

UW-Madison: Statement by UW-Madison Chancellor Rebecca Blank in reaction to legislative actions

Posted on Wednesday, Feb 23, 2022

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I am very pleased that the Legislature, working in a bipartisan fashion, passed three bills that will have a lasting impact on our academic and research enterprises.

These bills await the signature of Governor Evers, whom we appreciate for his support of higher education and UW-Madison.

Senate Bill 557 provides vital flexibility in the way UW can manage its working capital, which will result in a greater return on our investments and therefore help advance our teaching and research missions.

Assembly Bill 775 provides important funding for planning and design of a much-needed new facility that will allow us to educate more engineers, a labor force that is essential to Wisconsin's future.

Senate Bill 605 allows our Pharmacy and other professional schools more flexibility to set their instructional calendars in the same manner as their peers, helping UW compete for top students in those fields.

While there is much to be thankful for, I am disappointed by the passage of Senate Bill 409 and Assembly Bill 884.

As a university, our aim is to graduate well-rounded, critical thinkers; to teach our students not what to think but how to think. UW's ability to attract and retain the best and brightest faculty, staff and students depends on being an environment where both academic freedom and freedom of speech are core values.

Legislation such as SB 409 and AB 884 stand in opposition to those values and I strongly urge Governor Evers to veto these bills.