

*Communication from an Official Governance Unit*  
**UW-Milwaukee (UWM) Faculty Senate Resolution**  
**Approved January 29, 2015**

The UWM Faculty Senate is gravely concerned about the future of UWM and the entire UW System. UWM plays a vital role in southeast Wisconsin and the region in its service of students, employees, alumni and other community members. As one of two research universities within one of the best state systems in the country, UWM is committed to our dual mission of top-tier research and access.

Governor Walker's proposal to slash the UW-System budget by \$300 million will be catastrophic and will lead to job losses for hard working Wisconsinites, cuts in programs that will compromise the education of current students, a dramatic reduction in research productivity, and a likely increase in the cost of tuition in the long term. The UWM Senate stands firmly opposed to this proposed budget cut and rejects the notion that the cuts stem from a budget shortfall. The legislature created the budget shortfall when it chose to invest in tax cuts, which the state could not afford. Using the university system to finance those cuts provides an excuse to privatize public higher education.

The Governor also proposes to convert the UW-System into a 'public authority.' While system President Ray Cross has said that a public authority is the "best model" for our system, a convincing case has not yet been made. The UWM 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 a process is necessary and must include full representation across system faculty, staff, students, and administration. 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 are non-negotiable.

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 autonomy be preserved?
- Would Chapter 36 remain in place to secure shared governance and academic freedom? What are the guarantees that a board of regents would be obligated to protect these tenets? Would system officials of regents be able to change the rules of governance?
- 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? Current guidelines indicate that a public authority will be financed with sales tax and tuition. These are both regressive, placing the burden of public higher education on those who can least afford it. We must find a solution that does not encumber our current students and our future students with unreasonable debt.