

A message from

UW System Student Leaders

September 27, 2007

Dear Members of the Conference Committee:

We write to you on behalf of more than 160,000 students currently enrolled on the 26 University of Wisconsin campuses. As you negotiate the 2007-09 state budget bill, we ask that you consider our concerns and make higher education a top priority.

Years of budget cuts to the UW System are compromising the quality of our education and limiting access to college for future generations of students. What concerns us most is how the state's lack of support is forcing students and families to shoulder a greater share of the college costs through higher tuition, coupled with reductions in student services. We're paying more for less.

Unfortunately, the Assembly version of the budget continues that trend by woefully under-funding UW campuses, failing to even provide adequate funds needed to sustain the UW's current operations. These "cost-to-continue" expenses reflect the increased costs of utilities, employee health insurance and other basic operations. The cost of maintaining current academic programs is expected to be about \$150 million, yet the Assembly budget would only provide \$30 million for these ongoing expenses. That will, of course, require the university to once again pare back services to students.

You have a difficult task in determining the state's priorities. As students, taxpayers and voters, we respectfully urge you to **reinvest in**, and **not cut**, our campuses. It's time for lawmakers to recognize that the future of students and the economic vitality of our state depend on a strong and vibrant public university.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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