



STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 33RD Assembly District

P.O. Box 8952 Madison, WI 53708-8952

2021 Assembly Bill 1108 Testimony of Representative Cody Horlacher April 6, 2022

Chairman Murphy and members of the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities, thank you for having me here today to testify on Assembly Bill 1108.

Assembly Bill 1108 requires the UW Board of Regents to equalize per-student funding among UW institutions by July 1, 2031. This bill does not affect UW-Madison or UW-Milwaukee.

The current formula for distributing GPR funds among UW's comprehensive campuses has been in place for decades and has created significant GPR funding disparities among these campuses. This has resulted in several campuses receiving less than the average distribution.

For example, in 2020, UW-Superior received the highest GPR funding per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) student at \$7,964. At the bottom end, UW-Whitewater received only \$1,747 in GPR per FTE. Under this current formula, UW-Whitewater receives just 49.9% of the average distribution. This formula needs to change.

At the bottom end of the scale, campuses that are below the average allocation experience challenges campuses at the high end of the scale do not. In an era in which UW campuses are increasingly competing with each other for students, the campuses with much higher GPR funding per FTE are given an unfair advantage. They have larger marketing budgets and more generous scholarship programs.

For example, the UW System charges campuses for centralized services based on a per student basis, while funding the campus with a formula that does not use a per student basis.

Funding should be based on a formula that seeks geographic and economic equality throughout the state. An equitable funding formula is necessary to treat all campuses fairly. High school graduation numbers are decreasing, limiting the number of students who will be attending college. In order for campuses on the bottom end of the funding scale to be able to compete with other campuses an equitable funding formula must be achieved.

This bill gives the UW System four budget cycles to make incremental changes and achieve parity by 2031.

Thank you for your time and consideration.





Statement in favor of AB 1108 Equalizing the UW System GPR Funding

Thank you, Chairman Murphy and distinguished members of the Committee on Colleges and Universities.

My name is Jeffery Knight and I serve as the President and CEO of the Greater Whitewater Committee, Inc. (GWC). GWC is an action-oriented group committed to working with citizens, elected officials, and policy makers to identify, craft, and implement a pro-business agenda. This agenda advances the economic, educational, and social policies required to energize and secure the Whitewater Area's economic future as well as protect Whitewater's quality of life.

The GWC works closely with the City of Whitewater, the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, the Whitewater Unified School District, and the local community. Its goal is to educate, advocate, and develop ideas that make Whitewater a destination of choice to visit and live, including increasing the number of students attending UW-Whitewater. During our annual meeting in February, GWC members authorized our continued efforts in securing a fairer GPR funding formula.

We recognize that there is more to a student's college experience than what happens on campus. Businesses and local student housing play a huge role in the entire student experience. As a result, we also share in the economic boost this affords the broader regional community.

Over the last three budget cycles, GWC members have become concerned due to the consternation created between UW-W faculty, staff, students, and administration related to budget issues. Our concern is that as enrollment rates decrease due to less high school graduates, UW-W will have to offer fewer services to their students; services that other campuses have the ability to offer because they have more revenue.

We believe that each university should receive an equal amount of GPR funding per student. Currently, the formula used to distribute this money does not properly take into account each University's size and population, leaving UW-W to average \$1,750 less than the students in the 11 other UW-System campuses. We believe that, as most students attend a comprehensive university near their home, that this formula is not fair to families from the area and their students who pay their fair share of taxes into the state. GWC is requesting that the legislature adopt Assembly Bill 1108.

Current GPR funding for UW-Whitewater is the lowest of all the UW campuses. Due to the current formula used in the UW-System, UW-Whitewater receives approximately \$1,747 support per full-time equivalent student compared to the average support of \$3,499 for the eleven comprehensive universities in the system. This means that the students at Whitewater average about **\$1,750 less** than the average state-wide. In fact, eight of these 11 campuses receive less than the average amount of support. While Whitewater receives only about 50% of what other campuses average, the university still pays the same amount in fees. Attached please find a UW System GPR funding comparison chart that depicts data from the last ten years, despite the fact that this funding formula has been used for much longer.





