

WISCONSIN STATE
LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE HEARING
RECORDS

1997-08

(session year)

Senate

(Assembly, Senate or Joint)

Committee on
Education
(SC-Ed)

COMMITTEE NOTICES ...

➤ Committee Hearings ... CH (Public Hearing Announcements)

➤ **

➤ Committee Reports ... CR

➤ **

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INFORMATION COLLECTED BY COMMITTEE
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➤ **97hr_sb0072_SC-Ed_pt01**

➤ Miscellaneous ... Misc

➤ **



Fred Risser

President
Wisconsin State Senate

TO: Senator Cal Potter, Chair
and Members of
The Senate Committee on Education

FROM: Senator Fred Risser 

RE: Senate Bill 72 relating to tuition for undergraduates at the
University of Wisconsin System

DATE: September 9, 1997

Unfortunately, due to a previous obligation, I will be unable to attend the Senate Committee on Education's hearing on Senate Bill 72. However, I would like the following comments entered into the record.

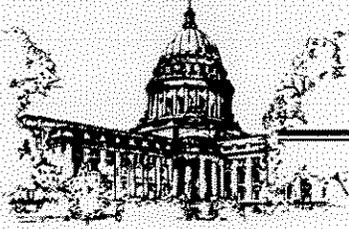
Senate Bill 72 will cap undergraduate tuition in the University of Wisconsin System at 33% of instructional costs for in-state students and 120% for out-state students.

My purpose in introducing this legislation is to preserve what I believe is a long standing commitment and obligation to continue to provide accessible, quality higher education to the people of this state.

Over the past twenty years, we have seen a steady increase in the amount of tuition students pay for higher education in the University of Wisconsin System. Depending on the campus, we have witnessed increases in tuition ranging from 340% to 490% while the consumer price index during this period rose 274%.

Additionally, tuition increases, based on students' share of instructional cost, increased from 25% to 34.5% during this period. I understand that the 1997-98 percentage of total cost of instruction paid by resident undergraduate students is 35.8%.

Capping tuition increases at 33% also provides the advantage of "certainty." Both the students and the university will have a benchmark to gage expenses and revenues which should assist in budgeting.



Fred Risser

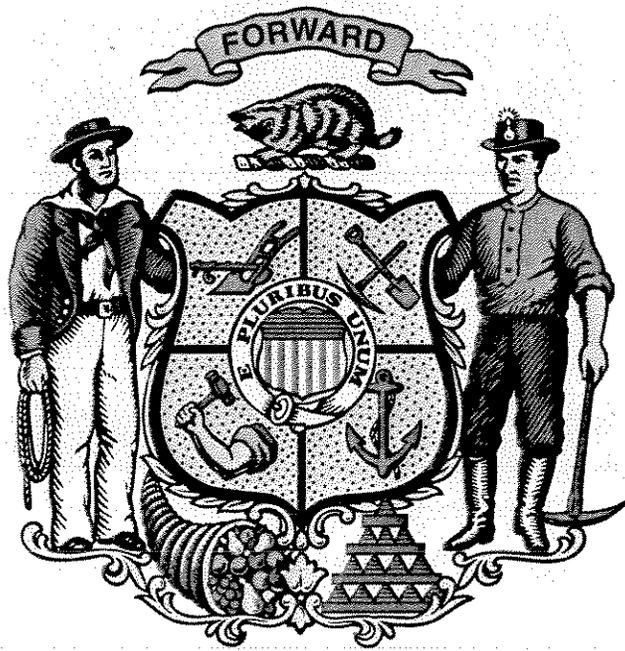
President
Wisconsin State Senate

Risser
Senate Bill 72
Page 2

I am a firm believer that we have an obligation to utilize general purpose revenue to fund our higher education system. Increases in compensation, equipment, facilities, maintenance or other costs should not be born on the backs of students but supported as a responsibility of the State.

We must stem the continued escalation in tuition and provide resources for students to assist in funding educational costs.

I believe that Senate Bill 72 is a step toward achieving one of these goals and I would appreciate your support of this legislation.



**Testimony on Senate Bill 72
Senate Education Committee
September 10, 1997**

**Margaret S. Lewis, Acting Vice President
for University Relations,
University of Wisconsin System**

Senator Potter and members of the Committee, I am Margaret Lewis, representing the University of Wisconsin System.

SB 72 requires undergraduate tuition be capped at 33% of instructional costs for Wisconsin residents, and 120 percent of costs for nonresidents.

Like the authors of the bill, the Board of Regents wants to keep tuition affordable. However, we cannot support SB 72 because it would result in several unintended consequences harmful to educational quality.

Placing a specific tuition cap in the statutes may appear to be a very attractive way of meeting the goal of keeping tuition affordable. However, the problem with SB 72 is that it addresses only one side of the educational cost equation and provides no assurance that the level of state tax support (GPR) for higher education will be maintained. Consider that if tuition was capped this year, the result would be a \$12 million cut in the UW budget unless state tax support was increased. The bill makes no such provision.

This legislation would effectively force the Board of Regents to reduce tuition any time our GPR support was reduced, simply in order to hold the students' share at 33%. In fact, even when tuition rates are held constant, any GPR reduction to the UW System automatically increases the student share of educational costs. This is what has happened most recently with the \$33 million cut in 1995-97.

As another consequence of the bill, we would be required to reduce non-resident tuition at UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee, where it currently exceeds 120% of student costs (124.4% at UW-Madison, 130.3% at UW-Milwaukee). We have been receiving the opposite recommendation from area legislators. This, in turn, would reduce the subsidy available to hold down resident tuition.

The affordability of a college education is a major concern of parents and students, and the UW System is doing its best to hold down costs. We currently rank lowest among 19 comparable systems in the country in the percentage of funds spent on administrative costs (6.1% for the UW System vs. an average of 10.8%).

It might be helpful to speak briefly about why college costs are rising. In one recent national study, for example, participants in a focus group thought 90% of college costs were paid by tuition. In Wisconsin tuition was about 16% of total college costs in 1997. State tax support funds about 34% of the UW System, down from 50% in 1974. (See changes in funding chart). Many do not realize that state funding for America's public colleges has diminished in recent years, and that this has been a significant factor in

tuition increases. Attached is a chart which President Lyall distributed to Finance Committee members this Spring which shows state support for higher education adjusted for inflation. The dollar-amount increase in the UW System GPR budget lagged the Consumer Price Index (CPI) by 44 percentage points between 1973-74 and 1996-97 (197.55% increase for the UW System vs. An increase of 241.59% in the CPI). You can also see there has been a steady decline in the amount individuals are paying per \$1,000 of personal income for support of higher education.

A relative decline in state support is one, but not the only factor to explain rising college costs, however. There are some very positive things happening on our campuses that are also driving costs. Consider two of them: (1) rapid growth of knowledge; and (2) the cost of acquiring books, periodicals and technology.

We see examples of the ever-increasing pace of technological and scientific change all around us. These changes occur even more quickly on university campuses, and they often occur there first. There are subjects taught in the UW System today that simply did not exist a decade ago (neuroscience, immunology, and materials science for example). The rapid growth of knowledge, estimated at 4-8% per year in most branches of science, has forced universities to pay the cost of keeping up. Colleges have responded to the increased volume of knowledge by hiring more specialized staff and investing in their professional development.

Now consider how libraries must keep pace with the rapid growth in knowledge. A survey of the Association of Research Libraries shows that from 1986-97 libraries have bought 9% fewer journals, but because of the rising costs of subscriptions increased expenditures by more than 100%. Expenditures on books increased 22% during the same period but purchased 23% fewer volumes. You may be interested in the handout on Wisconsin library statistics.

