

‘UpFront’: Cross says UW will do ‘best we can’ with 2 percent raises, Hitt says WisGOP energized

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UW System President Ray Cross, who sought 3 percent raises for faculty, said “we’ll do the best we can” with expected 2 percent pay hikes, but the university is behind some peer institutions when it comes to compensation.

Cross appeared in an interview aired Sunday on “UpFront,” produced in partnership with WisPolitics.com.

Saying the university needs to compete for top talent, Cross asked the governor and lawmakers for 3 percent raises in each year of the 2019-2021 budget.

The Joint Committee on Finance, which is dramatically reworking Gov. Tony Evers’ budget, approved 2 percent annual raises for most state employees, including UW faculty.

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“UpFront” host Adrienne Pedersen asked Cross if UW salaries are in line with its peer institutions.

“Most research shows that we are a little behind, and some areas we’re behind more than others. But compensation is an important piece of the total overall package to make the university part of the solution for the state,” Cross said.

“We have to compete for talent, we have to compete around the world for talent. And that’s important to Wisconsin’s future,” Cross said.

“It’s really important that the Legislature and the governor recognize the

importance of compensation for our employees and the role the university plays in helping the state resolve its problems,” he said.

Also on the program, new Republican Party of Wisconsin Chairman Andrew Hitt said party members emerged from their state convention in Oshkosh “organized and energized” and ready to work to re-elect President Trump in 2020.

“As I’ve traveled the state, meeting with grass roots leaders,” Hitt said, “many people have told me, ‘We’re working now like it’s June of 2020, not June of 2019.’”

Hitt said his focus as chairman would be on the grass roots and making sure they have the tools and data they need.

Pedersen asked Hitt if he thought Trump would win Wisconsin again.

“I think it’s very likely. I think we have to work harder than we even did in 2016,” he said. “I think it’s going to be close. Wisconsin is a purple state.”

In another segment, Tom Still, president of the Wisconsin Technology Council, said his organization is moving its annual entrepreneur conference back to Milwaukee because “there’s a lot more happening (there) now.”

The conference, geared toward start-up businesses, used to be held in Milwaukee, then shifted to Madison for many years. This year’s conference is scheduled for June 4 and 5.

Still said Milwaukee, which lacked a vibrant start-up scene for years, is now “a city where you’re seeing an entrepreneurial buzz, there are more young companies starting out.”

See more from [the show](#).