September 25, 2019

TO: Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Universities, Technical Colleges, Children and Families
FROM: Ray Cross, UW System President
RE: Senate Bill 205 Testimony - For Information Only

Thank you, Chairman Kooyenga and committee members, for holding this public hearing on SB 205, and thank you to Representative Kurtz and Senator Kooyenga for authoring this bill to support students who transfer credits from military transcripts to UW institutions.

We estimate that there are about 141 active duty service members and about 4,774 veterans who currently attend UW System institutions. We owe it to these students who are serving or who served our state and country to provide access to a quality education and to provide the necessary support to help them succeed. It is common for these students to enter our institutions with credits from the joint services transcript or Community College of the Air Force transcript and to transfer these credits.

Under current law, UW institutions must accept all credits, which may or may not help a student toward their degree completion. Sometimes students with a large amount of credits will be negatively impacted if their total number of credits exceed thresholds for financial aid. SB 205 gives students the option to object to having credits awarded for any course on the official joint services transcript or the Community College of the Air Force transcript. This will fix what was an unintended consequence of current law so students will not inadvertently be impacted by credit thresholds for financial aid.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide additional information on SB 205, and as a veteran myself, I appreciate any efforts to support those who are serving or who served in our armed forces and attend our institutions to pursue their education.