ANNOUNCER: This is Bascom Beat. A show dedicated to helping you navigate student life at UW. Featuring new guests from campus each week. Together, WSUM and the Division of Student Life are answering your questions. Want to reach out to us? Use the #BascomBeat on Twitter, and we might just answer your question on the show. And now here's Bascom Beat.

This show was recorded on Monday, September 24.

ALEESA: All right, you're tuned in to 91.7 WSUM FM Madison. This is Bascom Beat. We have so many people in the studio. Everyone say hi.

>> How's it going?
>> Hello.
>> Hello.
>> Hi.

ALEESA: Awesome. So we have the usual. My name's Aleesa.
ERIC: My name is Erica.
YOGEV: I'm Yogev.
ARGYLE: This is Argyle.
CHARLIE: I'm Charlie.

ALEESA: Awesome. And Charlie is our guest. He's going to be here for the first half of the show. We have another guest for the second half of the show. And we're going to start by talking about the Big 10 Voting Challenge voting, civic engagement, and what it
means to be a student voter on this campus.

If you have any questions throughout the show, you can tweet at us using the #BascomBeat, and we'll try and answer them on the next show. And any other questions, comments, concerns that you may have. We'll have our weekly calendar later, and the second half of the show will be with the Director of the Multicultural Student Center, Gabe Javier.

So a lot to look forward to, but right now we're going to start with the Big 10 Voting Challenge. So Charlie, if you want to introduce yourself and kind of your role, who you are.

CHARLIE: Yeah, sure thing. So my name is Charlie. I am a Vote Everywhere Ambassador with the Morgridge Center for Public Service as well as the Andrew Goodman Foundation. So it is my job on campus to make sure that all of you go out and vote on November 6, and also to make sure that we register as many people on campus as we can.

ALEESA: That's awesome. And you're a student?

CHARLIE: I am, yeah. So I'm a senior, and I'm studying Comm Arts and Econ. So that's my discussion section intro for the day.

ALEESA: Awesome.

ERICA: So why -- why is it important that we vote everywhere, then? Why is it such a big deal?

CHARLIE: So there are two things, and I think one of the
things we're going to bring up later is like this idea of social justice in that your need to vote and your ability to kind of enact civic duty is something that not everybody gets. And also the fact that civic engagement is just, at a core level, important to the way our democracy functions.

So particularly on campus, one of the big reasons that we have the Big 10 Voting Challenge is because of a concern about midterm turnout levels for like college students. So if you've done any sort of like civic engagement you know that like it's kind of classically called like midterm like is voter poison, kind of. So everyone comes out and votes in like the Presidential elections, but not too many people actually come out and vote in the midterms, which is something we're trying to change, and which is something that we're seeing is changing.

ERICA: Mm-hmm. So then why do you think there tends to be a low voter turnout of the young adult population?

CHARLIE: You know, I think for a lot of people, it's kind of standard for everyone amongst most age groups. But I think for younger people in particular, everyone gets very kind of caught up in like the fervor of a Presidential election, where it's kind of harder to access maybe your -- particularly like local reps, you know. They don't have as much money to advertise. And on campus, I know, a lot of people are very caught up with their own like concerns.

I know I'm taking like 18 credits, and you know, it's quite
difficult to actually get out and get anything done when you are like concerned about midterms, not so much the midterm election.

ERICA: Mm-hmm.

ARGYLE: So the group you're working with, the Big 10 Voting Challenge, how -- what's kind of the things they're trying to do on campus to try to get, you know, either registration to be higher or voter turnout to be higher? How does that -- how does that show up on our campus?

CHARLIE: Yeah, so we've got like unprecedented funding to go out and do voter drives. So we're working with a whole bunch of people like ASM as well as like the League of Women Voters to make sure everyone on campus is as registered as they possibly can be.

We're also working with, like I said, the University and ASM to throw a whole bunch of events. This Tuesday -- I know we're coming out on the radio on Thursday. But we're having a whole bunch of big events. I know in October, we are also having a whole bunch of GOtv efforts, like art exhibits, movie filmings, movie screenings, and stuff like that just to make sure once everyone is registered, they also know like where they can go vote and stuff like that.

We also have, and two would things I really want to go over is two Web sites that everyone, I think, on campus should know about. And that's myvote.wi.gov. And if you're kind of looking for a resource that, you know, you're wondering like am I registered?
Where do I go and vote? And you can actually register there, too, up until October 17. That's going to be the place to go. It's myvote.wi.gov. And as well as for a lot of students on campus and in dorms, another great resource is vote.wisc.edu.

ERICA: I guess I have a question about partisanship. So is the goal of this voting challenge to vote in general or is there a political like partisan component to it? Because we do know that most college students kind of do lean left.

CHARLIE: Yeah, sure. So I -- the whole point -- so like at a core level, the Andrew Goodman Foundation Act Division -- or like our whole idea is like vote everywhere. Right. So I would be doing this if I lived in Mississippi on a predominantly conservative campus as much as I would in Madison, which it also leans left.

