

Resolution: State Support for the UW System

BOARD OF REGENTS

WHEREAS, following a Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) management audit of UW System in 1986, the Wisconsin Legislature concluded that the UW System's resources were not sufficient to properly support an enrollment of nearly 140,000 FTE students (approx. 165,000 headcount), in response to which the Board of Regents directed UW System to reduce subsequent enrollments and manage future enrollments to maintain quality; and

WHEREAS, state General Purpose Revenue (GPR) support per student at the time of the 1986 audit was \$1222 **below** the national average, but, as a result of enrollment management and increases in state support, improved to \$161 **above** the national average by 1995; and

WHEREAS, since that time, GPR support per student has steadily declined to the point that today it is \$1228 per student **below** the national average; and

WHEREAS, it is universally accepted that there is a positive correlation between a state's per capita income and the number of residents who have baccalaureate degrees, and, accordingly the UW System is committed to implementing initiatives to maximize access for Wisconsin residents and now enrolls more than 135,000 FTE students each year; and

WHEREAS, despite deep cuts in state support, including the largest cut in state GPR support in the university's history in 2003-05, the UW System has continued to work hard to maintain access and sustain quality; and

WHEREAS, the UW System has eliminated more than 450 positions in the current biennium and has been directed to cut a minimum of 200 administrative positions in the 2005-07 biennium, continuing to maximize administrative efficiency and effectiveness as it maintains quality; and

WHEREAS, in August 2004, the Board of Regents passed, and submitted to the Governor and the Department of Administration, a 2005-07 "Student Access and Wisconsin Success" budget designed to put students first by increasing financial aid and adding more faculty in the classroom; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's proposed biennial budget reversed a trend of diminishing support for the UW System and its students by, among other things, increasing financial aid and reallocating dollars for additional teaching positions; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Committee on Finance has cut the proposed increases in financial aid by \$2 million to the UW System and nearly \$11 million to the Higher Education Aids Board, and eliminated the funding for classroom faculty; and

WHEREAS, only the full Legislature can restore GPR support for the UW System following Joint Committee on Finance action;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Regents urges the full Legislature to restore the 120 faculty positions and the financial aid removed by the Joint Committee on Finance;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Regents, noting the call by the Joint Committee on Finance for a Higher Education Task Force, strongly supports UW System President Reilly's call for a bi-partisan State Commission to address fundamental questions about what the people of Wisconsin want their public university to be, and to do, in the 21st century, including whether the state wants the UW to increase access to higher education in Wisconsin, or limit it by shrinking enrollments? Whether to continue to raise tuition to offset budget cuts, or hold down tuition increases? Whether to stoke the university's powerful research engine and connect it to job creation and the discoveries of the future? Whether to indicate how much state support per student should be provided and how much financial aid is necessary given rising tuition; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Regents requests that such guidance and direction from the Commission be concluded by early 2006, so that the Board of Regents can, with the advice of the Legislature and the Governor, and mindful of the results of the 1986 audit, plan prudently for the future, including determining appropriate enrollment levels for Fall 2007.