



John Nygren

WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 89TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance

**Assembly Bill 536 Testimony
State Rep. John Nygren
December 12, 2019**

Chairman Murphy and members of the Committee,

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Assembly Bill 536, which creates a career advancement scholarship program. The scholarship created in AB536 would be available for individuals who are 25 or older, are Pell Grant eligible, and do not have a postsecondary credential.

We probably all know someone who attended college for a year or two, made progress towards a degree but, for any number of reasons, dropped out of college before earning a postsecondary credential.

They are probably employed today and doing well for themselves, but not having that postsecondary credential is a barrier for career advancement or higher earnings. These individuals, who have earned some college credit but no postsecondary credential, are commonly referred to as near-completers.

This family member or friend also relates to one of the most common concerns I hear from employers in the 89th Assembly District: the lack of skilled workers to fill job vacancies. Despite a strong economy, employers tell me they are missing growth opportunities because they simply cannot find enough workers to fill job vacancies.

According to the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, in the 1970s, 79% of the jobs in American manufacturing were held by individuals with a high school diploma or less. Today, over half of manufacturing jobs are going to workers with some form of postsecondary education.

To be clear, this is not an issue unique to manufacturing. The Center on Education and the Workforce also estimates that, by 2020, about 60% of jobs in Wisconsin will require education or training beyond high school. In 2015, an estimated 43 percent of Wisconsinites had an associate's degree or higher.

Fortunately, we have a great opportunity to address this challenge, and AB536 can be part of that solution.

In October, the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center released a report that estimated, by state, the number of near-completers. The report found over 660,000 individuals in Wisconsin with some college credit but no postsecondary credential.



John Nygren

WISCONSIN STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ 89TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Finance

In its report, the Center's executive director posed an excellent question: "Imagine what we could do as a nation if we really focused on these students." AB536 seeks to focus, for the first time, on these students and help them return to higher education to complete their studies.

Wisconsin is not alone in facing this problem. Republican and Democrat states across the country have enacted policies to respond to changing demographics and employer needs. Specifically, states have passed similar scholarship programs intended to target near-completers.

Wisconsin does have need-based financial aid programs (the Wisconsin Grant), but nothing that specifically targets nontraditional students and near-completers. These students, as we will hear later today, face unique challenges in pursuing a postsecondary credential.

Although cost may be a barrier to returning to higher education, there are other barriers nontraditional students and near-completers face. That is why the bill provides \$500,000 to the 60 Forward Initiative to fund a marketing campaign to reach out to potential students and work with them to address the barriers they face. 60 Forward was started by the three higher education sectors in Wisconsin with the goal of achieving a postsecondary attainment rate of 60 percent by 2027. This bill will be a vital tool to aid 60 Forward in its work.

This bipartisan bill was drafted with input from all three higher education sectors in Wisconsin, who you will hear from later today, as well as research from the Education Commission of the States, who is also here today to provide a perspective on what other states are doing on this topic.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before your committee today and ask for your support of Assembly Bill 536.



DAN FEYEN

STATE SENATOR

18th Senate District
(608) 266-5300
Sen.Feyen@legis.wi.gov

PO Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882
<http://legis.wisconsin.gov/senate/18/feyen>

To: The Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities
From: Sen. Dan Feyen
Re: Assembly Bill 536

Mr. Chair, members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing today. It's a nice change of pace to be in my district to testify on a bill!

Rep. Nygren and I spent months thoughtfully crafting a scholarship bill that would work to address Wisconsin's most critical workforce needs. We received feedback from the UW System, the Wisconsin Technical College System, and the WAICU institutions and the product is the bill before the committee today.

According to the US Census, 91.7% of Wisconsinites graduated from high school. However, only 29% of Wisconsinites hold a Bachelor's degree or higher. The focus of this legislation is the 60% of our state that lies in the middle of these two statistics.

Labor economists estimate that 60% of all jobs will require a high-quality postsecondary credential by the end of 2020. Since Wisconsin's population is aging and leaving the workforce, we need more people to attain a post-secondary credential and fill these vacancies within the labor force.

This bill creates an appropriation for a scholarship for non-traditional students—defined as an individual at least 25 years old-- who do not have a post-secondary credential and intend to enroll in a technical college, UW-System, or a tribal college or private nonprofit institution of higher education. An individual must be Pell-eligible, complete the federal Free Application for Federal Student aid, and be considered an independent student. This scholarship is structured as a last dollar award where recipients can receive either 50% of the total tuitions and fees their educational institution offers or their unmet need, whichever is less.

We also understand the importance of ensuring students have skin in the game and realize the value of the education they're receiving. This bill requires an individuals who is receiving the scholarship to maintain a passing grade point average in order to renew the scholarship.

Overall, the goal of this legislation is to work toward a Wisconsin postsecondary education attainment rate of 60 percent by 2027 laid out by the 60 Forward campaign, which is a collaboration between the UW System, WTCS, and WAICU. The bill also includes an additional appropriation of \$500,000 that will be given to the 60 Forward initiative for a marketing campaign to encourage nontraditional students to use the scholarship to earn a credential.

Thank you for your time today. I welcome any questions you may have.

3 CAMPUSES, 1 UNIVERSITY

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh through its Oshkosh, Fond du Lac and Fox Cities campuses provides students with unlimited opportunities for internships, employment, community service and research. We are proud partners with the businesses and organizations in our communities, and as a member of UW System we provide statewide resources to ensure top academic quality, innovation and accountability.

UW OSHKOSH STUDENTS COME FROM

1. Winnebago County
2. Waukesha County
3. Milwaukee County
4. Outagamie County
5. Dane County
6. Brown County

AT A GLANCE



15,000+
ENROLLMENT

at Oshkosh, Fond du Lac
and Fox Cities campuses
fall 2019 (undergraduate
and graduate)



44%
FIRST
GENERATION
STUDENTS

2,584
DEGREES

awarded 2018-19



16.5%
STUDENTS
OF COLOR

percentage of total
undergraduate population
fall 2019

TOP MAJORS

1. Nursing (1,558)
2. Business (1,026)
3. Elementary Education (608)
4. Biology (595)
5. Undeclared (448)

\$43,485

AVERAGE
STARTING SALARY

class of 2017-18

62.3%

GOT THEIR
POSITION BEFORE
GRADUATION

36.5%

OF NONRESIDENTS
remained in Wisconsin
after graduation

88.1%

OF RESIDENTS
remained in Wisconsin
after graduation

9.2%

OF GRADUATES
went on to
postgraduate programs

TOP INDUSTRIES EMPLOYING UWO GRADS

- 27.6% Healthcare and Social Assistance
- 15.5% Education
- 15.2% Manufacturing, Transportation and Logistics
- 10.6% Retail, Hospitality and Trade
- 8.3% Professional, Scientific and Technical Services

TOP 10 CITIES EMPLOYING UWO GRADS

1. Oshkosh
2. Appleton
3. Milwaukee
4. Madison
5. Green Bay
6. Neenah
7. Fond du Lac
8. Menasha
9. Sheboygan
10. Chicago

TOP 10 EMPLOYERS OF CLASS OF 2017-18

- Aurora Health Care
- Oshkosh Area School District
- Oshkosh Corporation
- Children's Hospital of Wisconsin
- ThedaCare
- Appleton Area School District
- Froedtert and Medical College of Wisconsin
- Bemis
- Ascension
- Marshfield Clinic/Health System



"I did not realize that I was building a network while in college, but interacting with my classmates led to an internship, my current position of employment and a group of professionals in my field that I am connected to post graduation."

