

**University Relations Committee**  
**Monday, April 19, 2021**  
**Virtual Teams Meeting**

*Committee Members Present:* Ann Raddant, Tom Luljak, Kevin O'Connor, Shana Ponelis (**Chair**), Christine Roberson, Ginny Stoffel, Rebecca Neumann, Elana Levine, Glendalys Gonzalez, Jie Chen, Dev Misra

*Regrets:* Julianna Alitto Kwapil, Angela Kowalski, Michelle Putz, Gary Williams

*Guests Present:* Michelle Johnson, Keri Duce, Robin Van Harpen

*Minutes Recorder:* Laura Bandemer-Purifoy

**Minutes**

Meeting called to order at 3:01 p.m.

Minutes from February 1, 2021, meeting approved.

In providing a budget communications overview Tom Luljak stated that about 40 years ago half of our operational budget came from state funding and at this time we are at about 18% state funded. During the two years of each biennial budget process, we have the opportunity to impress upon legislators the value of investment in public higher education. The Joint Finance Committee is holding public hearings on the Governor's proposed budget.

The Chancellor will be sending an invitation to faculty and staff asking them to consider becoming advocates on behalf of UWM, not as public employees, but as citizens of the state, using personal email accounts.

The Chancellor, VC Robin Van Harpen, and Tom have been individually meeting with all 16 members of the Joint finance Committee informing them about the benefits of an investment in both UW-System and UWM. The presentation begins by telling the legislators who our students and graduates are, how UWM is positioned to address the challenges that exist in Wisconsin today and what we are doing to help. They then discuss the powerful partnerships that already exist at UWM, such as the Freshwater Collaborative of Wisconsin, TechEd Frontiers, the Northwestern Mutual Data Science Institute, and the Connected Systems Institute. This is followed up with a discussion on what a UWM degree means, not just to our graduates, but also for our communities and society. At this point the discussion with the legislators turns to the biennial budget request where UW-System priorities and more specifically those priorities which directly affect UWM are stressed.

Vice Chancellor Robin Van Harpen discussed the capitol budget projects:

- 1) New Engineering Building
- 2) Northwest Quadrant Renovation
- 3) Sandburg Hall West Tower Renovation
- 4) Great Lakes Research Facility Dock Wall Restoration
- 5) Old Chemistry Building Demolition

She discussed the Northwest Quad renovation, which when completed, would house the Health Sciences program which has grown by about 120% in the past decade and is currently located in five different facilities across campus.

Michelle Johnson covered media relations and how we are using our communication platforms to advance the advocacy message. We are using traditional media, social media including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and Tik Tok to show the value of UWM and what we are doing in areas that are important to the state. We are looking into geofencing which allows targeted messaging to a particular area; it could be a neighborhood or even an actual building.

Keri Duce spoke to the tools we've made available to help get the advocacy message out. All of these tools can be found on the budget website: <https://uwm.edu/budget/>. Talking points are up-to-date, information about initiatives and Chancellor communications are also available here. You can also use the "Find My Legislator" link if you'd like to reach out to them. Finding information on areas that you have a special interest in is easy and you can cut and paste bullet points into messaging you wish to send to your legislator or to the Joint Finance Committee. There is workforce information which showcases how many UWM graduates go into high demand fields. There is also information on our students and alumni on this site, including where alumni work in the state.

Committee members discussed electing a chair for the next academic year and opted to wait until September's meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.