

Rep. Shankland: Statement and lingering questions on New Point Forward proposal

Posted on Monday, Nov 12, 2018

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STEVENS POINT – Today, UW-Stevens Point released a second proposal to address their budget shortfall. In response, Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) issued the following statement:

“Since UWSP introduced the Point Forward proposal in March, I’ve heard from faculty, staff, college students, alumni, parents, high school students, high school counselors, community members, business leaders, local elected officials, regents, and state policymakers about it. My number one priority throughout this process has been to listen to these stakeholders and advocate for them, especially for sustainable state funding to our UW System.

“I want to recognize and thank the hard-working members of the campus community who served on the Program and/or Unit Discontinuance Consultative Committee and the Academic and Budget Advisory Work Group committees. This was not an easy task, and this entire process has been stressful and cumbersome for many.

“I look forward to weighing in on the new Point Forward proposal during the 90-day review period, after listening to the vital feedback and perspectives from all stakeholders. I plan on hosting roundtables on campus to solicit and better understand input from faculty, staff, students, and community members. I also look forward to meeting with campus administrators, UW System leaders, regents, and Governor-elect Evers.

“After reviewing the proposal, I have the following initial questions:

- Why was this proposal released to the press before it was sent to the campus community?
- What are the projected cost savings associated with Point Forward 2?
- Why is it necessary for UWSP to be the first campus in Wisconsin to lay off tenured faculty without declaring financial emergency? How much money will it save?
- How will eliminating these majors affect the Wisconsin Idea, including civic and global awareness?
- Have you explored other alternatives to lay-offs? For example, how much money would a hiring freeze save over the next three years of budget cuts? How long would it take to realize savings via attrition in the same departments you are projected to lay off tenured faculty?
- Why was it not explicitly disclosed in the proposal that the College of Letters and Science (COLS) will be eliminated? What cost savings do you project for dispersing COLS into the other colleges, and how will this affect shared governance?
- How will this move affect the College of Natural Resources, which is managed differently from others?
- What is the projected cost for the newly proposed institute and center, and how many faculty would be saved from lay-offs without the creation of these new programs, if any?
- What will UW-Stevens Point’s budget request to the governor and legislature look like? How will you focus your lobbying efforts in the Capitol? If presented with a stronger budget than in years past, will it change your proposal as it relates to lay-offs?

“We must pursue the ‘continual and fearless sifting and winnowing by which alone the truth can be found.’ I look forward to working with Governor-elect Evers and state legislators to ensure UWSP in Stevens Point, Marshfield, and Wausau will be both strengthened and well-positioned to continue its mission in carrying out the Wisconsin Idea.”