ANNA SALINAS BARRON

computer science graduate,
working as junior solutions
consultant for Plain Old DevOps

"Through hard work and dedication, I was able to fulfill my dream of becoming a teacher. I secured a job before I graduated from UW Oshkosh and was placed at Milwaukee Excellence Charter School."

TYRONE MOORE JR.

physical education,
math teacher, Milwaukee
Excellence Charter School

"UW Oshkosh was not only able to successfully prepare me for a STEM career but also prepared me to make an impact in my community. Being active on campus gave me the leadership and organizational experience to be valuable to any employer."

BENITO CRUZ SANCHEZ

biology, community organizer
and medical lab technician

Financial Aid for Adult Learners

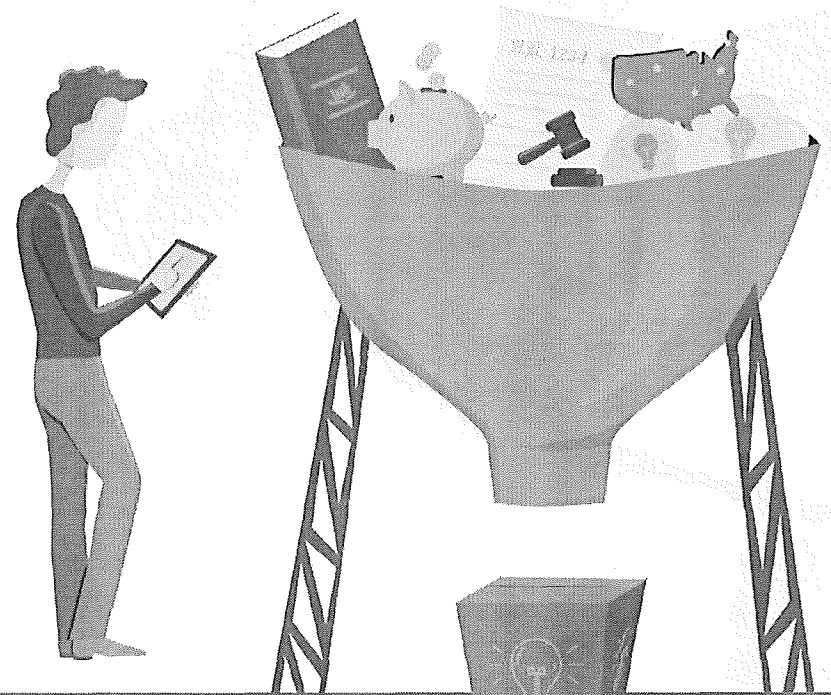
Tom Kelly, Policy Analyst, Education Commission of the
States

Agenda

1. Who is Education Commission of the States?
2. National overview of attainment goals and the need to reach adult learners
3. Characteristics of adult learners
4. What barriers do adult learner face in accessing postsecondary education and training?
5. Considerations for adult learner financial aid
6. Questions

Who we are.

The essential, indispensable
member of any team
addressing education policy.



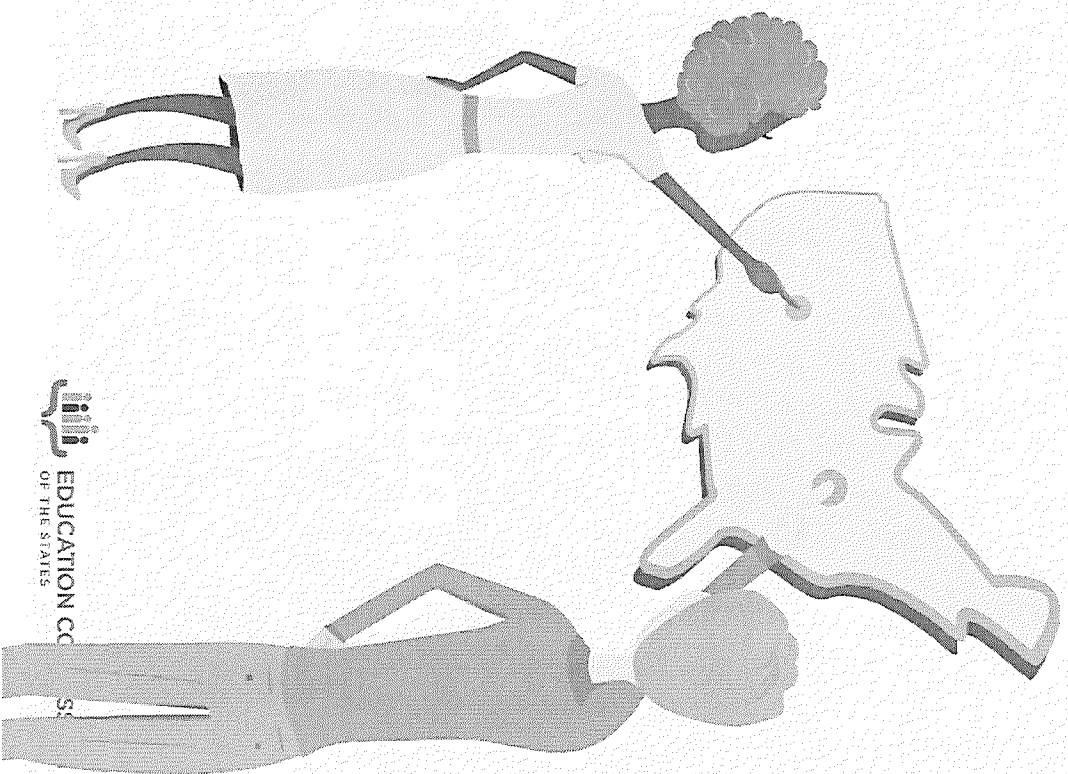
What we do.

We believe in the power of learning from experience and we know informed policymakers create better education policy.



