

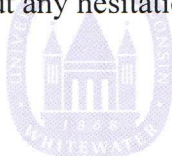


Statement from UW-Whitewater Faculty Senate on the Proposed Budget Repair Bill

UW-Whitewater faculty and staff members who have already been subjected to furloughs, pay cuts and pay freezes during 2009-11 biennium are appalled at Governor Walker's fast-paced budget repair bill that seeks to reduce benefits further starting with the upcoming second quarter of 2011. It is true that the State has a revenue shortage and a fix is needed, both short-term and long-term; the situation requires a dialogue among all parties and not an across-the-board reduction in contracted salary packages.

The proposed budget repair bill calls for sacrifice from university faculty citing the private sector's national averages be mimicked in employee's share in pension and healthcare contributions. Our salaries are based on a contract that was signed for a specific wage AND benefit package. The Governor fails to understand that our salaries are not on par with the private sector nor peer institutions across the country. Based on the Competitive University Workforce Commission data (published in June 2010), salaries at UW Comprehensive institutions for professors, associate professors and assistant professors are already 20.00%, 17.37%, 10.56% behind peer median salaries respectively. http://www.mbo.wisc.edu/biennial/bienn1113/CUWC_Final_report.pdf. Studies (Keefe, Jeffrey. "Are Wisconsin Public Employees Over-Compensated?" February 11, 2011) also show that government employees salary plus benefits are already 4-10% lower than their private sector employees salary plus benefits with equivalent education. If UW faculty were above comparative salaries then, as responsible citizens, UWW faculty would respond to the financial crisis of the State through an open dialog which may result in a sharing of pension and healthcare costs if better alternatives were not available. But the proposed budget repair bill demands a sacrifice that ignores our role in the economic prosperity of the state and disregards the long-term effects of such a proposal. UWW departments are already having difficulty attracting the best candidates for open positions and in some cases unable to hire at all as a result of the noncompetitive compensation packages. A further reduction will simply exacerbate the problem. Without a competitive compensation system both nationally and internationally, the quality of education in Wisconsin will surely suffer. It should be noted that Wisconsin's faculty have not been receiving raises in the recent past, on the argument that the benefits outweigh the need for salary increases. Reducing those benefits will only amount to faculty that are further underpaid compared to peer institutions and the private sector. Making permanent cuts without discussion in the pretext of fixing current budget crisis is simply unwarranted and shows utter disregard for the collective intellect of the UW System and the long-term impact it would have on university's academic mission.

It is to be duly noted that the UWW faculty dedication to teaching and training Wisconsin's students providing the highest quality education has remained the same in spite of the salary reductions through furloughs, pay cuts and pay freezes. Sadly, the proposed budget repair bill does not credit the substantial effort faculty put into their work. The measure, if passed in its present form, forecasts a grim picture for the university workforce, for which all our talents and abilities have been fully dedicated without any hesitation.



Whatever Governor Walker wants to do for a sustainable economy in the long-run and to address current budget crisis, the means he proposes is detrimental to that vision. An exodus of the bright minded students and educators can clearly be predicted. The deterioration of Wisconsin's educational systems will surely result in fewer jobs created in the future and a workforce that is less appealing to companies that would bring jobs to Wisconsin.

Given the ongoing reduction in tax dollars being invested in the education of Wisconsin students and the future of Wisconsin's economy it is only prudent that the Government release to the UW system and individual UW campuses the flexibilities and autonomy they need to effectively manage the educational enterprise and to determine more appropriate methods to address the challenges the UW system is now facing.