We can be proud in Wisconsin that with all the pressure to remain competitive, tuition has remained comparatively low.

For example, in 1996-97, the annual resident undergraduate tuition (including segregated fees) here at UW-Milwaukee was \$3,100, while the average tuition and fees for UWM's peer group was \$3,682, placing UWM 11th among 15 peers in tuition costs. (The highest tuition in the peer group, incidentally, was \$5,868 at Temple University, almost 90 percent higher than tuition at UWM.)

At UW Madison, annual tuition and fees were \$3,030, while its peer group average was more than a thousand dollars higher, at \$4,073. This ranked Madison eighth among the nine universities in its peer group.

Finally, the annual tuition and fees of \$2,499 at our 11 comprehensive campuses in 1996-97 placed them 31st among 35 peer institutions, whose average tuition was \$454 higher than ours. (see handout rankings of peer institutions).

The Governor and the Legislature have historically set maximum tuition revenue limits for the UW System within the context of the budget process. This process has worked well, allowing consideration of many factors, including: the total funding needs of

the UW System, comparative tuition levels in other states, inflation rates, personal income growth, and the availability of student financial aid. SB 72 would prevent consideration of these important factors and would potentially force the UW System to reduce access or let quality decline in response to budget shortfalls.

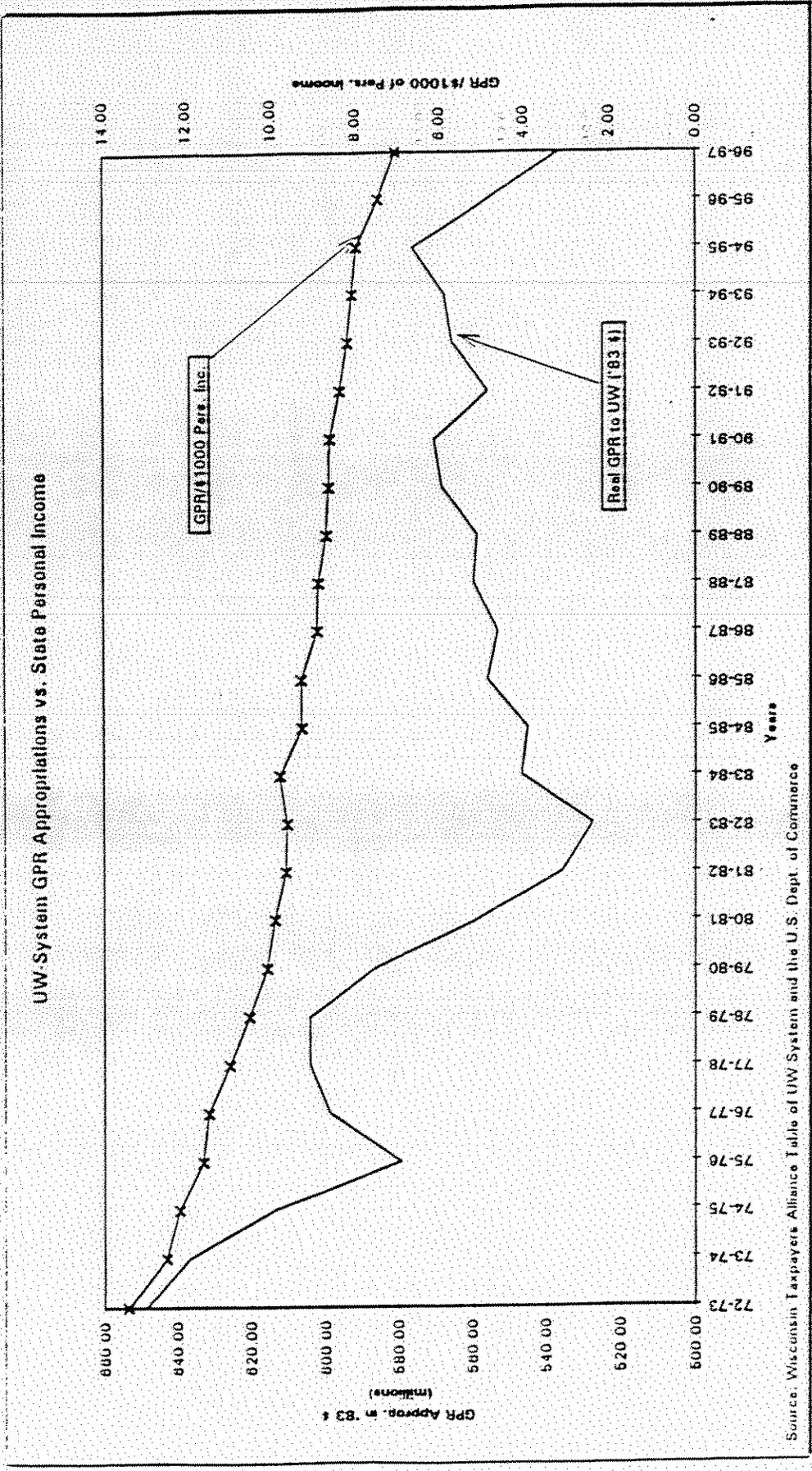
The University of Wisconsin System is deeply committed to the quality of the education it provides to students. We oppose SB 72 because, if it were enacted, we could not maintain existing levels of quality into the 21st Century. We cannot make that guarantee because the Legislature cannot similarly guarantee that GPR support of higher education will be sustained at 67% of costs.

It is budget action, not statutory caps, that can maintain reasonable cost-sharing with students. It will take more than a tuition cap to maintain the quality of the UW System at a level you can be proud of and which fulfills the needs and expectations of students, employers and the state.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you might have.

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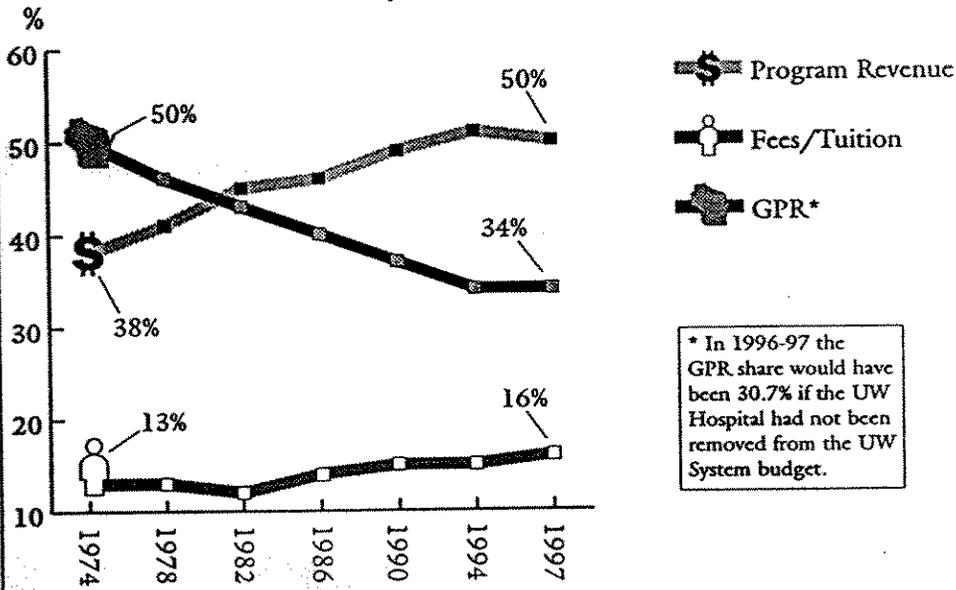
**UW - System
GPR Appropriations vs. State Personal Income
Historical Comparison using 1983 as the base year**



