March 22, 2020

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
U.S. Senator  
709 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ron Johnson  
U.S. Senator  
328 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin and Senator Johnson:

Thank you for speaking with me regarding the unprecedented challenges our students, faculty, staff, and institutions are facing due to COVID-19. The UW System appreciates the opportunity to share with you our priorities that will help us manage through the pandemic. We continue to prioritize the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff, and ensuring that academic and student services are provided to all students to support their academic progress.

Earlier this week, we shared with you a letter to detail UW System’s initial estimates on the fiscal impact to our students and our institutions, and you received information from our national organizations on the impacts to the higher education community across the country. Given those impacts, the UW System seeks the following relief for our students and institutions as the U.S. Senate continues negotiations on a relief package:

1. **Regulatory Relief**: The UW System endorses the regulatory relief provisions contained in the Health and Education section of the Senate Republican bill. In addition, we ask Congress to consider these additional regulatory relief measures:
   a. **Telecom Waiver**: Provide relief for those students who will be required to access courses through alternate delivery methods in lieu of in-person classes. Students with limited broadband accessibility may have to call-in to classes, which may result in expensive long-distance calling and roaming fees from Telecom companies.
   b. **Federal Perkins Loan Federal Share**: Allow institutions to use the Federal share of the institution’s cash-on-hand from recent Federal Perkins Loan repayments to fund a Federal emergency grant program for students. While this money is owed back to the Federal Government later this year, this would give the UW System immediate flexibility of about $22.7 million across all our institutions to provide aid to students.
   c. **Federal Work Study**: Allow institutions to draw down the federal work study funds that were already allocated/appropriated to UW System institutions and waive the matching requirement. UWS would use those funds to provide relief to students, even if they are not actually working.
2. **Emergency Grants for Students ($56.3 million):** The risk of our most vulnerable students dropping out without a degree and student debt is very real, and many other students who are suddenly faced with a loss of income and unexpected expenses will struggle to make ends meet. Emergency grants will support non-academic costs such as travel, housing, or childcare, so they can continue to focus on completing their degree. This estimate assumes a $1,500 emergency grant for each of our Pell-eligible undergraduate students, since these are our most financially vulnerable students. There are about 150,000 undergraduate students at UW System and about a quarter are Pell-eligible.

3. **Institutional Aid ($58.5 million):** UW institutions will refund an estimated $78 million to students and families to reflect pro-rating of housing and dining charges. This is the fair and right thing to do for our students, but it will result in a direct financial loss to institutions. Institutional housing and dining expenses will not be decreased by the same amount. Staff in these areas continue to work to support all students as well as those who are unable to leave campus. Contractors will continue to be paid a large portion of the fees owed to them for services in housing and dining, and other fixed costs to maintain facilities will continue. Institutions will work to find ways to offset this cost, however $58.5 million in institutional aid ($78 million x 75%) will provide significant support to UW institutions to continue to operate these facilities for the students who need them and for the employees who work for them.

4. **Student Behavioral Health ($4 million):** UW institutions are preparing to provide additional support for students through telemedicine, including behavioral health. This is estimated to cost $4 million over the next several months as we contract for services.

5. **Student Support ($5 million):** UW institutions need to continue to provide practicums for students in health care and other fields. These are done in partnership with clinical sites now experiencing significant challenges. To ensure continuity for students, additional funding of $1,000 per student, for an estimated 5,000 students, will help these efforts. Fees for students range from $1,500 to $2,500 for some of the clinical site experiences.

6. **IT Support ($16 million):** The UW System is scaling up services to support online instruction and other alternative delivery methods. Prior to the pandemic, UW institutions invested approximately $10.5 million over the past two years to migrate to Canvas for the core delivery of instruction online. This project is nearing completion and provides a strong foundation for all students and faculty due to UW’s forward planning. However, other investments are needed to effectively move to alternative delivery methods given the limited timeframe:
   a. **Proctoring Software:** Tools are needed to ensure the identity of students is verified and that cheating does not occur. UW-Madison is procuring software now at about $3 million. For all UW institutions, we estimate $7 million for this software.
   b. **Media Production and Student Assessments:** Software is required to create course materials and exams for students. Tools to streamline these critical components of instruction will cost an estimated $5 million across the UW System.
c. **eTextbooks and Course Content**: Since students and faculty are unable to physically access the library, we will need to purchase additional electronic materials, videos, and other media at an estimated cost of $1 million for all UW institutions.

d. **Virtual Computing Labs**: Since students will not have physical access to campus computer labs with specialized software, institutions will need to either bolster existing virtual lab infrastructure or shift to cloud-based services. For all UW institutions, we estimate $3 million for the software and services.

7. **Information Security ($9 million)**: Cybersecurity threats will only grow as attackers perceive our country’s institutions, including our institutions of higher education, as vulnerable during this pandemic. Students and employees need to be protected from cybersecurity attacks as more instruction and operations move online. The following investments will help in this effort:

   a. **Multi-Factor Authentication**: Providing multi-factor authentication for all students is a simple first step. It is estimated that this will cost $4 million for implementation and licensing from an existing vendor to cover all UW students.

   b. **Cybersecurity Monitoring**: UW institutional staff are stretched at this time to support the increased number of students and faculty working remotely. Cybercriminals know this, and we are seeing increasing numbers of attacks targeting higher education in the US. $5 million to secure additional support, through staff or vendors, will help to reduce the risk of cyber incidents over the next 12 months.

Thank you again for your leadership and concern for our students, faculty, staff, and institutions. The UW System is a ready and willing partner to help our communities and nation get through this pandemic. If you have questions, please contact UW System’s Associate Vice President for Federal and Corporate Relations, Kris Andrews, at 608-770-3362 or kandrews@uwsa.edu.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Ray Cross
 UW System President