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July 18, 2007

To: All Wisconsin State Legislators

We know that you've heard from students, alumni, and friends from across the state, asking you to support UW System's "Growth Agenda for Wisconsin" in the 2007-09 budget. While you've heard broad support for expanded enrollment and new economic development initiatives, we hope that you will address the need to fully fund the University's current academic programs and student services.

We ask you to preserve the quality of UW education, research, and public service, by providing necessary funds to meet our current obligations. Any effort to reduce support for these existing programs amounts to a budget cut.

Along with other state agencies, the UW System has contributed to recent belt-tightening efforts, absorbing an additional \$250-million base reduction in the 2003-05 budget. The UW System's cost-to-continue requirement for this biennium totals \$150 million. This is needed to pay utility bills, meet our current payroll, support mandated programs, and fund the quality of service already promised to students and parents. This is outside of funds necessary to meet the state's demand for new degree programs and expanded enrollment.

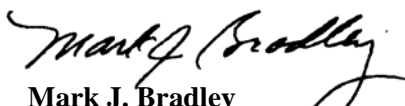
The budget advanced by the Joint Committee on Finance would fully fund our cost-to-continue. The Assembly's budget proposal funds only 20% of these ongoing commitments, forcing the University to make \$120 million in cuts and reallocations.

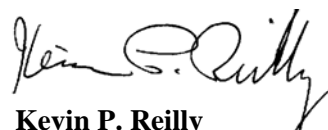
Previous state cuts have already compromised the quality of student services and contributed to the departures of talented UW professors. With further reductions in state support, we will not be able to educate 163,000 students without seriously diminishing quality.

Core investments fuel success. Fully-staffed academic departments offer classes and advising that students need to graduate on time. Fully-funded UW campuses compete more effectively for precious federal grants and private donations. Expanded research and teaching at UW campuses will contribute to a brighter future, but only if the underlying academic foundation is preserved.

When you support the UW System's ongoing operations, you're sustaining the state's educational infrastructure, and its economic vitality. More important, you're honoring promises made to today's UW students, their parents, and all Wisconsin taxpayers, making it possible for us to open the doors of a UW campus to more of your constituents.

We would be happy to provide detailed information about the "Growth Agenda" and UW System's cost-to-continue. Thank you for your service to the state and your support of Wisconsin's great public university.


Mark J. Bradley
President, Board of Regents


Kevin P. Reilly
President, UW System