

*Communication from an Official Governance Unit*  
**UW-Stevens Point (UWSP) Faculty Senate**  
**Resolution Approved February 4, 2015**

The UWSP Faculty Senate is gravely concerned about the future of UWSP and the entire UW System. UWSP plays a vital role in central Wisconsin and the larger region through its teaching, scholarship, economic impact, and outreach. In keeping with the mission and its service to students, employees, alumni, and other community members, we reaffirm our commitment to providing access to a high quality postsecondary education for all Wisconsin residents. As one of six comprehensive universities serving central and northern Wisconsin, and as part of the best public university system in the country, UWSP is committed to our mission of student-centered success and access.

Governor Walker's proposal to slash the UW-System budget by \$300 million would be catastrophic and would lead to job losses for hard working Wisconsinites, cuts in programs that would compromise the education of current students, a dramatic reduction in research and scholarly productivity, and a likely increase in the cost of tuition in the long term. The probable UWSP cut of \$6.4 million (or more) reflects at least a 17% reduction in the state support of our campus. The UWSP Faculty Senate stands firmly opposed to this proposed budget cut. Using the university system to fill the budget shortfall diminishes the quality, breadth, and access to a university education and will have a long-term and far-reaching negative impact on the economy of the state.

The Governor also proposes to convert the UW-System into a 'public authority.' While UW System leadership has said that a public authority is the "best model" for our system, a convincing case has not yet been made. The UWSP Faculty Senate calls for an open process to analyze the proposed public authority before such a model is accepted. Universities operate on research, reason, and the free exchange of ideas. Such processes are necessary and must include full representation across system faculty, staff, students, and administration. In the final analysis, the key tenets of Chapter 36, which enshrines shared governance and academic freedom into state law, must be preserved. Shared governance and tenure are the bedrock of a thriving university system and will remain intact at UW-Stevens Point.

Here are some of the many questions that must be addressed during a full vetting of the public authority proposal:

- What would be the structure of the public authority? Who would ultimately be in charge? How would collective decisions be made? If a board of regents will run the public authority, would they be appointed or elected? How will campus autonomy be preserved?
- If Chapter 36 is eliminated, what would remain in place to secure academic freedom and shared governance? What are the guarantees that a board of regents would be obligated to protect these tenets? Would system officials or regents be able to change the rules of governance? How easily would those proposed changes be made?
- How will the public authority be financed? How will budgets be allocated for each campus in the system? Who will manage operations, salaries, and tuition?

**Because of these concerns, the UWSP Faculty Senate express our strong opposition to the proposed \$300 million dollar cut to the UW-System budget and our deep concern that such a cut will substantially impair access to a quality and affordable education for students, and negatively impact the local economies and communities.**