



Office of the President

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January 9, 2009

The Honorable David R. Obey, Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Obey:

On behalf of the University of Wisconsin System, I am writing regarding deliberations that the Presidential Transition Team and the U.S. Congress are undertaking to address one of the greatest financial challenges of our lifetime. The UW System views itself as a vital engine of growth and renewal in our state and our country. We are ready to partner with the federal and state governments to revitalize our economy—educating the next generation of Americans to meet the challenges of global competition.

As President-elect Obama and the U.S. Congress deliberate on a new federal economic stimulus package, we offer the following for your consideration.

The UW System supports a federal infusion of capital allocated to the states, and has a master plan in place for construction and renovation projects that are “shovel ready.” The UW System is working closely with Governor Jim Doyle to identify capital projects that can begin construction in 90 to 120 days.

Federal funding for UW facilities would retain and create high-paying jobs throughout Wisconsin. The slowdown of commercial construction is already creating a loss of economic activity and loss of jobs in many communities. An infusion of funding for university projects that are already in planning would accelerate benefits for education, training, and research, and invigorate economic activity in all sectors in those communities.

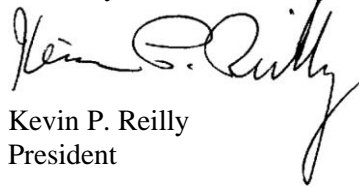
Attached is a list of phase I projects that could begin construction in as early as March 2009. The projects focus on energy efficiency, renewable and clean energy, LEED™ design standards, and academic need. Beginning construction of phase I projects could expedite construction of phase II projects. A list of phase II projects is also included in the attached document. Finally, a number of the projects, if funded, can leverage additional private gift funds.

The UW System also supports the recommendation by the six higher education national associations to provide for an increase in the Pell Grant maximum award of \$700, as well as to retire the program’s shortfall. Likewise, the UW System supports initiatives that would provide debt relief to students facing financial hardships in the current economy, including flexibility on annual loan limits, extension of the loan repayment grace period, and stepped-up assistance from the U.S. Department of Education to student borrowers who are delinquent on their payments.

The Federal government is the largest supporter of university research, which is critical to building America's research and development capacity. Our innovative researchers have invented technologies that have fueled economic progress in large part because of the significant support our institutions receive from the federal government. Continued and expanded Federal funding is vital.

On behalf of the UW Board of Regents, our 26 campuses, UW-Extension, and our 173,000 students, we stand ready and committed to work with you. We appreciate your guidance and leadership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin P. Reilly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Kevin P. Reilly
President

Attachment

cc: UW Board of Regents
Chancellors
Cabinet