

UW System seeks additional \$108 million in state aid in budget request

Posted on Tuesday, Aug 21, 2018

The UW System is requesting an increase of \$108 million in state aid during the next two-year budget, much of it through the performance-based funding championed by Gov. Scott Walker and GOP lawmakers.

Under the request, which the Board of Regents is set to consider later this week at its Madison meeting, the System is asking for an additional \$82.5 million in performance-based funding and \$25 million for “capacity building initiatives,” which provides funding for specific campus programs.

The request for additional funding comes even after Walker instructed state agencies to prepare budget requests with the expectation of no funding growth and 5-percent reduction.

But UW System President Ray Cross told WisPolitics.com in an interview Monday there is “growing interest” by all people in the state — including politicians — for a budget increase.

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

“The need for a greater portion of our population to hold some academic credentials has never been greater. That’s becoming a reality in the eyes of legislators and politicians. Now is the time for us to put in front of them our needs and issues,” Cross said.

Cross said the request for a budget increase comes after Walker and other legislators have expressed support for boosting K-12 funding, and at a time when both candidates for governor have highlighted their “commitment to educational priorities.”

Walker last month said he would continue the tuition freeze for four more years if re-elected. Cross in Monday's interview touted the System's commitment to keeping a college education affordable for students and underscored the System's request for additional GPR instead of increased tuition.

UW System officials, according to the budget documents, have already been in talks with the governor's office to seek added funding they claim would contribute to the state's workforce needs.

A significant chunk of the funding request would come via "performance" or "outcomes based" funding, which awards campuses based off of how well they meet certain metrics. The state Legislature previously allocated \$26.25 million for ongoing performance based funding that will first be distributed this fall.

The System is now requested that number be increased to \$27 million next year and \$55 million ongoing beginning in the 2020-21 school year.

The Board of Regents this spring approved four performance measures that underscore goals of ensuring student access, improving student completion, expanding workforce contributions and enhancing operational efficiency.

The four metrics are: undergraduate degrees conferred; percentage of Wisconsin high school graduates enrolled immediately after graduation; retention rate; graduation rate.