

## Chancellor chats with students at UW-S

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SHEBOYGAN – Even though Student Government Association President Gabe Bohn said he had no agenda, tuition was definitely on the minds of the students who came to speak with UW Colleges and UW-Extension Chancellor Dr. David Wilson Thursday, Sept. 13.

As soon as Wilson asked, “So, what’s on your minds?” Bohn answered, “Tuition freeze.”

And with that, even the few students who were wrangled into coming to the meeting realized that these were things they wanted to know.

“One of my many priorities is the priority of access,” said Wilson, responding to Bohn’s question. “We have to ensure that in the UW system, with our 28 campuses (referring to the two-year colleges and UW-Extension schools), college is available for students, who for some reason don’t want to start their education at a comprehensive institution.”

Wilson continued, explaining that he recently took the initiative to propose a zero tuition increase for all two-year colleges to Kevin Reilly, the president of the University of Wisconsin system.

“I asked him to endorse a freeze at extension colleges,” said Wilson.

Wilson said that a committee is currently meeting to decide how to handle extension college tuition in years to come.

“Maybe we’ll freeze again, maybe we’ll lower tuition,” said Wilson.

This year’s freeze would increase the savings benefit for students who choose to get their general education courses out of the way at a smaller, local institution rather than going away to one of the larger state schools.

“That separation was there four years ago,” said Wilson.

However, as of last year, the difference between an extension school and a comprehensive college is only about \$250-\$300.

“We want it to be where you come here for two years and you can save enough money to pay for your last two years of college on the back end,” said Wilson.

If the tuition rates were frozen for the 2007-2008 school year, the difference between the extension schools and comprehensive

colleges would more than triple to \$1,000.

Wilson said the price difference would be even greater at popular schools like UW-Milwaukee and UW-Madison.

Students could save \$1,800-\$2,000 by going to UW-Sheboygan for two years before transferring to UW-Milwaukee and \$2,800 before transferring to UW-Madison.

However, Wilson said that the tuition freeze, while finalized, may have to be reconsidered after the state passes its budget through the legislature.

“The proposed Assembly budget, if passed, would cut \$150 million from the University of Wisconsin operating systems budget,” said Wilson. “If that happens, then, maybe, a system increase will have to be made in January (of 2008).”

The stalemate of the state budget has also caused problems for students depending on the Wisconsin Higher Education Grant (WHEG).

Lemont Hellens, 21, wanted to know what progress was being made for the more than 6,000 students relying on that state grant.

“There’s been no movement on WHEG,” said Wilson. “Because of that, students don’t know, still, if they can go to college this year. We can have students that we are absolutely serving with this grant maybe drop out of school because of their finances.”

Wilson encouraged the 15 or so students who attended the meeting to be in contact with their state legislators to put pressure on them to resolve the budget.

“Make our legislators in our region aware,” he said. “You are their constituents.”

Wilson said that he is doing his part.

“I am down at the state capital on a weekly basis,” he said. “I spoke to the speaker of the house (Michael Huebsch) to make him aware of the impact of the cuts on the UW system. Also, the governor (Jim Doyle) has had all the chancellors to the capital to speak about the budget.”

He added, “Inaction is standing in your way to get a college degree.”