



State of Wisconsin  
2023 - 2024 LEGISLATURE

LRB-0922/1  
ARG:amn

## 2023 ASSEMBLY BILL 995

January 25, 2024 - Introduced by Representatives SHANKLAND, BILLINGS, CONSIDINE, EMERSON, J. ANDERSON, BALDEH, CLANCY, CONLEY, JACOBSON, JOERS, MADISON, NEUBAUER, OHNSTAD, PALMERI, RATCLIFF, SHELTON, SINICKI, STUBBS and SUBECK, cosponsored by Senators SMITH, LARSON, SPREITZER, ROYS and AGARD. Referred to Committee on Colleges and Universities.

1 **AN ACT** *to amend* 15.01 (2); and *to create* 15.06 (1) (f), 15.06 (3) (a) 7., 15.915  
2 (4) and 36.67 of the statutes; **relating to:** creating a Blue Ribbon Commission  
3 on Public Higher Education in the University of Wisconsin System.

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### *Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*

This bill creates a 19-member Blue Ribbon Commission on Public Higher Education in the University of Wisconsin System. Members of the commission include the presidents of the UW System and the Technical College System; faculty, staff, and students of the UW System and technical colleges; a higher education expert and a workforce development expert; two legislators; and the governor. The commission must study, and facilitate discussion of, a public agenda for higher education; a set of long-term goals and priorities for higher education; and accessibility and affordability of higher education. In addition, the commission must study and develop recommendations with all of the following objectives: 1) to define the goals of higher education for this state; 2) to identify strengths to continue and expand, and weaknesses that need to be improved, in this state's institutions of higher education; 3) to identify demographic trends affecting higher education in the state; 4) to identify strategies to enhance the state's attainment rate; 5) to encourage and develop innovations among institutions of higher education; 6) to encourage and develop partnerships between the UW System and the Technical College System; 7) to explore strategies to strengthen access and equity in higher education for students and potential students; 8) to explore strategies to reduce barriers to enrollment and degree completion; 9) to explore sustainable funding sources in state support and

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examine state funding challenges; and 10) to identify new ways to administer financial aid. The commission must submit a report to the legislature that includes all of this information by December 31, 2025. Upon submission of the report, the commission terminates, unless the governor renews the commission for an additional two-year period. The governor may continue to renew the commission for successive two-year periods.

For further information see the state fiscal estimate, which will be printed as an appendix to this bill.

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***The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:***

1           **SECTION 1.** 15.01 (2) of the statutes is amended to read:

2           15.01 (2) “Commission” means a 3-member governing body in charge of a  
3 department or independent agency or of a division or other subunit within a  
4 department, except for the employment relations commission which shall consist of  
5 one chairperson, the Wisconsin waterways commission which shall consist of 5  
6 members, the blue ribbon commission on public higher education which shall consist  
7 of 19 members, the elections commission which shall consist of at least 6 members,  
8 the ethics commission which shall consist of at least 6 members, and the parole  
9 commission which shall consist of 4 members. A Wisconsin group created for  
10 participation in a continuing interstate body, or the interstate body itself, shall be  
11 known as a “commission”, but is not a commission for purposes of s. 15.06. The parole  
12 commission created under s. 15.145 (1) shall be known as a “commission”, but is not  
13 a commission for purposes of s. 15.06.

14           **SECTION 2.** 15.06 (1) (f) of the statutes is created to read:

15           15.06 (1) (f) Members of the blue ribbon commission on public higher education  
16 shall be appointed and serve terms as provided under s. 15.915 (4).

17           **SECTION 3.** 15.06 (3) (a) 7. of the statutes is created to read:

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1           15.06 (3) (a) 7. The members of the blue ribbon commission on public higher  
2 education.

3           **SECTION 4.** 15.915 (4) of the statutes is created to read:

4           15.915 (4) BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION. (a) Subject  
5 to par. (e), there is created in the University of Wisconsin System a blue ribbon  
6 commission on public higher education.

7           (b) The blue ribbon commission on public higher education shall consist of the  
8 following members:

9           1. The president of the University of Wisconsin System or his or her designee.

10          2. The president of the technical college system appointed under s. 38.04 (2) or  
11 his or her designee.

