

UW System: Investing in the UW System is an investment in Wisconsin

Posted on Monday, Aug 20, 2018

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Biennial operating budget request focuses on student success, workforce development, efficiencies

MADISON – President Ray Cross will present a biennial budget proposal Thursday for the University of Wisconsin System that targets affordability, talent development, and return on investment for the people of Wisconsin.

“Investing in the UW System is an investment in Wisconsin,” President Cross said. “At a time when growing the number of highly educated graduates in Wisconsin’s workforce is essential for a strong economy, we are keeping high-quality higher education affordable and accessible. We continue to expand capacity in high-demand programs the state needs, including healthcare, engineering, and computer science. And collaborating with the Wisconsin business community, we are both helping to create new jobs and helping to provide the talent to fill those jobs.”

The UW System request calls for an investment of \$107.5 million in state funds, including \$82.5 million in outcomes-based funding to support university and statutorily required goals related to student success, workforce development, and operational efficiencies, and \$25 million to address capacity-building initiatives, primarily for STEM and high-demand fields. The Board of Regents will consider the request at its meeting Thursday in Madison.

The UW System’s FY 2019-2021 biennial budget request must be submitted to the state’s Department of Administration in September for consideration as part of the

Governor's executive budget, which is typically released in February.

"We are the state's largest talent pipeline," Cross said. "The UW System confers more than 36,000 degrees each year, launching our graduates into the workforce with valuable knowledge, skills, and experience. And that talent stays in Wisconsin. Five years after graduation, [81%](#) of UW System alumni live and work in the Badger State. This is just one way the state receives a strong return on its investment."

A new [study](#) by NorthStar Analytics shows the UW System contributes \$24 billion to the state's economy each year, which reflects a 23-fold return on each dollar Wisconsin invests in the university.

As part of the biennial budget request, the UW System will also present its 2019-21 capital budget recommendations, which largely focus on renovation, repair and replacement of aging or obsolete facilities. More than 60% of the UW System's 62 million square-foot building inventory was constructed between 1950 and 1979, and much of that inventory has had little renovation or upgrade since its inception.

UW System's 2019-21 capital request will seek project authority in 2019-21 and into 2021-23 for five projects. Within the 2019-21 portion of this request are six academic facilities and five utility/central plant projects that would be funded with \$463.9 million in bonding to renovate, expand and replace obsolete facilities. Another 10 projects to be funded with \$506.4 million are financed exclusively through UW program revenue, both borrowing and cash. These projects, funded entirely by UW System institutions, include a new residence hall and renovation of existing residential halls, recreational and athletic facilities, and a student union, to replace outdated facilities and accommodate growing student demand.

The request includes \$446.5 million in bonding for the five advance enumeration projects, requested now for 2021-23, and focused on science, engineering and priority academic programs.

"This capital budget proposal addresses critical needs related to our teaching and research missions, while also creating new jobs," Cross said. "It is important to highlight the long-term nature of capital planning and budgets and the modest amounts provided in 2015-17 and 2017-19. The investments we make now will have an impact far into the future."

View the [2019-2021 biennial budget funding request](#).