In the process of working with the legislature on this bill, I had the opportunity to meet with Regent President Edmund Manydeeds, Regent Vice President Karen Walsh, UW-W Interim Chancellor Henderson and two UW-System lobbyists to discuss efforts to create an equitable GPR funding formula. It was a very positive meeting and I left with the impression that Regent leadership takes this matter very seriously. However, at the time, the Board of Regents were incredibly busy conducting the search for a new UW System president and forming a search committee for a new chancellor for UW Madison. I felt comfortable that they were serious on the issue but due to their workload, I have not seen anything in writing to move this forward. We did let them know that if we weren't successful in this legislative session, our plan is to redouble our efforts and broaden our group to include other communities hurt by the current funding formula.

GWC is requesting that the UW System GPR funding be equalized over the next eight years and that Assembly Bill 1108 be adopted. We have serious concerns that as the predicted enrollment of high school students drops and supply of students shrinks, that a lack of adequate funding will impact UW-W's future. The university needs to thrive and continue to provide exceptional educational experiences for its students, which is difficult to do without equitable resources.

I do want to commend the UW System, UW-Whitewater administration, faculty, staff and students for the amazing way they came back to campus in the fall and proved to all that you can remain safe and still pursue an academic degree. Please help show them our appreciation by passing AB 1108t.

Jeff Knight CEO/President 920.728.0662 jpk@knightpublicaffairs.com

Please relay any mail to: 405 Panther Ct. Whitewater, WI 53190

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	2011	2012	2013	2014	2020
Eau Claire	\$3,327	\$2,873	\$2,854	\$2,928	\$2,806
Green Bay	\$3,279	\$2,824	\$2,886	\$2,935	\$3,151
La Crosse	\$2,611	\$2,146	\$2,021	\$2,054	\$2,161
Oshkosh	\$3,173	\$2,662	\$2,573	\$2,565	\$2,691
Parkside	\$5,181	\$4,790	\$4,742	\$4,664	\$4,968
Platteville	\$2,755	\$2,296	\$2,243	\$2,145	\$2,946
River Falls	\$3,304	\$2,910	\$3,043	\$2,915	\$3,081
Stevens Point	\$3,142	\$2,609	\$2,598	\$2,644	\$3,755
Stout	\$3,485	\$3,043	\$3,003	\$2,937	\$3,219
Superior	\$6,380	\$6,522	\$6,806	\$6,913	\$7,964
Whitewater	\$2,096	\$1,583	\$1,553	\$1,381	\$1,747
Average	\$3,521	\$3,114	\$3,120	\$3,098	\$3,499
Dif	\$1,425	\$1,532	\$1,568	\$1,717	\$1,752
total loss for UWW	\$14,983,194.29	\$16,552,682.08	\$16,830,880.16	\$18,696,580,71	\$18,861,121.78



April 6, 2022

Re: Letter in Favor of Equalized GPR Funding

To the Committee on Colleges & Universities,

I am writing to you today to express my concern about the current inequitable GPR funding formula for the UW System. As a parent of three UW-Whitewater graduates, all of whom had the pleasure of participating in or working with UW-W athletics, I can personally tell you what a wonderful university UW-Whitewater is and how crucial equalized funding is. A fair funding formula is critical not only to the future of the University but also to the futures of every student that attends UW-W, as they deserve their fair share of funding.

I have been a resident of Whitewater all my life. I have worked hard, paid my fair share of taxes, and have sent all of my children to UW-Whitewater for a stellar education. The faculty at the university are working hard to maintain their commitment to provide a high-quality student experience while facing financial shortages that prevent UW-W's programs from meeting their full potential.

As a parent and concerned taxpayer, it is incredibly difficult to understand how this funding formula became implemented at all, especially after reviewing the UW System distribution numbers. UW-Whitewater receives about \$1,747 support per full-time student while the average support for each student at the eleven other comprehensive universities in Wisconsin is \$3,499. This means that students at UW-W average about \$1,750 less than the average amount given to students in the 11 other UW System universities. I cannot understand why my children and the other students at UW-W deserve so much less than the rest of the students in the UW System.

Though my children have graduated, I feel strongly that this inequity needs to be fixed for the next generation of students. It is unfortunate that this formula has been in place for so long, as it is a severe injustice to every student who attends UW-Whitewater. It is my hope that after hearing my concerns, you may consider fixing this inequity.

