

## **Biennial Budget Resolution**

3/10/2011

WHEREAS in 1971 the University of Wisconsin merged with the Wisconsin State Universities to create the University of Wisconsin System (System); and

WHEREAS over the last 40 years the System has evolved into one of the nation's premier university systems, with over 182,000 students and over \$1 billion in research, and into a key contributor to the economy of the State of Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS institutions of the System have experienced a steady decline in state resources needed to provide access to quality higher education in the state; and

WHEREAS all System institutions operate in highly competitive national, and often international, markets for students, faculty, staff, and financial resources; and

WHEREAS, in light of these budget reductions and the competitive higher education market in which all System institutions operate, all System institutions need significant management flexibilities in human resources, tuition-setting, budgeting, purchasing, and capital projects; and

WHEREAS System institutions' need for increased management flexibilities has long been sought by UW leaders, and most recently affirmed by the System's Tuition and Financial Aid Working Group and Competitive University Workforce Commission; and

WHEREAS the importance and need for these flexibilities for all System institutions has been championed by business, community, media, and higher education leaders around the state; and

WHEREAS other public universities possess many of the flexibilities that System institutions seek, and other states are proposing increased flexibilities for their public universities in order to manage reductions in public funding and better serve their states; and

WHEREAS the proposed 2011-13 Wisconsin biennial budget bill reduces funding for System institutions by \$250 million dollars, and a cut of this magnitude, without flexibilities, creates significant challenges to all System institutions' ability to provide access to quality higher education for Wisconsin residents, create more jobs, and support communities; and

WHEREAS the budget bill provides for major cuts to all institutions in the System, but allows for increased management flexibilities only for UW-Madison, and further separates UW-Madison from all other System institutions through the creation of a new UW-Madison public authority; and

WHEREAS the creation of one or more separate public authorities would fragment the System and encourage more competition between System institutions; add new bureaucracy due to duplicative administrative and academic structures; and increase the total costs borne by state taxpayers, students, and families; and

WHEREAS fragmentation of the state's public university system will result in less collaboration between UW-Madison and other System institutions; and

WHEREAS fragmentation of the System will diminish UW-Extension's ability to make available to every corner of the state the vast stores of knowledge and expertise possessed by System faculty and staff through its presence in all 72 counties, with three tribal governments, and on each System campus; and

WHEREAS fragmentation of the System will eliminate a shared set of policies and procedures that aid research and teaching collaborations between institutions and that make it easier for information and research to be disseminated and partnerships to take hold; and

WHEREAS faculty, staff, and students from institutions throughout the System have voiced concerns over what the creation of a public authority for individual institutions would mean to current governance rights and structures, access for Wisconsin residents, affordable tuition rates, and academic freedom in teaching and research,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents strongly supports amendment of 2011 Senate Bill 27 to provide all institutions the management flexibilities proposed for UW-Madison, within the Board of Regents' and System's current governance and statutory framework; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the System Board of Regents will delegate the new flexibilities directly to each UW institution, while ensuring transparency and appropriate levels of board oversight and public accountability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the System Board of Regents endorses the careful future study of alternative structures for leading and managing the University of Wisconsin System, including but not limited to, public authority status for the entire System; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the System Board of Regents believes that any action that would break up the UW System puts at risk a proven and successful approach for delivering quality, and cost-effective public higher education that has served Wisconsin well for almost 40 years; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the System Board of Regents recognizes that stable state funding, affordable access, a high-quality, appropriately-compensated faculty and staff, and all System institutions working together through a carefully-planned structure, are necessary to achieve the widely-supported Growth Agenda for Wisconsin and strengthen the state's public higher education system.