



A GROWTH AGENDA FOR WISCONSIN

GROWING PEOPLE, JOBS, & COMMUNITIES

UW-La Crosse: Growth, Quality, and Access Initiative

Brief summary: This initiative seeks to provide additional financial aid grants to low- and middle-income students as part of UW-La Crosse's efforts to increase growth, quality, and access over the next three to five years.

Why is it needed?

UW-La Crosse has a reputation for providing a top-quality education for its students, and is one of the most popular institutions in the UW System. UW-La Crosse receives four applications for every opening in its freshman class, making it the second most selective UW institution based on admission rate. In order to maintain its record of excellence and provide access for more students, UW-La Crosse is implementing an undergraduate differential tuition that will allow it to grow undergraduate enrollments by at least 500 additional students over the next three to five years and hire at least 75 additional faculty and 20 additional staff over the next five years to improve academic quality and enhance the undergraduate experience. Beginning in the 2008-09 academic year, tuition for newly enrolled undergraduate students will increase \$250 per semester (\$500 per year), with an additional \$250 per semester (\$500 per year) increase for the 2009-10 academic year, for a total annual differential tuition of \$1,000. While the increased tuition will provide greater access to a high-quality educational experience, it could also create a barrier for students with financial need.

How does this proposal meet the need?

This funding will allow UW-La Crosse to provide additional need-based financial aid awards to low- and middle-income students. This additional financial aid, which will be awarded as "last dollar" grants after all other financial aid has been allocated, will enable qualified Wisconsin students, regardless of income, to benefit from the increased access to the campus. In many instances, the grants will be sufficient to offset tuition increases for students with financial need.

In addition to this request for funding in 2009-11, the 2007-09 Biennial Budget provided \$664,800 GPR to UW-La Crosse, of which \$225,400 can be used for increased financial aid to students. UW-La Crosse is requesting that it be authorized to use the entire \$664,800 GPR provided in 2008-09 for student financial aid. When combined with the requested \$1,170,400 GPR in 2009-11, a total of \$1.5 million in ongoing GPR (\$2.5 million GPR in the 2009-11 biennium) would be available for financial aid. These funds are equivalent to 25% of the tuition generated through the differential during this period, and would help to provide additional financial aid to help prevent low- and middle-income students from being "priced out" of a college education.

What are the outcomes/benefits?

This funding will allow UW-La Crosse to increase enrollments, thereby creating greater access, while still providing affordable, world-class higher education for Wisconsin residents. The additional students will provide Wisconsin with more highly trained and skilled workers to attract and support growing 21st-century industries, as well as encourage innovation and job creation across the state.

- Increase financial aid by \$835,200 annually;
- Support UW-La Crosse's efforts to increase enrollment by 500 students over the next three to five years;
- Maintain accessibility for Wisconsin residents.

Estimated ongoing cost: \$835,200 GPR

For more information: Contact Chancellor Joe Gow, 608-785-8004