

Rep. Gannon: An open letter to the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents

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To the Board of Regents:

Recent incidents on college campuses across the nation have demonstrated the growing intolerance of the market place of ideas and lack of willingness to discuss opposing viewpoints at universities and colleges. These events have even occurred at UW campuses and have presented the University of Wisconsin System in a very negative light locally, as well as nationally and internationally. These incidents have led to legislation being introduced in order to force the campuses to allow freedoms of thought and expression without fear of harm or intimidation. Passing laws in order to force common sense on our campuses seems unnecessary.

Your positions as Regents already allow you to correct these problems, and I ask you to quickly convene and to clarify to every student and faculty member that this behavior will not be tolerated and that management positions that the Board of Regents controls will be in jeopardy if these improper actions continue. Your positions as Regents to the UW System are analogous to a Board of Directors of a private or public company. It is your responsibility that the enterprises reporting to you are being operated in a way that the owners of these institutions, the state taxpayers, can be proud to acknowledge their affiliation and financial support of. Wisconsin is being impugned as an intolerant state for higher education, and it is your responsibility to get this to cease immediately.

No matter your race, creed, religion or political stance, your voice should be allowed to be heard at the state taxpayer funded campuses.

May I recommend that the salary and compensation of the university leaders be tied to their enforcing an open and safe environment? The private sector would have quickly terminated those in charge based on past behavior, and it's time our universities are operated in a similar manner. I ask that you immediately pass a resolution stating your intended actions for the university leaders whom are incapable or unwilling to control their campus safety and first amendment rights. Allowing the board a chance to correct these egregious wrongs would be better than forcing the legislature's hand in passing more laws to force these campuses to be operated in an open and healthy manner.

Regards,

Rep. Bob Gannon

WI State Assembly