So I think that voter engagement and making sure that everyone votes is a civic responsibility that kind of goes far above partisan lines. So if you wanted to get active on campus, I would like welcome you too, regardless of your partisan ideals. You know, I certainly have strong of my own. But you know, I think it's important to make sure that we are going out and getting -- make sure, like everybody is voting, you know, across state lines and across campus political division.

ERICA: Mm-hmm. And then a lot of economists say that voting isn't really, you know, worthwhile. They say that there's a very low chance that you'll influence the result of a political election.
What do you think about this? Why is it so important that we should vote, anyway?

CHARLIE: Oh, so I would disagree. So as an econ major, I would have to disagree with the economists who would say that. So I'm from a Virginia originally -- or rather than Virginia. And we had an election last year or rather in 2016 that was literally decide by a -- two names dropped into a hat. Because our state legislature wasn't sure that it was going to be a democratic or a republican. It was literally down to, I think five votes. And when the election is so close that they can't call it, that they actually put two names written down on slips of paper into a hat. And that's how the leaning of our state legislature was decided.

I think a lot of these elections coming up are going to be extremely close. So whatever side you're on, you know, it's going to be important to make sure you're out here, like registered to vote and actually voting. I think it will come down to like hundreds, if not like tens of votes.

ERICA: Awesome.

ALEESA: So the Big 10 Voting Challenge. So is there like a prize for the winner?

CHARLIE: Yes.

ALEESA: And who has won in the past? Are we usually pretty good? Or where do we kind of stand as a school?

CHARLIE: So we could be doing better. And one of the nice
things about this challenge is that beating Michigan is literally our civic duty.

[LAUGHTER]

CHARLIE: Yeah, it's one of those nice things to do in football, but now it's actually your civic responsibility to come out and rep for the school. Because we do have two trophies. The first is who and what campus -- Big 10 campus -- gets the most voters registered. And then to kind of adjust for population, there is also a trophy for who can actually come out and improve the most since the 2014 elections.

ARGYLE: Do we know how we're doing in either category, or is that not determined until the end?

CHARLIE: That's not determined until the end. However, what I will say is that across all campuses we have seen that primary voting during midterm elections, which is usually extraordinarily low, has matched or exceeded 2016 levels of primary voting which was for the presidential election. So we're really excited about these results.

ERICA: Do you think there's any reason why this has increased?

CHARLIE: I think people are more civically engaged than they ever have been before. And I think that, certainly, it is a response to the 2016 elections, but I think, again, that crosses partisan lines. I think people are paying more attention to politics than they ever
have been before, and I think that's a great thing more recent.

ERICA: Well then, let's take a step back. How would you define civic engagement? What exactly it is, and how you be civically engaged?

CHARLIE: So I would define civic engagement as anything you do in the public sphere, to whip out some comm arts terms. As anything you do in the public sphere that is an attempt to better or improve the situation of those around you. So that's more of a personal definition. It might not get you quiz points on any, again, comm arts quizzes.

But for me, civic engagement is kind of making sure I am in the public sphere and doing my best to make sure the lives around me are better. So that kind of influences your voting record.

So I vote the way I think is going to improve the nation the most. And also, you know, in your local community. So actually coming out and doing voter registration and stuff like that locally and making sure that the people in your town, in your city are feeling as good as they can feel.

ALEESA: Yeah, I think civic engagement can also be, you know, just like being informed on what you're voting on. I think that's another big part is not only just to have people vote, but also know who they're voting for, why they're voting for them, what issues they stand on.

And just going a little deeper. You don't have to know all the
knowledge in the world about this candidate, but maybe some issues that are really important you to personally, you can look at where they stand. You know, there's a lot of divisive issues within politics.

And people -- I mean, I think people -- it's good to know where who you're voting for stands. Because it is, you know, it is easy in some of these elections to go like D,D,D or R,R,R. You know, they have a letter next to their name. Let's vote for them.

But I think it is important to, you know, look at the big picture of who you're voting for, maybe who they're running with, too. And I think that can be a part of civic engagement, as well, is doing that and then telling your friends. Like hey, guess what I learned about this candidate. Are you going it vote for them? Or what do you think?

CHARLIE: Yeah, absolutely. And if you're looking for a resource to kind of delineate what the candidates are and what they stand for, myvote.wi.gov also has a list of the candidates who are up for election, and also their kind of political platform. So that's a really nice resource for students to use.

ALEEsa: Cool. And then I guess this may seem obvious to some, but when is election day?

CHARLIE: November 6. I'm going to say it again. November 6 is election day. Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and if you'd like to check my facts on that, you can head over to vote.wisc.edu or my vote.wi.gov. I'll going to plug those as
many times as I can before we leave.

ARGYLE: I know you've tried to encourage people to get registered early to, you know, if they're not going to be able to vote, vote absentee. But like how hard is it to get registered the day of? What's that going to be like for a student who hasn't, you know, been able to work kind of ahead?

