

DATE: October 30, 2025

TO: Members of the Assembly Committee on Education

FROM: Johannes Britz, Senior Vice President for Academic & Student Affairs

RE: Testimony for Information Only on Assembly Bill 582

Thank you, Chair Kitchens, Vice-Chair Goeben, and committee members for providing the Universities of Wisconsin (UWs) an opportunity to testify for information only on Assembly Bill 582 (AB 582). We appreciate Representative Murphy and Senator Cabral-Guevara for their willingness to work with us and the other sectors on this legislation. We are also very grateful for the intent and overarching goal of this legislation - increased awareness of, access to, and participation in dual enrollment for all Wisconsin students.

The Universities of Wisconsin comprise 13 universities across Wisconsin that have a shared goal of ensuring the success of our more than 164,000 students and developing talent that is critical to our state's economic vibrancy. To accomplish this, we have been working to increase enrollment at our universities (up for the third year in a row), lessen the time to degree, and reduce financial barriers to increase accessibility for all students. Dual enrollment (high school students earning college credit) directly affects these efforts. Students who participate in a dual enrollment program are more likely to enroll in and graduate from a postsecondary institution. Additionally, students who successfully earn early college credit can graduate earlier, thereby lowering the overall cost.

Every single year, the UWs have a record number of students participating in dual enrollment opportunities. In 2023-24, nearly 16,000 high school students participated in dual enrollment programs through the Universities of Wisconsin. This is a 12% increase from the previous academic year.

As part of the 2025-27 biennial budget request, the Universities of Wisconsin requested \$14.5M to expand dual enrollment opportunities to Wisconsin high school students. This money would have increased the capacity of this program by 15,000 students, nearly double the current student count. Ultimately, this funding was not included in 2025 Wisconsin Act 15, but we are still seeking avenues to continue to support dual enrollment expansion in Wisconsin.

The Universities of Wisconsin appreciate the opportunity to have participated in the statewide discussions convened by Representative Murphy alongside our K-12 and technical college partners on this important issue. Those conversations underscored a shared commitment to expanding access and participation in dual enrollment opportunities for students across Wisconsin.

(Cont.)

Many provisions in the bill align with the recommendations from our 2023 Dual Enrollment Task Force Report and support the strategic goals of the Universities of Wisconsin to strengthen dual enrollment pathways and enhance collaboration with K-12 partners.

We are generally supportive of the intent of this legislation and agree with its underlying principles. However, we are testifying for informational purposes only, as the most significant need we see in this area is the development of a sustainable statewide funding model to reduce financial barriers for students. Additionally, certain elements of the bill have a greater impact on other education sectors, and we defer to those partners on those specific provisions.

One key part of this legislation that we are very supportive of is the creation of a Council on Dual Enrollment. This collaboration will explore avenues to expand dual enrollment opportunities throughout the state, so all Wisconsin students can have access to early college credit. As mentioned earlier, the biggest obstacle to expanding dual enrollment accessibility for all Wisconsin students is a statewide funding model to ensure affordability and accessibility. We hope that the Council will make this a priority.

We also want to highlight our support for the legislation's application deadline changes that will better align with the academic calendars of both high schools and colleges, and language around supporting transferability of general education credits across colleges.

The provisions outlined above reinforce our shared goal of creating accessible and affordable educational opportunities for all Wisconsinites while reducing the time to degree so graduates join the state's workforce sooner. The Universities of Wisconsin are committed to ensuring dual enrollment remains a priority and appreciate the ongoing legislative interest in this very important issue. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with our colleagues in the state legislature at DPI, WTCS, WAICU and the Tribal Colleges.

Thank you again for providing the Universities of Wisconsin the opportunity to testify on this legislation today.