confusing as to discourage use of the Wisconsin Union for student meetings and events. The team suggested this invisible barrier could inhibit feelings of inclusion and involvement, particularly for those who sometimes are excluded systemically.

Constructed Environment. Constructed environment recommendations were intended to foster a collective sentiment that the environment promoted an ethos of involvement, inclusive of differences in race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation. To promote a

stronger culture of involvement, students must first see themselves represented in the space. Thus, we recommended that Wisconsin Union administrators and Wisconsin Union Directorate students actively and visibly recruit for diversity and its outcomes at every level, including among Union staff, student advisory groups, and student governance structures.

In sum, to achieve more substantive forms of involvement, affirmative effort and periodic reviews are required. For example, the creation of intentional relationships with colleagues serving typically minoritized populations can help ameliorate physical and organizational separation; selection processes with structured and strategic participation might yield more diverse staffs, student organizations, and physical environments; and occasional audits and reviews of practices, policies, and spaces often reveal unintentional barriers that sometimes prevent organizations from achieving involvement goals.

Community. To achieve the optimal level of Strange and Banning's model, a strong form of campus community, they suggest that all members should have "opportunities to engage in and shape over time a distinct history, tradition, and culture". Although community-building may be the penultimate purpose for a college union organization, Strange and Banning's research suggests that Wisconsin Union staff should satisfy the safety, inclusion, and involvement recommendations prior or simultaneous to addressing the community recommendations. Nevertheless, the research team's recommendations were aimed at ensuring that everyone in the University of Wisconsin Union – Madison community is able to express and experience commitment to community, a sense of personal empowerment and agency, and feelings of mattering within and to the community itself. Thus, the central themes of the team's community recommendations are collaboration and outreach.

First, we recommended that the Wisconsin Union administration assemble a high-level and highly visible, campus-involved but Union-led, committee to develop recommendations for improving community-building within the Union for all members of the university family. We suggested that the committee utilize the Union's well-written framing documents, and couple them with the university's clear and compelling commitments to achieving a diverse community.

Second, we recommended that the Union administration work intentionally and strategically with colleagues in the adjacent Red Gym to conceptualize the Memorial Union and the Red Gym as a neighborhood that defines, experiments with, and exhibits the most vital and diverse forms of campus community. We offered as a collaborative question "how might your work be different if you saw yourselves as two halves of a collective, symbiotic, and generative whole?"

Finally, we encouraged Union staff and Wisconsin Union Directorate students to think about outreach programming and building events as a means to a stronger and more inclusive form of campus community, by centering them within the Union's mission, assertively advertising and resourcing them to achieve outcomes, and integrating them with other campus entities that share a commitment to community-building. For example, might a Union Theater themed lecture series be launched about what constitutes community? Could a faculty/staff book club delve deeply into themes of community and the gaps that exist at the university? Would it make sense for a Terrace music series or Wheelhouse Studio art class to feature artists and teachers who epitomize community?

In sum, although virtually all college union organizations embrace community-building as their fundamental purposes, most may need to start with efforts that preceded community in Strange and Banning's model. Union organizations, however, can visibly and actively lead

community building efforts with community partners strategically involved; model community building by inviting others participation in the union organization's efforts and evaluation; and teach community by using its considerable programmatic and physical assets to more deeply examine what it means to live in community.

Post-Script

It is unlikely that few if any college or university in the nation disavows a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, or a strong sense of community. Given this nation's history of injustices, our obligations to these values, and how recent circumstances have again revealed how far we must go to achieve more equitable and inclusive campus environments, this study illustrates how any institution can be as courageous as the University of Wisconsin, and a possible methodology for analysis and reflection. The use of Strange and Banning's model is but one way to identify areas for improvement that are orderly, actionable, and important. To encourage other practitioners and researchers to use this model, or others, to examine the messages sent by the built environment, we offer the following lessons learned.

Clarify the purpose of the assessment and ensure key stakeholders are on board. As we embarked on our work, it was imperative the research team clarified its scope, selected a framework to inform methodology, and maintained a sharp focus on the Wisconsin Union as a case. In doing so, we were able to identify short-term and long-term recommendations to provide to the Union leadership without getting bogged down by the enormity of the work to be done. Furthermore, the research team's work was made infinitely easier because the Union leadership supported an honest assessment. The Union administration provided helped us gather documents, set up interviews with students, staff, and community members, and gave researchers freedom to

conduct intercept interviews. That freedom ensured we came away with high quality data from which to draw recommendations.

Make a robust plan for analysis. In addition to planning for the assessment, we recommend ensuring there is adequate time for, and multiple perspectives represented in, the analysis. Our team, which included representation from higher education administrators, architects, and faculty from higher education and architecture programs, brought different perspectives to the analysis. These vantagepoints were elicited during informal conversations, individual synopses, and resulting negotiations as we applied our framework to develop final recommendations. Some members of the research team focused on environmental factors, whereas others focused on the messages communicated by organizational dimensions. These differing perspectives helped us develop multifaceted solutions.

Consider bringing in outside perspectives. Although the assessment was supported by the Wisconsin Union administration, having a team from outside the university collect and analyze data added a level of legitimacy, transparency, and confidentiality to the process. After being assured their comments would not be attributable to them, students, staff, and community members shared perspectives freely with the research team. Their candor led to robust data from which we drew recommendations. The Wisconsin Union leadership helped us to put these recommendations into context, but otherwise let the recommendations stand. They shared our final report widely and made plans to enact them.

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