

Sen. Marklein, Rep. Kurtz: Launch campus community transition grant bill to help Richland County

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MADISON— State Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) and Representative Tony Kurtz (R-Wonewoc) circulated legislation today to allocate \$6 million to create three \$2 million Campus Community Transition Grants for communities where a University of Wisconsin (UW) System branch campus will no longer be used for academic purposes. The bill specifically requires the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to award \$2 million to Richland County.

“Nearly one year ago, the UW System notified the Richland Center community that they were going to close the UW-Platteville Richland campus to in-person instruction due to declining enrollment,” Sen. Marklein said. “This shocking announcement was devastating to our community. But, in the midst of the shock and sadness, the community also rallied and they have been working hard to move forward with new ideas and initiatives to use the property in innovative ways.”

“At UW-Platteville Richland all of the buildings are owned by the county. This is the case at most, if not all, of the two-year campuses across the state,” Rep. Kurtz said. “Richland County has been working tirelessly to determine what the county will do with the buildings now that there will be no more in-person instruction on campus. They have lots of ideas, but some of these ideas require investment and this grant will support the community in their efforts.”

Marklein and Kurtz’s bill will direct the WEDC to create and award \$2 million Campus Community Transition Grants. These grants are designed to help a county plan and redevelop underutilized campus buildings and property in the event of a campus closure. The money may be used for economic development, housing,

infrastructure and any other redevelopment efforts the community pursues.

To be eligible to receive a grant, a county must have a two-year branch campus that will no longer be used for academic purposes.

The legislation requires the first Campus Community Transition Grant be awarded to Richland County, but provides additional funds to assist other counties that may have a branch campus close in the future.

The bill is currently circulating for co-sponsorship by other legislators. It will be introduced soon and will proceed through the legislative process.