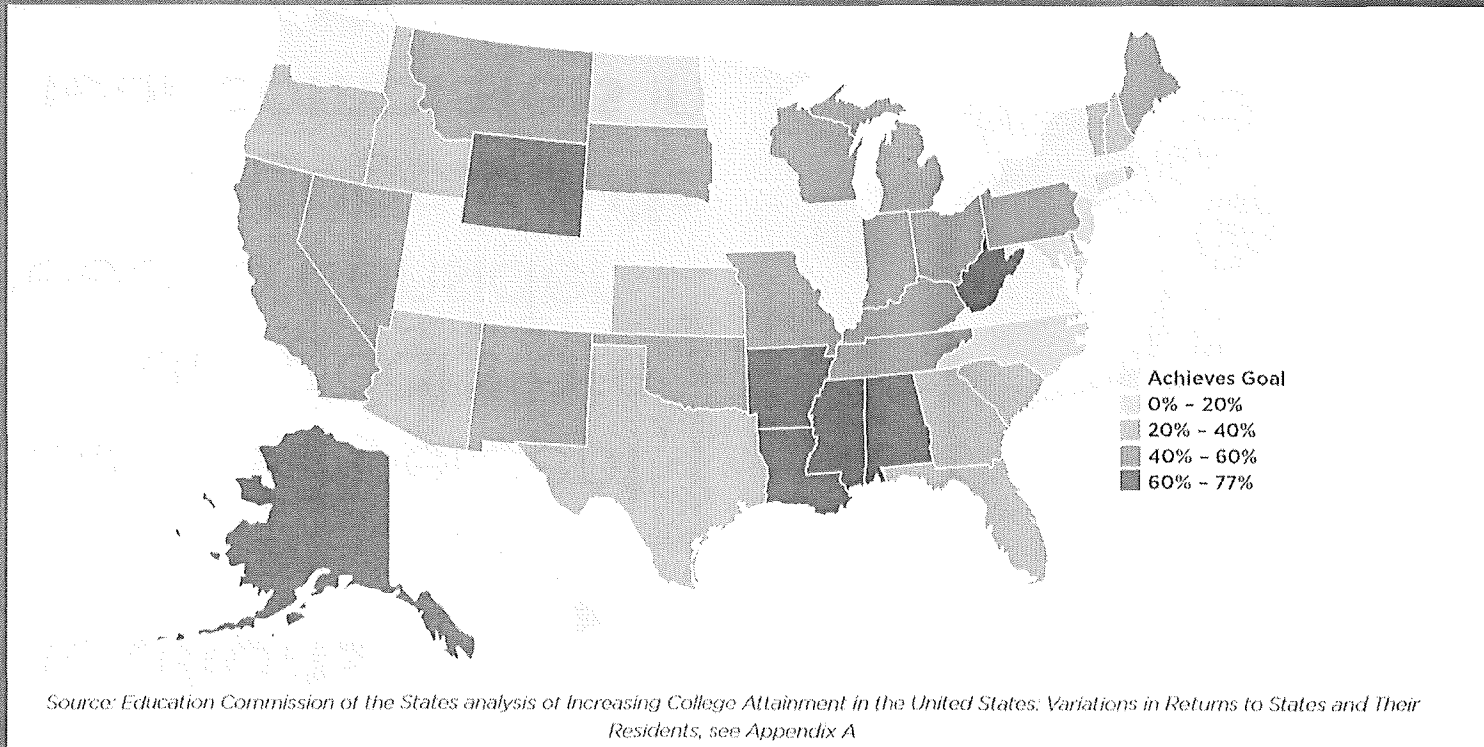
How we do it.

We research, report,
convene and counsel.



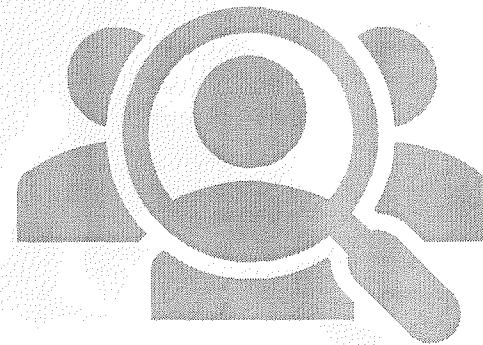
State Postsecondary Attainment Goals and Adult Learners

PERCENTAGE OF DEGREES THAT ADULTS NEED TO EARN TO REACH 60 PERCENT ATTAINMENT BY 2025



Implications

To meet a 60 percent attainment goal state will need to consider ways to engage **adults and near completers** in postsecondary education and training.

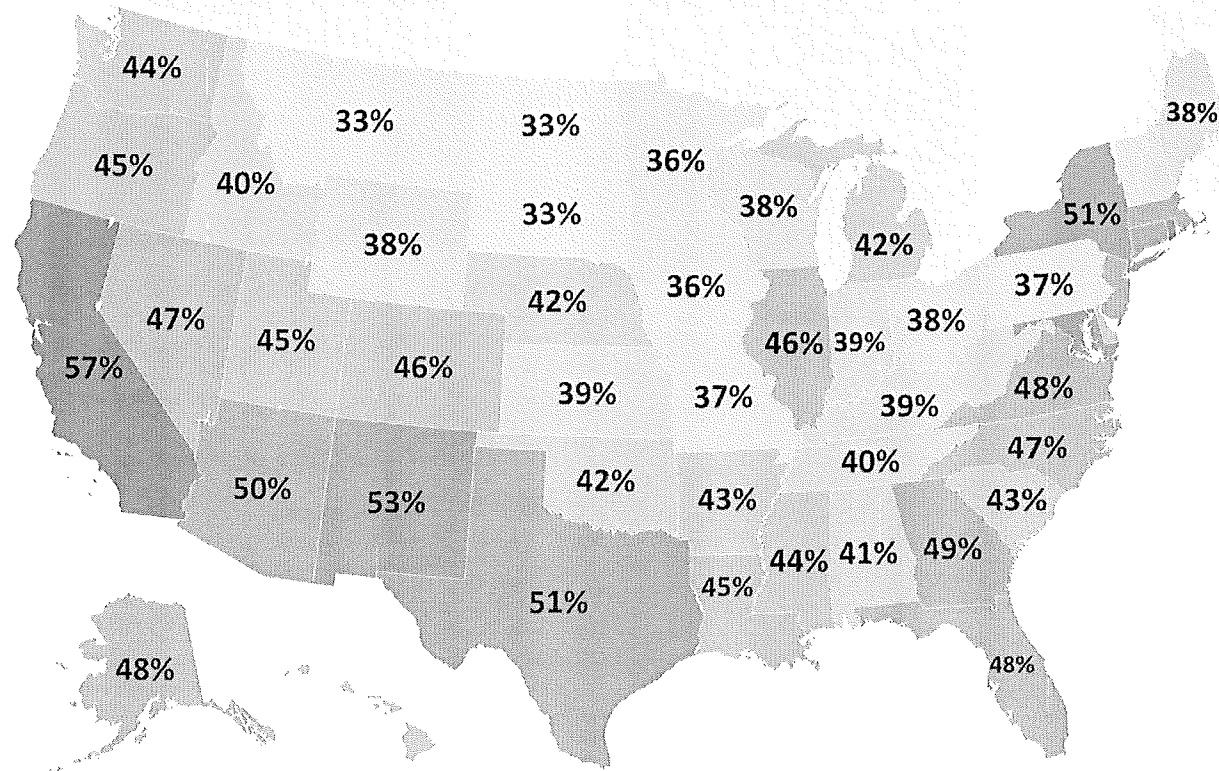


Who are today's postsecondary students and adult learners?

