

**Universities of Wisconsin Board of Regents**  
**Meeting of the Business & Finance Committee**  
Wisconsin Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
UW-Milwaukee Student Union  
2200 E. Kenwood Boulevard, Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
& Via Zoom Videoconference  
June 5, 2025

The meeting of the Business and Finance Committee was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Chair, Regent Ashok Rai.

**A. Calling of the Roll**

Present: Regent Chair Ashok Rai, Regent Jim Kreuser, Regent Timothy Nixon, Regent Jack Salzwedel and Regent Karen Walsh.

Absent: Regent Haben Goitom

**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 April 16, 2025, Meeting of the Business & Finance Committee**

**Corrections:** None

**Motion to adopt made by:** Regent Walsh

**Motion seconded by:** Regent Nixon

**Motion** carried unanimously (voice vote)

Upon the direction of Regent Rai, hearing no corrections, the minutes of the April 16, 2025, meeting were approved as distributed.

**D. UW-Milwaukee Host Campus Presentation, “Financial Planning and Progress to Support Our Unique Tripartite Mission”**

Robin Van Harpen, Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administrative Affairs, and Drew Knab, Associate Vice Chancellor for Business & Financial Services, UW-Milwaukee (UWM) shared financial and operational strategies designed to support UWM’s unique “tripartite” mission focused on access and student success, research excellence, and deep community service and engagement. After providing background on that unique mission, the presentation offered an overview of UWM’s current finances, which are challenged by relatively low state aid and tuition rates compared to its peers. Expense management efforts, including FTE reductions and branch campus closures, have limited expense growth to 1.5% annually since FY18.

The presenters shared the results of a five-year review of UWM's activity-based budget model and outlined the objectives of the university's FY 2026-2030 financial plan. Key strategies in support of that plan include a focused fundraising campaign; a strategic enrollment management plan focused on retention improvements and modest growth in new cohorts; community and corporate partnerships; and ongoing expense management efforts including faculty workload changes, academic program review, long-range planning and space optimization, and AI and other technology utilization.

**Questions/Comments:** Regent Walsh thanked the presenters for their presentation and the increased focus on fundraising. She asked how retention efforts have been impacted by the expense reductions made by UWM. VC Van Harpen shared that UWM has invested heavily in student support and continues to make those areas a priority. Regent Walsh asked for a clarification on the graduation rate figure that was presented, which was confirmed to be the six-year graduation rate. In response to a question from Regent Salzwedel, AVC Knab explained that the peer group shown in regard to tuition and fees is sourced by the Legislative Audit Bureau, while the peer group related to other financial metrics is a grouping of similar urban universities without a medical school, although there is overlap among the two groups. Regent Salzwedel asked which of the key objectives identified for the financial plan is considered the most challenging metric to achieve. VC Van Harpen shared that they are all interrelated and aligned, but student success and retention is the number one goal. Regent Rai asked what factors accounted for the 6% increase in adjusted operating revenue between FY23 and 24. AVC Knab replied that it reflects a combination of tuition, gifts, interest income, and state funds in support of pay plan.

As this agenda item was for information and discussion only, no further action was required by the committee.

**E. UW-Madison Undergraduate Application Fee Increase**

Julie Gordon, Interim Vice President for Finance and Administration, UW Administration, presented UW-Madison's request for a \$10 increase in its undergraduate application fee from its current level of \$70. This new \$80 rate would be effective for the 2025-26 application cycle and would remain in range of its peer institutions. The increase is expected to generate an additional \$600,000 in support of the admissions operation as it manages, and reviews record numbers of first-year and transfer applications.

**Questions/Comments:** None

**Motion to adopt made by:** Regent Salzwedel

**Motion seconded by:** Regent Walsh

**Motion** carried unanimously (voice vote)

**F. UW-Madison Master Clinical Trial Agreement with Amgen Inc.**

Rob Cramer, Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, UW-Madison, presented a

UW-Madison master clinical trial agreement with Amgen Inc., a biopharmaceutical company that is a long-time collaborator with the university and UW-Madison's Carbone Cancer Center. The value of future projects is anticipated to exceed \$10 million over the five-year term of the new agreement.

**Questions/Comments:** Regent Walsh asked how often this agreement comes up for renewal. VC Cramer shared that with recent changes to Regent policy, the number of contracts required for Board approval has diminished, allowing UW-Madison to enter more quickly into new agreements that provide opportunities to researchers and offer cutting-edge treatment options to patients.

**Motion to adopt made by:** Regent Walsh

**Motion seconded by:** Regent Nixon

**Motion** carried unanimously (voice vote)

#### **G. Trust Funds Quarterly Investment Reports**

VP Gordon prefaced the presentation by sharing that asset allocation analyses for both funds are being undertaken and will be discussed with the committee in the months ahead.

Charles Saunders, Chief Investment Officer, Office of Trust Funds, and Robert Thornton, Asset & Risk Allocation Business Director, State of Wisconsin Investment Board, shared the 2025 Q1 reports for Trust Funds assets (\$634.5 million) and Intermediate Term Fund assets (\$740 million), noting performance in each is in line with respective benchmarks. Mr. Thornton offered additional background on the asset allocation strategy for the SWIB-managed funds.

**Questions/Comments:** Regent Salzwedel asked for information on fees being paid, and whether asset liability matching work is performed as a strategy. Mr. Saunders shared there are no stated liabilities beyond the distribution for endowment. Mr. Thornton shared that the SWIB management fee is 5.5 basis points with additional operational and Blackrock fees that vary based upon the funds. Mr. Saunders noted that all fees combined equate to 0.1 to 0.2%.

As this agenda item was for information and discussion only, no further action was required by the committee.

#### **H. Administrative Transformation Program (ATP) Status Update**

Steven Hopper, Associate Vice President for Learning and Information Technology, UW Administration, provided a status update on the Administrative Transformation Program. Mr. Hopper shared that the project is on track for a successful go-live in July 2025. Activities are progressing as expected, and the project remains within budget. The build of the production environment is in progress, and 24x7 operations will begin on June 18. An increasing number of employees are completing training activities, with survey results

suggesting satisfaction with the training. The biggest remaining risk is related to the new benefits management system of the Department of Employee Trust Funds, which will require some short-term manual work by the ATP team.

**Questions/Comments:** Regent Rai shared his appreciation for the work done by AVP Hopper's team and everyone involved in the project. Regent Walsh asked what percentage of users have completed the training. AVP Hopper estimated that 35-40% have completed the training. Regent Walsh asked what users who have not taken will experience at go-live. AVP Hopper shared that there will be a command center to address issues and questions as they arise. He added that there are many self-guided, computer-based training modules that will continue to be available on demand, as well as an extensive library of resources and short videos. In-person classroom training has already occurred for staff in more complex roles and/or those with elevated levels of security. Regent Nixon shared that due to the experiences of similar projects nationwide, he was skeptical but hopeful that ATP will launch on time. He asked AVP Hopper what issues represent his biggest area of concern. AVP Hopper shared that he is confident on the technical component, but his biggest concern is in user adoption and helping employees manage through the transition. Regent Rai asked how long the command center will operate, to which AVP Hopper responded that the plan is to operate for two months and staffed 18-20 hours per day, to be gradually scaled down over time as milestones are met. Regent Rai asked if super users have been identified at the campus level, to which AVP Hopper replied in the affirmative.

As this agenda item was for information and discussion only, no further action was required by the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L. Joyce  
Recording Secretary