

Wisconsin: Stay Tuned to the State Budget

Column by David Wilson, Chancellor, UW Colleges and UW-Extension

As chancellor for two statewide UW institutions, I would be remiss if I did not point out some effects the proposed state budget cuts to UW System's operating budget would have on this entire state. Consider the following:

- State funding for Wisconsin Public Television and Radio programs would cease, affecting thousands of residents who tune in daily to our educational programs and unbiased news. Wisconsin Public TV and Radio cost Wisconsin taxpayers about \$1/year. You won't find cable TV at that price.

- Students would have a harder time gaining access and earning a degree at a time when a knowledge-based economy requires one. Right now, returning adults comprise 30 percent of students at the 13 UW Colleges campuses, the most accessible and affordable UW campuses. Place-bound students attend classes in person or take our online courses from remote corners of the state to become better educated and enhance their employability.

- Reduced resources for UW-Extension's Cooperative Extension would limit our ability to extend UW resources and research statewide. Current state funding allows us to hire campus and county colleagues who provide critical information that keeps our industries competitive, our communities vibrant, and our natural resources protected. In addition, federal grants and other revenue match \$2 for every \$1 Wisconsin taxpayers provide.

- Proposed cuts would eliminate the UW School for Workers, the oldest university-based labor program in the U.S., and one of UW-Extension's most effective statewide education efforts.

As chancellor of the UW Colleges and UW-Extension, I have personally seen the challenges and opportunities that exist in Wisconsin's urban regions, rural areas, and the state's tribal nations. In countless conversations, state residents have told me what their communities need and what they value. They have told me how the University of Wisconsin has made a difference in their lives, the lives of their children, and in their communities.

The UW Colleges and UW-Extension contribute positively to Wisconsin communities- through our county Extension offices, through public broadcasting, through students attending our campuses, through online courses, and much more.

Please. Stay tuned to the state budget process. Let your elected officials know how much you value the UW.

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