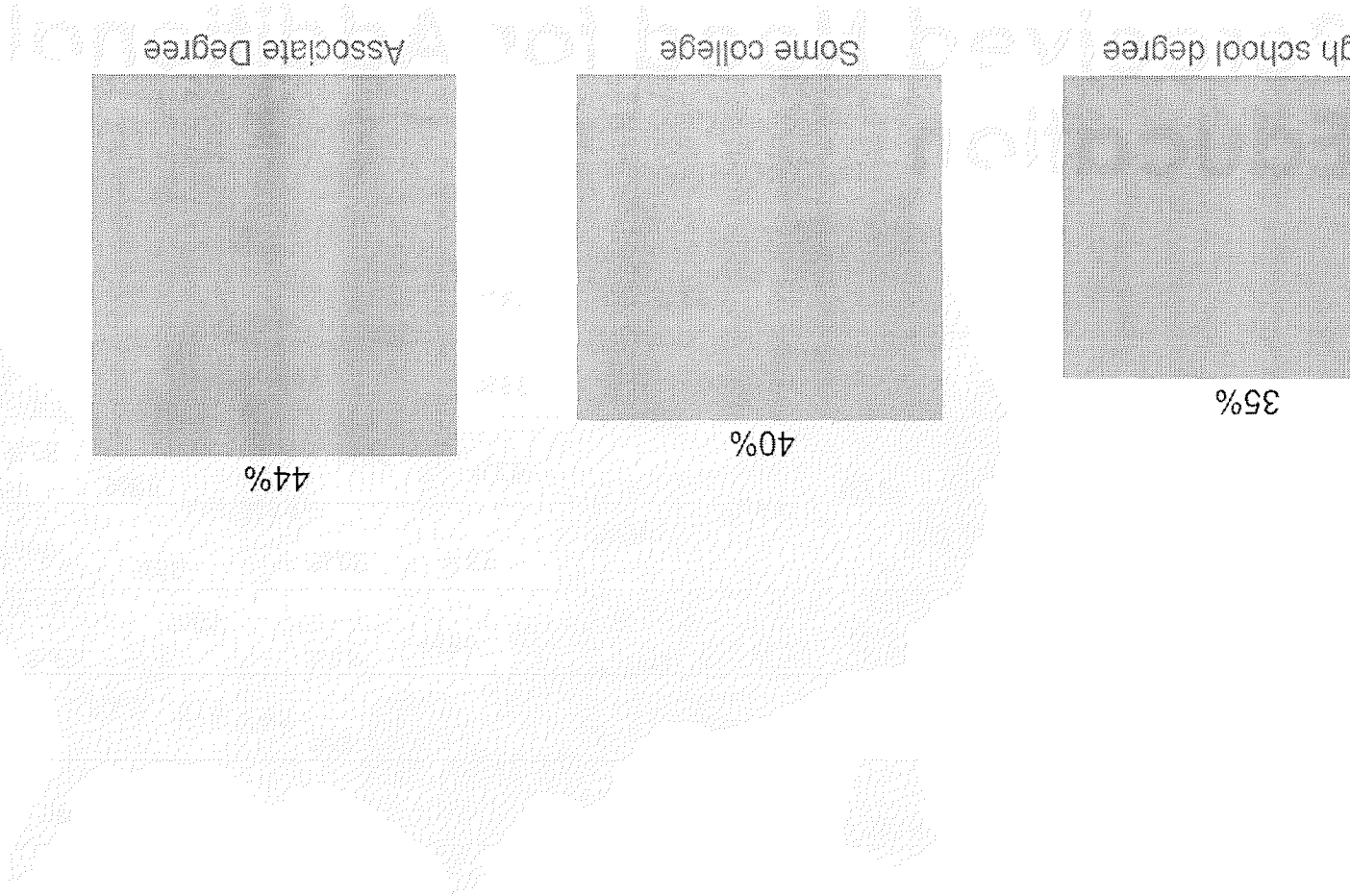
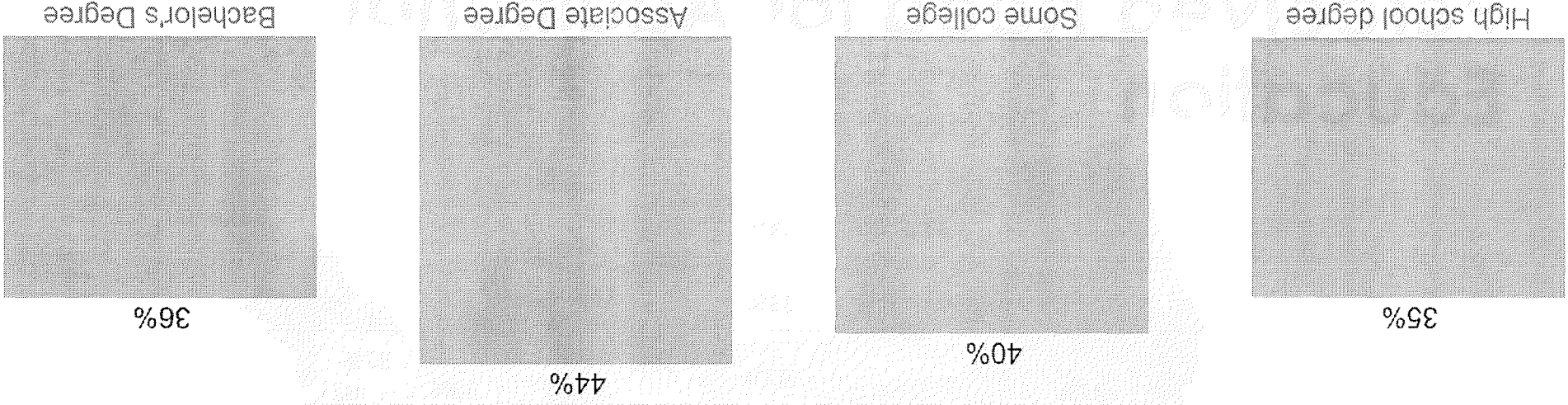
Attainment goals, adult perspectives
and characteristics

