



LEAP Year Proclamation
(Liberal Education and America's Promise)

WHEREAS, discussions about how America and Americans must move forward as a diverse nation animate civic discourse and drive democratic engagement; and

WHEREAS, higher education plays a vital role in these discussions in the present as well as contributes to the growth of those who will engage these issues wisely in the future; and

WHEREAS, discussions about higher education often focus on access, affordability, and accountability, but also need to consider the substance of what matters in a college or university education; and

WHEREAS, there is a growing consensus that the skills, abilities, habits of mind, and knowledge needed in a 21st century global society are provided by a liberal education; and

WHEREAS, liberal education—the oldest and longest-lasting educational tradition in the United States—offers a holistic view of knowledge relevant across the entire spectrum of political views; and

WHEREAS, the Association of American Colleges and Universities has undertaken a Liberal Education and America's Promise campaign known as LEAP to advocate for the importance of liberal education; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the LEAP Campaign is to make visible and understood the value of a liberal education—for individuals and for a nation dependent on economic creativity and democratic vitality; and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin has been designated a pilot partner in the national LEAP campaign, and the University of Wisconsin System has been sponsoring and collaborating in activities that support LEAP; and

WHEREAS, the LEAP Campaign in Wisconsin seeks to renew collective understanding of public higher education as a public good, essential for democracy and civic engagement, and vital to the economic well-being of the state and its citizens; and

WHEREAS, in the leap year of 1904 UW President Charles Van Hise gave voice to what we have come to call “the Wisconsin Idea,” asserting that we should “never be content until the beneficent influence of the university reaches every family in the state”; and

WHEREAS, 2008 is another leap year, in which an extra day is added to the calendar year to align it with the amount of time it takes the Earth to revolve around the sun;

BE IT RESOLVED that—throughout this leap year of 2008 and beyond—the State of Wisconsin will dedicate itself with extra diligence to align its PK-12 and higher education systems and to make liberal education available to all its citizens for the benefit of individuals, communities, the state, the nation and the world.

BARBARA LAWTON
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