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## Joint Finance Committee – La Crosse Hearing – April 3, 2001

Testimony by Robert Peterson, CESA #4, representing a number of area school superintendents.  
Phone: 608 786 4800, Fax: 608 786 4801, email: peterso1@cesa4.k12.wi.us.

Members of the Joint Finance Committee:

Welcome to La Crosse and western Wisconsin. Thank you for having a hearing in our area of the state.

School Finance Issues:

The top priority for school administrators is funding of our public schools. The revenue caps are increasingly having a negative effect on our ability to provide quality educational opportunities for our students. The impact is felt most severely on declining enrollment districts. However, even under the best conditions of increasing enrollment the revenue is just not adequate to maintain our educational programs. This year has been particularly difficult with raising energy costs and unusually high increases in health insurance premiums. Personnel costs of 3.8% plus lane advances when compared to revenue increases of less than three percent makes balancing a district budget impossible without program cuts. While supportive of the DPI's one percent solution and WASB's two percent solution, it is our opinion that additional relief is necessary. The inability of elected local school boards to remedy the situation is the greatest assault on local control in memory. Over time, the rigid revenue caps will critically harm our public schools. One has only to look at what happened in California following Proposition 13 in the 1970's to see the future for Wisconsin. California once lead the nation in student achievement and innovation, but now ranks 49<sup>th</sup> just above Mississippi. Will our state motto, "**Forward**", be average or below average for public education ten or fifteen years from now.

Area school superintendents are supportive of the SAGE program and urge full funding as promised in the current budget. All students benefit from smaller class sizes in the early years, not just the disadvantaged.

We are opposed to the expansion of the private school voucher program and the elimination of the income level limit once the students are enrolled in the program

We support the DPI's proposal for professional development for our current teachers. Research demonstrates that the quality of teachers is the major factor in improving student achievement. A number of states are providing millions of dollars in professional development of teachers. Can Wisconsin maintain its standard of excellence in public education without an investment in the most critical factor in improving student achievement.

## Policy Issues

We support the School Administrators Alliance proposal to remove all policy issues from the budget deliberations and adoption. These issues should be viewed in the light of day with separate legislation, separate hearings and separate debate and voting.

A number of the policy issues concern us and are too numerous to review at today's hearing. The school accountability function must remain with the DPI. The state superintendent should have the authority to use federal discretionary funds for statewide initiatives which benefit all students in the state. Our regional agency, CESA #4, provides valuable services to our districts through these discretionary funds. It is interesting that the Kettl Commission urged more regional cooperation and collaboration and the proposed budget attempts to diminish resources to do so.

The alternative licensure proposal for teachers is another threat to our quality public education system. Again look at California where close to 25% of their early elementary teachers are not fully certified.

We understand you have a difficult task ahead of you, especially in light of a slowing in growth of state revenues. We also understand that we cannot maintain our excellent public schools, excellent University and Technical College systems, excellent highways and other public services without a major commitment from our taxpayers.

The following area school superintendents have endorsed this testimony.

Steven Sedlmayr, Alma Schools  
Randall Stanley, Alma Center-Humbird-Merrillan Schools  
Dennis Richards, Black River Falls Schools  
Gay Leavitt, Blair-Taylor Schools  
Norbert Resheske, Jr., Cashton Schools  
Steve Mieden, Cochrane-Fountain City Schools  
Fred Frick, Holmen Schools  
Tom Downs, La Crosse Schools  
Lee Bush, La Farge Schools  
John Burnett, Onalaska Schools  
Eugene Ertz, West Salem Schools  
Jerry Freimark, Whitehall Schools

# SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LA CROSSE



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**Gerald R. Kember**  
Associate Superintendent/Instruction

April 3, 2001

Joint Finance Committee:

It is inappropriate to separate instruction from assessment in education. These components of an educational system rely on each other to provide a meaningful and results driven learning experience for children. Creating a Board on Education, Evaluation and Accountability as proposed in the state budget would do exactly that.

My understanding is that this newly created board would administer all aspects of the state student assessment program, evaluate school programs, and be responsible for the annual school performance report. While the title (Board on Education, Evaluation and Accountability) is a bit daunting, it also suggests that the responsibilities of this office could grow beyond what is currently being proposed. It appears that this is another step toward diminishing the role and effectiveness of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), the state agency responsible for insuring quality public schools in Wisconsin. The DPI is a valuable resource to our schools and one whose importance increases as we continue to raise the measures of accountability.

The Governor has suggested that handing out the tests and compiling the results does not need to be done by educators. Such an over-simplification of what is involved in a quality assessment program illustrates exactly why educators need to lead the way. The complexities of administering an effective state testing program are significant. When you test, what you test, which test is used and how the results are reported are all critical components of an assessment program. The Department of Public Instruction has worked diligently to make sure that the tests align with state standards and meet the needs of our schools and the children they serve. Can we expect the expertise and understanding necessary to administer an effective assessment program, when the state department whose mission revolves around insuring that Wisconsin students receive a quality education is not leading the program?

The Department of Public Instruction needs to continue to be responsible for state wide student assessment and evaluating our schools. I am asking you to remove the proposed Board on Education, Evaluation, and Accountability from the state budget. Thank you for hearing my concerns.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Kember  
Associate Superintendent of Instruction

**School District of La Crosse  
Superintendent's Office**

**To: Joint Finance Committee Members**  
**From: Thomas J. Downs, Superintendent**  
**Date: 4/3/01**

Thank you for holding this hearing and receiving our feedback. I come before you today to request that you make changes in the Governor's budget. I believe that without making these changes, students in the School District of La Crosse are being shortchanged. I'd like to speak in opposition to two of the budget proposals. The first proposal involves the SAGE program. The second is special education.

**First SAGE:** I ask that you maintain SAGE as a K-3 program for all schools who choose to participate. The Governor's budget redefines SAGE for seven of our eleven elementary schools that entered the program last year. I recognize that you've received much feedback already about the state's commitment to this highly successful, innovative program. It is indeed, a most powerful investment in the future of our most valuable resource, the education of our students. Failure to expand the SAGE program in 2001-2003 would directly affect students in seven of the eleven School District of La Crosse elementary schools. Due to existing revenue cap restrictions, the School District of La Crosse does not have the capability to replace this funding, which is approximately \$750,000 over the biennium. Class sizes in these seven elementary schools for reading, language arts, and math would be approximately 21 to 1 at the second grade level next year and third grade the year after, compared to 15 to 1 if SAGE is allowed to expand.

The timeline for making any decision regarding changes in the SAGE program is also critical. I would even go as far to suggest that we have an "emergency" here. The timeliness of your SAGE decision, if made later than May of this spring, virtually eliminates the SAGE design in seven of our eleven elementary schools for next year. Waiting until the summer or early fall would virtually eliminate any SAGE program expansion in our district for at least another school year and cause us to lose some very good teachers to other districts or states. In order to properly staff the program and to avoid laying off existing teachers, I ask that you make your decision in May of this year so that we can complete the hiring process for the additional teachers to expand the program and avoid serving "termination" notices to existing teachers.

**Second Special Education:** I ask that you not reduce funding for special education. The \$25 million in additional monies over the biennium will not keep us close to our current reimbursement rate. I'd request that you put additional dollars into special education. Failure to at least maintain the current level will create a potential shortfall of \$300,000 to \$400,000 in the School District of La Crosse. The reduction of funding will not equate to a reduction in the number of student referrals and placements in special education programs. The high-cost, low-incident definition is also inadequate. There are very few students who will meet the Governor's definition of high-cost of \$50,000. I propose that the definition of high-cost should be three times the state average, and that those costs be reimbursed at a 90% level. The funding for this proposal should be in addition to any handicapped aid appropriation so money is not just moved around. I would also request that you remove all of the special education requirements and rules from the budget as non-fiscal policy items.

Again, I thank you for your service to our state and our students. I appreciate your consideration of these requests.

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN  
**LA CROSSE**

Legislative Joint Committee on Finance

April 3, 2001

Hearing at La Crosse

Presenter: Anita Evans, Director, UW-La Crosse Murphy Library

First, I want to thank members of the Joint Committee on Finance for the attention given to funding \$7.3 million of the \$12 million GPR/Fees requested in the current biennium. It has made a tremendous difference in strengthening resources across all University of Wisconsin System libraries and expanding document delivery services for student and faculty. We have made up some ground lost in the 1990s, but we cannot stop here. UW libraries need to be positioned to retain subscriptions to essential periodical titles, buy the current literature in support of the curriculum, and continue offering access to online databases such as Web of Science, NetLibrary, and CINAHL Full Text. These databases were added by UW System this biennium.

UW System Libraries are proactively working to maximize resources. One strategy is the cooperative purchase of digital information through system-wide licensing. This biennium we have made great strides to negotiate favorable contracts with vendors across the System libraries saving substantial money. We are working on a "universal borrowing" program so faculty and students at one System library can use the online catalog seamlessly to borrow books and other materials from other System libraries. Librarians are teaming with scholars to explore alternative publishing vehicles to keep publishing costs down.

Nonetheless, UW System libraries are being squeezed by serious inflationary pressures which erode purchasing power each year of fixed budgets. For all types of library materials and electronic access, libraries are facing a collective yearly inflation rate of 6% or more. The real need is for annual incremental increases to answer the continually rising costs associated with inflation. PsycINFO, the preeminent psychology database, is just one example of the kind of cost increases libraries are facing. In 1998/99, UW-L paid \$6,300 for PsycINFO. This fiscal year the price tag is \$7,500. This amount would have been more had not UW System librarians in collaboration with Psychology Department faculty put pressure on the publisher, American Psychological Association, to hold down cost increases.

Clearly digital information is not free. Information in all its various formats has great value, but is costly. Let me take one example of a new resource, the historic collection of Ethnic NewsWatch. This is a retrospective database comprised of newspapers, magazines and journals of the ethnic, minority and native press from 1960-1989. The price quoted by the publisher for the UW-L campus alone is \$25,000. This is an important resource, but unaffordable at the current price. Digital information is the future, and we are finding that as digital replaces paper the costs are often higher.

Murphy Library Resource Center

1631 Pine Street, La Crosse WI 54601

Phone: (608)785-8505, Fax: (608) 785-8639 • <http://perth.uwlax.edu/MurphyLibrary/>

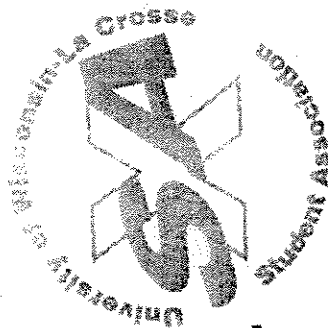
An affirmative action/equal opportunity employer

UW Students have made a strong statement through their United Council representatives at a Board of Regents meeting in April 2000 that funding for library acquisitions is a priority for them. They have good reason to be concerned. Up-to-date information resources are an integral part of a quality educational experience. UW-L and other UW System campuses are beginning to emphasize serious undergraduate research, and students need to be armed with the requisite resources.

The \$4.7 million for next biennium proposed by the Regents and future funding increases indexed to inflation would allow UW System Libraries to keep pace with providing dynamic, current information collections and access for the university community, businesses, K-12 schools, and all Wisconsin citizens.