CHARLIE: Right. Yeah, so I kind of approached the same problem with the primaries wherein I didn't have a lot of time because we were all doing moveout and stuff like that. And I found it difficult. I mean, I ended up still voting in the primaries, but I found it quite difficult to actually go out and register to vote at the same time as those voting because that means you're standing in two lines.

So while I would encourage, even if you haven't registered to vote up until then, you're still going to want to go and do it. But it'll cut like a magnemonious amount of time off of your visit to the polls if you're preregistered, and you can just skip that second line which, in my experience, is usually like 15-20 people, and sometimes like 3-4 reps. But it does take an extra like a little bit of time.

ARGYLE: Did you say October 17 was the date to get that done by? Or is there -- did I get that deadline right?

CHARLIE: Yeah, so early voting registration for early voting ends on October 17.

ARGYLE: Okay.
CHARLIE: So yeah, make you go ahead and get out and do that before, if you do plan on early voting.

ARGYLE: And just regular registration, is there a deadline where they should do that before the day of the polls? Or is that not -- is there not an affiliate deadline with regular voting?

CHARLIE: Yeah, so with regular voting there is no deadline. You can come up to the polls, and they can register you there. But like you said, it's always a good -- in fact, great idea to actually get registered beforehand to avoid that wait in the line.

ARGYLE: Okay, thanks.

ALEESA: And then, I think some people that are usually really concerned about voting is people who are out of state. And also they're also kind of like what's the importance of me voting if I don't -- if I'm just here for four years? Or you know, what is the importance for an out-of-state student to vote in Wisconsin? And also what do they need to do to be able to vote?

CHARLIE: So I'm an out-of-state student in Wisconsin. And I think it's incredibly important to vote here because this will be an incredibly, incredibly important election year. The midterms for, you know, we've got the gubernatorial vote. We've got the senatorial vote. We've got a Congressional vote, as well. So there are a whole -- as well as like a litany of like local elections. So this is going to be one of the most important government elections in Wisconsin's history.
And so I think it is extremely important for out-of-state students to vote here because their vote will really, really make a difference in Wisconsin. And to touch on the point of what do you need, so it's a little bit different for out-of-students.

So you can't just roll up to the polls and like hand them your Virginia, say, driver's license. You will need to go to the student union at Union South to the Wiscard Office and pick up a voter ID. And it should be said, one thing we've come across is that this voter ID is not your registration.

So if you do have a register -- or like the voter ID, and you have not re-registered after having moving, changed your name, or voting for the first time, you will not be able to vote. So you need to make sure that you have that voter ID as well as registered, like proper registration to make sure you're voting on election day.

ALEESA: Awesome, yeah. I've definitely gone through that process and reregistered. I'm also out-of-state. It is a little, you know, you have to have certain things, but it's a painless process. And it makes everything quicker at the polls on November 6?

CHARLIE: November 6.

ALEESA: November 6, awesome.

Well, we're going to transition a little bit to talk more about -- which we kind of touched a little on civic engagement, civic responsibility, and social justice. If you're just tuning in, this is Bascom Beat. If you want to tweet at us, you can use the
#BascomBeat and tweet @WSUM, tweet at @Argyle or just simply compose a tweet.

We are just talking about the importance of voting. We have a midterm election coming up November 6, and we're going to keep going.

So let's see here. So what -- what resources are there on campus for students to learn about civic engagement?

CHARLIE: So the Morgridge Center is a huge one. So the Morgridge Center for Public Service is going to be kind of your go-to for learning about how you can get publicly engaged on campus, and how can you can, like, actually perform civic engagement.

So again, if you want, and particularly to learn more about like voting, it's going to be myvote.wi.gov or vote.wisc.edu. But we also really strongly encourage people to get involved on campus. And if you'd like to do that, we can actually have you email us at vote@morgridge.wisc.edu. That's vote@morgridge.wisc.edu. I tried to do my like best Blue Apron voice there.

But yeah. Contact us there. We are always looking for more volunteers make sure more people get engaged on campus, and also making sure that we, again, beat Michigan in voting.

ARGYLE: Then a tie-in, I think, to this conversation about civic engagement and a crossover into social justice, I mean, I think is an interesting thing to think about, and our next guest after this segment is going to talk a little bit about the Multicultural Student
Center and how social justice shows up on our campus particularly in terms of cultural centers that we're trying to bring forward.

But do you have any thoughts about how these two concepts of civic engagement and social justice tie in together and where they might overlap?

CHARLIE: Yeah, no, it's huge. I think particularly on a college campus, I think civic engagement ties into social justice. Because I think -- I know speaking as a student, I have a lot of privilege in my ability to come out and get registered to vote.

You know, there are a lot of people in the greater Madison, like, area who don't have the same kind of resources that the university provides for us to get registered and to go out and vote. So I definitely view it as my responsibility to get registered and vote, because I know that not everybody has an opportunity.