THE UW SYSTEM – CHANGES IN FUNDING

From State Support to State Assistance

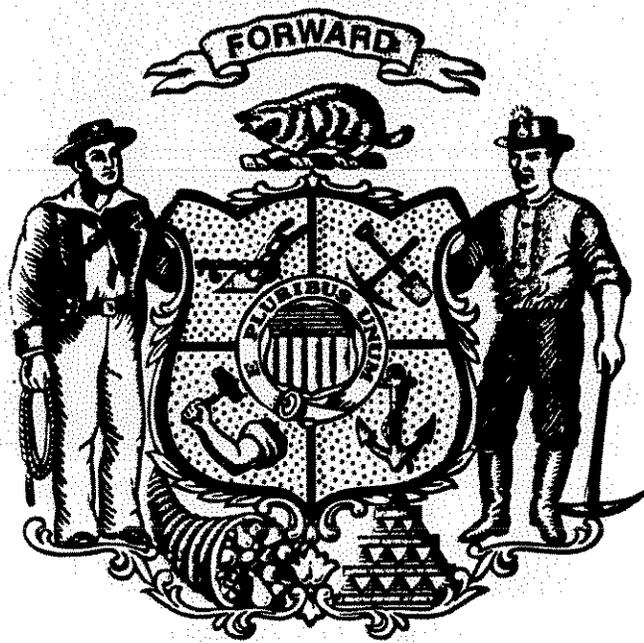
% of Funding of the UW System
by Source 1974-1997



* In 1996-97 the GPR share would have been 30.7% if the UW Hospital had not been removed from the UW System budget.

Quick Facts

- Since 1974, GPR support of the UW System has decreased from 50% of the budget to a proposed 32.7% in 1998-99.
- Since 1974, the UW System share of state GPR has dropped from 14.4% to 9.2%.





THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN—MILWAUKEE

UWM Student Union
Union Office E351 / Union Box 173
2200 East Kenwood Boulevard
Milwaukee WI 53201

1-(414)-229-4366

Testimony of

UW-Milwaukee Student Association President

Jessica Angus

before the

State Senate Committee on Education

in favor of

Assembly Bill 33/Senate Bill 742

September 10, 1997 – Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Chairman Potter, members of the committee, welcome to UW-Milwaukee.

My name is Jessica Angus, and I am the president of the student body here at UWM. On behalf of the Student Association, let me start by thanking you for getting out on the road and visiting our institution. I hope that this can become a regular event.

Thank you also for the specific opportunity to comment on two pieces of legislation, The Tuition Cap Bill and the Anti-Student Democracy Bill. I will be testifying in favor of AB 33.

By the end of this hearing, I'm sure you will have heard a number of statistics about how fast tuition has gone up, and how the UW System has become increasingly unaffordable for many Wisconsin families.

But as President of UWM's Student Association, I hear everyday the stories of the students themselves—not just numbers on a page—but real people, with jobs, families, hopes & dreams. Hopes and dreams which become harder and harder to achieve, with roadblock after roadblock put in their way. I couldn't begin to relate all the stories of students just trying to get ahead, but finding the increased demand to work too much to finish school in a timely manner. Time to graduation is increasing, not because we all love taking too many classes, or hanging out on campus, but because the demands on our time have gotten out of hand.

Many of you worked your way through college. But working through college in previous decades can't compare to the new demands on students' time. I'm working two jobs myself right now, and that, sadly, isn't the exception, but the new norm. We're making less, doing more, and wasting more time – time that we should be using to further our education.



UWM Student Union
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SB 72

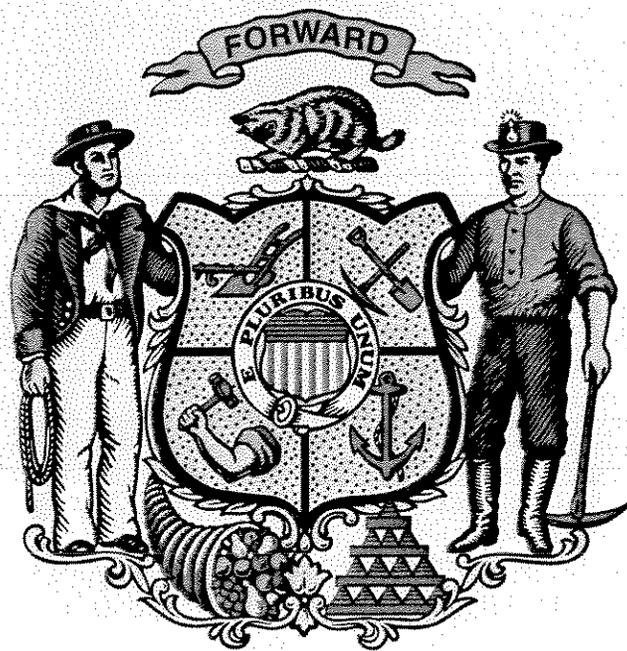
Angus Testimony (AB33)
September 10, 1997
Page 2

I know firsthand the disbelief and shock most of us had when we opened our tuition bills this fall. Almost one thousand, seven hundred dollars. Just for the fall semester. Plus books, transportation, food and rent... the cost of higher education in Wisconsin is beginning to be out of reach for most Wisconsin families.

Now, you've heard this before, but I'll say it again. We're willing to pay for quality education, but when we don't think we're getting any more for our hard-earned dollars, then it's tough to swallow. And it definitely is the case that a good part of this increase comes not from higher costs, but instead from a lessened commitment from the legislature for a quality higher education system.

One statistic stands out, and stands alone — In my short lifetime, the share we pay for college has gone from under 25% to nearly 36%. And as many of us have noted, there has been no legislative debate about this major change in policy, rather, the change has been quiet, incremental, and with far-reaching effects we can only begin to guess at.

Please pass the Tuition Cap Bill, if only to ensure that the state is willing to make the same commitment to future quality that we are.





United Council

of University of Wisconsin Students, Inc.

122 State Street, Suite 500, Madison, WI 53703 Phone: (608) 263-3422 Fax: (608) 265-4070

Testimony of

John Grabel

Academic Affairs Director

On the Tuition Cap Bill (SB 72)

Before the Senate Education Committee

September 10, 1997

Chairman Potter, members of the committee, good morning. My name is John Grabel and I am the Academic Affairs Director for United Council. I am here today to address concerns regarding Senate Bill 72, the Tuition Cap Bill. This bill is a positive first step in slowing tuition increases of the last 15 years. The cost of instruction that students are currently paying and are projected for today's children to be paying over the next decade is alarming. You have the opportunity today to create a solution to this concern.

One argument that is often brought up is the concern that a Tuition Cap will harm educational quality by limiting revenue. This argument is flawed because any cap placed on tuition would be created with the flexibility to work through any fiscal crisis. For example, if Wisconsin found itself strapped for cash, and the state was forced to justify increasing tuition above the cap, you as lawmakers could allow an exemption on a one-time basis, or if it were justified, the cap could be adjusted. And the cap would be in place to prevent the runaway tuition costs that have plagued students over the past two decades.

With this in mind, some of you may wonder why we should have a cap at all. The answer to this is simple. With a tuition cap in place, members of the legislature and the UW System will have to make a good case as to why an increase in tuition is needed. The UW System budget could not be automatically shifted to the backs of students, but increased services and benefits associated with the increase would have to be shown.