Sincerely,

Dave Schumacher

Testimony RE: AB 1108 Equalizing the UW System GPR Funding

Thank you, Chairman Murphy and distinguished members of the Committee on Colleges and Universities.

My name is Dr. James Hartwick. I am a former Faculty Senate Chair and a full professor, who has worked at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater (UWW) for the past 20 years. I want to be clear that I do not speak as a representative for UWW and the views I share here are my own. I am concerned about the inequities created by the General Purpose Revenue (GPR) funding formula used by the Board of Regents (BoR). I am not an expert on this formula and GPR allocations, but what currently exists does not appear to be fair to my students and my campus, and to several other campuses across the state. One has to ask, if we were creating a system to provide General Purpose Revenue to the thirteen university campuses, is this what we would come up with? Who benefits and who loses?

It is my understanding that due to the inequitable GPR allocation **UWW receives substantially less than the** average institution – more than \$1,500 less per student per year – and consistently less than all other campuses. These deficits are substantial, amounting to more than \$18 million per year compared to the average UW comprehensive university and \$6 million per year compared to the next lowest-funded campus (UW-La Crosse). Over ten years, the total loss amounts to \$177 million compared to the system average. Consequently, UW-Whitewater students, La Crosse students, and students at other under-funded schools pay the same for their education, but they have access to fewer resources.

Beyond this, when contracting services from UW-System it is my understanding that UW-Whitewater pays on a per student or per person basis, but as noted above it receives the least amount of GPR resources on a per student basis. It makes me wonder why UW-Whitewater is charged full freight on a per person basis, but we are funded at a discounted rate.

If we want to make an extra investment in some students, who should we invest in? Most of my students at UWW come from modest means and most stay in state after they graduate. The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater has a mission to serve students with disabilities, and we do a great job in and out of the classroom. For example, over the years, our Wheelchair Basketball Teams have won several national championships. Serving students with disabilities costs additional money and yet we receive the least investment, in terms of GPR dollars per student. We also serve a relatively high proportion of minority students, first generation college students, and those of modest means. We are the ladder to success for these students, and we need equitable GPR funding to help these and all of our students thrive. Investment in all of our students will pay big dividends in better lives and in greater tax collections in the future. The current funding formula, with its vast per student GPR differences, is a structurally inequitable funding formula. Instead of closing the gaps, it may actually exacerbate social and economic disparities.

When we disproportionately invest in the Research Universities (R-1's), we are making choices to fund institutions that have access to other resources, to grant funding, to strong alumni association, and so forth. Full disclosure, I earned my bachelors and my PhD at UW-Madison and am grateful for the strong educational preparation I received. Still, many of the students at the R1s are from out of state, many don't stay in Wisconsin after they graduate, and relative to my campus, many come from more affluent means.

UWW is at a competitive disadvantage in attracting new students, as other institutions have funding to offer students additional support. For example, I am a faculty member in the UW-Whitewater's College of Education and Professional Studies, which has the largest Teacher Education Program in the state in terms of the number of graduates. Still, it is difficult for us to compete with UW-Madison for new students, when Madison can offer <u>Buckv's</u> <u>Tuition Promise</u> scholarships and grants to pay for tuition & segregated fees for students whose household adjusted gross income is \$60,000 or less. While I applaud Bucky's Promise, which is designed to alleviate the teacher shortage and to help students in need, UWW doesn't have the resources to support such a program. Similarly, other UW schools are able to offer scholarship incentives that we cannot afford. And, while any individual program may or may not be financed directly with GPR dollars, the GPR dollars can be used to fund other programs at their institutions, freeing up resources for programs for which UWW cannot compete.

From what I can tell, UWW has been cut to the bone. The cumulative effect of the GPR funding formula— compared to the system average, over the ten-year period the total loss to UWW is \$177 million—means that we lack resources to best serve our students. We have cut academic staff to save money. We no longer have professional development

dollars to support faculty and staff in receiving valuable training to keep current in their fields. And, in some courses an increase in class sizes has resulted in fewer written assignments, with fewer detailed comments, as a way of managing the extra workload. These are just a few of examples, but the larger point is there appears to be no money to support even basic investments in our future and in our students. As noted above, lacking adequate finances, we are at a significant disadvantage in attracting new students, so with the loss of potential future tuition dollars, the problems and inequities are compounded.

