



Board of Regents

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April 6, 2011

Joint Committee on Finance
Wisconsin Legislature
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

VIA EMAIL

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Finance:

We are pleased that Governor Scott Walker has recognized that increased flexibilities are needed to help UW-Madison manage the budget reductions proposed for it in his 2011-13 biennial budget, and has shown an interest in extending similar flexibilities to other UW System (UWS) institutions. Indeed, all UWS institutions, including UW-Madison, greatly need the new management tools that the Governor has proposed so that they can manage the proposed 2011-13 biennial budget reductions applicable to them, and help grow Wisconsin's economy.

The Board of Regents strongly believes that keeping all of our campuses under one, unified System is the best way forward to further the Wisconsin Idea and to best serve the people of Wisconsin. We also believe that any action that would dismantle the UW System requires a very thorough, deliberative public vetting and should not be undertaken as part of the biennial budget process.

That said, the Board of Regents, UW System President, 13 out of 14 UW Chancellors, and many Wisconsin citizens have voiced strong support for the Wisconsin Idea Partnership -- an alternative proposal that extends the flexibilities that UW-Madison would receive to all UWS institutions, while preserving one unified UW System that includes UW-Madison. The Board recognizes that the benefits of the Wisconsin Idea Partnership will be greatest if those management tools are made directly available to each institution, where they can do the most good.

We write to you today to share the Board of Regents' commitment to delegate to each Chancellor the flexibilities contained in the Wisconsin Idea Partnership, while maintaining necessary Board of Regents oversight responsibilities. The Board of Regents, at its March 10th meeting, affirmed this commitment when it approved a resolution in support of the Wisconsin Idea Partnership. That resolution said, in part, "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the [UW] System Board of Regents will delegate the new flexibilities directly to each UW institution, while ensuring transparency and appropriate levels of board oversight and public accountability."

The process of delegating more authority to each UWS institution has already begun. At our early-February Board meeting we announced that we would undertake a full-scale review of all Board of Regents policies. That review includes identifying those areas where the Board could delegate authority directly to UWS institutions. We will begin the policy review at our April Board meeting, and expect to continue this process at subsequent meetings. In addition, President Reilly will be convening an advisory committee, with Regent membership and representation from throughout the UW System, to consider and recommend ways in which unnecessary system- or Board-level administrative procedures can be eliminated.

We appreciate the support that the Wisconsin Idea Partnership is receiving from many legislators, including several members of Joint Finance. We ask that you consider amending 2011 Senate Bill 27 to include the Wisconsin Idea Partnership, and we pledge our commitment to delegating new management flexibilities to all UWS institutions.

Sincerely,



Charles R. Pruitt
President



Michael J. Spector
Vice President

cc: Governor Scott Walker
Members of the Board of Regents
UW System President Reilly
UWS Chancellors