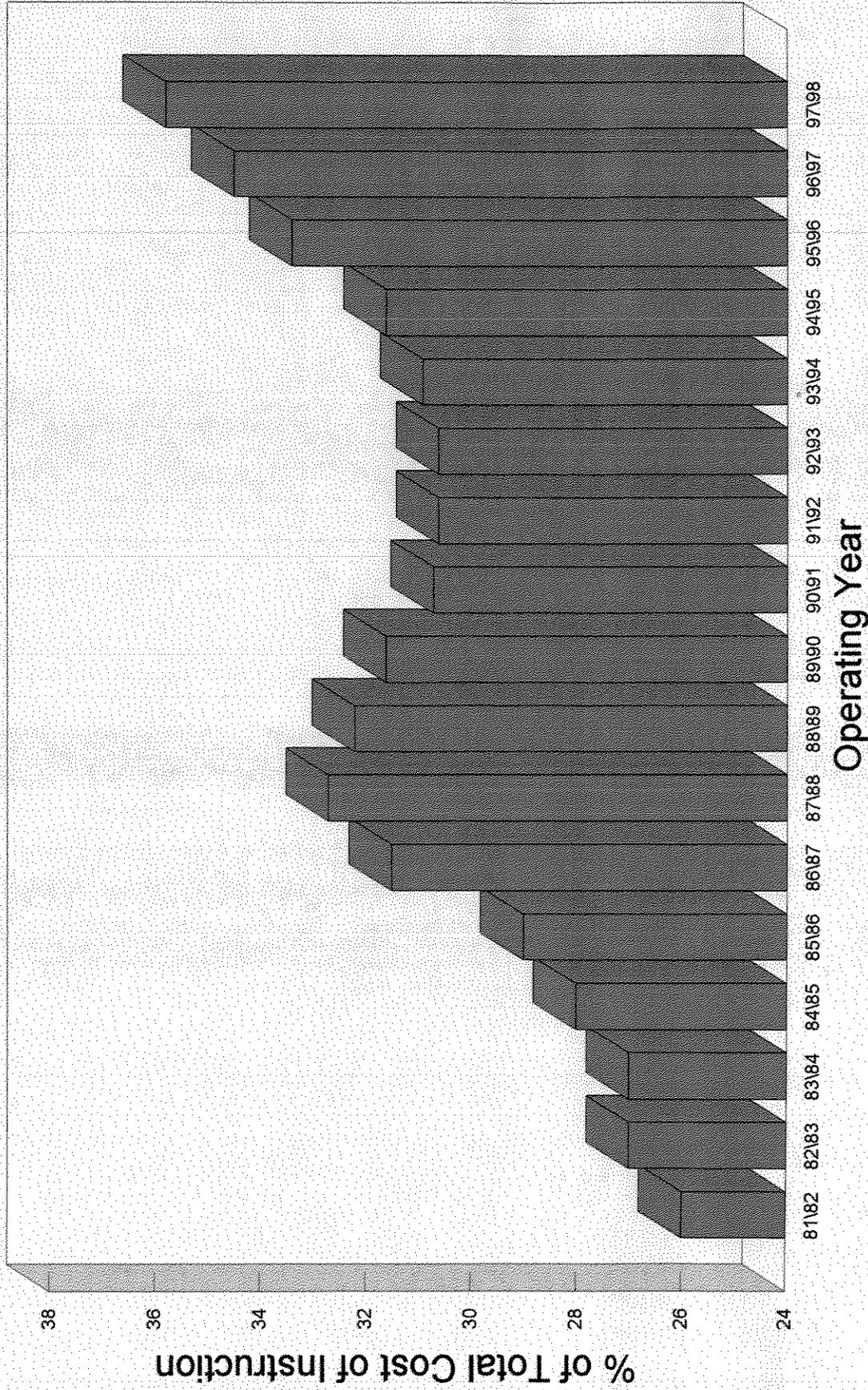
The UW System is a good deal in Wisconsin—for all of its citizens, student and non-student alike. A recent study found that UW System returned \$8.2 billion annually to Wisconsin's economy. This equals a ten to one return on every dollar invested in the UW System. But this healthy economy and significant return in investment will not continue without a reinvestment from the state.

This bill does not set a specific dollar amount for tuition in the future, it only maintains the percentage of instructional costs that students contribute. I ask you to pledge to Wisconsin's families and support the Tuition Cap Bill.

Inter-Departmental Mailing Address: United Council, Room B-11 South, State Capitol