I am not asking that funding be cut at other campuses. Rather, I'd prefer that through new funding UWW is caught up to at least the average per student GPR allocation. The years of limited state funding is likely hurting all campuses and I suspect each institution could benefit from increased funding. That said, due to the vast GPR per student differences, UWW is especially hurt by a lack of sufficient state support.

I ask you to charge the Board of Regents (BoR) and the new UW-System President to develop a more equitable GPR formula prior to the next budget cycle. This plan could be implemented in a step-wise fashion over several years and while it would result in a much more equitable GPR allocation per student, in my opinion it needn't be perfectly equal. Perhaps this new more equitable formula could set aside some funding for universities which for a variety of reasons need additional resources to educate their students. I can imagine that some schools may need additional funding due to their scale of operations or the cost of mission specific programs. Still, even if new dollars were allocated to address this inequity, it may prove difficult for some campuses and their benefactors to give up their funding formula privilege. My hope is that fairness and equity concerns along with our common mission to educate students in the state of Wisconsin will prevail. That said, the willingness of the legislature to establish the goal of greater GPR equity may play a role in motivating the reluctant few. Ultimately, I believe that the BoR is the proper authority for making these allocations. If they can make this a priority for the new UW-System President and quickly come up with a workable, more reasonable plan, then my hope is that the legislature can oversee when the BoR's new GPR allocation plan has been implemented and need not concern itself with the details of drafting a plan of its own.

If the BoR and the new UW-System President undertakes this long-overdue task, I hope that they will consider (1) what plan they would create if they were starting from scratch, and (2) if the current GPR funding formula is fair and equitable to students across the state. Thinking of UWW, I would also ask them to bear in mind that given the students UW-Whitewater serves – the highest number of students with disabilities and a relatively high proportion of underrepresented minority students – the current inequitable funding of UW-Whitewater does not reflect the diversity and equity goals that UW System claims to represent.

Finally, while I may not support all the details of Assembly Bill 1108, I wish to sincerely thank the authors and cosponsors for attempting to address this long-standing problem of inequitable GPR allocation. Perhaps more importantly than the details of this particular bill, I am grateful that this important issue of equity for Wisconsin public college students is getting some attention. It is my hope that given this context, the BoR and the new UW-System President will publicly commit to developing a fair, more equitable, GPR funding formula so that all UW-System students can succeed and the State of Wisconsin can thrive.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or wish to discuss my testimony.

Sincerely,

- Hartich

James M. M. Hartwick, Ph.D. 164 N. Franklin Street Whitewater, WI. 53190 608.206.3032 jmmccabe9@gmail.com



Office of Government Relations Van Hise Hall 1220 Linden Drive Madison, WI 53706 www.wisconsin.edu

DATE:	April 6, 2022
TO:	Members of the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities
FROM:	Jeff Buhrandt, UW System Interim Vice President for University Relations
RE:	Testimony on Assembly Bill 1108

Thank you, Chair Murphy, and committee members, for providing the UW System (UWS) an opportunity to provide testimony on Assembly Bill 1108 (AB 1108). UWS opposes this legislation, as it removes the fiduciary responsibility of the Board of Regents (BOR) to support our mission.

As stated in Wisconsin state statute 36.01 "...the legislature finds it in the public interest to provide a system of higher education which enables students of all ages, backgrounds, and levels of income to participate in the search for knowledge and individual development...". UWS's thirteen universities ensure there is regional access to higher education. The current model of allowing the BOR full, fiduciary responsibility of managing these institutions allows campuses to provide access and serve the surrounding community. Restricting the BOR's fiduciary responsibility, as AB 1108 proposes, would hamper the BOR's ability to support the access mission of UWS.