Another kind of way to touch on that point is the Andrew Goodman Foundation, which I also work for, was originally founded by the family of Andrew Goodman because he was killed during the Civil Rights Movement while he was registering voters in Mississippi.

So you know, all through the core of what we do is always this spirit of making sure that people are able to vote everywhere they choose, making sure people are able to vote regardless of their race, income, you know, you name it. And I think as college students, we have the responsibility and also privilege to get registered and vote.

YOGEV: Yeah, potentially, really cool that you mention that
about the different ways that we can help get more students the opportunity to vote. And I guess my question for you is, you know, you have the Dean of Students sitting right here. Is there anything that you think the administration could do better to get more students, especially those of marginalized communities or not privileged, to get them to be able to more easily vote or register to vote?

CHARLIE: Yeah, absolutely. So I think one thing that I think the university could do which would be extremely nice would be to make sure that voter ID machines would be in every polling place. That would be extremely great for maybe like communities who might find it difficult, particularly like disabled people who might find it difficult to make it all the way down to the Union South to the Voter ID Office. I think it'd also be great for pretty much every community on campus if we had more machines doing voter ID kind of everywhere around.

And additionally, you know, I've been loved seeing -- particularly working through the Morgridge Center, I love seeing the focus on diversity and the focus on marginalized communities in what we do with our outreach. So I would just really request that we keep focusing on this and making sure that we reach out, first and foremost, to the marginalized communities across campus when considering people who need to get registered to vote, etc. I mean, what would you say about that?
ARGYLE: I think the machines that you talked about, and if you remind me, are there two main polling locations on our campus? I'm trying to remember the number of different polling locations, because I think I remember we had a machine at each of them in the past.

CHARLIE: So I believe there are six this year. And let me actually go to this awesome Web site called vote.wisc.edu. And students can also find out on campus where they're going to vote. Also if you are off-campus, that other one that I mentioned, myvote.wi.edu -- or rather myvote.wi.gov will tell you, if you're off-campus, where you should be going to vote. So where do I vote for students. It's going to be -- for Adams, Bernard, Chadbourne, Waters, Slichter, or Tripp, Memorial Union.

Bradley, Kohl, Dejope, Humphrey, Jorns, Kronshage, Leopold, Phillips, or Sullivan, you're going to be at Frank Holt Center. And I think over the summer it was also Memorial Union.

If you live in Sellery or Witte, it's going to be Gordons, good old Gordons.

If you're living at Ogg or Smith, it's going to be the Doyle Administration Building, 545 West Dayton Street.

If you live in the Zoe Bayliss Coop, Merit, or Davis, you're going to be in Porchlight.

And if you live in Eagle Heights or University Houses you're going to be at the Eagle Heights Community Center.
And last but not least, if you are at the Harvey Street Apartments, your polling location is Hoyt School.

And our request would be that there is a voter ID machine at every single one of those locations.

ARGYLE: Well, we could take that back and take a look at that. I know that we had talked about trying to make those as accessible as possible. I don't know where we're at with that at this very moment. But you know, certainly we want to make it easy for people to vote.

CHARLIE: Yup.

ARGYLE: So I think that would be a shared value of ours, as well.

ALEESA: I know day of, my freshman year, they had them at Gordon. I remember that. And I think Union South, as well, was a polling place.

ARGYLE: Yeah.

ALEESA: I don't know, I guess that's maybe changed throughout the past couple years. So I'm not sure also how many -- recently is, because now I've lived off campus and have voted not on the, you know, campus grounds, but yeah.

CHARLIE: And you know, even outside of like polling days, it would also be great if we just had these across campus. So like we mentioned for, particularly for students with disabilities who might find it difficult to go out to Union South, it would awesome if we
could also have them maybe as a permanent installation in like 333 Campus Mall, for example, or somewhere else. And I know the Morgridge Center would be happy to lend a hand in terms of funding or training with that regard.

ERICA: I guess, I have a question just branching off of the whole social justice, civil engagement kind of thing. How essential is civic engagement in voting itself to democracy? And then how would you define democracy? Since we've spoken a lot about that, what would you -- what would you say is so important in that regard?

CHARLIE: Yeah, so in democracy, voting is the number one thing you can do. So our Constitution lists the -- you know, the House and the Senate and the first Article. And the reason being is because that's supposed to be the closest to the American people in terms of representation. So these midterm elections are extraordinarily important because your vote goes the farthest with these people.

And it's when you want to see change enacted, I think it's probably in addition to the activism, like the number one way you can actually see the change you want and will to actually come about. So your vote does mean something when, you know, when these races get super close. It is like decided by a couple hundred, a couple thousand votes.

And you know, these people are here to be your
representatives. And if you vote for them, they will represent the things you desire. And if you cast large -- you know, in large voter blocks, they will pick up your issues, which is the whole point of advocacy groups and things like that. So your vote really does make a difference, and it'll influence the way that our representatives want to change the nation.

