

2019-21 Biennial Budget: Higher Education

UW System Funding: The Governor's budget increases funding by \$43,692,600 in FY20 and \$65,992,600 in FY21. This includes Capacity Building Initiatives, Fund the Freeze, Extension County Ag, UW Colleges, and a standard budget adjustment. The budget also provides \$40.4 million for a 2% pay plan increase for UW System employees in each fiscal year, bringing the total increase investment in UW System to \$150 million. Base funding for UW System is \$876,924,500.

Capacity Building Initiatives: UW System will receive a \$45 million increase over the biennium, \$20 million in FY20 and \$25 in FY21, to distribute to each campus to allow them to meet the individualized needs of their regions, including allowing institutions to provide access to high demand fields, such as STEM, healthcare, and business.¹ Additionally, institutions will be able to enhance student services and academic support.² Without an adequate investment in higher education, positions, classes, and majors have been cut over the last several years.³ This investment will allow institutions the flexibility to do hard skills training for our workforce and soft skills training for our citizens.

UW Colleges – Student Support Services: To ensure that student support services are not sacrificed during UW System's restructure, the budget will provide \$5 million over the biennium.⁴

Freeze Undergraduate Resident Tuition + Fund the Freeze: The Governor's budget will freeze undergraduate resident tuition, but will provide UW System with \$50.4 million over the biennium to fund the freeze. This ensures that quality is not sacrificed for affordability.

Nurse Educators Program: The Governor's budget provides \$10 million in FY20 for the nurse educators program. There is a shortage of nurses in Wisconsin that is driven by a shortage of nurse educators. The demand for nurses continues to increase due to our aging population and the rise of opioid addiction. "The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development projects the need for 5,327 new registered nursing positions by 2024, a 9.5 percent increase from 2014's total of 52,212 positions. It also expects about 400 more licensed practical and licenses vocational nurses during the same time (a 5 percent increase), while nurse practitioner jobs are expected to expand by 440 jobs to 2,976 by 2024."⁵ This program would provide nurses in an educator program with loan repayment assistance if they make a 3-year commitment to teach in a Wisconsin nursing

¹ [UW System 2019-21 Budget Request.](#)

² [UW System 2019-21 Budget Request.](#)

³ [Students, faculty get word out on UW System budget cuts; UW system students, staff protest proposed budget, elimination of humanities majors.](#)

⁴ [Board of Regents votes to invest in student services for UW Colleges, Extension.](#)

⁵ [Nursing shortage in Wisconsin puts specialized care nurses in demand.](#)

program. A Fall 2018 Administrators of Nursing Education of Wisconsin study found over 80 vacant faculty positions throughout Wisconsin. This program would help 150 nurses to become faculty members.

UW-Extension County Agriculture Representatives: This provision provides \$3.5 million and 20 FTE for UW-Extension County Agriculture Representatives, with the goal of ensuring that there is at least one county ag agent in each county who wishes to have one. These are agents who are experts in agriculture and offer free advice to Wisconsin farmers. They are the physical embodiment of the Wisconsin Idea. Currently, there are 15 fewer agents than in 2017 and 23 counties are completely without an agent.⁶ These agents can help farmers navigate the declining dairy industry⁷ and with environmental best practices to help protect water sources.⁸

Environmental Education (Stevens Point): The Governor's budget provides \$500,000 over the biennium for environmental education at UW-Stevens Point. Specifically, this funding would be provided to the LEAF program, a K-12 forestry education program. This program provides professional development to teachers, develops curriculum that teachers can use, and helps register school forest parcels for educational use.

Wisconsin Technical College System Board – General Aid Increase: The Governor's budget provides an additional \$18 million to WTCS (base is \$88,534,900). Technical colleges play a vital role in workforce development. WTCS offers more than 500 career programs and thousands of short-term certificates to help students gain employment. 94% of their graduates find a job within 6 months.⁹ Base funding for WTCS is \$88,534,900.

Resident Tuition for Undocumented Residents: This proposal will allow undocumented Wisconsin residents to pay resident tuition rates at UW System and WTCS. 21 other states and the District of Columbia have statutory language or policies providing in-state tuition rates to undocumented students.¹⁰

Student Loan Refinancing Authority Study: This proposal provides \$50,000 for a student loan refinancing authority study involving the Department of Financial Institutions, the Higher Educational Aids Board, and the State Treasurer. This initiative will study the feasibility of and develop options to implement a refinancing authority similar to that proposed by Democrats in previous sessions in the Higher Ed Lower Debt bill. The average student loan debt for Wisconsin's Class of 2017 was about \$30,000.¹¹

⁶ [Shortage of agricultural agents creating void in farm-rich counties.](#)

⁷ [Wisconsin lost record-breaking percent of dairy farms in 2018.](#)

⁸ [Hazardous drinking water found in 42% of southwest Wisconsin wells.](#)

⁹ <https://www.wistechcolleges.org/>.

¹⁰ [NCSL: Tuition Benefits for Immigrants.](#)

¹¹ [Student loan debt creeping up nationwide, while Wisconsin's average is down a bit at \\$29,569.](#)

Wisconsin Grants: This proposal provides an additional \$17.4 million for need-based grants to resident undergraduate students at UW institutions, technical colleges, private, nonprofit colleges and universities, and tribal colleges through the Wisconsin Grant program. In 2017-18, 63,567 students received Wisconsin Grants totaling \$107.7 million.¹²

HEAB BACKGROUND

	Base	FY20 Increase	FY21 Increase
WI Grants UW	\$61,894,100	\$3,094,800	\$6,344,200
WI Grants WTCS	\$27,971,700	\$1,148,600	\$2,354,600
WI Grants WAICU	\$28,504,600	\$1,425,300	\$2,921,800
WI Grants Tribal	\$481,800	\$21,400	\$49,400
Covenant Reestimate	\$2,930,000	(\$2,072,000)	(\$2,930,000)

¹² [LFB Informational Paper #34: Student Financial Aid.](#)