Education Consumer Survey Data

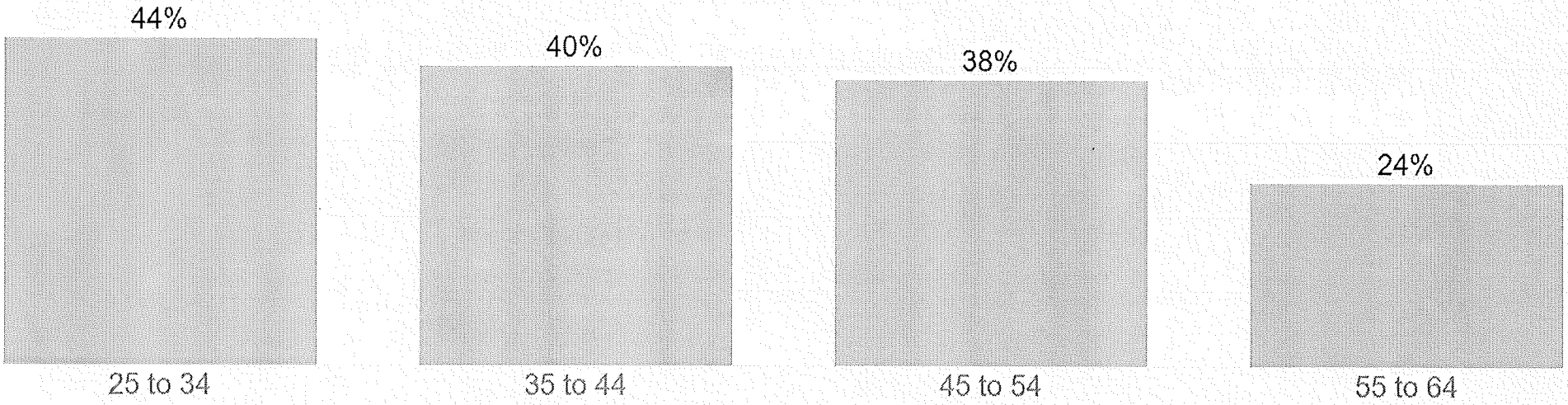
Perceived Need for Additional Education



Need for Additional Education : Wisconsin residents



Need for Additional Education by Age: Wisconsin residents



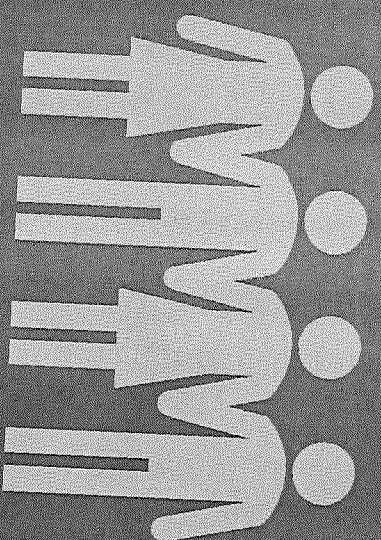
Source: Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey 2016-2019
Base: U.S. Adults 18-65 residing in Wisconsin in the workforce with a bachelor's degree or less and not currently enrolled
© 2019 Strada Education Report.

Adult Learner Characteristics and Barriers

www.ecs.org | @EEdCommission

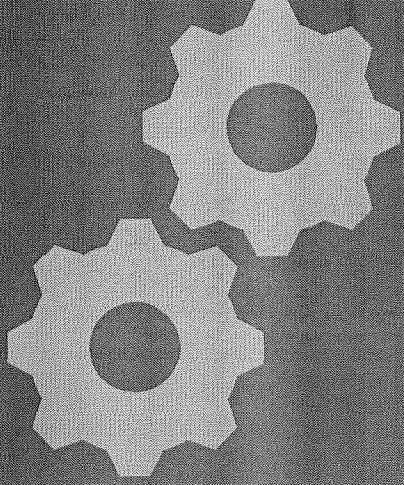
Characteristics of Adult Learners

- More outside responsibilities
- Concerns about debt, both past and future
- Price sensitive
- Do not necessarily work along a linear timeline



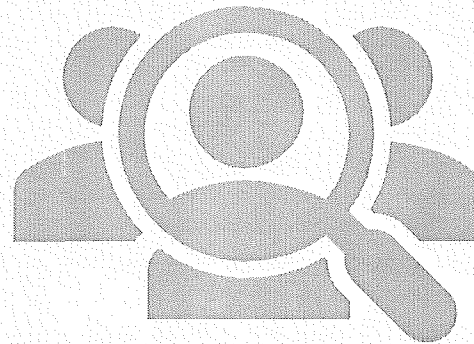
System Characteristics Impacting Adult Learners

- Requirements and application deadlines
- Policies around past student debt
- Costs associated with attendance that are outside of tuition
- Full-time enrollment requirement
- High school competition requirements



Consideration

How can a state financial aid policy address the needs of adult learners and near completers?



Considerations for Financial Aid Policy and Practice for Adult Learners

Part-Time Enrollment Eligibility

- Full-time enrollment requirements are a limiting factor
- To support adult learners with work and outside responsibilities:
 - Allow aid to be provided to students enroll part time (3-6 credit hours)



State
Examples

Part-Time
Enrollment
Eligibility

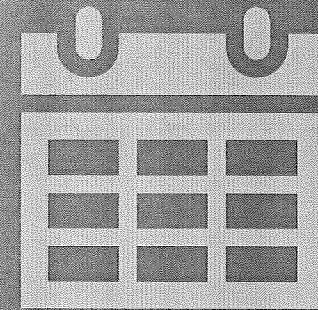
Illinois MAP Grant

Indiana Adult Student Grant

Tennessee Reconnect

Application Deadlines

- Adult learners are not on an academic calendar
 - Flexible deadlines provide more opportunity for adults to access financial aid



State Examples

Application Deadlines

Oregon prioritizes applicants with greatest financial need, not the first to apply.

Indiana uses a first-come, first serve model for adult student only.

©2019 ECS

Impact of Prior Postsecondary Attempts

Financial Obligations and Institutional Holds

- Outstanding state or federal student loans
- Outstanding past due fees or charges at an institution, financial holds

Satisfactory Academic Progress

- Requirements for past academic performance can be a barrier for near completers

State Examples

Impact of Prior Postsecondary Attempts

Financial Obligations and Holds

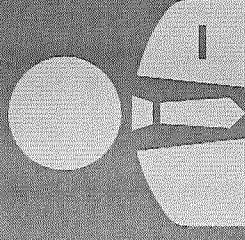
- **Wayne State University** allows students to re-enroll and gradually pay back institutional debts, and forgives 1/3 of debt with each completed semester.

