

AY 25-26



Center for Campus History
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Year In Review



campushistory.wisc.edu

centerforcampushistory@wisc.edu

About Us

The Center for Campus History (CCH) officially opened on July 1, 2023, but it grew directly out of four years of work as the Public History Project, a limited-term initiative commissioned by Chancellor Emerita Rebecca M. Blank. The Project's mission was to uncover and give voice to the many groups across the university's history who experienced and challenged discrimination and exclusion on campus.



Since becoming a permanent center, the CCH has sought to continue and grow that mission, working to expand and enrich UW–Madison's historical narrative by centering the voices, experiences, and struggles of marginalized groups.

That work has taken many forms over the last few years, from new archival research to classroom visits. We published new pieces of student and staff research, collaborated with other campus groups on public-facing projects, developed new curricular materials, and much more. Consider this **Year in Review** a sampling of what we've been up to.

To learn more about the Public History Project and its continuation as the Rebecca M. Blank Center for Campus History, visit our website.

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Research and Writing

The CCH staff and students spent the 2025-2026 year combing through collections in the UW Archives in search of stories that enrich our campus narrative. That research led to key articles published in our online publication *Siftings*. This year we published [“Badgers Go Green: A Story Of Environmental Practices and Ecological Culture at UW–Madison”](#) by Nicolás Felipe Rueda Rey which documented the history of environmentalism on campus in the 60s and 70s; [“Wiscetiquette: A Women’s Guide to UW–Madison”](#) by Arielle Raymos which explored the student-created handbook on navigating life as a woman at UW under strict social codes; and [“The UW International Club: Storying Assimilation and Belonging of International Students in the 1900s”](#) which discussed the complex experiences of international students within one of the university’s oldest student organizations.

Our archival research also supported another successful season of the *Reorientation* podcast, various social media campaigns, and exciting upcoming zines and walking tour projects.

To catch up on *Siftings* research you might have missed, visit the [Research](#) section of our website.

