



February 24, 2011

### **Letters & Science Dean Gary Sandefur's Statement of Support for New Badger Partnership**

As Dean, my role is to advance the research, teaching and public mission of the College of Letters & Science, the heart of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Our college is the largest unit on campus, teaching more than 650,000 credit hours a year and conferring more than half of the undergraduate degrees at UW-Madison.

I fully support the principles of the New Badger Partnership outlined by Chancellor Biddy Martin. I believe the public authority model would be ideal for providing the flexibility and new fiscal management tools critical to the success of UW-Madison and the College of Letters & Science. This model would also benefit our students, faculty and staff.

The landscape of higher education has changed drastically in 40 years, in particular for research institutions. Letters & Science is a major guardian of research at UW-Madison, and L&S faculty and staff are increasingly dependent on extramural funding to lead innovation and discovery. They are equally dedicated to serving and supporting a large and diverse student population, and engaging in public service to the state by advancing the Wisconsin Idea.

The human resources structure offered by a public authority would give the University the flexibility to recruit top talent and reward star faculty and staff to meet the needs of an increasingly global marketplace. In many cases, outside offers – both from university peers and the private sector – are easily double the starting salaries for a faculty position in Letters & Science, particularly for our high demand majors. Increased flexibility would allow us to improve access to courses and instructors, and continue to meet the needs of our public teaching mission.

As a public authority, the University would also have more flexibility to support its thriving research enterprise. In Letters & Science, this would alleviate the prohibitive start-up costs of laboratories. For example, establishing a new lab in the natural sciences – many which are top ten nationally ranked programs – often costs more than \$1 million dollars. As a public authority, UW-Madison could purchase equipment and instruments through a Big Ten consortium and considerably reduce overhead costs.

Last, as a public authority UW-Madison would be better equipped to meet unforeseen needs and take advantage of new opportunities. It is clear that we will absorb significant cuts to the University and UW-Madison needs innovative fiscal management tools that help us respond rapidly to change and manage our fiscal house. This is a creative direction that will allow us to remain open and accessible to future generations of students, preserve the value of a UW degree and help us maintain our international reputation.

As an advocate for the College of Letters & Science, I urge the L&S community to lend a voice to this discussion. It is a complicated issue, but I strongly support a public authority model for UW-Madison. I continue to value our relationships with UW System colleagues and I look forward to collaborating with them.