Members of the Special Task Force on UW Restructuring and Operational Flexibilities:

We are the University Committee (UC) at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM), the Faculty Senate’s Executive Committee. As you pursue restructuring of the UW-System (UWS), we urge you to keep in mind certain unique characteristics of our campus and its missions. Moreover, we strongly recommend significant structural reform.

UWM is distinct from other UWS institutions for two reasons:

- UWM is a doctoral granting institution, which requires that it be a premier research university, with scholars that are known nationally and internationally and who are heavily engaged in research and teaching;
- UWM is an “access” institution which requires that it provide a high quality college education, at an affordable price, to more Wisconsin residents than any other institution in the UWS.

While these two missions are often found together among urban research institutions across the country, it is unique among institutions within the UWS.

In addition to these academic missions, UWM helps foster economic development in the region and the state. Studies at the MIT Industrial Performance Center (MIT IPC Working Paper 05-010 http://web.mit.edu/ipc/publications/papers.html), show that urban research universities support the local economy not only through their broad-based academic excellence but also by:

1) Attracting new human knowledge and financial resources to a region; (2) Integrating previously separated areas of technological activity in a region; and (3) Unlocking and redirecting knowledge in a region to a more productive use.

These missions are under threat. We wish to convey our alarm at the accelerated pace of resignations from UWM, a rate two to three times the normal rate. Just a few examples: 1) A Professor in the Peck School of the Arts left for a 35% increase in salary; 2) A world-renowned
Professor left the School of Freshwater Sciences (along with his whole research team—about five persons) for a new laboratory in another state, because UWM lacked funds for infrastructure upgrades needed to support cutting-edge research on the health of yellow perch and lake trout populations; and 3) An Associate Professor of Education, who specializes in the educational needs of struggling urban K-12 students, left for a 44% increase in salary plus research support worth at least $50,000.

Recommended Structural Change—Given UWM’s unique contribution to education and economic growth, we urge you to consider a key structural change: the establishment of a separate UWM governing Board. This new Board would work with the existing UWS Board of Regents. In particular, such a targeted Board would oversee implementation of the following cost-savings and flexibilities:

- The ability to set compensation based on merit and market rates;
- The ability to purchase supplies, equipment and travel in the most cost effective manner;
- The ability to allocate savings and revenues earned to initiatives that the institution deems important; and
- The ability to set tuition at a price that is reflective of the cost of providing that education.

Respectfully,

Dist. Professor Mark D. Schwartz (Chair), Department of Geography
Professor William Holahan, Department of Economics
Associate Professor Mary Pat Kunert, College of Nursing
Professor Devendra Misra, Department of Electrical Engineering
Professor Marcia Parsons, Department of Dance
Dist. Professor Rudi Strickler, Department of Biological Sciences
Professor Cindy Walker, Department of Educational Psychology