

UWM Academic Staff Senate Position Statement

February 15, 2015

The academic staff of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) are strongly opposed to the \$300 million cut to the UW System proposed in Governor Walker's 2015-17 biennium budget. We are more than 1,700 non-faculty staff members who are deeply concerned about the impact that such severe budget cuts would have on the quality of education that UWM could provide and on the affordability of higher education throughout Wisconsin.

Governor Walker has publicly stated that he wants to "equip workers with the skills they need to find jobs in the modern workforce." Regardless of how "modern workforce" is defined, *every* workforce sector needs employees with a broad range of skills, including leadership, critical-thinking, and problem-solving. That's why more than 28,000 students have selected UWM: we provide meaningful career preparation that employers demand and that a four-year degree provides. By 2030, more than half of all new and replacement jobs are projected to require at least an associate degree, with 41% requiring a bachelor's degree or more. Wisconsin employers depend upon and expect UWM to provide qualified workers to this pipeline.

Furthermore, southeastern Wisconsin is home to the state's largest workforce and concentration of industry and commerce. More than 70% of UWM alumni stay in Wisconsin, providing needed talent and supporting the state's economy. And while hundreds of UWM alumni work in the region's largest companies such as Northwestern Mutual, Rockwell Automation, and Johnson Controls, many also own successful small businesses and are helping to create new jobs.

In addition to academic preparation, academic staff at UWM provide a strong foundation for student success. At UWM, this means we provide academic and financial advising, career counseling, research experiences, and internships, just to name a few. It also means we protect students' health and safety with physical and mental health programs, and campus security.

Working alongside faculty and administrators, UWM academic staff are deeply committed to the University mission providing students with the best individualized educational experience possible. We are committed to delivering outstanding value through high-quality teaching and co-curricular programs as students earn their certification, bachelor's degree, master's degree, or Ph.D.

Governor Walker's proposed budget cuts to the UW System, if enacted, will directly impact the quality of education that UWM can provide, decrease value to our students, and underprepare new professionals for the modern workforce. Such budget cuts also will cause exponential harm to the economic engine of Southeastern Wisconsin, because UWM is the most influential public metropolitan higher education presence in the region.

The academic staff at UWM believe students, families, alumni, and businesses throughout Wisconsin deserve better. We believe the best way to move Wisconsin forward is by investing in education and giving employers what they need most: educated, talented, and prepared leaders who can make a difference locally and globally.