The last major review of the general-purpose revenue (GPR) allocation occurred in 2014. In that year, a system working committee was created to review the issue. Many factors were recognized that led to the working committee not suggesting significant changes to the allocation model. Considerations that were discussed and analyzed by the group included:

- Resident and reciprocity weighted student credit hours
- Economies of scale/fixed costs
- Access missions
- GPR financial aid
- Allotments and costs the campuses do not control, including debt service, fringe benefits, utilities, and campus specific appropriations
- Support for professional schools, research, and public service

Each of these items still impact the GPR funding allocation today. AB 1108 does not allow the BOR the flexibility to account for these complexities in the future. The ten-year timeline may allow the BOR to untangle some of these historic complexities but will confine the fiduciary role of the BOR to address the future needs of the entirety of the UWS. For example, we have several distinctive undergraduate programs that have a high cost of delivery. Educating a nursing or engineering student is incredibly expensive, and this bill would hinder our ability to deliver these programs across the state.

Enrollment at UW-Platteville provides an example of the possible disparities in program costs. UW Platteville is the second largest producer of engineering graduates in the state despite being one of the smallest universities in the system. Since the bill's approach does not consider the costs or enrollments in certain programs, this bill would likely make it more difficult for UW-Platteville to produce the engineering graduates this industry desperately needs.

The BOR and UWS have also demonstrated their commitment to addressing the parity issues that exist in the current funding model when added resources are made available, as was the case in 2018 with the redistribution of a \$25 million lapse provided to UWS.

It is the UWS's thirteen Chancellors who must manage the impact of the GPR allocation and GPR allocation decisions and this approach provides little to no flexibility for them or System Administration in how they do this. While there has been a great deal of discussion among the Chancellors regarding the funding allocation of GPR in the UW System, none are in support of AB 1108.

As promised by Regent President Manydeeds, the UW System will review the current funding model in the fall after President Rothman has been in office for a few months. The Chancellors expect an extensive discussion of this allocation which considers the unique nature of each of their campuses resulting in an allocation formula that best fits the UW System.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.



UW-Superior Testimony, AB-1108

Relating to allocation of funding for UW System institutions

Thank you, Chair Murphy and committee members, for allowing me the opportunity to testify on AB-1108. My name is Renée Wachter, Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Superior.

For over 125 years, our small but mighty campus of 2,600 students has been improving the lives and livelihoods of people in northwestern Wisconsin and beyond. We serve both in-person students with on-campus courses and programs, and the place-bound with online delivery, with programs that serve some of our state's greatest needs – teacher education, school psychology, computer science, transportation and logistics, water quality, and mental health counseling and wellbeing. We host research centers focusing on transportation and ballast water quality, the latter being only one of two in the world. We are the UW four-year institution that serves the rural northern third of our great state, with the next closest UW four-year campus located 150 miles away. In our access mission, our students are often the first in their households to go to college — 46% of our students are first-generation college students — and are often in need of financial aid such as Pell grants, with more than a third of our students being Pell-eligible. We also serve a significant non-traditional student population — the moms and dads juggling school, work, family and other obligations in the pursuit of earning their degree and advancing their family up the socioeconomic ladder. For the 13th consecutive year, UW-Superior has been designated a Military Friendly School, earning gold status this year.

UW-Superior has significant concerns with AB-1108. While on the surface it may seem like equivalent per-student GPR funding is leveling the playing field, it would ultimately have a severe, disproportionate impact on smaller campuses, such as UW-Superior.

- All campuses have fixed costs regardless of enrollment size. These fixed costs include things like libraries, computer labs, academic buildings, science buildings and labs, and more. These costs can be more easily absorbed at campuses that have larger enrollment, whereas smaller campuses feel these costs more acutely.
- The GPR funding that smaller campuses receive help cover these fixed costs. If we're forced to find alternative funding sources to help cover fixed costs, it may result in having to cut programs and services offered at our campus, which would negatively impact the success of students.
- This bill limits the flexibility and autonomy of the Board of Regents. In a fiscal and business environment that is as dynamic and complex as the one we are in now, bills like AB-1108 could hinder their and our ability to be flexible and best reach and serve our students.

While UW-Superior is being portrayed as receiving high GPR funding, it's important to note that the university only receives approximately 1.8% of the GPR funding allotted to UW campuses. We already run incredibly lean.

We believe GPR allocations should instead be decided between UW System and the campuses, with chancellors having significant input into the process due to the potential impacts to students and the uniqueness of each campus.