We invite you to visit Murphy Library either personally or virtually:  
<http://perth.uwlax.edu/murphylibrary>

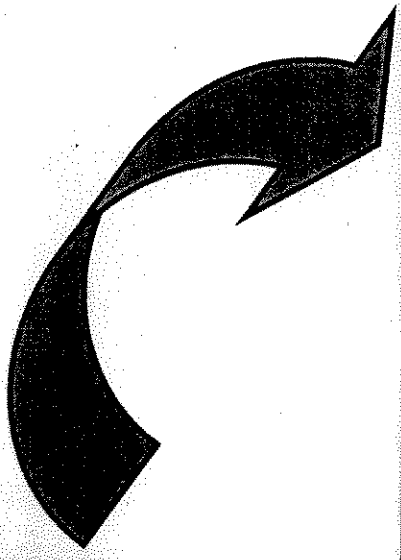
Thank you.



# Wisconsin State Budget Priorities

*The Shift away from Higher Education*

Student Priorities



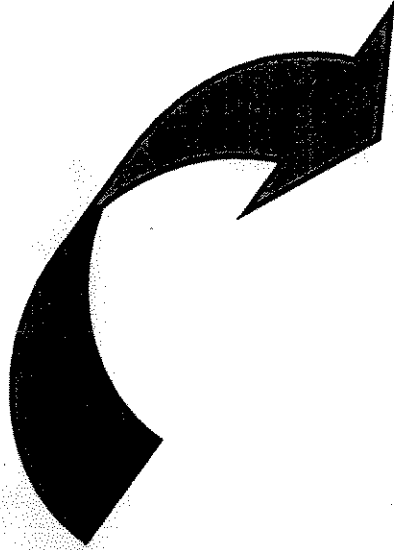
- UW-L Alfred Health Center
- Continuing Tuition Freeze
- Academic Advising and Campus Safety
- Economic Stimulus Proposal

Education Is An INVESTMENT!



# Wisconsin State Budget Priorities

*The Shift away from Higher Education*



Student Priorities

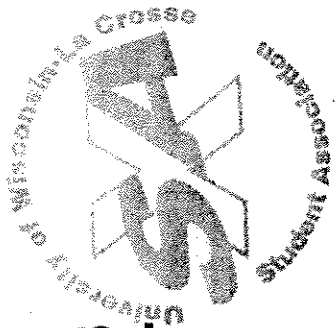
- o Indian Student Assistance Grant Funding
- o WHEG Funding Tribal Colleges
- o WHEG Funding UW System
- o Opposed to Tuition Flexibility

Education Is An INVESTMENT!



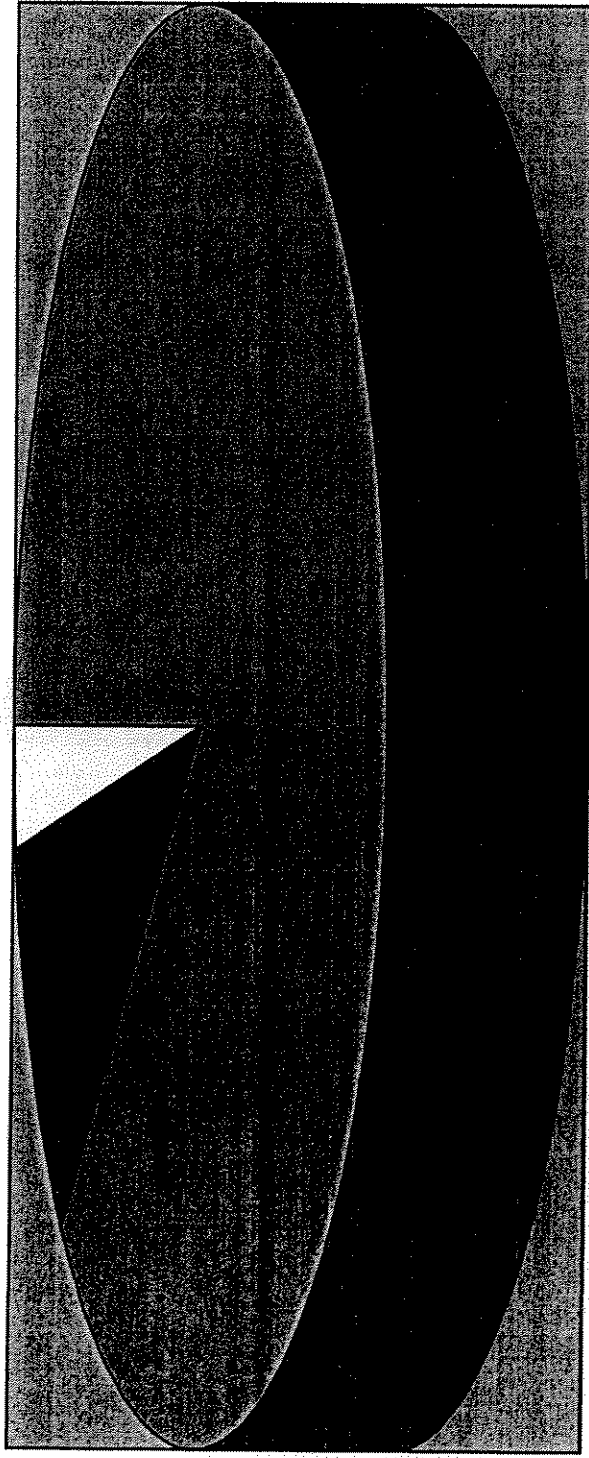
# Wisconsin State Budget Priorities

*The Shift away from Higher Education*



9.46%

2.80%

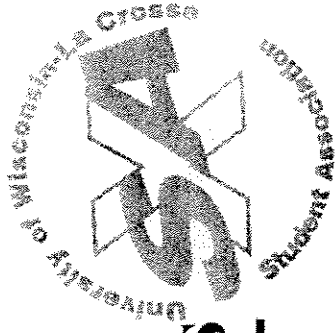


87.74%

- Federal
- State
- Other

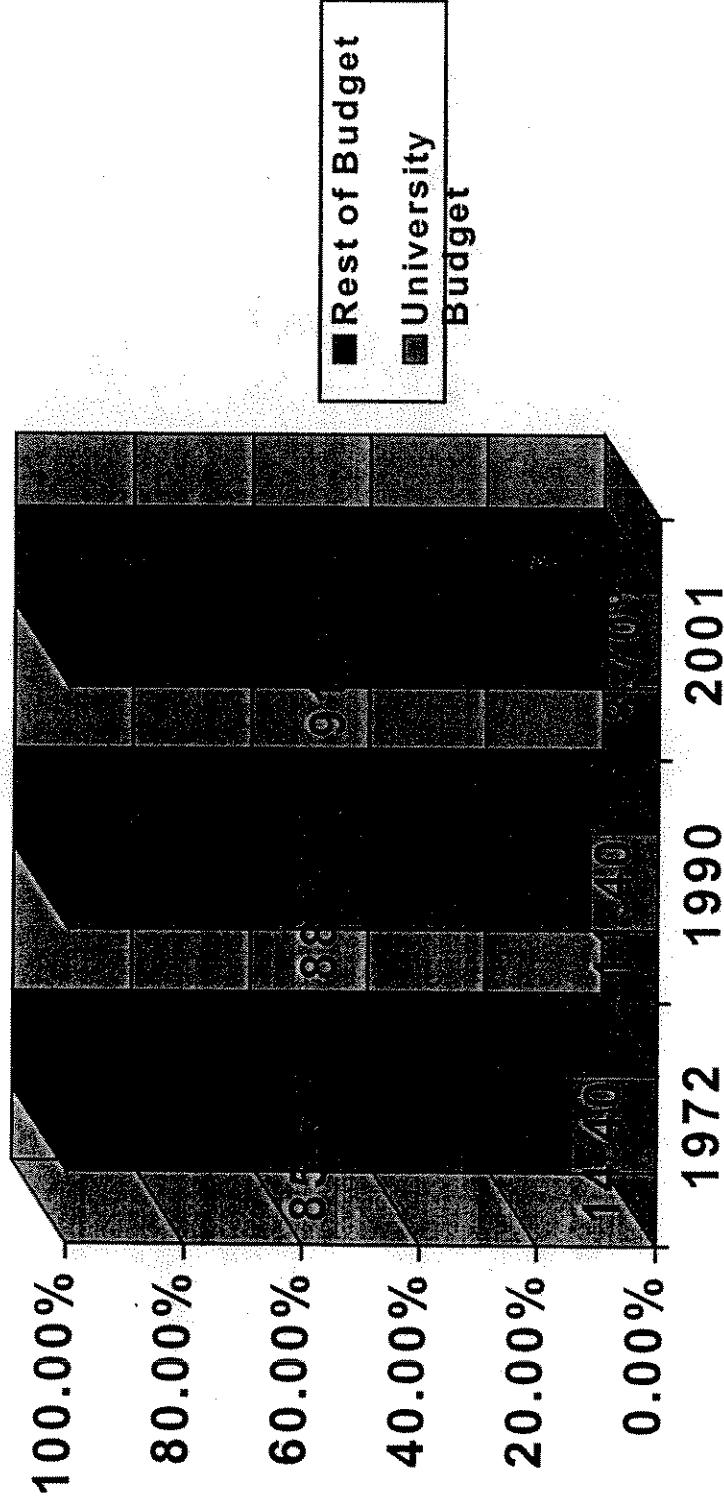
Total Need of Students is \$275,180,397. The states contribution in 1999-00 was at 9.46%. Total Unmet need of students is at \$70,169,137.

Education Is An INVESTMENT!



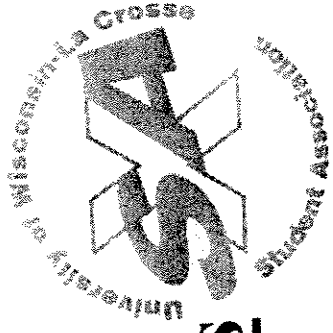
# Wisconsin State Budget Priorities

*The Shift away from Higher Education*



Since 1972, funding for the University Budget has decreased from 14.4% to 8.71%

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# Wisconsin State Budget Priorities

