

WAICU: Statement on the governor's budget by Dr. Rolf Wegenke, president of WAICU

Posted on Wednesday, Feb 17, 2021

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MADISON, Wis. – Dr. Rolf Wegenke, president of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), expressed gratitude for the Governor's recommendation of a 10 percent increase in funding for the Wisconsin Grants program in each year of the coming biennium. Wisconsin Grants are the primary means-tested student aid program for Wisconsin students attending a Wisconsin public or private nonprofit college or university.

“Wisconsin is at a pivotal point. What we do now will affect the state's workforce and economy for decades to come. It is no secret that birthrates have been declining while the cohort of individuals of retirement age is growing; already there are shortages of physicians, engineers, and teachers; Wisconsin will be in a ‘world of hurt’ if we do not increase educational attainment of all populations, including those who have been left behind.

Because of the pandemic some students have dropped out; others have stopped out. Because students and their families are struggling with unemployment many are not even considering higher education.

The Wisconsin Grant program, which began in 1965, empowers the individual Wisconsin students to pursue the career opportunities in their community for which

there is demand and which attracts their interests. Throughout its history, Wisconsin Grants have attracted bipartisan support. Governor Evers is to be commended for his recognition of the importance to our state of increasing educational attainment.”