

Communication from an Official Governance Unit

University of Wisconsin-Extension Faculty Senate Resolution

Adopted March 3, 2015

WHEREAS Governor Walker's proposal to reduce the University of Wisconsin System budget by over \$300 million will devalue the importance of education in the state of Wisconsin, decrease university services to Wisconsin residents, permanently damage programs, adversely affect community outreach, dramatically reduce research and scholarly productivity, and increase the cost of university services and tuition in the long-term;

WHEREAS this being a very significant budget shortfall will surely diminish the quality, breadth, and access to university outreach and will have a long-term and far-reaching negative impact on Wisconsin;

WHEREAS the uncertainty created by the proposed executive budget is already directly hurting the University of Wisconsin System's ability to keep and recruit high quality faculty and staff at campuses and the University of Wisconsin-Extension;

WHEREAS proposed budget cuts this deep will absolutely affect University of Wisconsin-Extension's ability to carry out its mission of building community capacity, applying University research, knowledge, and resources to meet the educational needs of the people in Wisconsin, wherever they live and work;

WHEREAS the Governor also proposes to convert the University of Wisconsin System into a "public authority," which fundamentally changes the relationship between the University of Wisconsin System and the residents of Wisconsin;

WHEREAS the Governor's proposal to convert to a "public authority" directly supplants the existing Wisconsin State Statute, Chapter 36, which clearly and thoroughly embraces the Wisconsin Idea with all of its precepts including, shared governance, academic freedom, and tenure;

WHEREAS the funding of the University of Wisconsin System using general sales and use tax revenues adjusted by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers in future years introduces greater fiscal uncertainty and establishes a distinctly more regressive underpinning to the University of Wisconsin System's state support;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that

The University of Wisconsin-Extension Faculty Senate stands firmly opposed to the proposed \$300-plus million dollar cut to the University of Wisconsin System budget and has grave concerns that any cuts will further erode access to a high quality and affordable education, including non-traditional learning, as well as negatively impact local economies and communities;

The University of Wisconsin-Extension Faculty Senate strongly opposes changing to a public authority model without a comprehensive analysis of any potential savings, impact to funding, and securing of the bedrock principles such as academic freedom, shared governance, tenure, and the Wisconsin Idea defined within Chapter 36. We call for an open process to analyze and review the proposed public authority before such a model is accepted. The importance of the relationship between the University and the State of Wisconsin is immeasurable, and any modifications should

be subject to open discussion and proper consultation with shared governance units. While current University of Wisconsin System leadership has asserted that moving to a public authority is desirable, this position was not informed by such consultation with shared governance units. A thoroughly vetted and convincing case must be made to justify any change;

And be it further resolved that because assurances are lacking that the precepts of shared governance, academic freedom, and tenure will remain intact, the University of Wisconsin-Extension Faculty Senate urges the State Legislature to maintain Chapter 36 in State Statute as is, and fully fund the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents budget request using broad general purpose revenues.