

Sen. Bewley: UW Barron falls victim to GOP cuts, again

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For the second time in just over two years, GOP budget cuts have taken aim at Northern Wisconsin and UW-Barron County, Sen. Janet Bewley (D-Delta) noted today. A reorganization plan announced yesterday would spell the end of not just UW Barron County as we know it, but all of Wisconsin's 13 independent two-year campuses.

"Local leaders are in the best position to know what they need for an educated workforce. Local officials I've spoken with are distraught by the proposed reduction in local control over the UW Barron County campus that their community built and pays for," Bewley said. "What this plan says to the young people of Northern Wisconsin is 'Look South,' and that's not right. What's worse, I fear this decision will be followed by cut after cut, year after year, to pay for the \$3 Billion Foxconn deal and other southeastern Wisconsin priorities."

Officials in Madison announced their plan to wrest control of 13 two-year campuses from local communities and consolidate them with four-year campuses without consulting Northern community or business leaders. "Deciding to hand control of the UW-Barron County campus over to UW Eau Claire without consulting the people who have contributed to, and rely on UW Barron County, is yet another slap in the face to northern Wisconsin citizens. They deserve better," said Bewley. Current law allows the University Systems' Board of Regents to approve the plan without legislative input, and they are hoping to pass it next month. Bewley encouraged Barron County citizens and businesses to make their views known before the Regents' final action in November.

Bewley noted that two-year campuses impacted by today's announcement primarily serve smaller communities and are vital to workforce training and economic development in communities left behind by the recent Foxconn deal. "Northern Wisconsin shouldn't lose its beloved UW-Barron County because the GOP has to make cuts here to pay for their priorities elsewhere."