ARGYLE: I appreciate that what you pulled out maybe earlier in the conversation about voting being a privilege, that not even everybody necessarily feels that they can equally take, you know, participation in. And so I think it's important to recognize that even if you're, you know, voting is not the way that you feel that you can be engaged, there's other ways to leverage your voice --

CHARLIE: Yeah.

ARGYLE: -- through, you know, being involved in campaigns, contributing, becoming informed I think as was mentioned earlier, and talking amongst your peer group, social media. There's just many ways to get out there and, you know, do petitioning and things like that to try to, you know, get your voice in.

And I think voting should be the thing that a lot of people would maybe look at first and foremost. But I know that that's not necessarily available to everybody in the same way. So I just want to lift that up as another way to be, you know, involved in social justice and civic engagement at the same time if you'd want to choose a different route. Or maybe do both.
CHARLIE: Yeah, no. I think for most things on campus for sure, I think there's a lot that will surpass voting in terms of what you can do. But I think that base building politics for changing society is certainly making sure to go out and like casting your vote.

ARGYLE: You bet.

ALEESA: I guess maybe we'll wrap on this question about, I think that civic engagement and social justice is something that most people encounter first on campus, and maybe have never talked about before. Don't really know what it means or what it looks like.

So what advice do you have for students who want to be engaged and don't know how, or maybe they're afraid to talk about it because they don't know the correct terminology or they don't want to offend anyone when they're talking about different civic issues. So how could someone go about that on how to have those -- how to engage?

CHARLIE: So I'm going to plug the Morgridge Center one more time. Because again, it's a really great resource for students to get involved. I know, if you are on, like, the Morgridge's Listserv, they will like blast your inbox with a whole bunch of different opportunities to get involved on campus. And it's really nice to be able to like wake up every day and have a new opportunity to get involved on campus.

And I think for students who might, you know, not know
exactly what they want to do or not quite know how to navigate the kind of intricacies of like civic engagement, the breadth of what you can do on campus, I think, is astounding to me and is definitely helpful in that regard. And I know that also the Morgridge Center would be more than happy to talk with them about what would suit them best and how to get engaged.

And also, if you, again, want to get in contact with us about civic engagement as it relates to voting, you can contact us at vote@morgridge.wisc.edu. That's vote@morgridge.wisc.edu.

ALEESA: Awesome. Does anyone else have any last things to add about that?

ERICA: They do not.

ALEESA: Okay. Awesome. Well thanks for being here, Charlie. This is Bascom Beat on WSUM 91.7. We will be right back with Gabe Javier of the Multicultural Student Center. And thanks so much for tuning in. If you want to tweet at us, use the #BascomBeat. We will be right back.

[MUSICAL TRANSITION]

ALEESA: You're tuned in to WSUM 91.7 FM Madison. This is Bascom Beat. We are back with another guest in the studio, but we're going to start with our calendar of events, things happening on campus this week.

We were just talking about voting, vote civic engagement, and speaking of that, today from 12:30-2:00, the Campus Election
Engagement Project will be registering voters at Gordons. They'll also be there next Thursday, as well.

And then Friday, September 28 is Sustain-A-Bash. That's going to be outside on Gordon where you can celebrate sustainability. There's going to be food, prizes, and a bunch of different sustainability and community organizations that will tell you how you can get involved with sustainability on campus. You can make your own milkshake by taking a ride on the blender bike, which sounds pretty fun.

ARGYLE: Hmm.

ALEESA: Yeah.

ARGYLE: The blender bike.

ALEESA: That'd be nice if they used like Babcock Ice Cream to make a blender. That would be good. Not sure though, have to check it out.

On -- this is kind of a fun one. So on Friday the 28th, also from 4:30-6:30, WUD Cuisine is having the first cooking workshop of the school year, and they're going to be making homemade pasta and pesto.

ARGYLE: Mmm.

ALEESA: So my friend is part of WUD Cuisine. I'm hoping she brings some home. If you want to be a part of that, you do have to preregister in advance. So make sure you do that. And on Tuesday, October 2, social justice speaker Sonia Nazario, she's an award
winning journalist and author of *Enrique's Journey*. She's going to be speaking -- oh, I didn't write where it is. She'll be -- do you remember?

GABE: The Pyle Center.

ALEESA: The Pyle Center. Awesome. From 7:00-8:30. And this is part of Latinx Heritage Month, which is September 15-October 15, so we're right in the middle of it right now. And there's a lot of events happening on campus in general through these four weeks, and we're going to have more on that in a bit.

And Wednesday, October 3, WUD Films is doing an advance screening. You get to see a movie before anyone else. *A Star Is Born*, directed by Bradley Cooper and starring Bradley Cooper and Lady Gaga. I heard it's supposed to be really good.

And then last but not least, on October 5, there's going to be a high ropes course that ALPs is going to be leading. It's a really good team building exercise. ALPs does a lot of stuff on campus with different orgs doing -- leading workshops and high ropes workshops and rock climbing and all that kind of stuff. So if you want to be a part of that, you can make a reservation to bring your team out for that experience.

