

Message from the Director

Nearly two years ago a small group of UW-Madison scholars, students, campus leaders and philanthropists came together to consider the inequities that face women around the world and in our own state of Wisconsin. We discussed poverty, violence, racial injustice, barriers to education, and inadequate access to family planning and health care across the life span. Perhaps most importantly, we identified underrepresentation of women in leadership as a critical issue that compromises the ability of our social institutions to make change and serve everyone. Surrounded by the unique strengths and assets of UW-Madison, we realized that we had a responsibility to address these challenges for women and for everyone.

Soon after, the university-wide 4W effort was born. Convened for all of campus by the School of Human Ecology, the Global Health Institute, and the Department of Gender and Women's Studies, the 4W Initiative is one of Chancellor Blank's campus priorities. As I reflect on this journey to date, I feel deeply grateful for the joys and challenges of this shared work.



Lori DiPrete Brown, 4W Initiative Director

The 4W mission is deceptively simple. We are working to make life better for women and, in so doing, make the world better for all. This requires the ability to address complex problems across disciplines. The 4W Directors Circle includes over 20 leaders from a broad array of schools and colleges. We are increasing access to health care, working to end human trafficking, supporting micro-enterprise efforts, working to empower women farmers, fostering equality in relationship and financial skills, and more. Our work, whether in Ecuador, Mexico, Kenya, Spain, Ghana or Wisconsin, is making life better for women in measurable ways, modeling new ways to collaborate across disciplines, and preparing students for leadership.

I am so grateful for the support we are receiving for our efforts. Approximately 3.9 million dollars in gifts and grants have been raised for 4W activities to date. UW-Madison was recently awarded a UNESCO Chair on Gender and Wellbeing and a Culture of Peace at UW-Madison. The UNESCO Programme connects UW-Madison to over 200 universities around the world, and enables the UW-Madison to play a role as a leading voice in relation to gender health and wellbeing. We will do this through an Annual Summit, as well as smaller meetings, which convene global experts, advocates and practitioners around critical issues.

The 4W Initiative is founded on the belief that, as a leading institution of higher education, UW-Madison can, should, and must make life better for women and make the world better for all. I hope you will join us on this journey!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori DiPrete Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lori DiPrete Brown
Director, 4W Initiative