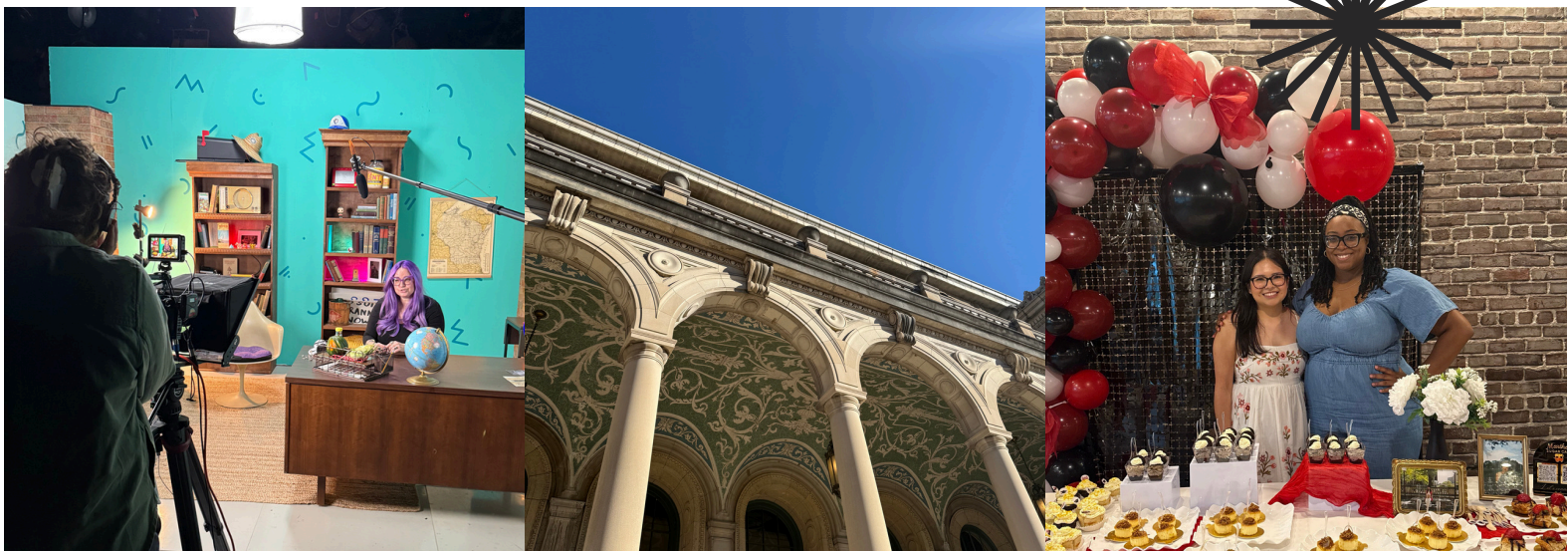


Collaboration

The CCH was happy to continue collaborating with campus organizations and communities on projects and programs this academic year.

This past year, the CCH continued its exciting partnership with the Chicanx/e & Latinx/e Studies Program (CLS) in preparation for its 50th anniversary. CCH Assistant Director Taylor L. Bailey and student researcher Karla Martinez continued their work from last year to curate an exhibition on the history and impact of this storied program. Their work highlights the robust CLS collection housed at the UW Archives alongside the experiences of CLS community members captured through oral history interviews. Physical panels, along with a digital companion, will be on display during the two-day symposium titled *Desde 1976: Education, Culture, and Community honoring the legacy of CLS at UW–Madison*. More information on the 50th anniversary of CLS and registration for the symposium can be found [here](#). We are also excited to collaborate with Memorial Union as they gear up for their 100th anniversary celebrations in 2028.

CCH Director Kacie Lucchini Butcher and CCH Assistant Director Taylor L. Bailey continued their collaboration with PBS Wisconsin on the *[The Look Back](#)* – an original series made young learners that teaches Wisconsin's history through artifacts.



Events and Outreach

Collaborating with departments, offices, and units across campus has always been at the heart of the CCH's work. From guest lectures to community events, we've had a busy year of making the history of the university available, accessible, and useful to the campus community.

In AY 25-26, the Center visited:

41 classes

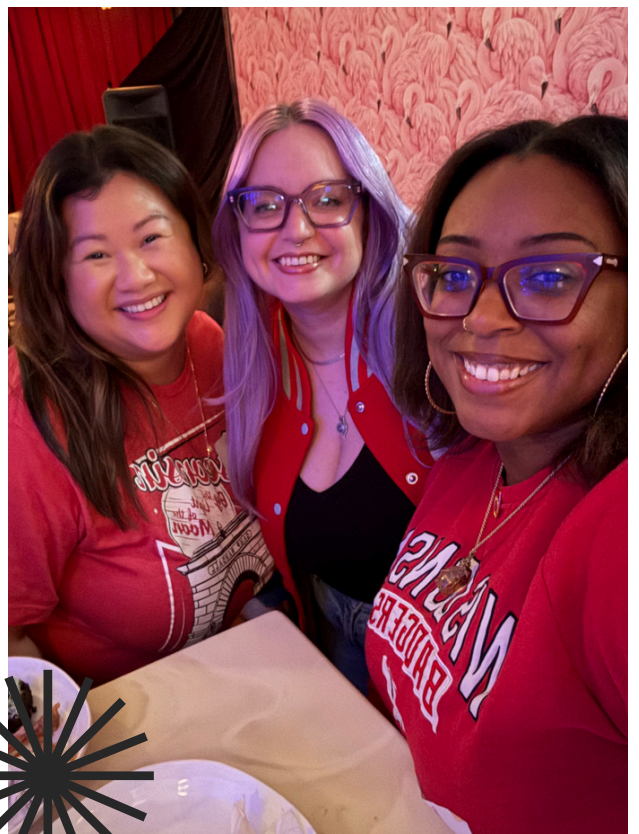
1,300 students

11 depts./units

870 faculty/staff

In the fall semester, the Center was proud to continue our multi-year partnership with the Alumni Association on Multicultural Homecoming. We were also excited to curate special lecture events for the Havens Wright Center for Social Justice, UHS Mental Health Services, and visiting students and scholars from other universities.