ARGYLE: If you go on the ALPs Web site under their workshops tab, that's where you can see all the information about our new high ropes course out in Stoughton. It is going to be
incredible.

ALEESA: That sounds really awesome. All right, so we're going to introduce Gabe Javier, Assistant Dean of Students and Director of the Multicultural Student Center.

GABE: Hello.

ALEESA: Awesome. We're glad you're here.

GABE: Thank you so much for having me.

ARGYLE: You bet.

ERICA: Awesome. So I guess the first question is what is your role? And then, you know, within the Division of Student Life and then within the administration as a whole.

GABE: Sure, yeah, thanks for asking. Again my name is Gabe and you know, I work as Director of the Multicultural Student Center. We're on the second floor of the Red Gym.

In my role, I'm lucky enough to get to lead a team of professionals who focus on doing programming and outreach advocacy and education for students of color and their allies. We really work to center the voices of students of color. And we do that by like first of all, I think providing spaces where students of color can come and gather in community and be with each other.

And then we also have a leg of our work that we do is social justice work. So we do a set of workshops and speakers. And then helping to sort of centralize and organize and the cultural programming that we do around campus. So if you think of things
like Latinx Heritage Month. So we help to corral the efforts there.

But like I said, like I am super lucky to work with a team of like -- of great professionals and the student staff to make it all happen.

ERICA: You mentioned safe spaces within this larger organization, this Multicultural Student Center. So first of all, can you explain to us what exactly is the Multicultural Student Center and what's the importance of these very specific separate spaces within it.

GABE: Sure, yeah. So the Multicultural Student Center started in 1988 in the way that we know it now. Candace McDowell -- shout-out to Candace -- was the first -- the founder director. And from the get-go, the goal and role in Multicultural Student Center was to provide literal physical spaces for students of color to gather. You know, we know that students of color have specific and particular needs that in some ways are unique to predominantly white students on campus.

So you know, you're talking about safe spaces. And really, how I like to think about it, is I can't really train a space to be safe. You know, four walls does not necessarily ensure the type of psychological and emotional safety that we try to provide for our students.

So we try to provide opportunities that facilitate people to connect in authentic ways with people in order to make their experiences feel like they are included on campus.
So you mentioned separate spaces. We have -- last spring the Black Cultural Center opened in its third iteration. And the Black Cultural Center serves as a place -- 106 Red Gym if you've never been by. It serves as a place for people to learn about the really significant contributions of Black students to the Badger experience. Again, also allowing Black students to gather as individuals and groups to come. And there's drop-in advising and events and other classes and stuff that go on in there.

So you know, I think the other spaces that we help maintain are the forthcoming APIDA and Latinx Cultural Center startup spaces. And you know, I think these spaces are really important for these communities to be able to see their names and identities reflected in a place. It's a place to start, which I think that's really important.

ARGYLE: How did those spaces kind of get started? What was the origins of, you know, any of these three you just mentioned?

GABE: Yeah, I think that the origin was not, you know, a wish list that came from administrators or staff. It was really students. Students said we want and we need a space together. We want a space that has -- that reflects our identities and also reflects our contributions to UW-Madison.

So the Black Cultural Center opened, like I said, last spring. And that was a year process of, it started with large student protests on campus. And one of the products was, you know, the idea of a
Black Cultural Center.

So students, led by at the time, staff member at the MSC, Rob Brown went on a tour of black cultural centers at our Big 10 colleagues in the Midwest. And then from there, that's where the idea sort of sprouted. What do we want it to look like, but more importantly, what do we want it to feel like? What kinds of things do we want to facilitate?

We had a really good blueprint in that work for APIDA students. And APIDA -- we use the term APIDA, which mean Asian American Pacific Islander and Desi American students.

And so the APIDA and Latinx Student Center -- Student Cultural Centers really started as the same way, students getting together and saying like let's talk about what our needs are. Let's talk about how to best -- what are some options in terms of meeting our needs, and where can we start?

ERICA: Mm-hmm. So you mentioned needs, and this is the second time you've mentioned it, and how they differ from White students. So how do these needs differ? And what do these spaces provide that they wouldn't be able to find in other places around the school?

GABE: Yeah, I think that's a great question. I think we get that a lot. And you know, to add on, like what are the differences between these cultural centers and the Multicultural Student Center, right?
ERICA: Mm-hmm.

GABE: So you know, I think that an important piece, like we know that for example, like our student of color population hovers around 12%. And so sometimes our students of color feel like they're the only ones in classes. And whether they are actually the only one or they feel like they're the only one, it still has an effect on their ability to concentrate and their ability to fully participate in the life of the classroom. Right.

So we, you know, the Multicultural Student Center may not have a lot of control out in the classroom itself. So what our purview is is what of the out of classroom experience. So how do we then make spaces and how do the opportunity -- and like I said, facilitate the opportunities where students feel like they belong. Like we know that the first couple months, helping students to feel like they belong helps them in long-term.