Satisfactory Academic Progress

- **Indiana** allows aid eligibility for some students who do not meet SAP requirements

Prior Learning Assessments (PLA)

- Adults frequently have work and learning experiences
- State financial aid policy can support adults pay for PLA



State Examples

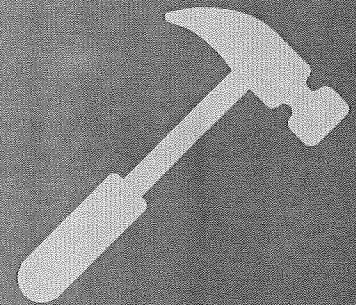
Prior Learning Assessment

Indiana allows students to use financial aid to pay for PLA.

© Wiscasset (6/17)

Connection to Workforce Needs

- Based on workforce need in states sub-associate certificates are in high demand
- Time and economic return of sub-associate certificates appeal to adult learners



State Examples

Connection to
Workforce
Needs

Indiana Work Ready Grant

**Oklahoma Adult Promise
Program**

10 WORKFORCE NEEDS

Reaching Adult Learners

- Adult learners are not always aware of assistance provided by states
- Outreach campaigns and marketing information about enrollment are necessary to reach adult learners



State
Examples

Reaching Adult
Learners

Indiana You Can Go Back

Mississippi to Complete

Tennessee Reconnect

Questions?

tkelly@ecs.org
(303) 299-3694

Tom Kelly

ALVERNO COLLEGE
BELLIN COLLEGE
BELOIT COLLEGE
CARDINAL STRITCH UNIVERSITY
CARROLL UNIVERSITY
CARTHAGE COLLEGE
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
EDGEWOOD COLLEGE
HERZING UNIVERSITY
HOLY FAMILY COLLEGE
LAKELAND UNIVERSITY
LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY



MARIAN UNIVERSITY
MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN
MILWAUKEE INSTITUTE OF ART & DESIGN
MILWAUKEE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
MOUNT MARY UNIVERSITY
NASHOTAH HOUSE
NORTHLAND COLLEGE
RIPON COLLEGE
ST. NORBERT COLLEGE
VITERBO UNIVERSITY
WISCONSIN LUTHERAN COLLEGE

Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities

December 12, 2019

Testimony on Assembly Bill 536

Submitted By

Rebecca Larson, Senior Vice President for Advocacy
Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities

On behalf of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU), its 24 members, and its 56,000 students I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in support of Assembly Bill 536.

WAICU member colleges and universities have a long and impressive history of providing educational opportunity to nontraditional students with many programs designed to meet the needs of working adults. Currently over 33 percent of our students are over the age of 25.

Wisconsin's private, nonprofit colleges and universities were also the first in the state to offer night and weekend programs and the ability to complete online degrees for the working adult.

60Forward, a partnership of WAICU, the Wisconsin Technical College System and the University of Wisconsin System, has established a goal for this state to achieve 60 percent of its working-age population with a degree or high-quality certificate. Wisconsin's workforce depends on it. It is estimated by the Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce that over 60 percent of jobs will require a postsecondary credential by 2020.

Many prospective college students over the age of 25 are working and supporting families. This new grant program is targeted to those students, whether they are returning to school to finish a degree or going to college for the first time. Wisconsin cannot achieve our 60 Forward educational attainment goal unless we provide opportunity for these nontraditional students. This legislation helps to break down financial barriers for students, making it possible.

In addition, traditional-age prospective college students look to a network of high school counselors, parents, and teachers for assistance in applying to and financing higher education. This legislation provides an opportunity for UWS, WTCS, and WAICU to market the program to ensure Wisconsin students are aware this opportunity is now available to them and to encourage them to pursue a degree.

We are making progress toward meeting the attainment goal, but we need to be creative, aggressive and persistent in order to meet the goal. Wisconsin's economy depends on it.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify and thank you for taking up this important issue.

Solutions

Wisconsin's population is aging. With a wave of retirements and fewer high school graduates, the state faces an urgent and growing need for talent. To meet that need, many more people must continue their learning beyond high school, earning college degrees, diplomas or certificates, or completing a registered apprenticeship. Six key strategies have been identified to help Wisconsin achieve a postsecondary attainment rate of 60 percent by 2027 ... *60 Forward*.



Higher education attainment = talent development



Wisconsin's Statewide Attainment Goal

60 Forward

In 2017, WTCS, UW, and WAICU received a grant from the Lumina Foundation to support the partners' attainment goal. The higher education partners are collaborating to ensure those between the ages of 25 and 64 have every opportunity to earn degrees and high-value education credentials. Of particular interest is ensuring these opportunities are equally accessible to all prospective students, including first-generation college students, low-income students, people of color, and working adults.

Why This is Important

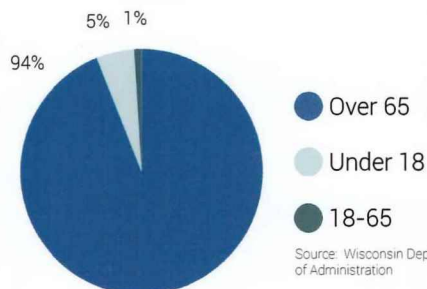


A higher "attainment rate" - the proportion of those aged 25-64 with an education credential beyond high school - is tied to **greater labor force participation and increased earnings**.

The partners also believe that anyone who wishes to pursue education after high school should have every **opportunity** to do so.

Why This is Urgent

Wisconsin Population Growth



Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration

Wisconsin's population is aging. The vast majority of Wisconsin's projected population growth from 2010-2040 is in the "over 65" age category. This is why the partners believe it is an economic imperative to increase postsecondary attainment.

Where Wisconsin Stands



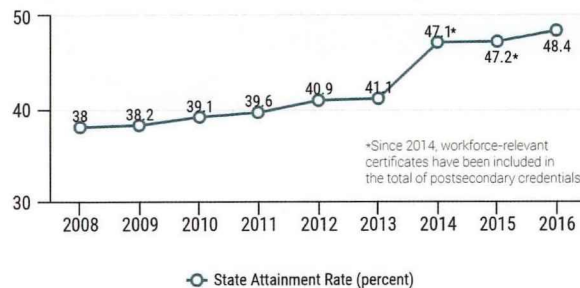
Labor economists estimate that **60 percent of all jobs will require a high-quality postsecondary credential by 2020**.

In 2016, the most recent year for which data are available, **Wisconsin's attainment rate was 48.4 percent**.

Source: Lumina Foundation, A Stronger Nation, 2018 Wisconsin Report

Wisconsin's Progress

Since 2008, Wisconsin's overall rate of educational attainment has **increased by 10.4 percentage points**.



*Since 2014, workforce-relevant certificates have been included in the total of postsecondary credentials.

