



August 12, 2008

Dr. Kevin Reilly
President, UW System
1720 Van Hise Hall
1220 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706

Dear President Reilly:

Dr. Reilly, since 1992, Downtown Mainstreet, Inc. has worked with local business and community leaders to cultivate an environment that is conducive to a robust economic climate. Among our partners in that endeavor are La Crosse's three institutions of higher education, including the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. These campuses provide a ready source of highly skilled employees that fuel the economic engine of the 7 Rivers Region.

Access to these institutions begins with the ability for students to afford them. That's why Downtown Mainstreet and its board of directors support UW-L's case for additional financial aid as stated in its 2009-11 budget request. For nearly 100 years, UW-L has earned a reputation as one of the nation's preeminent institutions of public higher education. Its Growth, Quality and Access Agenda are but one example of the ambitious thinking that has served this campus well in establishing an enviable position. But increasing the number of students, maintaining quality and expanding access come with a price, hence the tuition differential approved by the Board of Regents last December.

UW-L's request for additional financial aid to offset the impact of this tuition increase is reasonable and necessary. Without it, many prospective students who have the intellect and ambition to succeed at UW-L might not be able to attend. We cannot, should not, let that happen.

As a representative of the private business sector, I'm deeply concerned that we are not going to meet our companies current and future employment needs. I'm concerned that we will continue to fall back in our education competition with our world neighbors. We need to increase this financial aid to meet the growing demands of our state's economy.

Therefore, I ask for your support for the request that has been placed before you and the opportunity that increased financial aid will provide to deserving students who will greatly benefit the growth of our future economy. A great deal is at stake here.

Hope to see you on your next visit to La Crosse.

Best Wishes,



Bud Miyamoto
Executive Director