*The Shift away from Higher Education*

Median Family Income By Educational Level

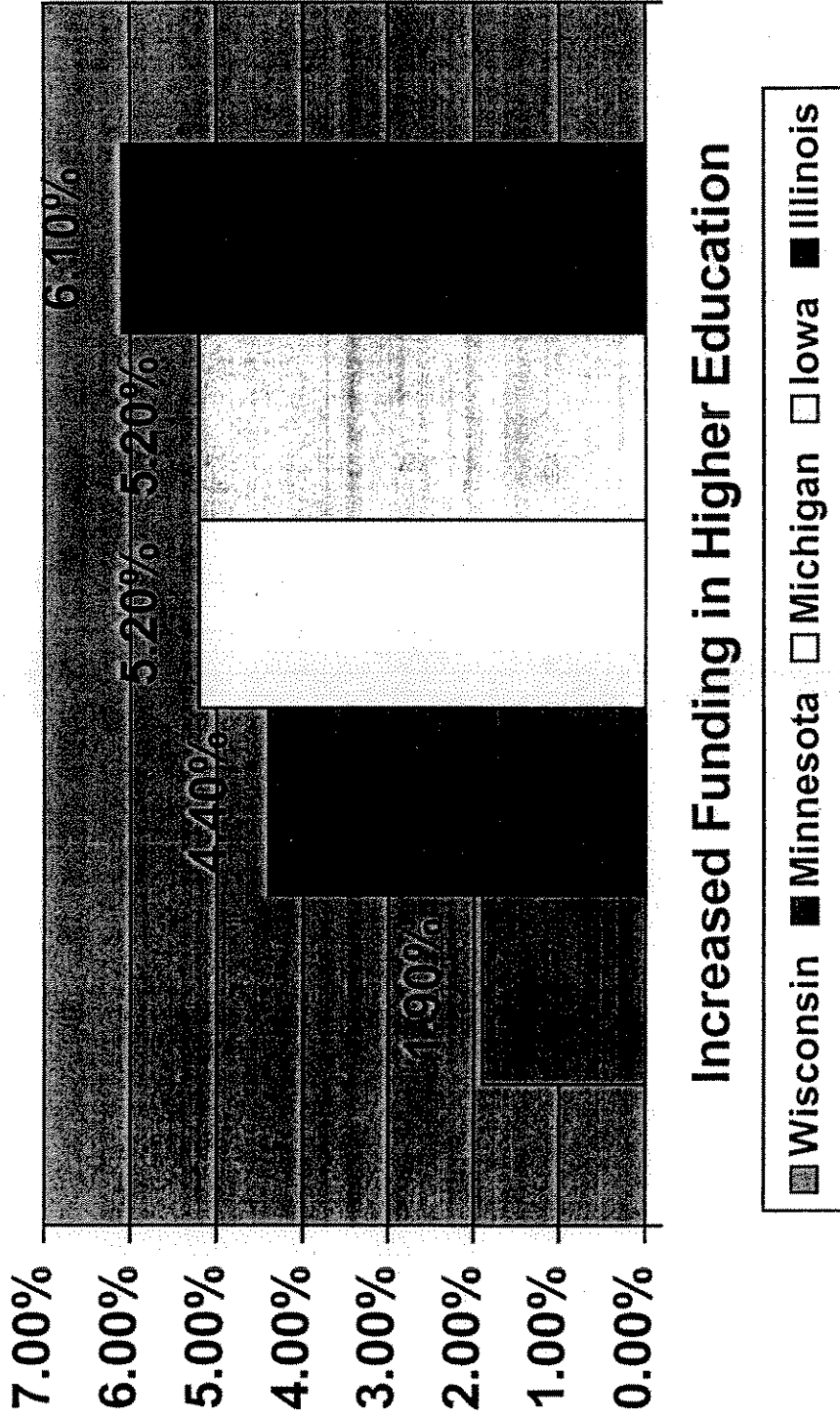
<b>HIGH SCHOOL</b>	<b>\$41,302</b>
<b>ASSOCIATE DEGREE</b>	<b>\$54,719</b>
<b>BACHELORS</b>	<b>\$71,680</b>
<b>MASTERS</b>	<b>\$83,052</b>
<b>PROFESSIONAL</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>

Family = 2 or more people  
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics = 1998 dollars

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# Wisconsin State Budget Priorities

*The Shift away from Higher Education*



**Increased Funding in Higher Education**

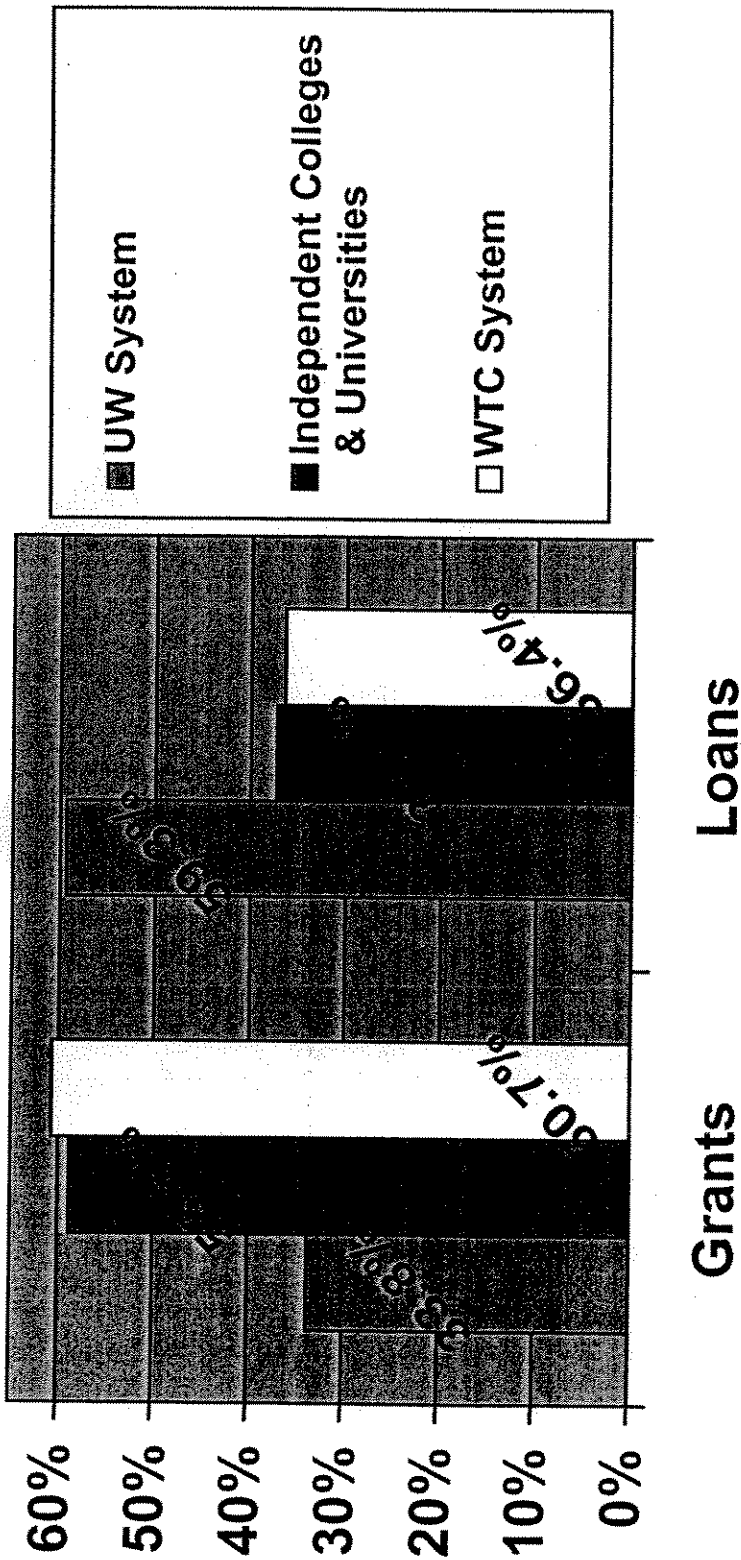
Over the Last Five Years, Wisconsin's average annual investment in higher education of 1.9% has trailed Minnesota (4.4%), Michigan and Iowa (5.2%), and Illinois (6.1%).

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# Wisconsin State Budget Priorities

*The Shift away from Higher Education*

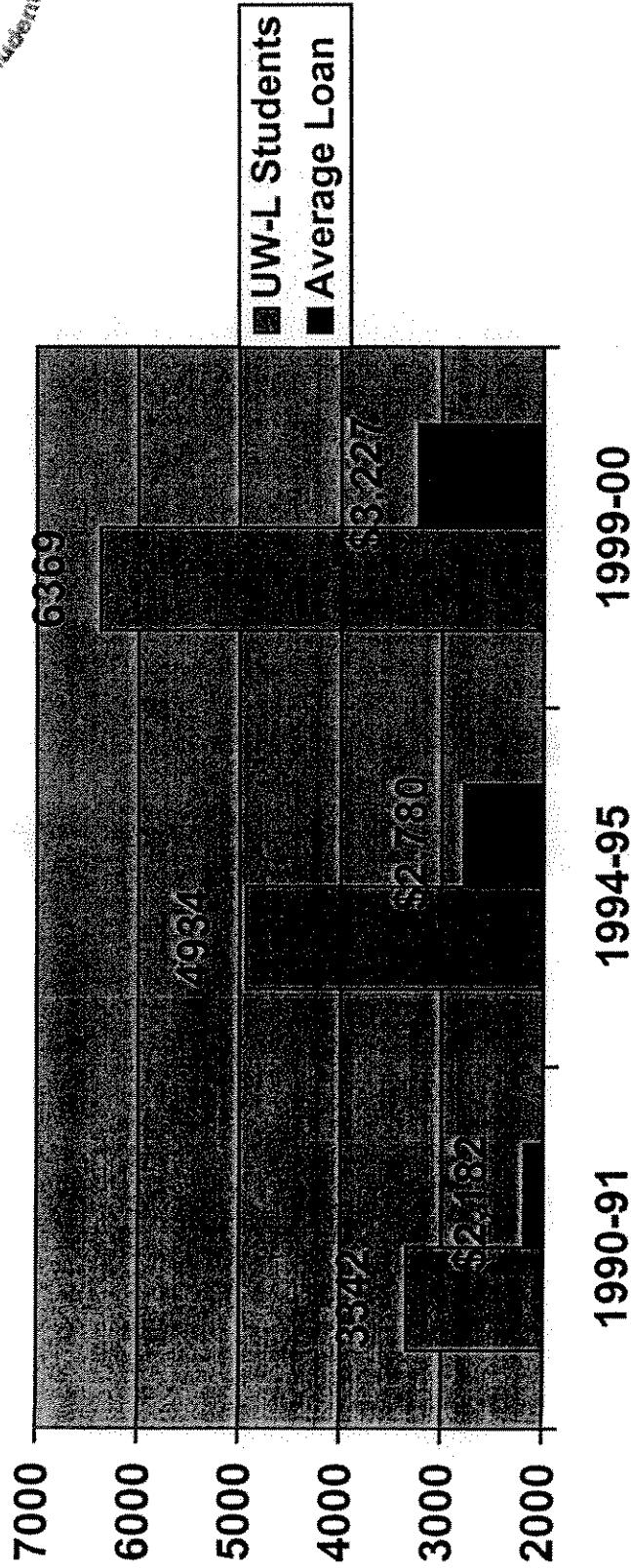


Currently, financial aid packages for UW Students consist of a heavy disparity between grant funding and loan funding.

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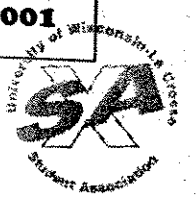
# Wisconsin State Budget Priorities

## *The Shift away from Higher Education*



In 1991, the average loan for a UW-L recipient was \$2,182. In the last ten years another 3,000 UW-L students receive loans, which forces more students to pay for the rising cost of higher education. In the 1999-00 academic year, the average loan was \$3,227 for the UW-L student. Upon Graduation, the average UW-L student owes more than \$15,000 in Student Loans.

Education Is An INVESTMENT!



**Investing in Wisconsin Higher Education Resolution**

- Whereas, 9,100 students attend the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse;
- Whereas, these students seek a quality and affordable education;
- Whereas, UW-L students find great benefit in valuable campus programs such as Academic Advising and buildings such as the new Allied Health Center;
- Whereas, the numerous services that are offered to the students at UW-L are advantageous in aiding the structure of learning at this higher education institution;
- Whereas, the average debt of UW-L Students upon graduation is above \$15,000;
- Whereas, in recent years, financial aid has failed to keep pace with the increased rate of tuition that additionally has far exceeded the rate of inflation;
- Whereas, according to the American Council on Higher Education, for every \$100 increase in tuition, there is a 2.2% decline in enrollment for low-income families;
- Whereas, most UW-L Students must work multiple jobs while taking a full-time credit load in school;
- Whereas, most of these positions fail to give students a living wage;
- Whereas, Governor Scott McCallum clearly did not place Higher Education in Wisconsin a priority;
- Whereas, the State Legislature is our democratically elected officials;

**Be it resolved that the UW-L Student Senate, the representing governing body of the 9,100 students attending UW-L, urge the State Legislature to ensure an adequate investment in Higher Education;**

**Be it further resolved that the UW-L Student Senate requests the State Legislature to approve the following initiatives at the requested amount:**

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN LA CROSSE ALLIED HEALTH CENTER**  
*Operating and maintenance costs*

Source of Funds	Student Senate Request				Governor's Recommendations			
	FY 02 Dollars	FY 02 Positions	FY 03 Dollars	FY 03 Positions	FY 02 Dollars	FY 02 Positions	FY 03 Dollars	FY 03 Positions
GPR	514,800	0	514,800	0	0	0	0	0
PR-O	164,100	0	164,100	0	164,100	0	164,100	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>678,900</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>678,900</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>164,100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>164,100</b>	<b>0</b>

- The Governor has not included continuing GPR state dollars for the Allied Health Center.
- The UW-L Student Senate is opposed to the Governor's Recommendation and Requests that an additional \$1,029,600 be granted in continuing GPR funds to offset the cost of the operating and maintenance of the Center.



