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DATE: 8/28/2023

Dear Colleagues,

I'm stepping down as CDHA director this summer, after submitting a successful center renewal grant in 2019 and serving for [five years](#). [Michal Engelman](#), Professor of Sociology and PI for the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study and T32 NIA Training Grant, will be the fifth CDHA Director. The last five years have been full of challenges, including the COVID shutdown and a near-complete turnover of SSRS staff. It has also been a time of major changes and opportunities in the Center. We've successfully increased our NIH-funded budget by ~50%; we've instituted a new Scholar-in-Residence [Program](#) for underrepresented researchers; we've spearheaded an initiative to [take advantage](#) of NIH support to increase the diversity of our research group at UW; and we've expanded project and grant application support to our affiliates.

With lots of help from SSRS staff, especially Mary Lynn Dombrowski, we've hosted three UW Hilldale Lectures (with another last one planned in [October](#)) and started a national [conference series](#) for Social Genomics research, in addition to regular [seminars and workshops](#). With [Hector Arolas](#) and [Anita Mukherjee](#), I'll be co-hosting a weekly series, Frontiers in Mortality, Risk, and Insurance ([FMRI](#)) this fall, which I hope you can join, in addition to continuing our [Social Genomics](#) group.

I'd like to thank many who have contributed to the success of the center over the last five years: Associate Dean Greg Downey has led the L&S support for the center, the Director of the La Follette School, Susan Yackee, has enthusiastically supported my role as director and absorbed its associated costs to the School; Lonnie Berger, Stephanie Robert and Carol Ryff have provided exceptionally helpful advice and support. I'm pleased to leave the Center in a very strong position, you all are doing path-breaking work and have been very successful competing for grants, producing high impact publications, and undertaking extraordinary mentoring and service. [SSRS](#) is also poised to provide exceptional support for your work and expand the reach of health and aging research at UW.

I anticipate that the next CDHA renewal application will be due summer 2024, so I'm glad Michal will have time to put together a great application with her vision and your help.

On Wisconsin!

Jason