



Esteemed Alders,

The Multicultural Affairs Committee MAC and the Women's Initiative Committee WIC asks for your support to transition out of City Committee status. As employee groups for the City of Madison we understand the need for a committee status when the groups originated and were first established. We are thankful for the organizing work and labor our predecessors gave to create these spaces. We recognize we stand on the shoulder of giants.

However, as we continue the path of ensuring underrepresented groups have a voice, we have come to understand and agree that a committee status constrains our ability to focus our efforts on sharing resources and building connections with fellow employees of marginalized backgrounds due to:

- Quorum/walking quorum
- Staff labor under "Quasi Committee rules" as it is a disadvantage to those with little or no knowledge of Robert's rules.
- Difficulty in increasing membership due to rules and policies of membership structure.
- The power to make decisions are held by only a few people.
  - Decisions may be guided by personal views and feelings by those who have the power.
  - Decisions made by a few can sometimes create feeling of unheard and unappreciated by the rest of the members. This can make members leave the group.
  - Decisions can take a long time. If an issue must be address by subcommittee, then take back to regular committee.
  - Diverse ideas and views could be left out.

Reasons fueling the choice to transform from a committee to an affinity group:

- Decisions can be made much more efficiently.
- Time could be saved by less formal processes for discussion, feedback, and/or voting.
- More opportunities for everyone to be heard and share points of views.
- Group structure – the purpose of the group, vision, and mission, can be adjusted to fit new needs of employees or community, with little or no difficulty.
- Membership – we can increase employee participation, with more relaxed expectations and no quorum.
- Easier to collaborate with other employee resource group to eliminate silos.

The City of Madison Human Resources has created a set of guidelines for City Affinity groups and Employee Resource Groups <https://www.cityofmadison.com/employeenet/toolkit/affinity-groups>

*Affinity groups are voluntary, employee-led groups that are organized around social identities, marginalized groups, and life experiences. The City of Madison supports our employees in participating in Affinity Groups that are in alignment with our city's vision and values. This document provides structure and guidance for affinity groups to be equitable and successful. It includes information about who can participate, time commitments, creating a new affinity group, supervisor approval, and funding support.*

MAC and WIC look forward to continuing to serve our fellow employees and operate in closer alignment to the mission and culture of the City of Madison. We ask for your support in helping us stay engaged and continue to create spaces where everyone feels seen and heard.

Cordially,

Emily Jamieson, Nancy Saiz and Rommel Tijerino.  
MAC Co-Chairs

Mary Richards  
WIC-Chair

Hannah Mohelnitzky  
WIC-Vice Chair

Sarah Russell  
WIC Communications Chair

Jojo O'Brien  
WIC Treasurer