### CONTINUING TUITION FREEZE

- The Governor has relied too much on tuition dollars to pay for the University Budget.
- **The UW-L Student Senate requests that the GPR funds provided for the Tuition Freeze of FY 01, continue as a base budget each year of the biennia.** This \$28,000,000 each year as a base budget would then be a cost to continue program.
- This GPR funding helps the reliance the Governor's budget has on student's tuition and restores the proper balance of GPR and fees for new initiatives.

### ACADEMIC ADVISING AND CAMPUS SAFETY

*Maintaining Quality in Higher Education*

Student Senate Request

Governor's Recommendations

Source of Funds	FY 02 Dollars	FY 02 Positions	FY 03 Dollars	FY 03 Positions	FY 02 Dollars	FY 02 Positions	FY 03 Dollars	FY 03 Positions
GPR	1,500,000	29.5	1,500,000	29.5	0	0	0	0
PR-O	0	0	0	0	0	0	750,000	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>750,000</b>	<b>15</b>

- This \$3,000,000 during the biennium would be used to strengthen academic advising for students who have not yet declared a major. Over the biennium, \$2,000,316 and 22.5 FTE in GPR funds would be used to enhance academic advising for students who have not yet declared a major. The remaining \$999,684 and 7 FTE would be used to provide each campus with a .5 position to address campus safety concerns for students, faculty and staff.
- The additional funding will support increased advising resources and staff at all system campuses and address campus safety. It is imperative that the Governor's original recommendation to provide 750,000 of PR-O funds be amended to include the above recommendation.
- **The UW-L Student Senate is opposed to the Governor's Recommendation and Requests that \$3,000,000 in GPR funds be provided creating 29.5 FTE positions.**

### ECONOMIC STIMULUS PROPOSAL

- **The UW-L Student Senate is in full support of the UW Systems Economic Stimulus Proposal.**
- Full funding would be provided for the UW-La Crosse Allied Health Consortium, as well as the following:
  - Plan 2008: Advance Opportunity Program (AOP) and Lawton Undergraduate Minority Retention Grant (LUMRG) would receive an increase of \$1,449,000 in GPR supported funds over the biennium. Currently, the Governor has proposed a zero increase in these programs.
    - **The UW-L Student Senate is opposed to the Governor's current stance and supports the UW System Request.**





- Maintaining Quality in Higher Education
  - Funding would be provided for Libraries, Advising, Study Abroad and Collaborative Languages.
  - The UW System has requested \$8,357,500 in GPR supported funds over the biennium for this initiative.
  - **The UW-L Student Senate supports the UW System request.**

**INDIAN STUDENT ASSISTANCE GRANT FUNDING**

Source of Funds	Student Senate Request				Governor's Recommendations			
	FY 02 Dollars	FY 02 Positions	FY 03 Dollars	FY 03 Positions	FY 02 Dollars	FY 02 Positions	FY 03 Dollars	FY 03 Positions
GPR	23,400	0	23,400	0	0	0	0	0
PR-S	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,800	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23,400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7,800</b>	<b>0</b>

Additionally:

**WISCONSIN HIGHER EDUCATION GRANT FUNDING: TRIBAL COLLEGES**

Source of Funds	Student Senate Request				Governor's Recommendations			
	FY 02 Dollars	FY 02 Positions	FY 03 Dollars	FY 03 Positions	FY 02 Dollars	FY 02 Positions	FY 03 Dollars	FY 03 Positions
GPR	12,000	0	12,000	0	0	0	0	0
PR-S	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,000	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>0</b>

- The Governor recommends increasing by one percent in FY 03 for both of these programs to help expand student access to post-secondary education and tribal post-secondary educational institutions.
- These programs provide grants based on financial need to resident undergraduate who are at least 25% Native American and are attending a post-secondary institution.
- Under the Governor's recommendation, gaming revenues must provide funding for these programs.
- **The UW-L Student Senate Opposes the Governor's stance for these grant assistance programs to survive off of gaming revenues.**
- **Further, The UW-L Student Senate finds it insufficient to provide only a 1% increase in FY 03.**
- **Lastly, The UW-L Student Senate requests the State Legislature to amend the Governor's proposal to provide a 3% increase in GPR funds each year of the biennium for both of these programs.**



Additionally the Following Request was not included in the Governor's Budget Recommendations:

**WISCONSIN HIGHER EDUCATION GRANT FUNDING: UW SYSTEM**

**The UW-L Student Senate requests \$46,761,936 in total allocation for the WHEG Program.** (This figure represents an increase of 18.9% in FY 02, and 8.0% in FY 03 from the FY 01 appropriation.)

- This includes \$22,481,700 for the FY 02 and \$24,280,236 for FY 03.
- This grant is the largest state funded need based grant for UW System students.
- Currently, the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) is not able to meet the statutory maximum award. This request would alleviate this situation and would help bring the amount of financial need met by HEAB in line with its level ten years ago.

**The UW-L Student Senate Also Supports Representative Spencer Black's Bill amending current statutory language regarding the Lawton Minority Undergraduate Grant Program and the Wisconsin Higher Education Grant Program.**

- Under this bill, the amount appropriated in each fiscal year for both types of grants depends on whether undergraduate tuition at institutions within the University of Wisconsin System in the current academic year has increased or decreased as compared to the previous academic year.

**TUITION FLEXIBILITY:**

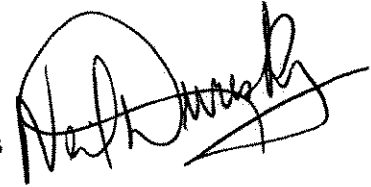
*The Governor recommends allowing the Board of Regents to raise tuition consistent with programming needs.*

- Currently the State Legislature holds the authority to authorize how much the Board of Regents can raise tuition. This ensures that the UW System justifies increases in tuition.
- The Board of Regents is an appointed body, without any legislative oversight. They are not accountable to the students that they ultimately govern over. It would be dangerous to allow the Regents this power without accountability to their constituents.
- In the 1997-1999 Biennium, the state legislature allowed the Regents 4% tuition flexibility in the first year of the biennium, and 7% in the second year of the biennium. The Regents used this power to fund the faculty pay plan on the backs of the students when the state ran out of money. Tuition increased over 13% in that biennium. For the past 25 years tuition has increased at four times the rate of inflation.
- The policy of Tuition Flexibility is a fundamental shift in who takes responsibility for public education in Wisconsin. Passage of tuition flexibility as stated would be the equivalent of the state saying it no longer wants to manage the UW System by deciding what is best for the citizens of Wisconsin, and their constituents.
- **The UW-L Student Senate is opposed to Tuition Flexibility.**

# Memorandum

**TO:** Joint Finance Committee Members

**FROM:** Neil Duresky, Region 6 Director, Wis. Assn. of School Boards



**DATE:** April 2, 2001

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**SUBJECT:** Proposed Revenue Cap Flexibility

Thank you for showing an interest in the lives of Western Wisconsin citizens as evidenced by your presence in La Crosse today. I am a lifelong Wisconsin resident, the La Crosse Board of Education president, and a retired Wisconsin Air National Guard squadron commander. I am confident that you will listen carefully to the comments you hear today, and that you will make conscientious and deliberative decisions that benefit all of Wisconsin's citizens. I am realistic enough to know that you will be pulled in many directions by numerous interested constituencies to promote a variety of budget concerns that will not all fit into one neat package.

Delegates to the 2001 Wisconsin Association of School Boards state convention voted overwhelmingly in January to make the proposed change (reverse) providing revenue limit flexibility the number one legislative priority of the Association. I appear today to strongly encourage you to make statutory changes that will provide revenue limit flexibility by allowing school boards to increase their local tax levies on a per pupil basis above the state limits by not more than 2 percent of the statewide average cost per pupil.

I do so because the current limits are beginning to have substantially negative effects on districts, and therefore on children, in my region; particularly those districts that are experiencing declining enrollments and increased operating cost expenses (i.e.; electricity and natural gas costs). Districts like La Crosse have trimmed the fat and will face severe program cutbacks soon if the draconian effect of revenue limits is not modified or reversed. For example, La Crosse has cut three administrative positions, and annual capital improvements expenditures have declined from \$3.3 million annually to less than \$1 million; while all seventeen district buildings still require operations and maintenance funding.

I have never seen such genuine overwhelming concern about the future of Wisconsin public education as I did during this year's delegate session. It would be worthwhile to listen to the legitimate concerns of the school boards you have legislatively formed to facilitate Wisconsin's public education programs.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of my remarks.

**WASB LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES  
2001**

***THE MISSION OF THE WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS IS TO PROVIDE VISIONARY LEADERSHIP TO WISCONSIN SCHOOL BOARDS AND TO SUPPORT, THROUGH QUALITY SERVICES, THEIR PURSUIT OF EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR EACH STUDENT.***

*Each of the following legislative priorities has been approved by a majority vote of representatives of Wisconsin School Boards at the annual WASB Delegate Assembly. Most were approved in January 2001. Others are ongoing WASB priorities. The WASB Board of Directors approved the priority list on February 10, 2001.*

**Local-State Finance Partners**

*Work together in the best interest of Wisconsin's students.*

*Provide revenue limit flexibility by allowing school boards to increase their local tax levies on a per pupil basis above the state limits by not more than 2 percent of the statewide average cost per pupil.*

April 3, 2001

Members of the Joint Finance Committee of the Wisconsin Legislature:

My name is Mike McArdle. I live at 820 Lori Place in the Town of Campbell (better known as French Island). I live due west of the LaCrosse Airport terminal within the boundary of Logan High School, which is located on the Northside of LaCrosse in the LaCrosse School District. The LaCrosse District is composed of six towns/townships and the City of LaCrosse. We are in both LaCrosse and Vernon counties. I am a member of the LaCrosse School Board and have been since the spring election in 1992. I took 1995-96 off at the end of my first term, so that I could oppose a referendum to build a new high school on the extreme Southside of LaCrosse, which I considered to be very bad policy. I have since been re-elected twice by the voters as the number one vote getter both times. We Board members often kid the LaCrosse Mayor that we are elected by more voters than he is.

I am also the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Desmond's Formal Wear, Inc. We are based here in LaCrosse and have 80+ stores throughout the upper Midwest. We operate in 12 States in the Upper Midwest. Our dry cleaning facility in the Northside industrial park of LaCrosse makes us one of the biggest single site operators in Wisconsin. We also view ourselves as the dominant "player" for formal wear in Milwaukee.

I wish to first thank the Joint Finance Committee for coming to LaCrosse. It is especially valid for you to come to this community to see the impact of State Government. Western Wisconsin prides itself on being self reliant, but the obvious benefits of State Government can easily be seen. More importantly, I hope you will come to realize the unique border issues that we have with Minnesota and Iowa. It is very common for employees to live in Minnesota or Iowa and work in Wisconsin. Nowhere else in Wisconsin is this more pronounced than here on our Western border. I would ask you to pay attention to this issue and assist Western counties, cities, Towns and villages to deal with this complex issue.