And so these specific cultural spaces are complementary to the Multicultural Student Center. It's not an either/or, it's a both/and. So you know, if I think about myself, you know, I identify as Filipino. And the son of immigrants. And I think that was it was important for me to find other Asian Americans and other Filipinos for me to connect with my own identity before I went out and started to talk around community building immunity and with other identities.

And we know, you know, we know that these centers, like they won't solve racism on campus, right. But they will be a place, they
will be part of an overall solution and the overall investment by the university.

ERICA: Mm-hmm. So then going back to the concept of safe spaces, how exactly would you define a safe space?

GABE: Right, so I would say safe spaces are intentional spaces whereby people can have their -- the multitude of their multiple intersecting identities respected and that they can speak freely into the space in order to connect around things that are -- that may be very close to their identities, right.

So I think that, you know, I think that part of it is it's not necessarily the ingredients, but it's like how it feels. It's very much a feeling piece of it that -- that -- I hope that we're able to help when we train in social justice. Allied behavior, for example, to be able -- for people to have the skill set to be safe people that they can go to. And people carry that space around. People carry around the ability to make spaces comfortable. Not just comfortable, inclusive and affirming.

ARGYLE: Because we're not just looking for a couple spaces on campus to be safe, right?

GABE: Right, totally.

ARGYLE: We're trying to make the whole thing feel safe. But we also know we've got work to do.

GABE: Yeah, absolutely. You know, I think that if we said that every student of color needs to come to the MSC, I can we
ARGYLE: Exactly.

GABE: Right. We just don't have -- like we don't have the square footage. We don't have the resources, we don't have the people power. So we have to depend on partners across campus to help bridge people to the MSC when they're needed -- when they need help.

ERICA: Mm-hmm -- oh, sorry to cut you off.

GABE: No, no.

ERICA: I was also interested, so you mentioned social justice. So what exactly does social justice mean to you, and how do we see it through everything that MSC does?

GABE: Sure, yeah, that's a great question. So social justice is one of probably our main three pillars of the work that we do, the other two being cultural programming and leadership and involvement.

So we define social justice as a process and a goal. In that process and the goal, we hope to -- we hope to create opportunities and spaces where people can fully participate in sort of the assignment of resources. And we hope that people find places they can be their most authentic selves.

It's a process and a goal. So you know, the long and short of it is like, it's something that we do every day. It's something we work towards. So I think about it both like the destination and the
vehicle you're driving.

How it shows up, you know, I think, you know, your event calendar talked -- we talked about Sonia Nazario who is going to be here on Tuesday. You know, she's actually Madison-born. I think three or four years ago, *Enrique's Journey*, which is her Pulitzer book was Go Big Read. And it's a nonfiction book about a young boy who is leaving his home in South America to travel to the United States to find his mother. And really, no spoiler alert, but really the only way he can do that is to jump on trains. And you know, he has nothing except the phone number that he uses to call his mom.

So this is a story of -- this is a story that speaks to everyone. Like people trying to find their parents and trying to make their connections. And this story has those universal themes, and it also really specific contemporary themes of borders, of like access, of immigration. And I think that's really one of the ways that we show our social justice mission is taking a conversation and showing complex layers and telling complex stories.

ERICA: Mm-hmm. And then I guess going back to this Multicultural Student Center as like a physical space. If a student feels like they're not represented somewhere on campus, they don't feel like they fit into the Black Cultural Center. If they don't feel like they fit into the APIDA or the Latinx group, what do they do and where could they go?

GABE: Yeah, so I would say come by the MSC. Come by the
MSC or drop us an email. Check out our Web site and Facebook. Make a connection with one of our student staff. And it could be as simple as coming by and just planting down to study. We have tons of study space, both for groups and individuals. Every day, Mental Health Services is in the building in the Red Gym. So there's always an opportunity to, really -- no appointment necessary, just totally drop in in and come talk to someone about their experiences. Right.

And I think that's really hard. You know, no one wants to admit that they're homesick. No one wants to admit that they can't find a place to belong. But I think we've all felt that before. So I think that for students of color, coming to the MSC and expressing those things takes one of those burdens off, right. So that's what we hope to do.

ARGYLE: Gabe, I know you've talked a lot about, you know, the importance of identity. And I know that the MSC values intersectionality. I was wondering if you could talk about the Crossroads Program, and a little bit about what population that serves and the initiatives you're kind of working on there.

GABE: Sure, yeah. So the Crossroads Program is really a unique program, and I think unique in a lot of sense -- senses. Partially because, you know, working at other institutions, there's not really any other programs like it.

But the Crossroads Program is a joint venture between the Multicultural Student Center and the Gender and Sexuality Campus
Center. So still housed in the Division of Student Life, it's unique in that we share a staff member. There's a staff member, her name is Tiffany Lee, who you know, she is part of two staffs. And she is part of, you know, two staff meetings. You know, all those nuts and bold bolts of it.

