

Universities of Wisconsin Board of Regents
Meeting of the Business & Finance Committee
Via Zoom Videoconference
April 16, 2025

The meeting of the Business and Finance Committee was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Chair, Regent Ashok Rai.

A. Calling of the Roll

Present: Regent Haben Goitom, Regent Jim Kreuser, Regent Timothy Nixon, Regent Chris Peterson, Regent Chair Ashok Rai, Regent Jack Salzwedel and Regent Karen Walsh. Regent Hector Colon's presence was noted immediately following the roll call.
Absent: None

B. Declaration of Conflicts

The chair asked committee members to identify any conflicts of interest regarding items on the agenda. No conflicts were identified.

C. Approval of the Minutes of the February 6, 2025, Meeting of the Business & Finance Committee

Corrections: None

Motion to adopt made by: Regent Walsh

Motion seconded by: Regent Kreuser

Motion carried unanimously (voice vote)

Upon the direction of Regent Rai, hearing no corrections, the minutes of the February 6, 2025, meeting were approved as distributed.

D. Approval of 2025-26 Auxiliary Rates

Julie Gordon, UW Administration Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration, after noting that tuition proposals will be considered at a future meeting pending final action on the UW's state budget funding request, presented the proposal for 2025-26 auxiliary rates at each of the Universities of Wisconsin. While the rate adjustments vary across the universities, the proposal would increase the average segregated fees for students at a four-year campus by 3.5%, and the average annual room and board cost for the majority of students living on a four-year campus by 2.8%, for an overall increase of 2.9%. These increases are driven by several factors including wage adjustments, inflationary expenses, capital projects, and student-initiated programming. Even with the rates approved as proposed, overall auxiliary revenue balances are projected to decline.

Questions/Comments: Regent Colon asked whether expense reductions would be

considered if budgetary shortfalls emerge. VP Gordon responded that the outcome of the state budget process as well as potential federal actions would determine whether adjustments would be necessary, in consultation with the universities and the Board. Regent Colon encouraged consideration of cost reduction opportunities for addressing any financial impacts, which VP Gordon agreed will continue to be a focus.

Regent Walsh asked whether there had been a calculation of the tuition rate increases that would be necessary to cover the cost of initiatives should they not be enacted in the state budget bill. VP Gordon responded that because the total funding increase requested in the state budget bill would equate to an unrealistic 40% tuition increase, university leadership would need to prioritize any budget provisions not funded in the final bill. Regent Walsh then asked if UW Administration has enumerated the impact of inflation on the universities to help provide context. VP Gordon noted that the auxiliary rate proposals from the universities include details explaining where inflation has necessitated fee increases in specific areas, which universities can use to communicate the rationale to students and families. She added that messaging on inflationary impacts is embedded in budget request advocacy as well. Regent Rai commented that the auxiliary rate proposal is supported by data and rationale, and encouraged members to view the budget request passed by the Board in aggregate versus contemplating potential impacts on tuition.

Regent Salzwedel commented on the potential financial impacts from federal government actions and other changes to higher education, and asked where within the UWs do risk and financial planning efforts primarily reside. VP Gordon shared that UW Administration, across all areas including Finance, Legal and Risk, as well as the universities are jointly monitoring and undertaking contingency planning. President Rothman added that in addition to the various UWSA units, some of this work resides with the Board and his own position from a managerial perspective. He stressed the work done to address structural deficits and achieve efficiencies, and noted that while the funding requested in the budget bill would allow for needed investment, there will continue to be an effort for drive efficiency and prepare contingency plans.

Motion to adopt made by: Regent Walsh

Motion seconded by: Regent Salzwedel

Motion carried unanimously (voice vote)

E. Approval of an Amendment to the UW System Report on Strategic Plans for Major Information Technology Projects

Steven Hopper, Associate Vice President for the Office of Learning and Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, presented a request for an addition to the UW Strategic Plan for Major IT Projects. The three-year project would modernize the data infrastructure and overall data collection process to provide new university-level student data warehouse capabilities while also streamlining submission of data at the UW Administration level. The approach would create a process that reduces manual effort, aligns to broader data strategies, and reduces the lag-time to report official numbers. While the project budget is \$3.3 million, this solution will collectively reduce or avoid \$1.4 million in annual operating expenses. AVP Hopper added that the UW is on track for go live of the

Administrative Transformation Program in July 2025, following a successful dry run in March of the cutover process.

Questions/Comments: Regent Rai commented that the value of the project extends beyond the cost savings by providing significant analytic capabilities on topics like student trends and student success measures. Regent Nixon asked President Rothman whether it remains his recommendation to proceed with the project versus delaying until state and federal funding questions are known. President Rothman affirmed his recommendation, stating that the investment in the project will support sustainability in the long run. Regent Walsh commented that the successful test of the cutover to ATP was impressive. AVP Hopper added that while the test went well, the team did learn some lessons that will help optimize the rollout.

Motion to adopt made by: Regent Salzwedel

Motion seconded by: Regent Walsh

Motion carried unanimously (voice vote)

The meeting was adjourned at 1:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L. Joyce
Recording Secretary