Beyond campus, CCH staff engaged with other scholars and public historians to inform our work. Both the Center's Director and Assistant Director are proud to serve on committees for the National Council on Public History (NCPH).



Curricular Resources

There were several exciting curricular developments this year at the CCH, but arguably our biggest accomplishment was creating a course. Our curricular program manager, Dan Berman, created and taught Educational Policy Studies 163: Histories of Discrimination and Resistance at UW–Madison: Higher Education and Society since 1848. The course uses CCH research to contextualize how UW fits within broader histories of discrimination and resistance in higher education and the US. The course satisfies Communications B and Ethnic Studies requirements and is already fully enrolled for the fall semester.

Another major project we completed was designing walking tours about campus history. Our first walking tour is debuting in September and considers how UW history relates to key moments in American history. Our second walking tour will focus on the history of student protests and will come out during the Fall semester. We will initially offer walking tours to individual classes, discussion sections, and academic units, but plan to expand these tours to the broader public. There will also be a self-guided option for all tours that will have recorded audio at each stop, teaching material, photos, videos, and links to additional resources.

This coming year, we hope to continue larger projects with expanded outreach to students, educators, and the broader community. Be on the lookout for new teaching guides for blog posts, the third season of *Reorientation*, and a companion teaching guide for the Go Big Read Book *Custodians of Wonder*.

To access all of the Center's curricular materials, visit the [Education](#) section of our website.



Reorientation Podcast

After a successful launch in 2024, the Center continued production of *Reorientation*, an original narrative podcast that dives deep into UW–Madison’s history using archival research and interviews with experts and scholars.

Season 1 unpacked the history of campus policing from the early days of campus watchmen to the professionalized, fully deputized police force that UW–Madison employs today. Season 2 – available now – explored the fraught history of student housing in Madison. Scholars and campus experts guided listeners through the university’s housing past, from decades of housing discrimination to the development of alternative living options, and up to contemporary issues like housing insecurity and skyrocketing costs.

The first two seasons of *Reorientation* received positive feedback from faculty, students and community members. The podcast has reached 3,000 listeners to date. With the success of the first two seasons, Season 3 is set to be released this fall 2026 where we’ll explore the history of student protest at UW.

To listen to the *Reorientation* podcast, you can visit the [Podcast](#) section of our website or stream it wherever you listen to podcasts.



Looking Ahead

One of the many challenges we faced this past academic year was budget cuts. Since understanding our new budget reality, we've taken time to rethink our work in collaboration with student researchers, faculty, and community partners. Budgetary realities will force the Center to adapt but we remain excited about our important work, and we are committed to the work of historical reckoning on campus. We hope that you will join us.

It has been a challenging year – on campus, in Wisconsin, in our nation, and across the globe. Even as historians, we struggle to make sense of this moment. While history can be instructive, it cannot always provide the answers to every problem. While history can be a comfort, showing us that our struggles are not wholly unique, it can also be painful to see fights for justice that have been waged for years falter and to see hard won gains be stripped back so cavalierly. In the face of these heartbreaks, we have often revisited Mariam Kaba's words: "Let this radicalize you rather than lead you to despair."

Despair won't save us. Despair won't change our world. But we can. *Together*. The work we do on campus can inspire people to act. It can inspire people to hope. The Center remains committed to using history as a tool that can provoke new ideas, create empathy, energize action, and inspire us to work together to form stronger, safer, kinder communities that recognize the inherent human dignity of all people.

Contact Us

Engaging with communities, both at UW–Madison and beyond, is the core of the Center for Campus History's work. We're always looking to hear from you, whether it's a history question, an invitation to present or an idea for collaboration. You can contact the Center on our website, campushistory.wisc.edu, or at centerforcampushistory@wisc.edu.

Don't forget to follow us on Instagram ([@UWCampusHistory](https://www.instagram.com/UWCampusHistory)) and if you want updates straight to your inbox, subscribe to our [monthly newsletter](#).