

DATE: January 28, 2026

TO: Members on the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities

FROM: Office of Government Relations, Universities of Wisconsin

RE: Testimony for Information Only on Assembly Bill 757

Thank you, Chair Murphy, Vice-Chair Nedweski, and committee members, for providing the Universities of Wisconsin (UWs) an opportunity to submit testimony on Assembly Bill 757 (AB 757).

The Board of Regents (BOR) is the governing authority for the Universities of Wisconsin (UWs), responsible for promulgating administrative rules, establishing policies, determining educational programs and degrees, and exercising systemwide oversight. While the BOR may delegate certain responsibilities to the UWs president or university chancellors, it retains ultimate responsibility for system governance.

Current statute makes the BOR responsible for appointing the UWs president, chancellors, and the necessary faculty, academic staff, officers, and all other UW employees. Certain senior administrative roles are designated as limited appointments held at the pleasure of the BOR, including the president, chancellors, vice chancellors, and other senior administrators. Faculty or academic staff who accept limited appointments retain their underlying appointments. Under BOR policy, the Board has delegated a wide array of appointment authority to the president of UW and the chancellors (See Regent Policy 20-21), including the authority to make limited appointments. Current law does not require the BOR to approve standardized position descriptions for most employee types, including limited appointments, or to submit comprehensive reports detailing their titles, salaries, and duties.

The BOR appoints the UWs president and chancellors and delegates a variety of authorities to them for systemwide coordination and administration consistent with BOR policy. Faculty, academic staff, and students participate in governance in advisory roles defined by statute, administrative rule or BOR policy. Under statute, administrative code and policy, these governance roles are generally advisory to the chancellors, and are subject to the authority of the chancellors, the president and the BOR.

AB 757 would restrict the BOR's broad authority to govern the UW system by constraining its delegation authority related to limited appointments. Under the bill, the BOR would be required to directly make most limited appointments and would be prohibited from delegating that authority, centralizing appointment decisions that are generally delegated under current BOR policy. The bill would also expand the BOR's responsibilities by requiring approval of the title, salary, and position description for each limited appointment and mandating an annual report to the legislature and

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governor detailing the number, titles, salaries, and duties of limited appointments at each institution.

Finally, the bill would modify faculty governance by redefining “faculty” to include instructional academic staff and others meeting specified appointment thresholds, and by limiting the ability of governance bodies to restrict committee service or leadership roles based on rank, tenure status, faculty title, or terminal degree attainment. These issues are already managed well by existing BOR administrative code under Wis. Admin. Code s. UWS 1.05, which allows an institution’s faculty shared governance body and chancellor to designate members of the academic staff as having faculty status for the purposes of fully participating in faculty governance within the rules of the institution. Among the reasons for the flexibility afforded to faculty shared governance and chancellors included in Wis. Admin. Code. s. UWS 1.05 is to acknowledge the differences between departments, schools, colleges, and units on individual campuses. A broad approach like the one in AB 757 would not acknowledge these differences in governance and structure, which can be dependent on their size, structure, and programmatic focus.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on AB 757.