United Council of UW Students

Presentation to the
UW System Board of Regents
May 9th, 2003
Overview: Mission

- Non-profit, non-partisan (501c3) lobby and advocacy group for UW students
- Student run, student directed
- In addition to lobby/advocacy work, United Council researches issues, provides networking opportunities, holds events, and runs campaigns.
Overview: Membership

24 of the 26 UWS schools are members

- UWs Stout and Whitewater are currently not members

All 13 UW College campuses are members

- Membership is by individual campus—not as an institution
Overview: Mandatory Refundable Fee (87-3)

- Created by the Board of Regents in 1987
- The current fee is $1.35 per student per semester and summer session
- The fee plus postage is refundable
- Membership is decided by campus referenda every two years
Overview: 9 Staff

1 President
• Elected to a one year term
• Full time
• Chief executive and political leader
• Registered lobbyist

8 Directors
• Hired for full-time two year terms,
• Staggered terms to reduce turnover
• Mostly recent graduates
• 1 additional lobbyist
Overview: Staff

- President*
- Executive Director
- Legislative Affairs Director*
- Academic Affairs Director
- Shared Governance Director
- Organizing and Communications Director
- Multicultural Issues Director
- Women’s Issues Director
- LGBTQ Issues Director

* registered lobbyists
History

- **1960**: Nine schools come together at Stevens Point and form United Council.

- **1971**: The Wisconsin State and University of Wisconsin Systems merge. United Council helps draft 36.09(5).
History

• 1987: United Council and the Board of Regents create the Mandatory Refundable Fee.

• 1994-2000: Successfully worked with UW System to protect student fee autonomy in *Southworth v. the UW System Board of Regents.*
Services

- Advocacy and Lobbying
- Research
- Networking
- Campaigns
Events

- 7 General Assemblies
- Alumni Picnic
  - Summer Leadership Retreat
  - Women’s Retreat
  - Student of Color Symposium
  - Shared Governance/Student Fee Summit
Conferences

• Building Unity
  – State’s largest multicultural conference
  – This fall will be the 12th annual conference

• Women’s Leadership Conference
  – State’s largest women’s conference
  – This spring will be the 7th annual conference
Past Legislative Victories

- **1971**: Helped write state stature 36.09(5)
- **1999**: Banned the use of social security numbers as IDs
- **2000**: Resident tuition freeze
- **2001**: Reauthorized VAWA and Hates Crimes legislation
- **2002**: Passed Add-a-Regent legislation out of committee
‘01-’03 Budget Adjustment Bill

- Linked financial aid increases to tuition increases
- Capped tuition at 8%
- Eliminated a 10% non-resident surcharge (saved students $1,600)
- Eliminated the 165 credit surcharge (saved students $200/credit)
‘01-’03 Budget Adjustment Bill

- Restored funding for study abroad grants and travel
- Defeated an Assembly proposal to increase the UWS base budget cut from $50M to $100M
- Successfully lobbied to reduce the base cut to $44M
‘03–’05 Budget: Doyle Proposal

- Eliminated statutory cap on the WHEG
- Instituted a hard cap on tuition (15/18%)
- Lobbied for a record financial aid increase of $23.6M
- Lobbied against damaging shared revenue cuts
Statewide Campaigns

• **Fall: Vote 2002**
  – Vote Conference included forums with the candidates from the 4 major parties
  – Targeted races in Eau Claire, Sheboygan and Manitowoc
  – Registered thousands of students to vote

• **Spring: State Budget**
  Priorities
  – GPR funding for financial aid
  – Protect shared revenue
  – Restore base budget funding
  – Lower the proposed tuition increase
Campaign Events

- Vote 2002 Conference
- State Budget Campaign Training
- Coordinated Press Conferences
- Lobby Days
- Days of Action
- March on the Capitol
Other Priorities

• Federal: Higher Education Act
  – PELL grant increase
  – PELL as an entitlement
  – TRIO eligibility for UW Colleges
  – Repeal the drug and selective service provisions

• Other priorities
  – Differential tuition policy initiative
  – SEVIS funding
  – Affirmative action
  – Curriculum infusion
  – Advising
  – AB 208: Add-a-Regent legislation
Vision and Direction
Recent Changes

• Staggered two-year staff terms
• Revised calendar
• Restructured budget
• Statewide campaigns in Fall and Spring
More Regent Engagement

• United Council and New Regent orientation?
• Liaison between SGA’s and Regents’ adopted campuses
• Incorporate the Regents into more United Council events
• Promote the Student Regent as a statewide student leader
Regent Packets

• **Purpose**
  – Update the Board on student issues
  – Provide the student perspective on pending items of business
  – Request Board action

• **Content**
  – UC News, GA resolutions, Conference information, and Regent Items

• **Feedback**
Organizational Restructuring

- Creation of a Foundation
- Reviewing the MRF
- New Office?
- Seeking more grant funding
- Alumni Events
- The role of the UC President—should we elect a current student?
The Future

• 5 year strategic plan for United Council
• Building the State Student Association (SSA) movement nationally
We Are Your Future
Make Us Your Priority

Thank You