

December 14, 2023

Colleagues:

Yesterday evening, the Board of Regents, by an 11-6 vote, approved a resolution related to a state funding agreement that outlines specific actions to be taken by the Universities of Wisconsin (UWs) and by the legislature.

As part of that agreement, the legislature needs to act on the following:

1. Approval of the pay plan for UWs' employees no later than December 31, 2023 (4% in '23 and 2% in '24).
2. Approval of our \$32 million workforce proposal to add capacity and develop talent in four key, high-demand fields of engineering, nursing/health care, business/finance, and computer/data science.
3. Approval of the new engineering hall at UW-Madison.
4. Approval of up to \$45.4 million in funding to demolish 20 uninhabitable facilities at the UWs.
5. Approval of utility projects for the UWs as set forth in the original budget request.
6. Approval of the renovation of Winther/Heide Hall at UW-Whitewater.
7. Approval of the renovation of the Kronshage-Jorns-Humphrey Residence Halls at UW-Madison.
8. Approval of Assembly Bill 140 that will provide funds through the Minnesota-Wisconsin reciprocity agreement directly to those universities participating.

These actions would deliver more than \$800 million in funding and compensation to our universities and employees. This funding is essential if we are going to help build a vibrant future for all Wisconsinites.

Should the legislature act, the Universities of Wisconsin would do the following:

1. Cap overall non-faculty positions at the UWs for three years, with additional exceptions for student-facing and research positions.
2. Cap and restructure 43 positions dealing with diversity, equity and inclusion. It is important to note that nobody will lose their job under this agreement and these reclassifications would happen over the next two academic years.
3. Support legislation that would guarantee admissions for the top 5% of high school graduates at UW-Madison and the top 10% at all other UWs.
4. Address specific issues connected to diversity and inclusion issues at the UWs:
  - a. UW-Madison will seek philanthropic support to create an endowed chair, through a national search, on conservative political thought or a similar field.
  - b. UW-Madison will not renew its Target of Opportunity Program focused on hiring diverse faculty; instead, it will broaden its recruitment and mentorship efforts.
  - c. The UWs will eliminate any diversity statements in its admission applications.
  - d. The UWs will develop a module on freedom of expression for entering undergraduate students.

This agreement is the result of an arduous process. While it funds priorities of the Universities of Wisconsin, we have also made compromises with the legislature. Our commitments in this agreement are conditioned upon legislative action.

The UWs agreed to, primarily, an overall freeze on administrative positions. We are already well underway as we are actively addressing structural deficits throughout the UWs and preserving faculty positions as we make these reductions. Guaranteeing admission to Wisconsin's top high school students at our universities is not something we object to, if done correctly. The UWs have also agreed to restructuring approximately 43 DEI positions to new roles focused on student success while also not increasing the aggregate number of this family of jobs for three years across all of our universities.

As was made clear publicly throughout these discussions, diversity and inclusion are core values. But we are open to changing how some of these positions can more directly benefit student retention and graduation.

The UWs are here for every Wisconsinite. Our mission is developing the talent we all need to prosper economically, as well as to provide students with the education they deserve, and their parents expect.

Our universities rank 42<sup>nd</sup> out of 50 states nationally in public funding; we will continue to advocate that our state must do better. However, these immediate historic capital investments, program investments, and pay plan increases for our faculty and staff are much needed gains for the UWs as we face challenges now.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay", written in a cursive style.

Jay Rothman  
President, Universities of Wisconsin