Committee members, I ask that you please not support AB-1108 in future sessions. Thank you.



Assembly Committee on Colleges & Universities

2021 Assembly Bill 1108

Allocation of funding for University of Wisconsin System institutions

April 6, 2022

Chairman Murphy and members of the Assembly Colleges & Universities:

The University of Wisconsin–Madison thanks the committee for the opportunity to provide written testimony for information only on Assembly Bill 1108 (AB1108), related to allocation of funding for University of Wisconsin System institutions.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison) is the flagship public institution of higher education in Wisconsin. As Wisconsin's 1862 Land Grant University, UW-Madison has a unique and comprehensive mission that includes teaching, research and service. Our work is motivated by the Wisconsin Idea and has deep and lasting impacts on our communities, industries, and citizens.

UW-Madison is home to the Division of Extension, which provides services and resources in all of Wisconsin's 72 counties. Through the College of Agricultural & Life Sciences (CALS), UW-Madison also operates twelve agricultural research stations in communities around the state. Wisconsin's only public schools of Medicine & Public Health, Pharmacy, and Veterinary Medicine are housed at UW-Madison. Many of these schools and colleges at UW-Madison were established by an act of the State Legislature and are an important part of the state's history of growing the flagship university. The UW-Madison students who graduate from UW-Madison play a vital role in keeping communities across the state healthy and important industries like agriculture thriving.

The return on Wisconsin's investment in UW-Madison is significant. UW-Madison and affiliated organizations and start-ups make up nearly 9% – over \$30 billion – of the state's \$345 billion economy. This economic activity supports more than 232,000 jobs, roughly 1 out of every 13 jobs in the state. For every \$1 of public tax investment in the university, over \$26 is put back into the state's economy. In addition to a billion-dollar research engine, UW-Madison continues to produce ideas and inventions that solve some of the biggest challenges at home and across the globe. The university and UW-Madison affiliates like the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) are home to a leading patent system, a deep pool of scientific talent, powerful computing infrastructure, and curriculum that supports the development of entrepreneurs. Together, these elements make up a partnership that empowers innovators to directly address problems facing major industries in Wisconsin and beyond.

Office of University Relations University of Wisconsin-Madison 165 Bascom Hall 500 Lincoln Drive Madison, Wisconsin 53706 608/890-4880 Fax: 608/265-8011 State appropriation per student at UW-Madison has fallen by 25% in the last decade. When compared to regional and national peer institutions, the state appropriation per student for UW-Madison is 8% less than the average. Simply put, UW-Madison continues to see a decline in the percentage of our budget coming from the state despite the significant contributions the institution makes in Wisconsin communities. Rather than reallocating stagnant state investments, the Legislature should be investing more in our public higher education system to benefit and grow our state's economy. It is also important to note that in addition to a decline in the appropriation per student, UW-Madison is uniquely constrained compared to its peers, with limited financial flexibilities and virtually no flexibility to manage its own construction projects.

While we appreciate the exemption the legislation provides UW-Madison, the proposal sets a concerning precedent for legislative involvement in a responsibility that has been statutorily delegated to the Board of Regents. Legislative involvement and oversight of the UW System budget already exists in two major forms. First, the legislature has the opportunity to make major budgetary decisions in the state budget process for UW System every biennium. Second, the State Senate has existing authority through the appointments confirmation process for Board of Regents appointees. Enacting this proposal would remove a responsibility that has been delegated to the Board of Regents, effectively removing the ability of the Board to respond to the needs of individual campuses, which may vary from year to year.

This type of involvement in campus budgeting also effectively eliminates incentives for campuses to improve and perform. Under this model, the focus for UW institutions would solely be on increasing enrollment for the purposes of additional resources, instead of educational outcomes, removing potential duplications in programming, and most importantly, contributing skilled graduates to our state's workforce. In the 2017-19 state budget, the State Legislature adopted an outcomes-based funding model for UW System campuses. The provisions of this bill contradict the legislative intent behind that model, removing the emphasis placed on educational outcomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the impact this legislation would have on UW–Madison. If you have any questions, please reach out to UW-Madison Director of State Relations Crystal Potts <u>crystal.potts@wisc.edu</u> or (608) 265-4105.