But really, the goal of the Crossroads Program is to center the voices and experiences of people who live at the particular intersection of their gender -- gender and sexual orientation and their race and ethnicity.

And I think that one of the most important things that that program is really able to -- does, is remind people at that intersection, like myself, for example, identifies as Filipino and gay, that there are people that are adults. There are folks out there that could be really great possibility models.

And I think it's important that this institution says yeah, we invest in this way in that initiative. So it's a really cool program.

ERICA: Mm-hmm. So then just a couple other questions. Just going back to the two new spaces that have recently opened up or are in the process of opening up. Are they open now? And if they're not, how are they accessible? What can one do for the meanwhile?

GABE: So, you know, they're not open nor are they closed. So they are exactly as they are now in terms of conference rooms. So the folks in the Red Gym use those rooms regularly as meeting
spaces. And they're also open generally during the day now. So there's a lot of drop-in studying that happens up there. We're hoping that construction, you know, will be complete in the spring, and we'll be able to have that area up in the North Mezzanine of the Red Gym. You go up those stairs or take the elevator in the back, and it'll open up to like a nice lounge space.

It's nice and sunny right there looking at Mendota. And then one side will be Latinx and the other will be APIDA Cultural Centers. They'll have lounge furniture, study space. All of it moveable so they can be sort of made into one large space.

We will certainly have, on the windows there, we're going to have -- we're going to highlight major points of history at UW that included the Latinx and APIDA communities. Because we want the spaces to tell stories, as well.

ERICA: Mm-hmm. And then when is the MSC open? When are these spaces open? You know, like time-wise.

GABE: Yeah. So all of our spaces are open Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. And the Black Cultural Center is open 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

ERICA: Mm-hmm. And then, so you mentioned where the spaces are open within the Multicultural Student Center. Where is the Multicultural Student Center?

GABE: So we are in the Red Gym, which is the big red castle next to the Memorial Union. So we're on the lake on the second
floor. It used to be the basketball courts, so the floors squeak quite a bit. So that's where we are.

ERICA: Awesome. And then this is kind of a devil's advocate question, I guess. But so I guess some people might argue that making these individual spaces is not inclusive. How would you argue against that? How would you say that it actually fosters community? Or if you believe that?

GABE: Yeah, actually I probably wouldn't argue all that much, but I'd invite them to come check them out. I'd invite them to see that, you know, our experience in the Black Cultural Center in the past year, you know, there are still Black students who come to the Multicultural Student Center. And there are still students across the spectrum of racial identities who hang out in the Black Cultural Center. Right.

So I think that what I would say is that again, like we are providing spaces where people can explore truths about their own cultural identity. And then they, you know, give an opportunity in time like are able to share those experiences with other folks in the Multicultural Student Center's programming.

The other thing is that the Multicultural Student Center space still is like the main hub of a lot of activity. So even though there's a Black Cultural Center, there's still Black Cultural Center events in the MSC. And similarly with the APIDA and Latinx Cultural Centers. They're not big enough to hold all of the events they want to do.
But the MSC, which will be their umbrella or their home, is certainly a way that we facilitate those larger events.

ERICA: Mm-hmm. Is there anything else you'd like to say?

GABE: I would say it's like -- it's still Latinx Heritage Month. So I would check out the Web site, which is wisc.edu/Latinx. Come out to Sonia Nazario on October 2. It should be a great, powerful event.

ERICA: Awesome.

ALEESA: Awesome. Well, we have one final question that we ask all of our guests, which is what is your favorite Wisconsin tradition?

GABE: Oh, wow. So I really like when Bucky spins on his head.

[LAUGHTER]

I feel like it's a very -- I mean, it's not something that I would want to personally try. But I think it's neat. You just wonder, like okay, how did Bucky realize that he's like, my head is a flat surface, and I can spin upon it. Like so, I kind of like it when he does that. That's funny to me.

ALEESA: I love all his antics at the football games just in general.

GABE: It's wild and crazy.

ALEESA: And then also, what is your favorite Babcock Ice Cream flavor?
GABE: So I often like the temporary ones. I don't know if you all remember, but when Chancellor Blank first started, she had a flavor called Bec-Key Lime Pie, which was a key lime and like graham cracker crust ice cream, which was pretty good.

ERICA: I think I saw it recently actually.

ALEESA: I think they bring it back sometimes.

GABE: Yeah, well, it's pretty good. So if you're listening, Babcock, I'll take a pint.

ALEESA: Awesome. Well thank you so much for coming, Gabe. We really enjoyed everything you had to say, and looking forward to all the events that MSC has going on and all the ways that students can get involved. That's it for Bascom Beat. We'll be back next week Thursday at noon. If you have any questions, use the #BascomBeat, and we'll try to answer them on air. You can tweet at us your comments, thoughts, concerns, anything like that. And thanks so much for listening.

[MUSICAL WRAP-UP]