



*Representing UW-Madison Faculty.
Strengthening Wisconsin.*

PROFS Statement on UW System and Board of Regent Actions That Are Inconsistent with the University's Proud History of Shared Governance and State Law

November 8, 2017

PROFS, the Public Representation Organization of the Faculty Senate, represents the interests of the UW-Madison faculty. The elected University Committee, the executive committee of the Faculty Senate, serves as PROFS Board of Directors.

The UW System and UW-Madison have a long and proud history of strong shared governance among key stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and students. It is a key reason why both the system and our university are recognized across the globe as shining examples of quality higher education.

Shared governance has been the birthplace of many great initiatives. It makes the university both effective and efficient. This cooperative approach to management saves our system and our universities money. Shared governance is the antidote to the bad idea: it makes sure proposals are thoroughly vetted before moving forward.

Indeed, Chapter 36.09(4) states: “The faculty of each institution, subject to the responsibilities and powers of the board, the president, and the chancellor of such institution, shall have the primary responsibility for advising the chancellor regarding academic and educational activities and faculty personnel matters.” Chapter 36 also provides specific governance roles to academic staff and students.

Unfortunately, recent actions by the UW System with apparent swift endorsement by the Board of Regents to restructure the system’s operations, shifting staff and programs, and eliminate programs and majors at UW-Superior, are starkly inconsistent with our shared governance tradition. They are also inconsistent with state law. Clearly, faculty, staff, and students from UW Colleges and UW-Superior do not believe they were given the opportunity to fulfill this role in the UW Colleges restructuring decision and in the decision to close programs and discontinue majors at UW-Superior.

The UW-Madison faculty recognize that challenging economic situations require systems and universities to make tough choices. We have joined with other shared governance stakeholders at our university to make these decisions. This is the way to manage a university and a system in a manner that brings people together, rather than alienating the very professionals who have dedicated their lives to those institutions, as the UW System and Board of Regents are doing.

Moving forward, we hope the UW System and Board of Regents will choose to return to the principles of shared governance, based in our history and in the spirit and letter of state law. The UW-Madison faculty will continue to work day in and day out to ensure that our university remains the great university that the people of Wisconsin have come to expect.