But, I really came here today to address issues in the next State Budget that affect the LaCrosse School District. I hope you noted from my personal introduction that I am a conservative who is quite willing to take a public stand and pursue my beliefs. I was not afraid to leave the School Board when I was told that I could not lead opposition to a referendum, which I felt was bad policy, while seated on the Board. So, please do not associate my remarks today as just another liberal, who has no sense of what programs cost, or has not taken the time to completely understand the issues and the background materials, which supports the argument. It is not my intention today to take you through the necessary support material and arguments, but to quickly identify those issues, which I do not support in this Budget, and then let my personal opposition, in conjunction with the professional administrators' more expert presentations, win your support for changing the policy of this budget which affects our School District in the coming two years.

It is important to first say to you that I do not intend to ask for more funding, but rather to have it distributed differently. I applaud and support the two thirds funding that this Budget continues. And, I understand the necessary limitations the legislature has placed on School Districts to keep property taxes off the "front burner". For the most part, our Board has found ways to keep innovating and live within these rules. The LaCrosse "mill" rate has declined every year since 1992. I wish I could say that this always resulted in lower tax bills each year for our taxpayers. During some years, however, it has. I, of course, understand that this was through both our efforts and that of the legislature.

My experience tells me that any budget is always a process of scarce resource allocation, and I understand that your job in this budget process is just that. It really makes no difference whether a budget has lots of monies to work with or is under financial pressure, choices must always be made. However, I understand, that a budget prepared under financial pressure always brings this scarce resource allocation issue to the forefront. I also concede that by all standards, and especially those in Western Wisconsin the Milwaukee Public School system is broken and needs you special attention. But the fix cannot come at the expense of students in the rest of the State. Please allow this to be the basis for my remarks.

If the real theme of this budget is "Building the new Wisconsin Economy", then I must remind you that the school system in Wisconsin at all levels is the key. When LaCrosse puts its best foot forward for business, among the top five assets pointed to, is its health care and educational institutions. The LaCrosse Public Schools are an important part of that representation. We are proud of our buildings and the delivery system within them. LaCrosse schools are also an important resource to our success at avoiding urban flight. The bedroom communities around LaCrosse, especially those in Minnesota, drain a lot of financial resource from the city. We have tried to be innovative. We understand that we must keep our existing students, attract new ones from outside the area and provide programs for the working parents, which result in their utilizing our system rather than the one in their bedroom community.

To this end, we consider ourselves a leader in establishing Charter Schools. We understand how they should best operate and comply with the law. I invite you all to tour any of our Charters. When you look at the Charter questions in Milwaukee, do not throw the baby out with the bath water. Further, I strongly urge you to keep the control for Charters with the local school board. We are best equipped to keep the process from getting out of hand. Parents love to take control just like the bride's mother...

We have further tried to attract and keep students by offering small class size through the SAGE program. All the literature says that small class size during the Kindergarten to third grade experience makes the educational outcome a success all the way through High School. These are the development years for any student. If we can teach them to read and develop good learning habits by the time they are 8 years old, then we can expect the best results when they are seniors in high school. This is a far better investment in the

future of Wisconsin than any graduation test. This is just simple upper midwestern common sense. It is often said that what happens before you are 8, determines your success or failure in life. You receive your moral value system and you learn respect or lack thereof for authority. I see this investment now as a means to take pressure off our prisons in ten years and to develop students who can pass the stiff requirements for college entrance, and have the desire to succeed at the secondary level. We lose far too many to "dead end" jobs because they do not have the foundation to keep learning, as the task gets more complex. If our economy is to attract and keep the sons and daughters of our citizens, then we must find ways to motivate them to seek careers of skill, and then provide jobs that take advantage of those skills. If Governor McCallum, in his remarks before this year's State School Board Convention, meant it when he said, "we need an education system that allows us to compete world wide", then it is my opinion that this is a necessary investment.

I would also cite a **Business Week** article in the March 19, 2001 issue, which lists small class size as the second of seven ideas that work in fixing America's schools. This article was addressing the goals of President Bush and how they can be achieved. I will further tell you that my entire literature search, points to a class size of 15 as the magic number where a real difference in kids is achieved. Former President Clinton was wrong with his 18 legislation of last year, though anything helps to some degree. Again, I would tell you not to throw the baby out with the bath water in addressing Milwaukee. I would further suggest that if there is no other way, then compromise on community size. Might I suggest that the most benefits are for the larger communities using SAGE to attract and keep residents?

I would request your support for keeping the Summer School program monies as is. The reasons are all the same as SAGE. LaCrosse provides a very rich summer school program to help attract and keep students, as well as, to deal with the educational concerns that students lose too much during the three month break and must start over in the fall where the class members are all at different points on the educational continuum. In addition, the issue of diversity is addressed by providing ongoing activities that can keep children occupied, and provides opportunities to catch the rest of the class educationally. This is very important to urban districts.

Next, I would request your support for changing the proposal for Special Education from the proposed target of more than \$50,000 to a more realistic target of \$35,000. We have an extensive special education program here in LaCrosse. Again, I would invite you to come and see. But, none of our children would qualify at \$50,000. We very much have need for the added support being talked about in the proposal, but need a level where we can actually benefit. As you review the State, you will see that this is very much an urban problem. This is because smaller districts tend to "ship" to districts like ours the unique problems, which have high cost. Remember that a district must by federal law serve these special children.

Finally, I would request relief from the revenue caps so that we can maintain our buildings. I have no objection to you limiting this power to the Capital Project Fund.

This is a real issue in LaCrosse. When I started on the Board, the District was spending nearly \$3,300,000 on building maintenance and other capital related expenditures. Last year we struggled to keep this number at \$1,000,000. I was unaware that it was possible to split a roof replacement into parts to be funded over multiple years. But, I have learned that our administration can be very creative. I am told that when we receive the budget for next year from administration the number will be less than \$1,000,000. Over the years, we have also transferred expenditures to the General Fund just to ensure that the project would be addressed. This happens at the expense of student spending. We also need to address ADA issues without trying to educate our public to the complex reasons why these projects need to be addressed. We need this power and the buildings need to be kept up.

Again, Thank you for coming to LaCrosse and allowing me this time.



My name is Mike McArdle. I live at 820 Lori Place in the Town of Campbell. I am a member of the LaCrosse School Board and have been since the spring election in 1992. I am also the Chief Financial Officer of Desmond's Formal Wear, Inc. We are based here in LaCrosse.

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Western Wisconsin Literacy Services  
N5881 Hwy 54W, Black River Falls, WI 54615

The impact of current TANF Literacy funding has been significant, directly affecting the employment status of those persons who have been enrolled with Western Wisconsin Literacy Services (WWLS). Working in cooperation with the Wisconsin Job Centers and Workforce Connections, WWLS has provided employer requested, custom-designed workplace curriculum. The training has helped to increase the quality of employee production, reduce employee turnover, and helped provide participants with other valuable skills to for being more productive within the community.

One workplace situation at Stroh Controls in Mauston involved nine employees who participated in a Mathematics specification and tolerance twelve week training program. The training sessions occurred four hours each week during the employee work shifts, which resulted in a thirty percent (30 %) improvement in job skills. The training was considered extremely effective by the Plant Manager, Mr. Dave Thrans. Employee feedback was incorporated in the seventy page training manual produced by WWLS to be used for new personnel and refresher training for current employees. WWLS was invited to continue the education process with Stroh Controls and is currently conducting a twelve week basic skills instruction package for reading and writing for six employees.

Other workplace classroom situations include English as a Second Language (ESL) to approximately fifty employees at two remote work sites. Terminology and language skills are taught to improve the communication skills between management and the employees and the results are reflected through increased interest and participation of the students as peer tutors. WWLS also arranged with the employers to bring the ESL employees to the Department of Motor Vehicles to apply for driver's license permits.

Family and child tutoring programs created by WWLS through the TANF Family and Child Literacy Funds have helped children who were reading below grade level raise their reading abilities to grade level and to train parents as their child's first teacher.

The TANF Literacy grants have provided members of our community with valuable skills to help them become more successful in work and school. We believe that it is a great asset to our community to have this funding continue and would also like to see it extended to allow us to help single adults who have no dependants, but are in need of literacy services. There are a significant number of non-high school graduates in each county who do not qualify, yet need the literacy services provided.

Western Wisconsin Literacy Services is a non-profit organization which provides Educational opportunities to citizens in Jackson, Juneau, Trempealeau, and Buffalo Counties. WWLS receives financial support in the form of government TANF grants and local community donations. The funding supports workplace education initiatives to employees for basic skills in mathematics, reading and writing, and also provides tutoring to adults and children as a family literacy program.

Testimony: Joint Finance Committee  
University of Wisconsin System Operating Budget, 2001-03  
(With a Particular Focus on GPR Support for the La Crosse Health Science  
Center)

Douglas N. Hastad, Chancellor  
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UW-L)

Tuesday, April 3, 2001  
Cleary Alumni and Friends Center  
La Crosse, WI

Good morning. It's a pleasure to have Co-Chair John Gard and Co-Chair Brian Burke and other members of the Joint Finance Committee on our campus. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony regarding the budget requests of the UW System and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

First, I would like to speak briefly about the University of Wisconsin System's Economic Stimulus Initiatives. Just recently, you heard UW System President Katharine Lyall and Regent President Jay Smith speak about how there is much more the University of Wisconsin System could do with modest additional investment to brighten Wisconsin's economic future. These proposed initiatives that are found in the UW System's Economic Stimulus Package have gained a great deal of community support during the past six months.

[Parenthetically, in crafting the Economic Stimulus Package, it is important to note that many other worthy projects from the Regents' original budget were left "on the cutting room floor." These included Plan 2008 funding, to help minority and disadvantaged freshmen and the stewardship initiative, which would have helped us maintain our deteriorating, aging buildings.]

The UW System is committed to helping offset the below average per capita income of Wisconsin and increasing the number of individuals who can bolster economic growth through high-tech high-paying jobs. However, the primary reason for supporting the Economic Stimulus Package is the fact that the initiatives contained therein will allow Wisconsin to grow its college-educated population and grow the jobs and businesses needed to attract these college graduates. In sum, the recently proposed UW System Economic Stimulus Package will: 1) educate more high technology graduates into the workforce (to include direct benefits to the Coulee Region via funds to support high tech programs located in the Health Science Center); 2) complete the all-important Madison Initiative and the Milwaukee Idea; 3) establish the "2 + 2" programs

that will facilitate transfer of students between the UW System and the Wisconsin Technical College System; 4) support financial aid in the Advanced Opportunity and Lawton programs to parallel tuition increases; 5) complete the library restoration initiative begun last biennium; and, 6) extend study abroad and foreign language opportunities for UW students.

The resulting economic growth will benefit all and assist in pulling us out of this economic slowdown. More importantly, we can begin to become more competitive with our neighbors in Minnesota in retaining our own college graduates, instead of what appears to be the pattern du jour... . namely, educating Wisconsin youth in the UW System, only to have them find gainful employment in Minnesota. With your financial investment, we will be able to educate and employ our students in this great state.

Second, I would like to share with you a wonderful success story. It is a story about people and organizations working together. Several years ago right here in La Crosse, there were three institutions of higher education---UW-La Crosse, Western Wisconsin Technical College, and Viterbo College (now Viterbo University)----competing for students and resources. In addition, there were two major health care facilities---Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center and Franciscan Skemp Healthcare (now affiliated with the Mayo Clinic)---competing to provide health care services. In spite of the competitive relationship, discussions surfaced about the importance and value of cooperation. This led to the formal gathering of the heads from all five of the institutions. The topic of discussion was how they might work together for the benefit of the people who live in the region.