Source: Lumina Foundation, A Stronger Nation, 2018 Wisconsin Report



LAKELAND ♦UNIVERSITY♦

Good morning. My name is Amy Pearce and I serve as director of Lakeland University's Fox Cities Center in Neenah and our Central Wisconsin Center in Wisconsin Rapids. Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important legislation.

In 1978, Lakeland offered the state's first degree completion programs for non-traditional students, especially working adults. In the early 1990s, Lakeland was a pioneer in offering online education. Today, Lakeland has approximately 2,000 non-traditional students taking undergraduate and graduate classes.

I have worked at Lakeland for 8 years, and I have worked with numerous students needing a bachelor's degree to take the next step in achieving their career goals. Finding an affordable program is key for many of these students as they deliberate whether to start or return to school. The scholarships that would be created as a result of this legislation would have a great positive impact for prospective students all over the state.

Lakeland offers a number of pathways and programs for students of all ages:

- Lakeland's BlendEd and BlendEd Live platforms allow students to decide weekly if they want to attend class in a traditional classroom or access class online. It's among the most flexible platforms in higher education, and our students love it because it works around their busy schedules.
- Lakeland's student-designed program allows students to earn academic credit for projects they are doing on the job, cutting down the time to graduation and making their learning relevant to their career advancement.
- For individuals that have some credits but no post-secondary degree, Lakeland attempts to offer the maximum transfer credits and is a popular choice for working adults looking to return to school.
- Lakeland offers evening classes at seven centers located around Wisconsin for students who prefer face-to-face learning in a traditional classroom.
- Our non-traditional students largely remain in the state after graduation, so making efforts to support their education benefits the state.
- Some of the programs our students pursue include accounting, business administration, computer science and nursing. These are areas of need in Wisconsin and the state benefits from having qualified professionals in these areas.

Fox Cities Center

2320 Industrial Drive, Neenah, WI 54956 • 920-727-0777 • 888-942-4444 • Lakeland.edu

Over the years I have met and worked with hundreds of students who return to school for numerous reasons. One of the outcomes that many don't anticipate is that it impacts their career and their families' lives within a few semesters. We hear from students all of the time that they got a promotion, a new job, or are working on a project team that was not offered previously. The families go through the experience with them. We are often told stories about how our student and their children are doing homework together after dinner and that a completed exam or outstanding grade is celebrated by the whole family. Non-traditional students are proud of their accomplishments and want to set an example for their own families. I remember a student, Bob, that was finishing his undergraduate degree while one of his daughters was also in college. She used to check up on him to make sure he was keeping up with his homework by showing her his grade report at the end of each semester. He often told me that she joked with him if he did not do as well as she did. They had a race to see who would finish their degree first. She won the race, but they both won in the end by bonding over their education.

In closing, please know that Lakeland strongly supports this legislation, and we appreciate the opportunity today to share with you a little more about our efforts to help non-traditional students achieve their educational and professional goals.



HERZING[®]
— UNIVERSITY —

TESTIMONY

By

**Kevin McShane,
Vice President of Financial Aid & Compliance – Herzing University**

On Assembly Bill 536

Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities

December 12, 2019

Chair Murphy, members of the Committee, my name is Kevin McShane. I am the Vice President of Financial Aid & Compliance at Herzing University, a private nonprofit university with a unique career-focused mission, that serves over 1,300 Wisconsin students, is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and is a member of the Wisconsin Association of Association of Independent Colleges & Universities (WAICU).

Thank you for holding this hearing today, for hearing our testimony, and for recognizing the importance of career advancement in today's ever-changing workforce.

Herzing's Support:

Herzing University's career-focused mission has allowed us to support the education and training of adult learners over our 50+ year history. The average age of the students we serve in the state of Wisconsin is 29, with 54% of the students in the state being Pell Grant eligible. In addition, we serve an incredibly diverse student population, with our Wisconsin students self-identifying as being 19% African American, 14% Hispanic, 7% Asian, 2% two or more races and 1% Native American/Pacific Islander. and 78% of our student population being female.

Wisconsin's demand for labor has created shortages in many key industries and Herzing is well positioned to assist in training the next generation of workers as 70% of our students are enrolled in high demand healthcare degree programs. We also have a strong reputation of working closely with employers in Wisconsin to ensure that our programs teach students the valuable skills needed to be career-ready. We know from this experience that solving workforce needs regularly involves the training of adult learners.

Adult learners tend to be more established in our communities and state and are less likely to leave the state after being educated. If the state's funding investments are designed to support residents, boost in-state economic impacts, and increase the state's tax base, then this scholarship is a great investment. It will not only help adult students looking to obtain a postsecondary credential, but it will also expand the number of educated and trained people that reside in the state which is a great investment in the state's workforce.

Support of Marketing Campaign Component & link to 60 Forward:

Herzing University supports the requirement of a marketing campaign coordinated with 60 Forward. If the goal of this legislation is to increase the number of adult students seeking postsecondary education, part of the challenge is reaching those people who are not yet enrolled in school and letting them know there are resources available to help. A lack of knowledge of these available resources will directly impact the programs success. While it is always difficult to see limited appropriations go to things like marketing efforts instead of directly to the program at hand, in this case we see it as a necessity to educate those being targeted. The tie to 60 Forward will also ensure alignment of that important initiative to the new resources available to adult students.

In Summation:

Herzing University supports this legislation and the state's support for adult learners in Wisconsin. We would also request that the committee continue to evaluate the expansion of this program in the future should the Annual Reporting requirements show success of the program.

The state of Wisconsin has a great history of supporting its citizens, education and the workforce. This legislation accomplishes an expansion of the investment in all three, as well as a plan to educate the citizenry on the availability of the funding, and Herzing University appreciates your support and work on this bill. I thank you again for your consideration of my testimony and of this overall bill.



TESTIMONY

By

Kevin McShane,

President – Wisconsin Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (WASFAA)

On Assembly Bill 536

Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities

December 12, 2019

Chair Murphy, members of the Committee, my name is Kevin McShane. I am President of the Wisconsin Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, or WASFAA, a non-profit, volunteer organization that provides support to financial aid administrators and other agencies involved in the administration of financial aid programs in Wisconsin's post-secondary educational institutions. It is comprised of over 400 members representing over 100 institutions (colleges, agencies, and lending institutions) throughout the state.

Thank you for holding this hearing today, for hearing our testimony, and for recognizing the importance of career advancement in today's ever-changing workforce.

WASFAA's Support:

Wisconsin's post-secondary educational institutions have a long history of supporting all students on their journey towards their goal of a job in our workforce. We are in strong support of providing scholarship dollars to adult students to help increase the total number of adults in Wisconsin with a postsecondary credential. This scholarship will reduce some of the financial burden of obtaining a higher education, which often can be the difference between an adult continuing their education or not. Many adult students across the state, attending all types of institutions will benefit from the creation of this program.