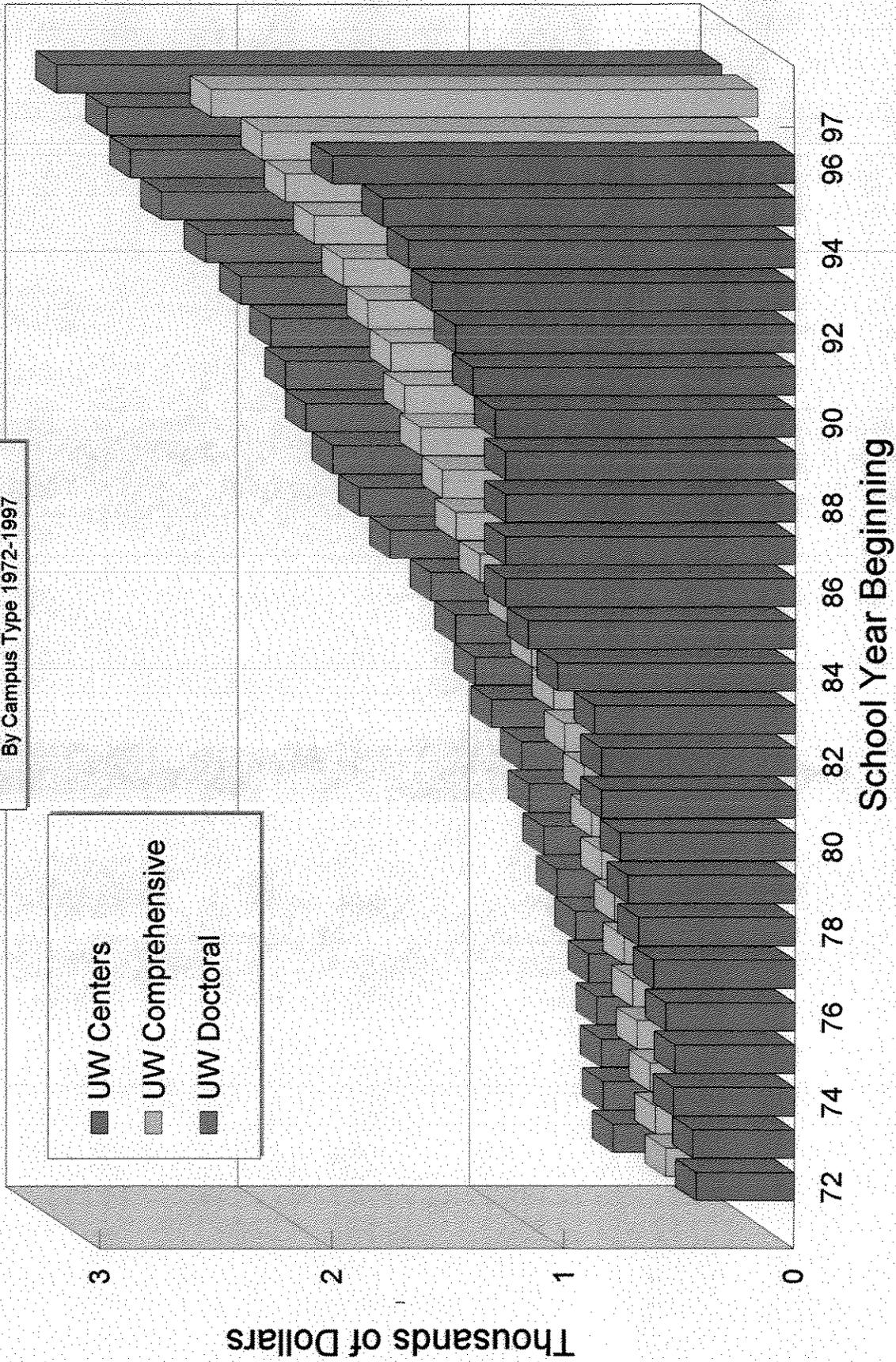
E-mail Address: UCOUNCIL@macc.wisc.edu

Percentage of Total Cost of Instruction Paid By Resident Undergraduate Students



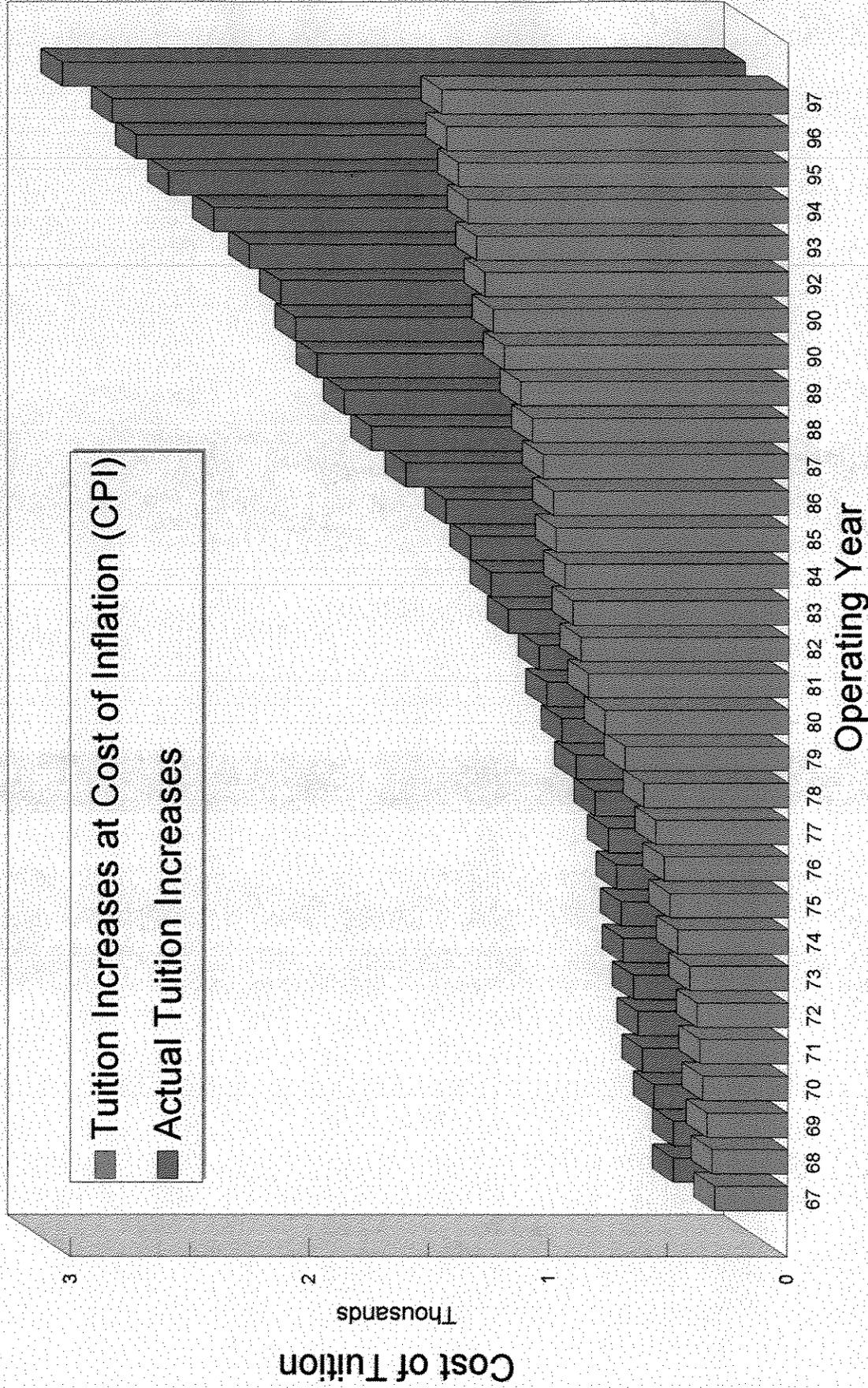
Sources: UW System Fact Books 91&96, Board of Regents Documents 6/96
 For more information contact United Council of UW Students at 608/263-3422. Copyright 09/97 UC of UW Students, Inc

UW Tuition Increases
By Campus Type 1972-1997



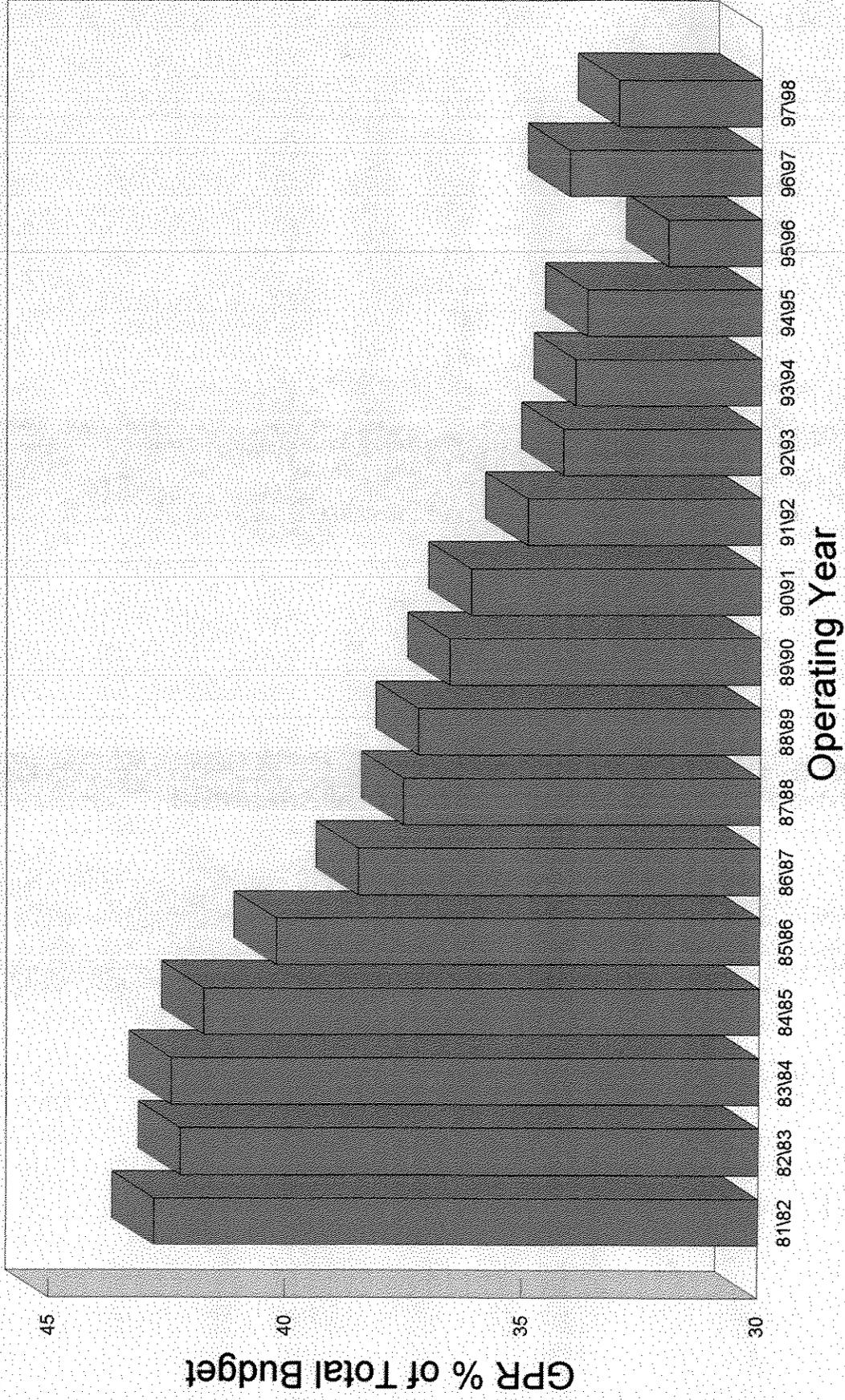
Sources: Legislative Fiscal Bureau, Info Paper #34, January 1993, UW System Board of Regents, 7/93, 6/94, 7/95, 6/96, 6/17/97 Lyall Memo
For more information, contact United Council of UW Students, 608/263-3422. Copyright 09/97 UC of UW Students, Inc.