Out of that seed in 1993 was born the La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium, a private 501(c) 3 organization that eventually led the effort to build the Health Science Center (HSC). This facility opened its doors just last September. The HSC is a unique national model of cooperation and collaboration of the state and private funding, education, and service. The cost of the state-of-the-art facility was \$27.1 million, of which \$13.7 million came from State funds through UW-La Crosse and \$5.4 million was contributed by WWTC in the form of a referendum, a land gift, and building equipment funds. The balance came from private gifts.

I am pleased to report that in the first six months of operation, the HSC collaboratively served 444 students in 11 different educational programs and more than 10,000 students in other programs. And this is only the beginning! The possibilities are tremendous for health research and related business applications, all of which could be opportunities for economic growth and job creation. In short, it is a wonderful

investment! This "impossible alliance", as it is called, has captured national attention. It is a striking example of what happens when organizations invest in collaboration and partner for the betterment of education, health care, and economic growth. It is with great pride that I state we've done exactly what you (the State) asked us to do.

Surprisingly, and quite unfortunately, this project finds itself in serious jeopardy. You see, the state dollars to fund the maintenance and operation (\$1.0 million of GPR) of this exemplary facility will be eliminated on June 30, 2001. And, although submitted for funding as part of the UW Regents' initial budget proposal, the Governor chose not to erase the sunset clause. The Governor did, however, support \$.3 million in student fees to be designated for support of the maintenance and operation of the facility. Needless to say, if these funds are not continued the HSC and UW-La Crosse will be faced with a financial crisis. The alternatives are not pleasant. On one end we can choose not to support the maintenance and operation of the HSC. On the other end, we could gouge the UW-La Crosse budget to create the necessary \$1.0 in GPR to fully fund the maintenance and operation. This would need to come from the already minimal discretionary dollars. In this scenario we would, in effect, be required to cut 26% the discretionary dollars available to us at this time to fund the maintenance and operation of the Health Science Center. Either option (or any other one in between) would have a devastating impact on students and the citizens of the region.

So, I am here today representing approximately 9,200 current students, more than 1000 UW-L faculty and staff, many folk associated with the HSC, and regional citizens who currently benefit from the services of the HSC. Our request is quite simple. We wish to eliminate the sunset clause and request that you add back \$1.0 million to the already \$.3 million of student fees and allow us to maintain and operate this facility for the betterment of the state. It is an outstanding investment. It will pay dividends.

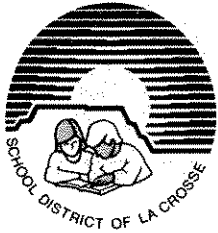
Thank you for listening. Thank you for choosing UW-L as a site to host this important hearing. And, best wishes as you continue the all-important task of deciding on how Wisconsin should invest in its future.

### Disappointing Trend

At the time of merger in 1972, the state devoted 14.4% of its overall budget to the university. A decade ago, 11.4% of the state budget went to the university. Today, the state devotes just 8.7% of the budget to the UW System, and that percentage would decline further with the Governor's budget that is before you.

# SCHOOL DISTRICT OF LA CROSSE

Principal  
Mark J. White



**HINTGEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**  
**3505 South 28th Street**  
**La Crosse, WI 54601**  
**(608)789-7767**

April 3, 2001

Members of the Joint Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about an issue in the Governor's proposed budget that is of concern to elementary schools in La Crosse, CESA #4, and across the state. My name is Mark White and for the last 11 years I have been the principal of Hintgen Elementary School here in La Crosse, where we started with SAGE in K-1 this school year, I am also a Regional Director for the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators.

My concern is with the proposed hold on the SAGE program for grades 2 and 3 in the latest round of SAGE additions, unless the school has 50% or more of its students from conditions of poverty. Hintgen and 6 other elementary schools in La Crosse hover between 25-45% and would not qualify for expansion, as well as, 300-400 schools around the state. Our other 4 elementary schools in LaCrosse have been a part of SAGE for several years as La Crosse was one of the early districts to realize the potential of SAGE.

There are many reasons I could give you to ask you to consider restoring the funding for the grade 2-3 expansion that was anticipated and looked forward to by many of the elementary schools for next school year including the plans that have already been made and staffing decisions that have been put on hold with this unexpected proposal, the on going nature of the evaluation study out of UW-Milwaukee that is now entering its final year, the excellent long term results recently released of lower classes sizes in grades K-3 and 4 proven by the Tennessee STAR study on graduation rate, high school achievement etc.

Instead I would ask you to consider these points in detail.

1. SAGE works. SAGE is the most universally accepted program for education to come out the state in the past 15 years. It has made a difference in schools across the state in grades K-3. The UW-M study does show it makes a difference in student achievement to have 15 or less students per classroom. It has required our teachers to teach differently and learn new methods to reach students in need in greater numbers. Our teachers are learning and applying strategies like guided reading and working with words with greater results each year. Much innovation is occurring with grouping of students that needs to continue. Teachers are working smarter and we can expect even greater gains in the future.

2. SAGE is about relationships. It is about teachers spending more time with each child, forming those bonds in the early years, getting students to love to come to school to spend time with them. At Hintgen the K-1 teachers currently working in the program report much more individualization and small group work, of spending more time with each student, less discipline time and more time on task for students, more cooperative work among students, and better student attitudes toward school. We can not do this at the same level with 25 students per classroom. It does not make the teacher's job any easier, it just makes it different with more focus on instruction and relationships- where it should be.

3. Grades 2 and 3 are important years for the development of reading and math skills. This school year at Hintgen we have 13 students in each first grade room. In second grade next year, if SAGE does not expand, we will have 23-24 students per classroom. Grades 2 and 3 are critical for the development of comprehension in reading as measured at the end of third grade in Wisconsin. Working with smaller groups of students at their own pace will allow the students to make the greatest gains possible in grades 2-3, THE critical years for the development of reading comprehension strategies.

4. Increasing expectations for high achievement by our public schools and students need to be supported. We are working on a number of efforts including more Preschool, early reading intervention, and curriculum changes here in La Crosse to meet those expectations, but NO initiative is as far reaching in terms of its effect on learning as SAGE. Please give us the continuing support we need!

In closing let me thank you for this opportunity and invite you to visit Hintgen and see what our staff is doing with SAGE, it is the most exciting initiative at Hintgen over the past 11 years for students, staff, parents, and the building principal - please allow it to continue into grades 2-3, it will make a real difference in the lives and learning of our students.

I'd like to thank the Chairmen and members of this committee for giving me the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Wis. Technical College System (WTCS) and our own Western Wis. Technical College (WWTC). My name is Bud Miyamoto, and I am appearing as a member of our business community.

I have been involved in a major economic redevelopment and revitalization project in our historic downtown La Crosse, for the past 10 years. Included in this project is identifying new economic development opportunities that will benefit our city and state. I have participated in the recruitment of high tech industries, such as Firstlogic (with 275 employees), EDS and our newest and largest high tech company CenturyTel...a \$26 million project with over 585 employees (opening in May and which could have gone to Michigan). All 3 of these high-tech companies and others that we are trying to attract have one common need. Their future success is totally dependant upon a work force that is highly educated and trained in technology and services.

Our entire state is in the midst of a crisis...and if we are not prepared, the crisis will turn into a future development fiasco. That crisis is the shortage of trained and educated employees in the fields of high technology and services. Without the proper state budget support...the shortage of skilled workers will increase dramatically. Cutting funding will negatively affect the basic high-tech training and educational needs that these companies demand for their long-term economic growth. With that...the "Brain Drain" our state now experiences, will increase at an alarming rate.

In addition, WTCS graduates contribute to our tax base...88% of them stay in our state with increased earning capacity. Here locally, dislocated employees from other industries, no longer are faced with long-term unemployment and uncertain futures. Many are now being trained, educated and filling job vacancies because of WWTC.

Committee members...5-10 years from now you may be addressing how will we keep high tech companies, such as: EDS, Firstlogic, Centurytel from leaving our state. Instead of power losses driving high-tech businesses out of "a" state...ours will be that we didn't provide the needed funds to train/educate employees that would have prevented the losses from occurring in the first place...this will become our state's "power loss".

Please support the funding needed for our Western Wis. Technical College (WWTC) campus and our Wis. Technical College System (WTC)...

Thank-you.

Bud Miyamoto, Executive Director  
Downtown Mainstreet, Inc.  
712 Main St.  
La Crosse, WI 54601



## Joint Finance Committee Hearing

April 3, 2001

My name is Margaret Baecker. I live in Independence, Wisconsin, a small rural city of about 1050 people. It is located in Trempealeau County midway between Eau Claire and La Crosse. I represent Independence Public School. I am an elementary and Social Studies teacher. Governor McCallum's 2001-2003 budget proposals will increase the hardships that revenue cap limits have already placed on public education in our state, especially in smaller school districts.

The average enrollment of Independence Public School is 360 students. All of the school districts in Trempealeau County are small; many are experiencing declining enrollments and exceeding fund balances. In addition, both Independence and Arcadia support private schools, and have had to reduce the services they provide to these schools. The Whitehall School District cannot balance its budget.

During the 1999-2000 school year, Independence Public School made twenty-four budget cuts to comply with the revenue caps. Among the cuts were teacher and support staff layoffs, and the elimination of the services of the Trempealeau Valley Coop Schools' Special Education Director. Presently our district administrator also serves as the Special Education Director. The Family and Consumer Education teacher will possibly face a layoff next year due to declining enrollments. Both faculty and support staff have increased workloads as a result of these cuts. Staff development opportunities have also been cut. A

janitor who will be retiring at the end of the school year will not be replaced. Our head cook earns \$7.75 an hour, which includes recent pay raises.

We have made significant reductions in our summer school program, which has been reduced, from eight weeks to three. Summer recreation programs such as swimming lessons and little league programs have been dropped. In addition, we have been forced to drop our Driver's Education program.

Do we need to mention the financial hardships that our schools face as a result of the winter we have just experienced? As of the end of March, our school is \$12,000 over budget for heating costs. Arcadia Public School spent \$26,000 for heating costs just in December alone. We have spent \$4,000 in snowplowing services. Costs in areas such as these have risen well beyond the rate of inflation and the consumer price index, which establishes the revenue caps. Districts are required to give teachers a 3.8% pay increase including fringe benefits. Health insurance costs are expected to increase anywhere between 15-20%. Teacher raises, if any, will be minimal. Combined with the costs of special education, buses, textbooks, etc., balancing a budget without the lifting of the revenue caps will be impossible. Without some kind of change, Independence Public School will be forced to have a referendum to exceed the revenue caps within the next three years.

What will happen when school districts cannot pay salaries and heating costs? Will they be forced to close or consolidate, and in many cases, take away the pride of the small communities they represent?

If Wisconsin schools are expected to comply with initiatives, mandates, increased teacher and student standards, testing requirements, and technology, they will need help from the state government, not hindrances. The Governor's proposed budget demands more for less, and our schools and children will suffer as a result of it.

I am in full support of removing non-fiscal policy items from the state budget, and request that the Joint Finance Co-Chairmen take the necessary steps to do so.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns.



815 Ninth Street South  
La Crosse, WI 54601

April 3, 2001

## WISCONSIN TUITION GRANT FUNDING

**William J. Medland, Ph.D.**  
**President, Viterbo University**

### WTG FUNDING

- The Wisconsin Tuition Grant (WTG) is a need-based financial aid program for Wisconsin students attending a private, or independent, college or university in this state.
- Every year about 20,000 students apply for WTG grants, but only 10,000 receive them because there simply is not enough money.
- During the past 10 years, funding for WTG has not kept pace with the financial need of students.
- In the past 20 years, the maximum WTG award has increased just 15 percent, or \$300, from \$2,000 in 1981 to the current \$2,300.
- Every dollar invested in the WTG leverages nearly \$5 of privately funded aid from the college or university itself to these students.
- WTG supports Wisconsin students attending Wisconsin colleges and universities.