12          3. Two members who are faculty of the University of Wisconsin System,  
13 appointed jointly by the senate and assembly standing committees with jurisdiction  
14 over matters relating to universities and colleges at a joint meeting of these  
15 committees after the committees have received recommendations for the  
16 appointments.

17          4. Two members who are faculty of a technical college under ch. 38, appointed  
18 jointly by the senate and assembly standing committees with jurisdiction over  
19 matters relating to universities and colleges at a joint meeting of these committees  
20 after the committees have received recommendations for the appointments.

21          5. Two members who are academic staff of the University of Wisconsin System,  
22 appointed jointly by the senate and assembly standing committees with jurisdiction  
23 over matters relating to universities and colleges at a joint meeting of these  
24 committees after the committees have received recommendations for the  
25 appointments.

**ASSEMBLY BILL 995****SECTION 4**

1           6. Two members who are staff of a technical college under ch. 38, appointed  
2 jointly by the senate and assembly standing committees with jurisdiction over  
3 matters relating to universities and colleges at a joint meeting of these committees  
4 after the committees have received recommendations for the appointments.

5           7. Two members who are students enrolled in the University of Wisconsin  
6 System, appointed jointly by the senate and assembly standing committees with  
7 jurisdiction over matters relating to universities and colleges at a joint meeting of  
8 these committees after the committees have received recommendations for the  
9 appointments.

10           8. Two members who are students enrolled in a technical college under ch. 38,  
11 appointed jointly by the senate and assembly standing committees with jurisdiction  
12 over matters relating to universities and colleges at a joint meeting of these  
13 committees after the committees have received recommendations for the  
14 appointments.

15           9. One member who is a higher education expert, appointed by the Board of  
16 Regents of the University of Wisconsin System.

17           10. One member who is a workforce development expert, appointed by the  
18 governor.

19           11. Two members who are legislators, one from the majority party of one house  
20 and the other from the minority party of the other house, appointed jointly by the  
21 senate and assembly standing committees with jurisdiction over matters relating to  
22 universities and colleges at a joint meeting of these committees after the committees  
23 have received recommendations for the appointments.

24           12. The governor, or his or her designee.

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1 (c) Members of the commission shall serve for a term expiring on December 31,  
2 2025, or when the report under s. 36.67 (4) is submitted, whichever occurs first,  
3 except that if the commission is renewed under par. (e), each term shall continue  
4 during any period of renewal.

5 (d) No member of the commission may receive any salary for services performed  
6 as a commission member. Each commission member shall be reimbursed for actual  
7 and necessary expenses incurred while performing official duties.

8 (e) The commission shall terminate upon the commission's submission of the  
9 report under s. 36.67 (4), unless the governor renews the commission for an  
10 additional period of 2 years. The governor may thereafter continue to renew the  
11 commission for additional 2-year periods or allow the commission to terminate upon  
12 the expiration of any renewal period.

13 **SECTION 5.** 36.67 of the statutes is created to read:

14 **36.67 Blue ribbon commission on public higher education.** (1) In this  
15 section, "commission" means the blue ribbon commission on public higher education  
16 created under s. 15.915 (4).

17 (2) The commission shall study, and facilitate discussion of, all of the following:

18 (a) A public agenda for higher education.

19 (b) A set of long-term goals and priorities for higher education.

20 (c) Accessibility and affordability of higher education.

21 (3) The commission shall study and develop recommendations with all of the  
22 following objectives:

23 (a) To define the goals of higher education for this state.

24 (b) To identify strengths to continue and expand, and weaknesses that need to  
25 be improved, in this state's institutions of higher education.

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1 (c) To identify demographic trends, including enrollment, that will affect higher  
2 education in the state.

3 (d) To identify strategies to enhance the state's attainment rate.

4 (e) To encourage and develop innovations among institutions of higher  
5 education.

6 (f) To encourage and develop partnerships between the system and the  
7 technical college system.

8 (g) To explore strategies to strengthen access and equity in higher education  
9 for students and potential students.

10 (h) To explore strategies to reduce barriers to enrollment and degree  
11 completion.

12 (i) To explore sustainable funding sources in state support and examine state  
13 funding challenges.

14 (j) To identify new ways to administer financial aid.

15 (4) Not later than December 31, 2025, the commission shall submit a report to  
16 the chief clerk of each house of the legislature for distribution to the legislature under  
17 s. 13.172 (2) that includes the information described in sub. (3).

18 (END)