Actual Tuition Increases vs. Tuition Increases at Consumer Price Index (CPI)



Sources: Economic Report of the President 02/94, Bureau of Labor Statistics
 For more information contact United Council of UW Students at 608/263-3422. Copyright 09/97 UC of UW Students, Inc.

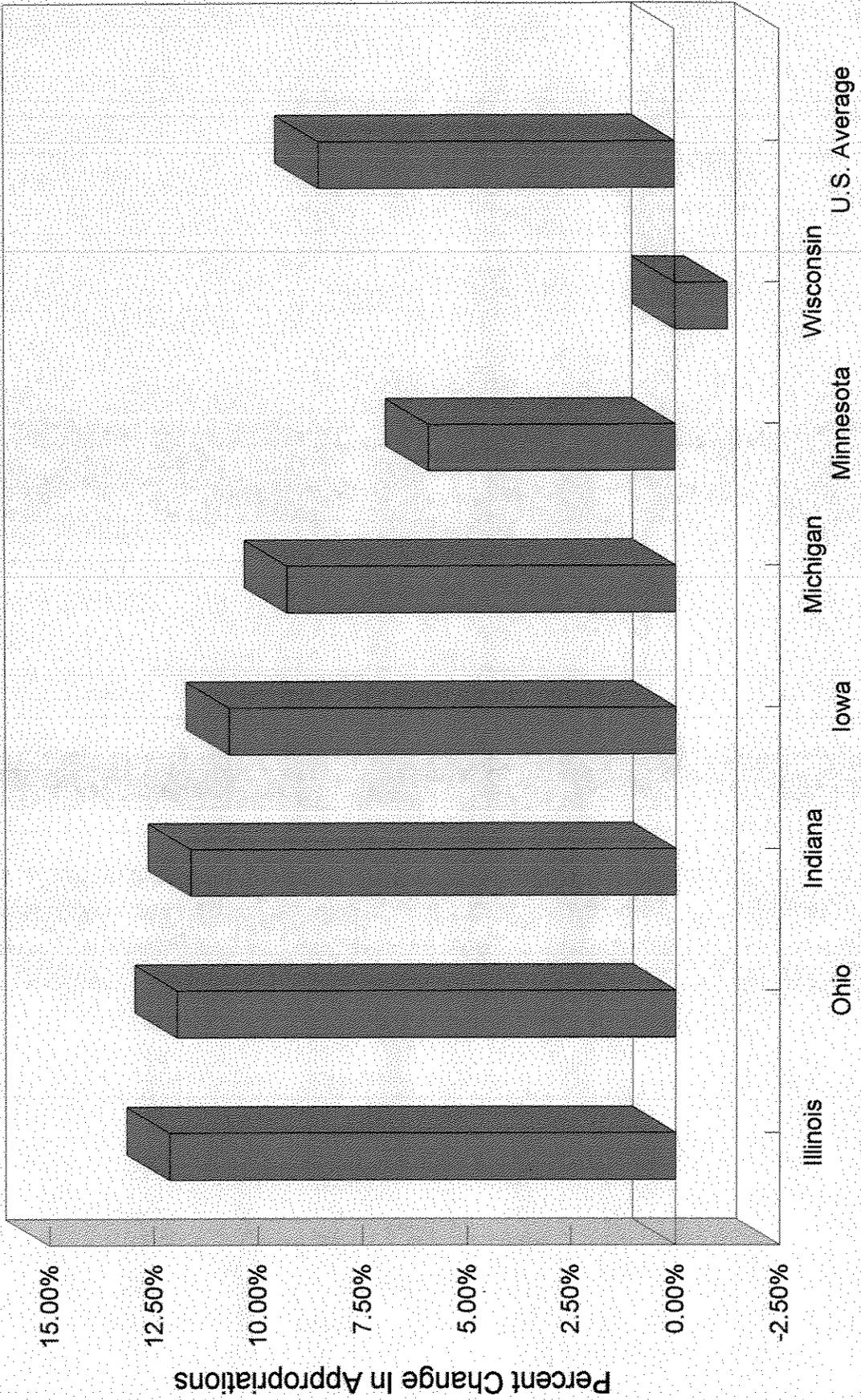
GPR As % of Total UW System Budget



Sources: UW System Fact Books 81-96, Board of Regents

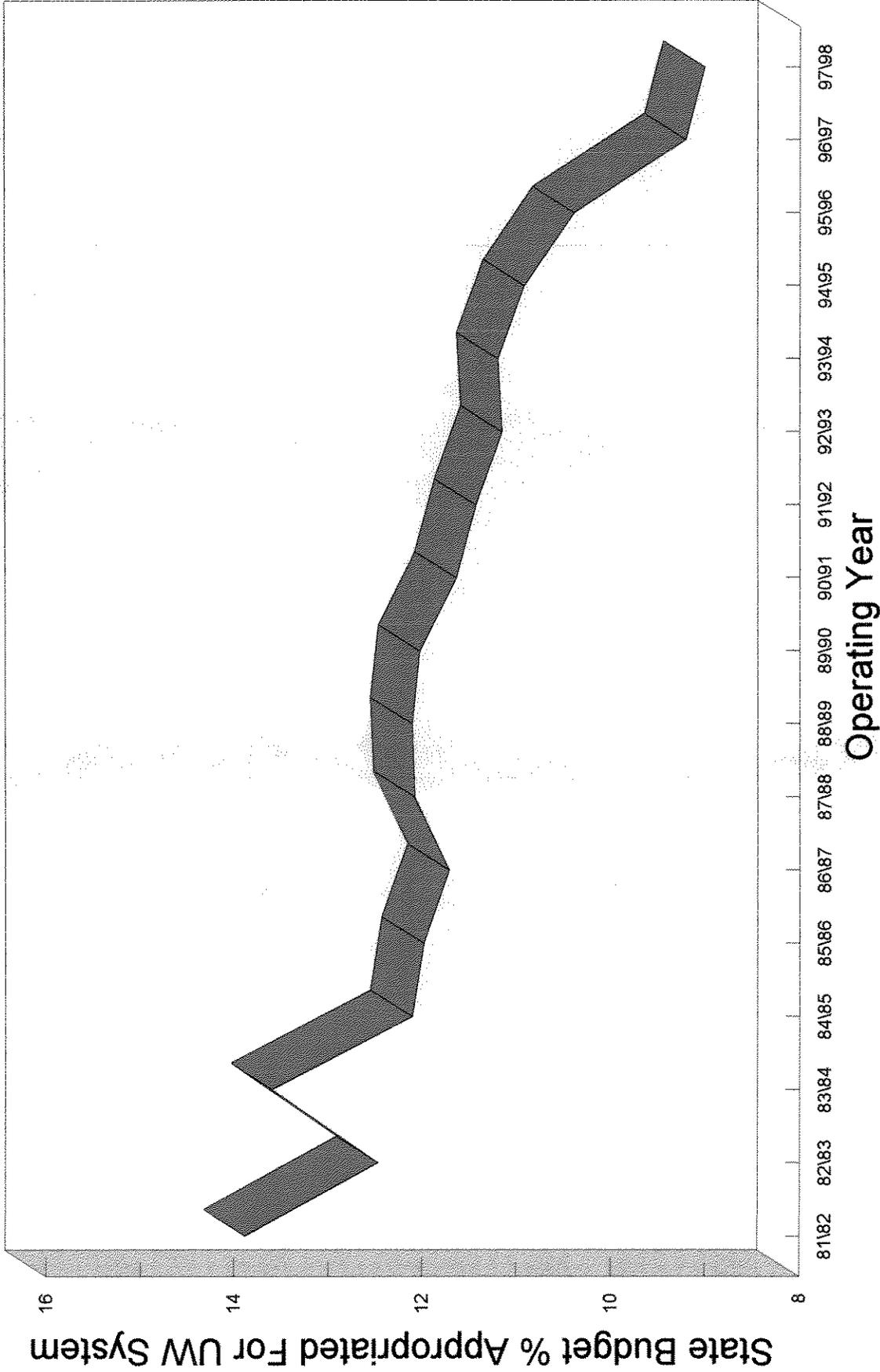
For more information contact United Council of UW Students at 608/263-3422. Copyright 09/97 UC of UW Students, Inc.