### PRIVATE COLLEGES

- Although the twenty-one independent colleges and universities in this state are private, they serve an important public purpose.
- Private colleges educate one-quarter of the state's four-year degree-seeking students – more than 50,000 individuals.
- Wisconsin's private colleges are places of opportunity. In the most recent year for which comparative statistics are available, the average family income of students attending a private college or university was less than that of UW System students.

### BUDGET CONTEXT

- I am aware of the stringent budget conditions.
- As compromises are made and priorities are set, I urge you to **FUND STUDENTS FIRST.**



To: Members of the Joint Committee on Finance  
From: Wisconsin State Reading Association  
Date: April 3, 2001  
Subject: Governor's DPI budget proposal

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The Wisconsin State Reading Association represents almost 4,000 educators whose mission is to "promote excellence in reading throughout the state." Our organization has reviewed the governor's proposed budget for DPI, comparing it to research that helps us understand how we, as a state, can help all children become competent, skilled readers and writers. We believe that policies that benefit some children while leaving the needs of others unaddressed will fall short of the goal of helping all children become competent readers and writers.

Our specific concerns are addressed in the following research-based policies which are outlined by the International Reading Association's position statement, "Making a Difference Means Making It Different - Honoring Children's Rights to Excellent Reading Instruction."

#### 1. Changes to the teacher licensing requirements.

We were very pleased to see that the Legislative Fiscal Bureau has identified the changes to teacher licensing as non-fiscal items and is recommending they be removed from the budget. **Children have a right to well-prepared teachers who keep up to date through effective professional development.**

**We believe that it is ill advised to retain the proposal for issuing a temporary licenses to persons who have either a bachelor's degree, practical experience, or five years of service in the U.S. Armed Forces.** These achievements, while laudable, do not prepare a person to teach reading to young children and also, do not prepare a person to teach the essential learning and reading strategies necessary for young people in high school who are asked to deal with highly technical or challenging reading material.

**It is our contention that all persons receiving a teacher license should meet the same standards as those set for individuals who are educated to teach.** After having passed PI 34, to insure quality within the ranks of teachers, allowing initial licenses to persons who have no training that would allow them to meet the standards set for teachers seems contradictory.

The rules for new teacher licensing are not, as yet, in force. Various task forces are now working on implementation of the new teacher licensing rules. One such task force is currently examining the issue of alternative licensing. **We strongly urge that this committee and the state legislature allow these task forces to issue their recommendations on implementation and alternative licensing before any action is taken.**

#### 2. Public Library Funding and Books for Success

**Children have a right to access a wide variety of books and other reading materials in classrooms, schools and community libraries.**

Research continues to demonstrate that children who read more, read better. **Therefore, we find it shortsighted to continue to inadequately fund our Public Libraries. As you know, the state is not meeting its 13% funding commitment for public library services. Currently, the rate is 10% and under the governor's proposal the state's commitment falls to 9.5% in the first year and a mere 9% in the second year of the biennium.**

With such a high emphasis being place on children's ability to read effectively and efficiently by grade 3, it seems the state must provide adequate support to help us reach this goal. We urge the following actions with regard to this budget item:

- **At a minimum continue to fund at the current rate of 10%. We strongly encourage the state meet its obligation to provide 13% funding for public libraries**
- **Include funding for the Books for Success initiative in the budget.** This proposal, introduced by Sen. Shibilski, passed this committee, Joint Finance and the Senate last session. It will provide increased amounts of appropriate reading materials (classroom libraries) to assist schools where young readers have been struggling with the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading test.

### 3. **The Board of Education, Evaluation and Accountability**

**Children have a right to reading assessment that identifies their strengths as well as their needs and involves them in making decisions about their own learning.**

Assessment must provide information for instructional decision making as well as for public accountability. **Placing the assessment of students in the hands of a Board of Education Evaluation and Accountability stresses only the public accountability portion of the purpose for assessment.** Pulling assessment responsibility from DPI increases the potential for transforming schools into places that teach to a state test instead of teaching the literacy skills needed for a full, well-rounded education. It insures that state tests become even more high stakes and lessens the likelihood that the results will be used for instructional decision making. It increases the likelihood that business-style decisions will take precedence over decisions made on the basis of good assessment design. It increases the possibility that results will be misinterpreted and misused in relation to students and school districts.

**Placing the assessment of students in the hands of a Board of Education Evaluation and Accountability provides a detrimental separation between assessment and the state standards that are supposed to be assessed.** There needs to be a clear link between the two. By having standards set by one department and using another department to control assessment, the public will be unable to see the clear link that should exist between the two.

**We express strong concern about the constitutionality of this proposal.** Responsibility for the education of Wisconsin students and for the evaluation of that education clearly resides in the constitutional office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

### 4. **SAGE**

**Children have a right to classrooms that optimize learning opportunities.** We recognize and support the benefits that children receive through the SAGE program. These benefits and the learning gains that children make in this program continue to be demonstrated through nationally recognized research. The most appropriate student-teacher ratios for teaching reading/language arts and math are achieved in this program and benefit children in grades k-3. Further, research is showing that in order to establish long-lasting gains by reducing class size, students must experience this smaller class size for at least 3 to 4 years.

**National and state expectations of reading achievement by the end of grade 3 are best accomplished in the kinds of classroom situations that the SAGE program provides. Continuing a state expectation of accomplished reading skills by the end of grade 3 does not coincide with cutting back on a proven means of accomplishing this expectation. The state must continue its obligation to SAGE if teachers and students are going to continue to be held to meeting high standards in reading achievement.**

### 5. **SUMMER SCHOOL SUPPORT**

**We are opposed to the governor's proposal to count only 25% of summer school enrollment for determining a school district's revenue limit. School districts are struggling with fitting under the caps. This will only enhance this struggle.**

We acknowledge that this biennium finds the state with fewer resources than in the past and that the budget must reflect this fact. We also note that funding must be assigned in different ways than currently proposed in order to meet the recommendations outlined in this testimony. One suggestion that we have is for the state legislature to rethink the amount of allotted funding for vouchers in the Milwaukee area in relationship to the amount of allotted funding for the statewide SAGE program. One program (vouchers) serves only 10,500 students while the other program (SAGE) potentially serves over 60,000. The current totals allotted in the budget for these programs are almost equal in amount. **We believe that policies that benefit some children while leaving the needs of others unaddressed will fall short of the goal of helping all children become competent readers and writers.**

**We believe that efforts to improve children's reading and writing achievement must begin by recognizing the right of any child to receive the best possible reading and writing instruction.** As we evaluate this proposed budget in light of the rights of children, **we believe that the changes we have suggested will lead to the improvement of instructional opportunities that will benefit all Wisconsin students.**

# UW-La Crosse Student Testimony

Joint Finance Committee Hearing, Cleary Center

April 3, 2001



**NAME:** Kelly E Berens  
**ADDRESS:** 1258 La Crosse St.  
La Crosse, WI 54601

**TESTIMONY:** I feel that there isn't enough credit and money given to all of the UW systems.

**NAME:** Say Endyah Xiong  
**ADDRESS:** 1525 Caledonia Street  
La Crosse

**TESTIMONY:** I feel that there should be an increase on full tuition flex spending because I do not think that faculties are not getting paid enough. Another thing is that there should be more money put into child care or special grants given to single parents who are full-time students or going to school because they can not afford childcare. Lastly, I believe that to better educate children, we need to see that schools have less class sizes and more teachers.

**NAME:** Bridget McCoy  
**ADDRESS:** 311 N. 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

**TESTIMONY:** I feel that we need to keep the cost of higher education reasonable for college students.

**NAME:** Nathan Schoone  
**ADDRESS:** 533 N 10<sup>th</sup> St.  
La Crosse, WI 54601

**TESTIMONY:**



# UW-La Crosse Student Testimony

Joint Finance Committee Hearing, Cleary Center

April 3, 2001



**NAME:** Adam J. Mueller  
**ADDRESS:** 426 N. 11<sup>th</sup> St.  
La Crosse, WI 54601

**TESTIMONY:** As a student at a state institution, I am concerned with the lack of investment that is seen in higher education. I am forced to work three jobs just to pay my rent, heat bill, and buy groceries while I am trying to continue my schooling. When I graduate after my fifth year of education, I will have an unsubsidized loan debt of more than \$25,000. Please insist that in the state budget, an investment in higher education is made.

**NAME:** Karyn Sobczak  
**ADDRESS:** 325 N, 11<sup>th</sup> St.  
La Crosse, WI 54601

**TESTIMONY:** As a student, dedicated to involvement at the UW-L campus, each year it becomes increasingly difficult to pay my tuition bill along with the others expenses of living away from home. If it wasn't for our university scholarships, I would not be able to remain in school. Currently, I have accumulated over \$12,000 worth of debt, and have two more years until I graduate. It is so unfortunate that something as essential in today's global society as a higher education excludes so many people who are economically challenged, and this population is growing each year as the cost of tuition rises. Currently I am trying to find a third job for next year, besides student loans, just to break even.

**NAME:** Adam Clasen President U W River Falls Student Senate  
**ADDRESS:** 551 S Spruce #203  
River Falls WI 54022

**TESTIMONY:** I testify against the governors proposed budget. I would like to see more money for the plan 2008 initiatives and campus safety. Being that I attend a 4 year institution I am here to be prepared for the work force. Diversity is an important part of that force and the years in school should be spent preparing for that. Also being a homosexual male I feel unsafe on my campus also known as my home. I would also like to see a tie between tuition increases and financial aid increases. Also think about the messages this proposal sends such as telling High School students they are not getting help from the state and wont be able to afford a college education and the fact most our new money is being spent on convicts instead of Higher Education

# UW-La Crosse Student Testimony

Joint Finance Committee Hearing, Cleary Center

April 3, 2001



**NAME:** Sharon Rice  
**ADDRESS:** 1300 Pine St. Apt. 5  
La Crosse, WI 54601

**TESTIMONY:** I testify against the governors proposed budget as it places many limitations on the options for students in the future. High school students view college as less of an option because they see the lack of financial support from the state and the range of their options becomes narrowed. As I attend a 4-year school, I see the benefits of the extensive services offered to the students that aid the structure of learning. As these programs continue to multiply to better service the needs of the students, the tuition increases. Students are forced to take on a full semester of courses and commit to a full-time job in able to afford this increase. Furthermore, the benefits of these extra services are becoming harder for more students to utilize as their time has to be allocated to activities not related to their education.

**NAME:** Stephen Palmer—UWRF Student Senator  
**ADDRESS:** 515 E. Cascade Ave. #10  
River Falls, WI 54022

**TESTIMONY:** As a sophomore at UWRF, I have already accumulated \$12,000 in debts through both subsidized and unsubsidized loans. This means I am already paying interest on the money I have borrowed to pursue higher education, and I will surely be in debt for years to come. It is sad that in a day where a college degree is so essential to succeeding in this world, that I cannot pursue a degree at an "inexpensive" institution without compiling \$25,000 in loans. Grants need to be increased. Subsidized loans need to be increased. Students from working class families and large middle class families should be allowed the opportunity to seek higher learning without the outrageous costs. The governor's budget is an outrage, ditching education and investing in prisons. Maybe if we invested in the former we wouldn't have to invest in the latter. I understand that Wisconsin is \$750 million in the hole. But education is Wisconsin's future, and the needs of the students must be met.

