



Research

OVCRGE Equity and Diversity Committee

Wisconsin National Primate Research Center

May 3, 2022

The Wisconsin National Primate Research Center (WNPRC: <https://primate.wisc.edu>) is one of seven federally support National Primate Research Centers and the only one in the Midwest. Thousands of scientists – not only on the UW-Madison campus, but also throughout the nation and the world – have conducted research in primate biology with relevance to human and animal health through the Center since its establishment in 1961. Based in the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education (OVCRGE), the Center has strong, long-established research and teaching links to the UW School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH), College of Letters and Science (L&S), College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS), and School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM). The fundamental mission of the WNPRC is to increase understanding of basic primate biology and to improve human health and quality of life by discovering treatments, preventions, and cures for human disease; generating new knowledge regarding primate biology, from the molecular and whole animal levels to the understanding of primate social behavior; facilitating research progress by providing intellectual and technical expertise, resources, and training to scientists worldwide; and disseminating information about the Center to the research community and the public.

The WNPRC continues to support the University's efforts in creating a welcoming and inclusive community and is committed to diversity as an end in itself, as well as a valuable means for eliminating health disparities through research and training the next generation of scientists. While the Center is not a degree-granting entity within the University, all Core and Affiliate Principal Investigators at the WNPRC play a vital role in the training of high caliber graduate and undergraduate students, as well as postdoctoral fellows, in research and scholarship in the key scientific areas studied at the Center. These areas include but are not limited to Neuroscience, Reproductive and Regenerative Medicine, Energy Metabolism and Chronic Disease, and Global Infectious Disease. Training at the WNPRC has demonstrably prepared students for sustained post-graduate education and employment. Trainees from the United States and US territories are joined by a diverse group of peers from other countries, including those from Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, Grenada, India, The Netherlands, Russia, Scotland, South Korea, and Taiwan.

To encourage public support of research, the WNPRC has a strong community engagement program to educate the public about the importance of the Center's research and the link between nonhuman primate research and improvements in human health. From 2017 through early March 2020, the Public Information and Outreach (PIO) Unit served 202 groups and festivals throughout Wisconsin, as well as 18,394 individuals, with in-person outreach events. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, outreach events became virtual, and thousands of people attended online through 2021. To help reach underrepresented areas of Wisconsin, the PIO unit developed a new partnership with the Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers (WSST) to raise awareness and support for biomedical research. Educators were surveyed regarding their interest in teaching about biomedical research using resources on the WNPRC website. Based on those responses, the PIO Unit created a new WNPRC outreach page with K – 12 activities for home and classroom, including lesson plans, videos, and the new Callicam website (where the public can watch live footage of some of the Center's marmosets). In the future, the PIO Unit plans to produce and disseminate a WNPRC video "tour" of the Center's scientific areas and service units to continue this crucial public education, as well as to provide students throughout Wisconsin with career path information on the variety of positions involved in biomedical research. Through the continuing the collaboration with the WSST, the PIO Unit will be able to reach a diverse audience across the state.

In addition to ongoing efforts, there is enthusiasm in creating a WNPRC Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee to help expand awareness and understanding of DEI issues, and to foster a welcoming environment throughout the Center. The WNPRC recognizes the importance of engaging in DEI efforts to continue to enrich the WNPRC and, therefore, the larger University community with contributions from a growing array of identities, cultures, and other equally essential representations of diversity.