Support of Marketing Campaign Component & link to 60 Forward:

WASFAA supports the requirement of a marketing campaign coordinated with 60 Forward. If the goal of this legislation is to increase the number of adult students seeking postsecondary education, part of the challenge is reaching those people who are not yet enrolled in school and letting them know there are resources available to help. A lack of knowledge of these available resources will directly impact the programs success. While it is always difficult to see limited appropriations go to things like marketing efforts instead of directly to the program at hand, in this case we see it as a necessity to educate those being targeted. The tie to 60 Forward will also ensure alignment of that important initiative to the new resources available to adult students.

Requested Future Considerations:

WASFAA supports this legislation as proposed as a great starting point of the state's support for adult learners in Wisconsin. In addition, we would also request that the committee continue to evaluate the expansion of this program in the future. We feel that the definition of unmet need should be expanded to include other components of a student's Cost of Attendance (COA) in addition to tuition and fees, including but not limited to housing and food expenses (commonly referred to as Room and Board). Many non-traditional adult students struggle with housing and food expenses, book costs, etc. even when they are able to cover their tuition and fee charges to the institution. If the intended long-range goal is to increase the number of adults in Wisconsin with postsecondary credentials, the scholarship program could be expanded to help students with all types of needs, and the current definition is restrictive and would not help students with these other types of financial needs beyond tuition and fees.

In Summation:

The state of Wisconsin has a great history of supporting its citizens, education and the workforce. This legislation accomplishes an expansion of the investment in all three, as well as a plan to educate the citizenry on the availability of the funding, and WASFAA appreciates your support and work on this bill. WASFAA thanks you again for your consideration of my testimony and of this overall bill.



Chairman Murphy and other members –

Thank you for holding a hearing on Assembly Bill 536. The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay sees this bill as an opportunity to build on our success with nontraditional students and offer access to individuals who feel the financial burden of a degree is too difficult.

My name is Samantha Post and I am a Student Success Coach in the K-12 and Community Relations Department at UW-Green Bay. I am currently working to build innovative student degree programs, such as an Accelerated Associates Degree Program, where individualized advising and support is a top priority.

UW-Green Bay has a long standing tradition of serving adult learner populations. We have and continue to create transfer agreements, individualized credit evaluations, and flexible learning formats to help non-traditional student's progress towards degree completion, especially in our organizational leadership and business administration majors. Enrollment numbers for both majors have increased significantly over the last five years in our targeted age group (25+).

UW-Green Bay's Accelerated Associates Degree Program, which will launch in fall 2020, is intentionally built to reach the working adult population who may not have a postsecondary credential. The program is customized with built-in flexibility and personalized coaching, while making it possible for students to manage work, family, and home. Workforce development skills will be embedded into the program courses where students will earn a series of intentional micro credentials/digital badges, such as professional communication and multicultural awareness and advocacy. Credit for prior learning will also be assessed for students in this program via the Lumina Foundation All Learning Counts grant that was awarded to the UW System with the goal of increasing adult learner on-ramps to degree completion.

A career advancement scholarship program clearly aligns with the needs of adult students and programs that we have in place at UW-Green Bay. The scholarship program will provide access by removing financial barriers for students on our way towards moving Wisconsin to a postsecondary education attainment rate of 60% by 2027. Assembly Bill 536 would mean more student success stories all over the state and help us to move the needle forward in reaching the 25+ student population. Thank you for your time, and I hope that all members vote to approve this bill. Thank you.

Samantha Post
Student Success Coach



Written Testimony on *Assembly Bill 536* before the
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
December 12, 2019

Michael Welsh, Director of Legislative Affairs
Wisconsin Economic Development Association

Chairman Murphy and members of the committee, the Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA) would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today in favor of Assembly Bill 536.

WEDA is a statewide association representing over 400 public and private sector economic development professionals. We are dedicated to advancing economic prosperity in Wisconsin and providing our members with the necessary tools to encourage business expansion and promote private investment.

Strengthening Wisconsin's workforce is a top priority for WEDA. One of the most important factors in successful business retention and attraction is the presence of a strong talent pipeline that meets the workforce needs of the business community. Unfortunately, we have fallen behind other states in attracting and retaining the most-educated workers critical for the 21st century economy.

In addition to our struggles to attract new talent, Wisconsin's aging population, record-low unemployment and lackluster in-migration rates have created a situation where we do not have enough employees to fill current job openings across the state.

Wisconsin's workforce shortage crisis impacts every industry sector and threatens economic growth statewide. Unfortunately, there is no simple solution to the problem. It will take a comprehensive strategy that includes collaboration between businesses and policymakers. It will also require the implementation of bold, forward-thinking policies and programs to attract new talent and ensure Wisconsin's existing workforce is better educated for in demand jobs.

Assembly Bill 536 would be an important part of the solution in strengthening Wisconsin's workforce, both in the short-term and long-term. By creating a scholarship program for non-traditional students to attain a post-secondary credential, the legislation will help turn out additional skilled workers, who will be more likely to remain in Wisconsin and help fill job vacancies in high-demand fields at businesses across the state. In short, AB 536 will help create a better-educated workforce in Wisconsin.

In closing, WEDA would urge you to support Assembly Bill 536 as part of a comprehensive strategy to address Wisconsin's workforce shortage. Thank you for your consideration.



December 11, 2019

Honorable John Nygren
Room 309 East
State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

Representative Nygren,

The Fox Cities Chamber is dedicated to the economic growth and prosperity of the Fox Cities region. We write to express our gratitude and our support for Assembly Bill 536 (AB 536), which establishes a career advancement scholarship program.

Education plays a vital role in economic development. States that are able to educate and retain their citizens are more likely to have diverse and robust economies. As an Economic Development Organization, we have experienced companies unwilling to consider locating in Wisconsin due to low rates of two and four year credentialed individuals. AB 536 provided a resource allowing our state to increase the number of credentialed individuals and allow our state to attract business and talent in the future.

Various studies performed by workforce development boards have indicated that people find their occupation of choice at the average age of 34 years old. Many of these individuals either started but did not complete their post-secondary credential or went directly into the workforce from the K-12 system. With each year, the ability to go obtain a credential becomes more difficult due to family and financial constraints and limited access to scholarship opportunities.

While some employers offer tuition reimbursement, many small and medium sized businesses struggle to afford such benefits. In today's labor market, small and medium size companies struggle to compete for talent due to aggressive benefit packages. AB 536 will help create a more even playing field for talent competition.

Thank you for the opportunity to support of Assembly Bill 536.

Sincerely,

Jayne Sellen
Vice President of Economic Development & Government Relations