



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Rep. Murphy and Sen. Jacque Unveil UW Affordability, Accountability Reforms

MADISON, WI — College affordability, expanded credit opportunities, increased transparency and more accountability are key themes of a reform package that was recently introduced by Wisconsin Assembly Colleges & Universities Committee Chair Rep. David Murphy (R-Greenville) and by Senator André Jacque (R-De Pere).

“I believe it is important to create a safety net for college students,” said Representative David Murphy (R-Greenville). “Our proposal does not lift the tuition freeze, rather it creates a safety net for college students by capping future increases in tuition if the freeze is ever eliminated.”

“Our proposals put in place strong protections to rein in excessive and inappropriate costs for students while eliminating a statutory barrier to expanded dual credit opportunities for high school students” said Senator André Jacque (R-De Pere), adding, “These are vital reforms for ensuring college affordability for our current generation and beyond and accountability to taxpayers.”

The proposal is called the “Open and Accessible UW Package” and consists of the following five legislative proposals:

Fair Future Tuition Act – This bill prevents skyrocketing tuition if the freeze is ever lifted. It does not lift the tuition freeze, rather it creates a safety net for college students. The bill caps future increases in tuition at a maximum of CPI for incoming students and freezes tuition for four years while a student maintains enrollment.

UW System segregated fees – This bill aims to rein in skyrocketing UW fees. The bill takes UW restrictions on fee use and puts them into law, preventing future expansion of fee use for new activities.

Responsible UW Financial Relationships Act – Addressing concerns raised by a Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) audit, this bill provides for transparency and accountability when outside organizations are permitted to use University of Wisconsin branding, resources, employees, or facilities without fair market compensation.

The LAB “[Relationships between the University of Wisconsin and Certain Affiliated Organizations](#)” report issued in March 2018 and the “[University of Wisconsin System Fiscal Year 2017-18](#)” report issued in May 2019 raised significant concerns about the lack of transparency and accountability in place at UW institutions with regard to the relationships it maintains with outside groups.

UW WTCS Universal Course Numbering and Transfer Act – This legislation eliminates a 1972 restriction on the ability of technical colleges to expand course offerings to high school students through dual enrollment. This change is expected to significantly increase the availability of post-secondary course credit to students. In addition, thousands of students transfer from public Wisconsin colleges to other public Wisconsin colleges every year to complete their degrees. Unfortunately, many students learn their journey to a degree will take longer than expected due to credits that won't transfer. UW System has been touting the importance of fixing their credit transfer problem **for nearly fifty years**, and yet the problem persists. We're proposing a flexible solution that allows our colleges and universities to determine the structure of credit transfer and course numbering that they will implement. This flexibility comes with a hard implementation deadline of five years.

UW Report Consolidation and Cleanup Act – Different reporting requirements on the state and federal levels of the same information is both unnecessary and cost inefficient. This bill removes or changes a number of duplicative and outdated reporting requirements. The bill also allows “graduate health science classes” at UW institutions, specifically nursing and pharmacy, to commence at the same time as the medical school and fourth year veterinary school classes.

“Given the significant liabilities created for universities by engaging with affiliated organizations, it is more critical than ever for these relationships to be recorded, reviewed by the university, and protected from inappropriate manipulation,” said Murphy.

“No student should be forced to take the same class over again simply because they transferred from one Wisconsin public college to another,” said Jacque. “I am very pleased to be offering these reforms.”

The Open and Accessible UW Package helps to keep college affordable and courses accessible while increasing transparency and accountability.

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