Change in State Higher Education Appropriations FY 95 to FY 97



Source: MEMO to the President, Vol. 37, No. 6, June 1997. Published by the American Association of State Colleges And Universities. For more information, contact United Council of UW Students, 608/263-3422

Percentage of WI State Budget (GPR) Appropriated For The UW System



Sources: UW System Fact Books 81-96, Board of Regents
For more information contact United Council of UW Students at 608/263-3422

Average UW System Student Debt Upon Graduation

(1983-1996)



Source: University of Wisconsin System Budget and Planning Office
For more information, contact United Council of UW Students, 608/263-3422. Copyright 09/97 UC of UW Students, Inc.

Projected UW System College Costs for Potential Students up to age 18

Childs Age	Tuition	Room & Board	Total Cost
18	\$3,030	\$4,033	\$7,063
17	\$3,269	\$4,311	\$7,581
16	\$3,528	\$4,609	\$8,136
15	\$3,806	\$4,927	\$8,733
14	\$4,107	\$5,267	\$9,374
13	\$4,431	\$5,630	\$10,062
12	\$4,782	\$6,019	\$10,800
11	\$5,159	\$6,434	\$11,593
10	\$5,567	\$6,878	\$12,445
9	\$6,007	\$7,352	\$13,359
8	\$6,481	\$7,860	\$14,341
7	\$6,993	\$8,402	\$15,395
6	\$7,546	\$8,982	\$16,527
5	\$8,142	\$9,601	\$17,743
4	\$8,785	\$10,264	\$19,049
3	\$9,479	\$10,972	\$20,451
2	\$10,228	\$11,729	\$21,957
1	\$11,036	\$12,539	\$23,574
0	\$11,908	\$13,404	\$25,311

Projections based on 15 year average increases in UW System tuition, room, and board

Information taken from *UW System Fact Books 1982-1997*

September 9, 1997

Invest In Tomorrow... Educate Today!
Legislative Conference March 3 & 4, 1997—Madison, Wisconsin

Tuition Cap Bill (AB 33)

- ☉ **United Council supports the Tuition Cap Bill as a measure against future increases in tuition beyond commensurate GPR growth.**
- ☉ **United Council opposes tuition being a greater-than-33% component of instructional costs.**
- ☉ **United Council supports efforts by the Legislature to maintain tuition levels below 33% of instructional costs.**

What will AB 33 do?

Assembly Bill 33 would cap undergraduate tuition in the UW System at 33% of instructional costs for in-state students, and at 120% for out-of-state students.

What's the Problem?

Undergraduate tuition at UW System campuses has skyrocketed in the last 21 years. Since 1975-76, tuition has nearly quintupled at the doctoral campuses, quadrupled at the comprehensives and more than tripled at the centers. Over the same period, the consumer price index (CPI), which measures the cost of goods and services, increased by 274%—far below the rate of tuition increase for the doctorals and comprehensives.

These tuition increases were not simply due to increased costs of providing educational programs; students' share of the instructional cost increased from 25% to 34.5%.

UW SYSTEM			
<u>TUITION INCREASES</u>			
20 year comparison			
	<u>1975</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>Percent Increase</u>
Doctorals	\$540	\$2,645	490%
Comprehensives	\$524	\$2,143	409%
Centers	\$524	\$1,779	340%

How will the tuition cap help control tuition increases?

Tuition cap legislation is the first step in getting tuition increases under control. A cost control on the percentage of instructional costs that tuition must cover would limit tuition hikes to increases in actual instructional costs. In other words, the bill would stop the trend toward increasing the share of instructional costs paid by students. Under a cap, the UW System would have to control spending, since it could no longer increase expenditures by transferring a greater share to students. Future spending increases would have to be offset by increased efficiencies and/or revenues in other areas in proportion to tuition.

Is the tuition cap flexible enough?

Critics have claimed that a tuition cap will erode the quality of education because it limits the ability of the UW System to raise revenues. They argue that the UW System must be free to set tuition rates at whatever level is necessary in a given year. This argument ignores the flexibility inherent to this bill.

First, the bill does not place any absolute limits on tuition increases. The system is free to set tuition rates at any level that does not exceed 33% of instructional cost. Thus, if additional revenue is needed to fund programs, the budget can be increased with money from GPR and other sources to balance out tuition increases.

Second, should there be a state revenue crisis situation that would force the state to increase students' tuition share beyond 33%, the legislature could allow an exemption on a one-time basis, or if warranted, the cap could be adjusted. This is easily accomplished since the legislature makes many statutory changes in the biennial budget bill and any mid-biennium budget adjustment bills.

If the legislature can change it at any time, why adopt a tuition cap?

Once a tuition cap is adopted, the burden would be on the UW System to justify exceeding the 33% cap. Since a change in law would be required, the system would have to produce solid reasons for raising tuition. Thus, the bill would create more pressure to hold increases down. Passage of AB 33 would send the message that the legislature is committed to keeping the students' share of instructional costs at a fair and reasonable level. This is particularly important in light of the recent cuts to federal financial aid and the level-funding of state financial aid programs.

Would the tuition cap hurt educational quality?

No. The cap allows adequate flexibility to address academic quality issues. If, for some reason, the quality of education in the UW System requires additional revenues that cannot be found without increasing the students' share of their costs, the legislature can adjust the cap. Historically, students have been willing to contribute when issues of educational quality are involved. This bill provides an incentive to make sure the UW System bureaucracy continually strives toward efficiency.

Joe Plouff



State Representative - 29th Assembly District

**Written Testimony of Representative Joe Plouff to the
Senate Committee on Education
September 10, 1997**

Good afternoon Chairman Potter and members of the Senate Education Committee.

As the Assembly author of SB 72 and its companion bill AB 33, I am pleased to have the committee hear testimony today on this legislation which addresses the problem of skyrocketing college tuition costs.

From 1975 to 1997 the cost of tuition has risen dramatically. Since 1975, tuition has increased 490% at the doctoral campuses, 409% at the comprehensive campuses and 340% at the Centers. In comparison, over the same period, the cost of living, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), increased by only 274%. Over the years, tuition hikes have constantly outpaced the cost of living.

