

Communication from the UW-Whitewater Faculty in support of "Wisconsin idea partnership"

A statement on 2011-2013 budget with Re: Flexibilities and proposed UW System Split

Approved at the Spring All-Faculty Meeting-March 15, 2011

WHEREAS, the UW System comprising of 2 doctoral, 11 comprehensive and 13 extension campuses serving 182,000 students from all parts of the state of Wisconsin, continues its preeminence as a leading national model of public higher education system, and the UW System's reputation in terms of academic excellence, high quality research, access and affordability to students is well cited and much admired around the nation; and

WHEREAS, we applaud the visionary efforts of previous Governors and legislators from both parties to provide accessible education to all citizens of Wisconsin and state's long-term investment in higher education which has shaped the UW System that all Wisconsin residents can be proud of; and

WHEREAS, the 2011-2013 Wisconsin state budget bill proposes severe funding cuts to the UW System- a \$ 250 million biennial reductions in GPR and an additional 90.6 reductions in GPR to reflect increase in employee benefits and retirement contributions, totaling a \$ 340.6 million reduction, a 16% cut from the state's previous appropriations of \$ 1.1 billion to the UW System; and

WHEREAS, the 2011-2013 UW System budget request by the Regents sought managerial and operational flexibilities for all UW campuses in light of on-going budget cuts to so as to provide necessary tools to manage university operations to fulfill its academic mission; and

WHEREAS, the UW Whitewater faculty appreciates Governor Walker's idea of providing flexibilities to offset some budget cuts and be able to manage university operations to better serve our educational mission; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's proposed budget would allow flexibilities only for UW-Madison and not to other system schools that are in equal need of those flexibilities to survive in these difficult budgetary times; and the budget proposes to separate UW-Madison from the UW System granting a separate public authority status and creating a different governing board; and

WHEREAS, splitting and creating multi-tier education systems operating under different boards, would lead to isolation, too expensive to taxpayers and would not benefit the broader citizens of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the UW Whitewater faculty members are grateful to the state for the many years of state's long term investment in higher education and for preserving the Wisconsin Idea-the

diversity of institutions under one umbrella and their ability to collectively serve all citizens of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, the UW-Whitewater competes at the national and international market to retain and recruit top quality faculty and staff and the university is facing challenges to provide competitive compensation and benefit packages to address market rates, due to lack of pay plans and continued decline of state's support; and

WHEREAS, UW Whitewater would very much need those flexibilities to manage its operations, retain and recruit dedicated faculty and staff, and to fulfill and advance its academic mission to all students, especially students of Southern Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, separating the state's flagship university will lead to unnecessary duplication, waste, fewer shared resources such as access to libraries and high tech instrumentation, increased competition rather than collaboration among campuses, duplication of programs and degrees and above all, a divisive political climate at the state capitol competing for state dollars all of which are detrimental to the enshrined Wisconsin Idea; and

WHEREAS, a split in UW system would inevitably increase tuition thus limiting access to middle and low income students; this measure would have implications on Whitewater transfer students whose student population primarily comes from rural, low income and first-generation students; and

Whereas, the Board of Regents is proposing an amendment to 2011-2013 budget bill in support of Wisconsin Idea Partnership which allows management flexibilities to all campuses within the current board of Regents of UW system governance structure;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the UW Whitewater faculty fully support and endorse the Wisconsin Idea Partnership and the amendment the Regents are proposing to Senate Budget Bill 27; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UW Whitewater faculty are deeply concerned about the proposed split in the UW System and lack of flexibilities extended to other campuses; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the flexibilities be granted to all UW campuses preserving the current UW system with the oversight of current administrative and shared governance structure.