**NAME:** Tami Richardson  
**ADDRESS:** 204 B Trowbridge  
1622 Pine St.  
La Crosse, WI 54601

**TESTIMONY:** As a student with a physical disability, I am investing in my future by going to college. I need my future degree to obtain jobs that I am physically and mentally able to do. I need the state government and their budget to commit to my future, as one of their voting citizens, as well. Without governmental assistance, I would

# UW-La Crosse Student Testimony

Joint Finance Committee Hearing, Cleary Center

April 3, 2001



not be able to go to college. I need the state government to put more than 9.46 % towards funding universities. I need them to fund the universities so that I am able to receive my degree in four years with all the programs and benefits that a fully funded university can give, and need to give to give out respected degrees.

**NAME:** Emily Hellmuth  
**ADDRESS:** 141 B Reuter Hall  
618 N 19<sup>th</sup> Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

**TESTIMONY:** As a student attending UW-La Crosse under the Minnesota-Wisconsin reciprocity program, I am concerned with the rumors I have been hearing about getting rid of this program in the next couple of years. This makes it possible for me to attend college, as I would not be attending if I had to pick from any of the Minnesota schools. I am already in enough debt without my tuition going up. Why should we be punished for wanting to expand our horizons?

**NAME:** Joseph N. Ruskiewicz  
**ADDRESS:** 628 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

**TESTIMONY:** As a student dedicated to a higher education for the general public, the rising cost of education is absurd. Private universities provide more in grants than in loans providing the students they education with opportunities when they are done with college. Instead of worrying about money to pay back, they can pursue their dreams and become great assets to this country and this state. This in turn hurts the local economy. Instead of students going out and purchasing houses and purchasing cars, they go home to live with their parents and use their cars. The point that is being missed is that public education is for the public. The public consists of white, black, yellow; poor, middle, and rich. With the rising cost of education, you are limiting who can afford to become educated. This usually includes, but not strictly limited to, white rich families. Ask yourself, is that representative of the public? The governor has decided that prisons are more valuable than universities. It has been proven that an educated individual is less likely to be a criminal. So instead of addressing the core of the criminal mind, you just want to throw them in jail and let the taxpayers and the students cover their stay. Please address the real issues at hand. Education is an investment towards the future of your constituents and your country.

# UW-La Crosse Student Testimony

Joint Finance Committee Hearing, Cleary Center

April 3, 2001



**NAME:** Weston Hoyer  
**ADDRESS:** 1145 State St. La Crosse, WI 54601

**TESTIMONY:**

**NAME:** Daniel Stich  
**ADDRESS:** 222 S 8<sup>th</sup> St. #1  
La Crosse, WI 54601

**TESTIMONY:** I just want to ask for an expansion of the loans and grants offered to the students of the UW system. I realize that education is an investment but loans are needed to offset the rising cost of living. I myself are currently receiving higher loans than the average student here at UW-L. Without this assistance I would not be able to attend this University.

**NAME:** Gretchen Reabe  
**300A Drake Hall**

**TESTIMONY:** As a freshman at uwl I'm quite in debt as the others here, but I have had the luxury this past year to not have to work another job, but come next fall I have no clue how I will juggle my job, 17 credits, that include Organic Chemistry, Calculus II, Physics, and Biology. We need more funding for our Universities, GPR dollars, not Pr dollars.

**NAME:**  
**ADDRESS:**

**TESTIMONY:**

April 3, 2001

The Honorable John Gard, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Finance  
Room 315 North, State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702

The Honorable Brian Burke, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Finance  
Room 316 South, State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Representative Gard and Senator Burke:

I am concerned with the proposed zero percent increase in state aid to technical colleges that is part of the 2001-03 biennium budget. My greatest concern is for Western Wisconsin Technical College located in La Crosse. WWTC provides courses and programs to residents in western Wisconsin throughout an 11-county area. Without an increase in general state aid from the state it will be difficult for WWTC to maintain the programs and services they currently provide.

I am a district Governor in the Wisconsin Student Government for the WWTC district. I am involved with WWTC through being a member of its student government executive board. I work with WWTC in bringing student issues to the attention of the Wisconsin Student Government to present them to the state legislators to improve student affairs. Not only at this college but also at different technical colleges around the state. My concerns for the 0% budget increase is that it not only affects the current students we may have attending any technical college, it will also effect potential students that may have been interested in a certain program that we may no longer be able to afford. This in turn can affect the state's economy itself. For the benefit of our students, potential students, and the programs we offer here at WWTC, I urge your committee to support the Wisconsin Technical College System for an increase in the 2001-03 biennium budget.

Other areas of concern with the budget that impact WWTC includes WWTC's ability to match funds provided through the Capacity Building Grant Program. If there is no increase in general aid, WWTC may not have the funds available to match the grant dollars provided through the Capacity Building Grant Program. Programs or courses at the college may have to be discontinued making some programs unavailable to people in western Wisconsin, and making waiting lists for other programs and courses even longer.

My other concern is the shifting of funds and responsibilities between government organizations. For example, the potential reduction or phase out of third party contracts with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). Elimination of the contracts would result in lost revenue for the college. Making it even tougher for the college to provide the programs, services and seat availability that western Wisconsin needs.

Over the years WWTC has been a great community partner. Because of that I am writing to you to voice my support of WWTC and all the programs and services it provides to the people of western Wisconsin. At a time when skilled worker demand is at its highest, it doesn't make sense to cut funding for technical colleges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael R. Hilson, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Michael R. Hilson, Jr.  
Governor, Wisconsin Student Government

April 3, 2001

to: All Members, Budget & Finance Committees  
Wisconsin State Senate &  
Wisconsin House of Representatives

from: Ronald Malzer  
331 South 28<sup>th</sup> Street  
La Crosse, WI. 54601

Let me begin by expressing thanks to you for coming to La Crosse as part of efforts to hear first-hand the concerns of Wisconsin citizens. I would like to have had time to speak, but with a full work-day today, I am preparing brief comments in written form.

We are hearing that the state budget will be tight this year. Years when the budget is tight require a careful assessment of priorities.

I am the father of two children in the La Crosse public schools, and a psychologist at Franciscan Skemp Healthcare. My wife Margaret is an employee assistance counselor at Franciscan Skemp who works in large part with families and children. I am writing to you to convey my sense that there is no greater priority for Wisconsin than to have well-funded public schools, capable of providing a solid educational experience to all children.

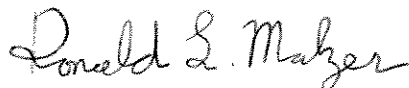
It is with dismay that we hear the following:

1) There is a cap on school expenditures. Education is our investment in the future. We could understand a cap on tax loopholes, or a cap on discretionary spending by government agencies, but to cap the basic operating budgets of public school districts is a recipe for long-term disaster. Please reverse this.

2) Budget cuts have been proposed for the SAGE program. Educational research demonstrates what common sense indicates: Children benefit from the more personalized attention that occurs in smaller classes. We urge full funding of this program.

Please set the education and health of our citizenry as the top priorities for the state budget. I am sure there are other causes that have well-funded lobbyists to make their pitch. But the long-term future of our state and country depend on wise investments of limited dollars, and we urge you to act to support education and health of our citizenry as your utmost priority.

Sincerely,



Ronald L. Malzer



# STATE BANK OF LA CROSSE

April 3, 2001

Attention: Joint Finance Committee

***Subject: Proposed State Funding Budget***

I am writing because of my concern about the proposed budget and its impact on Western Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

I am involved with UW-L on several different levels. I have the pleasure of working with many faculty and staff members on a variety of community organizations. I am actively involved with the UW-L Foundation and also helped with the La Crosse Medical Health Consortium Square Foot Campaign to secure funding from area businesses for support for the Health Science Center facility. UW-La Crosse's leadership role and partnership with WWTC, Viterbo University, Gundersen-Lutheran, and Franciscan Skemp Healthcare is a true success story of what can happen when people and organizations work together.

The ongoing success of this collaborative initiative is not only extremely important to UW-L and the other institutions, but also to the La Crosse region. The programs offered through the Health Science Center expand local access to health care today and also train much needed professionals in Western Wisconsin for the future.

To discontinue the \$1 million plus funding needed to maintain the facility would seriously jeopardize this project and send a negative message which would downplay the importance of community collaboration.

I do not believe it is a feasible alternative for the maintenance and operation of this facility to come out of the UW-La Crosse budget.

The continued success of UW-L plays a very important role in the continued economic growth of our area, and students attending the university account for well over \$100 million in economic activity. This positive trend must continue. Educating and maintaining quality students must remain the University's priority.

I am proud to be counted among the ranks of supporters for the University of Wisconsin System and of UW-La Crosse. In this budget process to determine which programs and services will receive state funding, please continue to consider how much the University system contributes to all the people of Wisconsin and how much UW-La Crosse contributes to Western Wisconsin.

Thank you for your time and your support for maintaining higher education as a key state funding priority.

Sincerely,

Ellen L. Alexander  
Senior Vice President

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INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMING  
College of Business Administration  
University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse  
April 3, 2001

The College of Business Administration (CBA) at UWL has been developing International Business curricula for over two decades. The following gives an overview of what has been done.

**Curriculum Development**

1970's – Development of curriculum offerings pertaining to international business topics. Each degree granting department has at least one course specific to this area of endeavor.

1980's – Development and implementation of the interdisciplinary minor in international business. This is a 32 credit minor which includes courses from most CBA departments, and requires at least 8 credits in a second language.

1990's – Development and implementation of the major in international business. This is a double major within the CBA (students must also carry a major in one of the functional departments). It includes requirements for study in political science and geography, proficiency in a second language, and study abroad in a country/region of the world where the dominant language is the student's declared second language. In addition, the Management major offers a track in international management issues.

The major was implemented in the fall of 1999. The major and minor combined have between 80 and 100 declared participants at any time.

Through the past decade we have seen an increase in the number of firms which interview and hire students for positions that are defined as being international in nature.

**Faculty Development**

Because many doctoral programs have not, traditionally, offered an international component, several members of the faculty have participated in Faculty Development Programs at other institutions. These programs are designed to help faculty to develop course materials and understanding of international business topics. Participation in these programs has been funded with faculty development monies made available by the state.

## Program Development and External Partners

In addition to curriculum and faculty development, the CBA has been active in developing new programs and relationships with other institutions.

### *East Central European Scholars Program (ECESP)*

This program is funded by grants from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and administered by Georgetown University. The CBA at UWL is the business school designated to provide business training through the program.

UWL has been participating in the program since 1994. During this time we have hosted approximately 300 students from countries in Central Europe (Poland, Slovakia, Albania, Czech Republic, Hungary), and have received over \$5 million in grant funds.

These students represent governmental and industry offices from their respective countries. They come to UWL for classroom instruction in business practice in a market-oriented economy. The students become a part of the regular class mix at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. When the students return to their respective countries and positions, they become contacts for UWL faculty and students. The program has also led to opportunities for UWL faculty to deliver in-country programs on a short-term basis within Central Europe.

### *Latin American Business Studies (LABS)*

This program is designed primarily for undergraduate business students. It takes into consideration the fact that Latin America has enormous growth potential, and that Spanish is the most popular second language offered at UWL. Through the program students are presented with increased opportunities to develop language, culture, and business knowledge specific to Latin America.

The LABS program makes use of institutional partners in three cities in Mexico, with prospects for extending the program into Brazil in the future. The institutional agreements allow for UWL students to study at any one of the three Mexican Universities. Students from these universities have an opportunity to study at UWL.

This program also allows for short-term faculty exchanges. The CBA has hosted two faculty members from Mexican institutions in the past few years.