This problem of upward spiraling tuition has been compounded by a decade's worth of reductions in federal financial aid programs and a shifting of aid from grants to loans. Additional student fees above and beyond tuition has also increased the cost of a college education.

Not only is access to affordable education being restricted, but those who do graduate often find themselves with enormous debt loads. Many students are also taking longer to graduate in order to maintain jobs to finance their education.

According to the Legislative Fiscal Bureau, prior to the merger of the state university system in 1971, resident undergraduates paid 20% of the cost of instruction. After the merger, tuition rose to 25% of instructional costs. Today undergraduates pay approximately 34.5% of instructional costs.

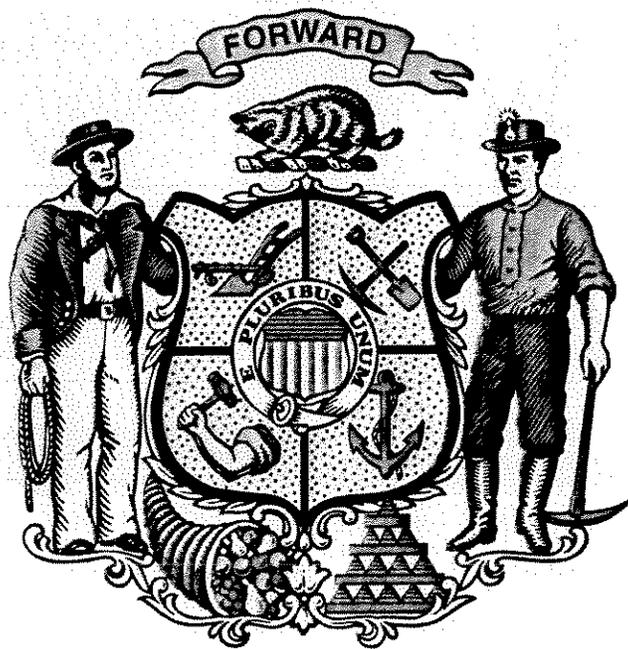
SB 72 would establish a tuition cap of 33% for resident undergraduates and 120% for nonresident undergraduates. A cap would still allow the state flexibility. The tuition cap would not prevent tuition hikes, but would ensure that the state shares the burden with students and their families when tuition is increased. Currently, when tuition is increased, the burden is placed primarily on the backs of students.

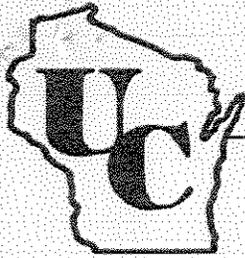
Capping tuition will also help ensure that increases in UW System GPR revenue will be tied to increases in instructional costs. This, in turn, will provide a higher level of accountability when investments are made in Wisconsin higher education.

Two sessions ago, an identical bill, introduced by Representative Al Baldus was passed by the State Assembly on a bi-partisan vote of 58 to 38. Since then, public support for this type of legislation continues to grow as more people realize that the cost of a college education may soon be out of reach for them and their children.

It is in our best interest to provide a system of higher education that is accessible and affordable; so a person's decision to attend college is based on one's academic achievement or potential rather than on one's income level.

I hope that this testimony has been helpful in detailing the need for this legislation. Again, I would like to thank the committee for considering SB 72.





United Council

of University of Wisconsin Students, Inc.

122 State Street, Suite 500, Madison, WI 53703 Phone: (608) 263-3422 Fax: (608) 265-4070

Testimony of

Jamie S. Kuhn

United Council President

on the Tuition Cap Bill, SB 72

Before the Senate Education Committee

September 10, 1997

Chairman Potter, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Jamie Kuhn and I am the President of the United Council of UW Students. United Council is the state student association which represents the more than 140,000 students within the UW System. I am here to support Senate Bill 72, the Tuition Cap Bill, which would cap instructional costs of undergraduate tuition at 33% for residents and 120% for non-residents, and help protect the affordability and accessibility of higher education for Wisconsin's children and families.

A quick history review shows that prior to the merger of the University of Wisconsin System and the Wisconsin State University System, resident undergraduates paid 20% of instructional costs. After the merger of the two systems, the percentage increased to 25%. In 1986, students became even more concerned about the trend to balance the UW System budget on their backs, and introduced this legislation as the cost of instruction that students paid reached over 31%. At that time, legislators said there was no need for a 33% cap because it would never be reached. Then in 1995, the magical 33% was surpassed when students paid 33.4% of the cost of instruction.

Now today, as I stand before you, tuition has reached 35.8% of the cost of instruction (graph 1), even though during just the last biennium the Governor pledged that his budget would "keep tuition levels under 33% of the cost of instruction."

However, what is so alarming is the rate at which tuition has increased. At two times the rate of inflation over the last 15 years, tuition has increased far faster than any other costs such as property tax, housing and food (graph 2). Can you imagine if taxes were to increase at the rate tuition has? As you can see in graph 3, if tuition were to increase at the same rate as inflation, it would be less than half of what it is today, and the tuition cap bill would not be necessary. But it is necessary, because this year the tuition increase was three times the rate of inflation—the largest increase in a decade. Legislators have a responsibility to do something.

What does this all mean? It means that more and more Wisconsin families—your constituents—cannot afford to send their brightest and most promising children to our public university system.

And every year, students and their families are being asked to pick up the support which used to be shared between the state and students.

Yes, it is true that the total cost of instruction has increased, and students are willing to accept reasonable tuition increases. But asking students to continually pay more while state funding decreases is unacceptable, since it is these decreases in state support that are artificially driving up the tuition costs.

Since 1981, the percentage of GPR dollars that makes up the UW System budget has dramatically decreased (graph 4). In the last biennial budget, Wisconsin was one of only six states that deprioritized higher education to such an extent that it cut funding to its university system (graph 5). Thus, fully funding the UW System now, doesn't even make up for last biennium's decrease. And if you compare UW-Madison to several of its peers, it is in a sad class all by itself.

Senate Bill 72 will eliminate many of these problems because as the cost of instruction increases, there will be a shared cost increase by students and the state.

We are in a time of great economic growth: unemployment is low, and people's lives are good; yet the portion of the state budget that is appropriated to the UW System, the "economic powerhouse," again quoting Governor Thompson, continues to decrease (graph 6) minimizing the benefit the university will have on our state economy. And as support for higher education decreases, so does the health of our economy.

As average student debtload after graduation increases to over \$12,000 (graph 7) and students take longer to graduate because they need to take entire semesters off at a time to earn enough money to attend classes, they will be less and less likely to have the financial means to contribute to the growth of Wisconsin's economy.

Promises by past legislators and even the Governor have not stopped tuition from increasing, and the current tuition flexibility proposal allows the Board of Regents to increase tuition up to 4% above what you, the Legislature, sets tuition at. What we need from you is a commitment to support higher education with the tuition cap bill.

I ask you now to think back when you were a student at the university and how much it cost you. Now let me guide you into the future. Using the average increases in tuition and room and board costs over the past fifteen years (though more recent increases are much higher), a new born daughter or son today would pay over \$25,000 for her or his first year at the university (chart 1). This is a realistic possibility and should frighten you. Just think, the opportunity you received, completely out of reach for most children in the near future.

The tuition cap bill, encourages the state to appropriately fund one of its most important investments

without binding the university to anything in a time of crisis. We have always taken extreme pride in the educational level of our citizens, and have reaped the benefits that this education provides to the entire state.

The best way to generate revenue without raising taxes is by increasing the income of our citizens through an accessible, affordable higher education.

Please think very critically about the accessibility of the UW System in the present and in the future. Think about the affect this will have on Wisconsin as a whole. Now challenge yourself to draw a line in the sand and stop the trend of increasing students' tuition and deprioritizing higher education.