

## State Budget Cuts would drastically affect Access to UW-Extension and UW Colleges programs

A legislative conference committee will soon wrestle with an Assembly version of the state budget poised to cut \$120 million from UW schools and student financial aid that would drastically affect access to both the UW Colleges and UW-Extension, affecting millions of people across the state.

“Our two statewide institutions of UW Colleges and UW-Extension have been integrating key functions for several years, becoming more cost effective and more efficient in the process. Any further cuts would drastically affect our ability to serve the people of the state,” said David Wilson, chancellor for both UW Colleges and UW-Extension. “Additionally, the UW System, which we are part of, is already ranked as one of the leanest, most efficient public universities in the nation.”

The *UW Colleges* is a leader in meeting the higher education needs of returning adult students via its 13 campuses and its online offerings. The Assembly’s proposed reduction of \$95.9 million from the UW System’s base budget and reductions in the all-agency fund would mean less access to a college degree for students of all ages. Such reductions would also affect the Colleges’ ability to partner with UW four-year schools to deliver baccalaureate degrees, which research shows the state needs.

Needy and disadvantaged students also do not fare well in this proposed budget. The need-based Lawton minority undergraduate grant program would be cut by \$1.2 million, while \$4.1 million would be cut from the Advanced Opportunity Program. This would mean \$5.3 million *less in financial aid for Wisconsin students*.

Most or all Wisconsin-produced programming on *Wisconsin Public Television and Wisconsin Public Radio* would be eliminated along with 90 staff positions. This would affect millions of viewers and listeners. In addition, the Assembly budget cut would lead to a long-term degradation of the broadcast system because Educational Communications Board (ECB) field engineers would be cut by about half. Those cuts would hamper the reliability of the signals they send out not just for public programming, but for educational services and emergency warnings. In addition, cuts of this magnitude would significantly reduce federal funding. A portion of WPT/WPR’s matching funds from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) is based on a multiplier of non-federal funds received. The proposed budget cut would result in a decline in CPB funding to UW-Extension and the ECB of more than \$650,000 annually.

*The School for Workers*, which provides programs in communities throughout Wisconsin, would be put out of business. It offers instruction and consultation to workers about their employment rights and how they can have a voice in their workplace, in the economy, and in society. It also provides services to joint labor-management groups that directly benefit both the employers and their workers.

Further, the entire GPR appropriation for the *Wisconsin Humanities Council* (WHC) would be erased. Not one nickel of current state funding goes to salaries, overhead, or other operating expenses at WHC. All state money goes right back to communities in its re-grant program. The WHC is already one of the most under-funded state councils in the nation at the state level. Wisconsin gets \$72,600 a year from the state for humanities initiatives, while states like Louisiana, Connecticut, and Virginia get well over two million dollars a year. Elimination of state funding will likely reduce the amount of federal grants and private money that the WHC can leverage and bring into the state. Currently, it brings in more than \$700,000 in federal money to Wisconsin.

“Rather than making an investment in higher education, the Assembly budget version would be overseeing the continued decline of higher education in Wisconsin. Rather than increasing the number of baccalaureate degree holders that would eventually increase the economic base in Wisconsin, the Assembly budget would be creating the condition for continued economic decline,” said Wilson. “The strength of our economy rests on the capacity of our citizens to learn and apply new knowledge to their work. A reinvestment in higher education is essential to achieving these shared goals.”

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