

The Center for Black Excellence and Culture: New UW-Madison Chancellor Mnookin visits The Center site

Posted on Thursday, Aug 18, 2022

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Chancellor Mnookin calls The Center a “real opportunity” for UW to advance the Wisconsin Idea through research and educational collaboration

Madison, Wis. - August 18, 2022 - In a demonstration of priorities during her first week on the job, University of Wisconsin-Madison Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin joined The Center for Black Excellence and Culture founder and CEO Dr. Alex Gee last week for a tour of the forthcoming site and to discuss rich opportunities for future collaborations with the university.

The visit underscored the role The Center will play as a unique cultural gathering space, spurring tangible impacts across the community from Black youth leadership development to wellness to entrepreneurial opportunities and more.

The project - which has \$30M in private/public contributions and expected New Market Tax Credits - has quickly amassed support from organizations and individuals spanning nearly every sector, including business, government, education, health care and finance. Last week, The Center received a \$250,000 matching grant from The Green Bay Packers Foundation - the franchise's first-ever grant to a Dane County effort.

UW-Madison News: [One Week in, Mnookin and community partners discuss improving educational access, reducing racial disparities](#)

By: Doug Erickson

August 12, 2022

Key Excerpts:

- It's mostly underutilized land today, but within a couple of years, the site on Madison's south side is expected to be home to The Center for Black Excellence and Culture — a three-story, 65,000-square-foot space touted as unlike anything else in the country.
- “We want it to be a hub for folks who strive for Black excellence to meet each other,” said the Rev. Alex Gee, the center's founder and CEO, as he described the project and showed the site to UW-Madison Chancellor Jennifer L. Mnookin on Thursday, Aug. 11, 2022.
- The stop was one of three that afternoon as Mnookin, the university's 30th leader, continued meeting and learning from people in her new city and state on her seventh day on the job.
- As he shared his vision for the new culture center, Gee emphasized his desire to collaborate with the university on research that would be based at the center and that would respect and benefit the people who take part.
- Mnookin called it a powerful, important vision. “This is a real opportunity for us,” she told Gee. “It's not a potential gift we're giving you. It's an opportunity for us to find some new lanes to do really interesting, important, engaged research that can help produce knowledge — that *is* the Wisconsin Idea.”

[Read the full piece here.](#)

About The Center for Black Excellence and Culture:

The Center for Black Excellence and Culture (The Center) will answer the decades-long absence of cultural space to celebrate and advance Dane County's Black community. Located on six acres within the heart of a historically Black neighborhood, The Center will be a physical place where Dane County's Black residents and others throughout the community can gather to plan for and celebrate current and future growth and advancement.

Specifically, The Center will: Celebrate and promote Black excellence; Pay tribute to Black history; Nurture and develop Black business and community leaders; Attract, connect and retain Black talent; and provide the space for conversation, connection and growth. For more information about The Center, visit <https://www.theblackcenter.org/>. Organizations and individuals can give to The Center at <https://www.theblackcenter.org/donate>.