

Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association: UW Now Livestream features update from Chancellor Blank

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MADISON, WI (October 8, 2020) — Chancellor Rebecca Blank wants alumni to know that, while she's a realist, she's also confident about UW-Madison's future.

"We'll come out of [the COVID-19 pandemic] with some budget problems," she said. "We'll come out of it with some people who are more or less happy about what we did." But, she emphasizes: "We will come out of this."

During The UW Now Livestream on October 6, Blank spoke about the three crises that UW-Madison faces this year: COVID-19, a budget shortfall, and rising calls for greater racial justice and equity. She described the UW's financial situation as the worst budget in more than a century, and the demands for substantive changes to create a more diverse and inclusive campus have been growing for decades.

But it's COVID-19 that presents the most immediate challenge, as the UW saw when it restarted in-person instruction in September, only to quickly take a two-week pause with virtual-only courses.

"We opened with some real hopes. But I have to say, the first week our cases spiked, and they spiked fast, and they spiked high. We're still trying to deconstruct what happened. They went up faster than at our peer schools," she said. "The good news is that [the pause] worked, and it worked quite well."

Blank spoke for about 20 minutes, and she took questions from viewers who

followed the event live on YouTube. Mike Knetter, president and CEO of the Wisconsin Foundation and Alumni Association, hosted the conversation and served as moderator.

Throughout, Blank emphasized that the university is planning for the long-term future.

“We’re trying to think not just about how we get through these next nine months, though we are thinking about that,” she said. “But how do we come out stronger and better? A better functioning university and a better functioning research institution. And we have, as you all know, great faculty, and great students, and great staff.”

To hear more from Blank, you can view a recording of [The UW Now](#). The series is offered via YouTube and will continue through the summer. The next event will be October 20.