



August 19, 2016

Dear UW-Madison Finance and Administration Staff,

I wanted to send a quick note to say hello at the end of my first week on campus as vice chancellor for finance and administration. I am proud and excited to be joining UW-Madison, and I greatly appreciate the opportunity Chancellor Blank has given me to be part of your team.

I can already see that this is a special community. To a person, the folks I've met so far are smart, community-minded, and mission-driven. And your commitment to the public elements of our university's mission – inclusion, diversity and shared governance to name but several examples – is both obvious and exemplary.

You all know this, but it bears mentioning here: the hard work and committed service of all the staff and units of the VCFA organization are instrumental in making UW-Madison one of the world's great universities. Our faculty, students, staff colleagues and visitors to the campus count on you every day, and I will, too.

I want to offer a special word of thanks to Mike Lehman and the VCFA office staff for their excellent management during the recent interim period. The university has been in good hands, and I will strive to maintain and build on both Mike's and Darrell Bazzell's responsible leadership and extensive contributions to this campus.

To that end, I've started by doing the wisest thing I can think of: listening. I was fortunate to get to chair the first session of the 2016-17 University Staff Congress on my first day on campus. This was a fantastic first experience in shared governance at UW-Madison, one I will work to build on in future meetings. I will continue to seek out other opportunities to meet you, listen, and learn all I can as the semester gets underway.

A public university like UW-Madison has a special responsibility to enhance inclusion, diversity, and community engagement in all that we do, whether that be through world-class teaching, innovative research, or administrative support of all kinds for our students, staff, and faculty. I look forward to learning more about the VCFA Engagement, Inclusion, and Diversity (EID) initiative and discussing what I can do to help us make progress together on these critical issues.

I also have heard a lot about the Wisconsin Idea – the idea that higher education should influence people's lives beyond the classroom and enrich the quality of life in Wisconsin and beyond. I am excited about working with all of you in pursuit of this guiding principle.

I look forward to meeting more of you in person as opportunities present themselves. Please don't hesitate to stop me and say hello if you see me out and about on campus (or off!), or send me an email if you have thoughts, questions, or ideas at vcfa@vc.wisc.edu.

On Wisconsin!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Laurent Heller", enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Laurent Heller
Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration