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☞ Details: Legislative Audit Bureau Report 07-2: An Evaluation: Personnel Policies and Practices,
Wisconsin Technical College System

(FORM UPDATED: 08/11/2010)

WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE ... PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE RECORDS

2007-08

(session year)

Joint

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STATE OF WISCONSIN

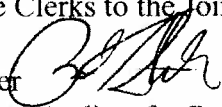
Legislative Audit Bureau

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Janice Mueller
State Auditor

DATE: March 12, 2007

TO: Lewis Rosser and Pamela Matthews
Committee Clerks to the Joint Legislative Audit Committee

FROM: Paul Stuiber 
Deputy State Auditor for Program Evaluation

SUBJECT: Report 07-2: An Evaluation of Wisconsin Technical College System
Personnel Policies and Practices

Enclosed is our evaluation of Personnel Policies and Practices in the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), as requested by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee. The 16 technical college districts are local units of government, governed by locally appointed boards. Each is responsible for establishing compensation levels, fringe benefits, and personnel policies for its employees, and because nearly two-thirds of WTCS employees are represented by unions, most of these policies are negotiated through collective bargaining. The Wisconsin Technical College System Board, staffed by 63 state employees, establishes policies and provides oversight in specific areas, but personnel policies are largely determined by the districts.

In fiscal year (FY) 2005-06, WTCS revenues totaled \$1.1 billion, with property taxes accounting for 56.0 percent of that total. FY 2005-06 expenditures totaled \$1.1 billion, and employee salaries and fringe benefits represented more than two-thirds of that total. In March 2006, WTCS employed 12,908 full- and part-time individuals, including 7,181 full- and part-time faculty.

Earnings of WTCS employees reflect compensation rates and workload requirements that have been negotiated through collective bargaining agreements. Faculty can earn additional compensation for work that exceeds their negotiated full-time workload, which averages 35.7 hours per week across all districts. In FY 2004-05, full-time WTCS faculty earned an average of \$74,598; by comparison, faculty at the two-year University of Wisconsin (UW) Colleges earned an average of \$52,552 in 2005. In addition, when we compared full-time faculty earnings in the ten technical college districts that also contained a four-year UW System institution, we found that average earnings were higher for WTCS faculty than for UW System faculty in 7 of the 10 districts.

Each technical college district also provides its employees with fringe benefits, including pension benefits provided through the Wisconsin Retirement System and health insurance benefits that are negotiated by each individual district. Retiree eligibility for health insurance benefits is typically based on the retiree's age and years of service, although six districts provide benefits based in part upon retirees' accumulated, unused sick leave balances, similar to the State's sick leave conversion

program. New accounting rules require all public employers to report the cost of non-pension retiree benefits, known as other post-employment benefits (OPEB), no later than FY 2009-10. Of the 16 WTCS districts, 13 have calculated these liabilities, and Milwaukee Area's is by far the greatest, at \$228.6 million.

The amount of sick leave earned by WTCS employees varies according to individual district policies and collective bargaining agreements, and full-time WTCS employees reported using an average of 6.0 days of sick leave in FY 2004-05. Faculty reported using an average of 3.2 days, and 38.1 percent reported using none. By comparison, UW System faculty reported using 0.8 days of sick leave in 2005, and 77.1 percent reported using none. District leave reporting systems generally provided accurate documentation of reported absences, although we noted several instances in which leave usage for long-term absences may have been incorrectly recorded.

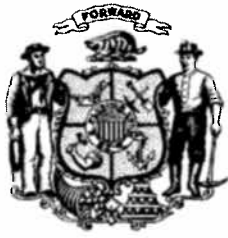
In FY 2005-06, eight districts had a total of ten retainer agreements in place for professional services, six of them for employee health care benefits consulting. Several of these agreements did not follow WTCS procurement requirements.

WTCS districts do not use "back-up positions" or similar job protections. Instead, they may execute settlements or severance agreements with employees to avoid litigation or remove employees whose performance is unsatisfactory. From July 2002 through March 2006, 12 districts reported negotiating a total of 81 agreements with payments totaling \$1.5 million.

The report will be released on Tuesday, March 13, at 9:00 a.m. Please let us know if you have any questions regarding this report.

PS/bm

Enclosures

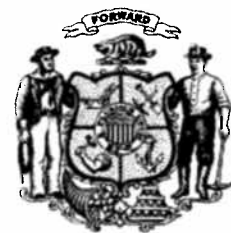


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An Evaluation

Personnel Policies and Practices

Wisconsin Technical College System

2007-2008 Joint Legislative Audit Committee Members

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Russell Decker
Alan Lasee
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Response

From the Wisconsin Technical College System President



STATE OF WISCONSIN

Legislative Audit Bureau

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Janice Mueller
State Auditor

March 13, 2007

Senator Jim Sullivan and
Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz, Co-chairpersons
Joint Legislative Audit Committee
State Capitol
Madison, Wisconsin 53702

Dear Senator Sullivan and Representative Jeskewitz:

We have completed an evaluation of personnel policies and practices within the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), as requested by the Joint Legislative Audit Committee. In March 2006, the 16 technical college districts employed 7,181 full- and part-time faculty and 5,664 full- and part-time support staff and administrators. Each district is a local unit of government that establishes its own personnel policies. The State's Technical College System Board and its 63 staff oversee certain district operations.

The earnings of WTCS employees reflect compensation rates and workloads specified in each district's policies and collective bargaining agreements. Full-time faculty earned an average of \$74,598 in fiscal year (FY) 2004-05, in part because most received additional compensation for work exceeding a full-time workload ranging from 32 to 40 hours per week. By comparison, faculty at the two-year University of Wisconsin Colleges earned an average of \$52,552 in 2005. Faculty in the largest WTCS district—Milwaukee Area—earned the most: an average of \$89,850.

Every district pays all or part of the cost of health insurance for retirees. By FY 2009-10, all public employers are required to report the cost of such non-pension benefits, which are known as other post-employment benefits (OPEB). Accounting rules do not require employers to fund these costs, but large unfunded liabilities could affect future operations. WTCS districts' OPEB liabilities are largely unfunded, and the Milwaukee Area district's is by far the greatest, at \$228.6 million.

The amounts of leave earned by WTCS employees vary widely. Full-time WTCS employees reported using an average of 6.0 days of sick leave in FY 2004-05, although 38.1 percent of faculty reported using no sick leave.

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to us by the Technical College System Board and each of the districts. A response from the WTCS President follows the appendices.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Mueller
State Auditor

JM/PS/ss

Report Highlights ■

Personnel costs are the largest portion of WTCS expenses.

More than two-thirds of full-time faculty earned compensation beyond their base salaries in FY 2004-05.

Districts have varying policies and procedures for recording leave.

Several districts' retainer agreements did not follow competitive selection procedures.

Settlement agreements are used to resolve some personnel issues.

The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) offers associate degree programs, technical diplomas and certificates, and customized training at 48 campuses operated by 16 technical college districts. The system employed 12,908 individuals, including 7,181 full- and part-time faculty, in March 2006.

The technical college districts are local units of government. Each is governed by an appointed board and funded through local property taxes, tuition, student fees, and state and federal aid. A state agency—the Technical College System Board and its 63 staff—oversees some district operations, but each of the 16 districts develops its own personnel policies and procedures, most of which are negotiated through collective bargaining. Approximately two-thirds of technical college staff are unionized employees.

At the direction of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, we evaluated selected personnel policies and practices affecting both local and state employees of WTCS, including:

- compensation and fringe benefits for faculty and other employees, including the technical college presidents;
- the use and reporting of sick leave, vacation, and sabbatical time;
- adherence to state laws and policies governing the procurement of consulting services; and
- the use of settlement agreements to resolve personnel issues.

Our analysis of the employment of felons within WTCS, which was also requested by the Audit Committee, was described in a letter report released in June 2006. "Back-up positions" or similar job protections are not available to WTCS employees.

Funding and Expenditures

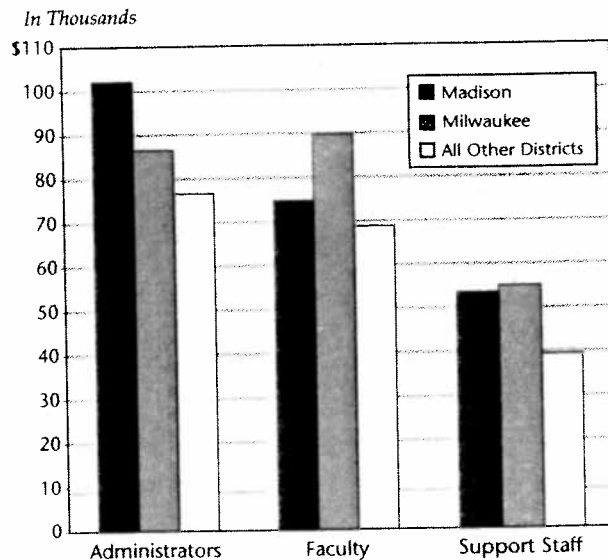
The expenditures of WTCS districts and the System Board totaled \$1.1 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2005-06. Employee salaries and fringe benefits accounted for more than two-thirds of that total. Local property taxes were the source of 56.0 percent of WTCS funding in FY 2005-06.

Salaries and Benefits

Average earnings vary, as shown in Figure 1, because of differences in the compensation rates and workloads specified in each district's policies and collective bargaining agreements. In FY 2004-05, full-time WTCS administrators earned an average of \$77,567. Full-time faculty earned an average of \$74,598, and full-time support staff earned an average of \$43,636. In that year, 369 WTCS employees had earnings of at least \$100,000.

Figure 1

Average Earnings of Full-Time WTCS Employees
FY 2004-05



Full-time workloads for WTCS faculty, as defined by district collective bargaining agreements, averaged 35.7 hours per week. In FY 2004-05, 68.2 percent of full-time WTCS faculty earned additional compensation by working more than a full-time workload. Most of the additional earnings represent compensation for teaching additional courses.

The average base salaries of WTCS faculty are among the highest reported nationally. Their average annual earnings—which represent base salaries plus additional compensation—exceeded the average annual earnings of full-time faculty at the two-year University of Wisconsin (UW) Colleges by approximately \$22,000.

We compared full-time faculty earnings in the ten technical college districts that also contain a four-year UW System institution. In 7 of the 10 districts, average earnings were higher for WTCS faculty than for UW System faculty. For example, in FY 2004-05, full-time faculty at Southwest Wisconsin Technical College earned an average of \$63,090. Full-time faculty at nearby UW-Platteville earned an average of \$60,895, a difference of \$2,195. During the same period, full-time faculty at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College earned an average of \$82,406. Faculty at nearby UW-Green Bay earned an average of \$57,199, or \$25,207 less.

WTCS employees also earn fringe benefits such as health and dental insurance, life insurance, and retirement benefits. All 16 districts provide health insurance benefits to full-time and at least some part-time employees. In addition, all districts provide health insurance benefits to some retirees. District costs for retiree insurance benefits totaled \$15.7 million in FY 2005-06.

Under new accounting rules, all public employers will be required to more fully disclose the costs of non-pension retiree benefits no later than FY 2009-10. Although accounting rules do not require employers to fund these costs, large unfunded liabilities could adversely affect employers' credit ratings and the cost of issuing bonds.

Of the 16 technical college districts, 13 have estimated their liabilities for benefits already promised to current and retired employees. Actuarial estimates of the costs of these non-pension post-retirement benefits range from \$3.3 million for the Northeast district to \$228.6 million for the Milwaukee Area district. The magnitude of Milwaukee Area's liability suggests the district could be challenged to meet its future financial obligations without significantly increasing revenues or significantly reducing its operating budget.

Compensation for technical college presidents typically includes a salary and the fringe benefits available to other employees, as well as a vehicle or vehicle allowance and supplemental contributions to retirement accounts. Technical college presidents' compensation in FY 2005-06 ranged from \$127,625 at Southwest Wisconsin to \$226,900 at Milwaukee Area.

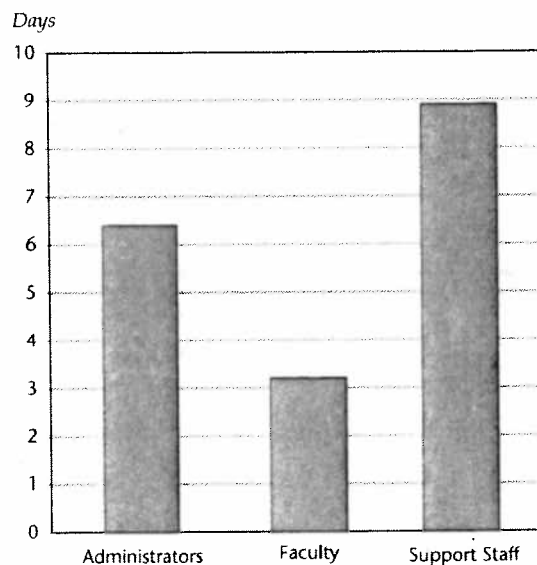
Leave Use

WTCS employees earn sick leave, as required by statutes. The amount earned each year varies based on collective bargaining agreements and individual district policies.

In FY 2004-05, full-time WTCS employees reported using an average of 6.0 days of sick leave. On average, faculty reported using 3.2 days while support staff reported using 8.9 days, as shown in Figure 2. Although most full-time employees reported using some sick leave during FY 2004-05, 38.1 percent of faculty reported using none, compared to 17.8 percent of administrators and 6.6 percent of support staff. A greater percentage of UW System employees reported using no sick leave in 2005.

Figure 2

Average Annual Sick Leave Use FY 2004-05



To evaluate compliance with leave reporting requirements, we reviewed 336 employee leave files. Although most records appeared to be complete, we found several discrepancies between paper and electronic leave records.

All technical college districts offer sabbaticals to faculty, and seven allow support staff or administrators to apply for sabbatical leave. From July 2004 through March 2006, 17 employees took sabbaticals, including 15 faculty. We found general compliance with sabbatical procedures, although compliance with reporting requirements could be improved.

Retainer Agreements

We examined the extent to which technical college districts contract for professional services using retainer agreements, which establish fixed regular payments for agreed-upon services even though the amount and type of work may vary.

Eight districts reported a total of ten retainer agreements in FY 2005-06. Six of the ten contracts were with employee health care benefits consulting firms. While most retainer agreements met specified procurement requirements, we noted several concerns. In particular, the Waukesha County and Madison Area districts entered into retainer agreements exceeding \$25,000 without following the competitive selection process required by law.

Settlement Agreements

Twelve of the 16 districts reported that they had resolved personnel issues by negotiating settlement agreements with their employees. The most common reason for entering into an agreement was to terminate employment because of unsatisfactory performance. Other reasons included position elimination or restructuring, settlement of discrimination complaints, and termination for misconduct.

From July 2002 through March 2006, 81 settlement agreements were negotiated, including 17 by the Gateway district. Approximately one-half of the agreements involved administrators, with the remainder evenly split between faculty and support staff. Settlement payments totaled \$1.5 million over the period we reviewed. In addition, 47 of the 81 settlement agreements provided employer-paid health insurance benefits for varying periods.

Recommendations

Our report includes recommendations that the technical college districts:

- ☑ improve the accuracy of reporting long-term employee absences (p. 50);
- ☑ improve compliance with requirements for reporting sabbatical outcomes (p. 54);
- ☑ ensure that procurement practices for retainer agreements comply with state law and WTCS policies (p. 60); and
- ☑ annually report to the WTCS Board on the number, type, and cost of any settlement agreements they enter into (p. 63).

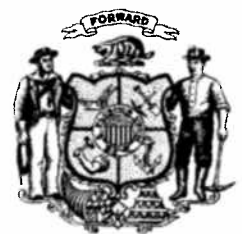
We also include recommendations for the WTCS Board to:

- ☑ report to the Legislature on all technical college districts' plans for addressing liabilities associated with retiree benefits costs (p. 38); and
- ☑ direct its staff to monitor the procurement policies and practices of each district (p. 60).

■ ■ ■ ■



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



March 13, 2007

Legislative Audit of WTCS Personnel Policies and Procedures Released

- Audit Highlights Faculty Salaries
- Reviews and Makes Recommendations Concerning Post-Retirement Benefits, Leave Reporting, Sabbaticals, Retainer Agreements and Settlement Agreements
- WTCS Responds That It Will Work With Districts to Ensure Audit Recommendations are Implemented

The Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) has released the long-awaited audit of WTCS personnel policies and procedures. Audit highlights, the full LAB report, and the WTCS's formal response by President Clancy (attached at the end of the main report) are available at: <http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab/index.htm>. The audit parallels a UW System audit released in October, 2006. The LAB is a non-partisan service agency that works with the Wisconsin Legislature to provide information and oversight concerning state and state-funded operations.

The LAB report contains several highlights - with WTCS faculty salaries being most prominent - and several recommendations. In the written response attached to the report, the WTCS has already agreed to work with districts to ensure the audit's recommendations are fully implemented.

Faculty Salaries

The report found that full-time WTCS faculty earned an average of \$74,598 in 2004-05, and that 369 employees earned over \$100,000 in that year. Those full-time faculty averaged a 35.7 hour workload under collective bargaining agreements. However, 68.2% of full-time faculty earned additional compensation by working more than a full-time load.

The LAB also compared these figures nationally and with the UW. The report's highlights document states:

“The average base salaries of WTCS faculty are among the highest reported nationally. Their average annual earnings – which represent base salaries plus additional compensation – exceed the average earnings of full-time faculty at the two-year University of Wisconsin (UW) Colleges by approximately \$22,000.”

The audit report and the WTCS’s response recognize some of the key factors contributing to the salary data, such as a highly competitive employment market for teachers in highly skilled and well-compensated professions and greater flexibility in making faculty work assignments than found in many academic environments.

Importantly, the LAB figure presents the average salary for full-time faculty only. The WTCS response points out that the majority of WTCS faculty are part-time or adjunct faculty, not full-time faculty. When using the common measurement of full-time *equivalent* compensation for all faculty, the average earnings are \$12,500 less than for all faculty on a full-time basis than for exclusively full-time faculty. This gap ranges from some \$2,300 at Gateway to more than \$19,000 at MATC Milwaukee and Northeast Wisconsin. A chart comparing these figures for all districts is found on page 2 of the WTCS response.

While the audit highlights faculty compensation, no formal recommendation is made regarding this issue.

Post-Retirement Benefits

In addition to discussing benefits packages for current administrators and faculty, the LAB describes district liability for non-pension post-retirement benefits. These “OPEDS” amounts must be accounted for more directly under new accounting standards applicable to all public entities. The audit recommends the WTCS Board report to the Legislature on all technical college districts’ plans for addressing these liabilities. The WTCS response notes that 13 districts have completed actuarial studies of their liabilities and that the remaining 3 are expected to meet the deadline for doing so.

Leave Reporting

The audit notes that districts have various policies for recording the use of sick leave. The audit reported that WTCS employees reported an average 6 days of sick leave in 2004-05 ranging from 3.2 days average for faculty and 8.9 days average for support staff. In 2004-05, 38.1 percent of faculty, 17.8 percent of administrators, and 6.6 percent of support staff reported using no sick days. The LAB notes that this is lower than the percentage of employees in the UW System audit reporting no sick day usage. The WTCS response notes that, unlike UW (state) employees, most WTCS employees have no right to convert unused sick days into a credit for post-retirement health premiums. The audit recommends that districts improve the accuracy of employee leave reporting.

Sabbaticals

The LAB reported that 15 faculty and 2 other WTCS employees were granted sabbaticals statewide from July, 2004, through March, 2006. The audit found general compliance with sabbatical procedures but recommended that districts improve reporting requirements for sabbatical outcomes.

Retainer Agreements

The audit examined district contracts for professional services using retainer agreements. These agreements establish fixed regular payments for agreed-upon services. Such agreements were a catalyst for the original and more limited audit request.

The audit found that 8 districts reported a total of 10 retainer agreements in 2005-06. Six of these were with employee health care benefits consulting firms. While the audit report notes that most retainer agreements met specified procurement requirements, the report notes that 2 agreements in 2 different districts did not comply with competitive bidding procedures as required.

The LAB recommends that districts assure procurement practices for retainer agreements comply with state law and WTCS policies. The LAB also recommends the WTCS Board direct its staff to monitor district procurement policies and practices.

Settlement Agreements

The LAB reports that 12 of 16 districts had resolved personnel issues by negotiating settlement agreements with employees between July, 2002, and March 2006. The most common reason was an agreement to terminate employment for unsatisfactory performance. Other reasons included position elimination or restructuring, settling discrimination complaints, or termination for misconduct. The report reviewed 81 settlement agreements over the period. Approximately 50 percent of the agreements involved administrators and 25 percent each involved faculty and support staff. The LAB recommends that districts annually report the number, type, and cost of any settlement agreements to the WTCS Board.

Audit History and Process

The WTCS audit was initially requested by four legislators in August, 2005. That request noted concerns focused on Gateway Technical College and then-President Sam Borden. The initial request was made by then-Minority Leader and current Majority Leader Senator Judy Robson (D-Beloit), Senator Glenn Grothman (R-West Bend), Senator Bob Wirsch (D-Kenosha), and then-Representative and current Senator John Lehman (D-

Racine). Their audit request was approved November 29, 2005, by the Joint Committee on Audit led by Assembly Chair Representative Sue Jeskewitz (R-Menomonee Falls) and then-Senate Chair Carol Roessler (R-Oshkosh). The audit as approved included an expanded scope to parallel the UW audit. An audit's scope also evolves over time as the complex process and information unfolds.

Since approval in late 2005, the LAB staff has worked with the WTCS staff and districts for countless hours to review enormous amounts of information. In June, 2006, the LAB released a single portion of the audit findings concerning felons in employment at technical colleges. The remaining major portions of the audit were shared in draft form confidentially with specific contacts at the colleges for fact-checking in the past few weeks. The WTCS was also able to contribute to this process and to prepare a formal response to the audit that is appended to the report.

After the opportunity for review by members of the legislature, the Joint Committee on Audit will likely hold a hearing on the audit's findings and recommendations. Other legislative committees occasionally hold separate hearings. The Joint Audit Committee may also hold additional hearings over time to monitor progress on follow-up to the recommendations.

Conclusion

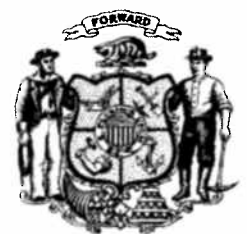
In his formal response attached to the main audit report, President Clancy notes that: "The System Office will work with technical college districts to ensure that all 5 of the report's recommendations are implemented." In a press release today, WTCS President Clancy and Board President Mary Cuene also publicly commended the LAB for its professional handling of sensitive personnel issues in completing the complex audit.

Significant media coverage and legislative comments on the audit report should be expected over the next days and weeks. President Clancy's formal response provides an excellent starting point for the dialog with the LAB and legislators. While the LAB report focuses on faculty salaries, any audit topic or others that may flow from the audit could be the subject of media or legislative interest.

This report was prepared by Paul Gabriel, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association, based on an initial reading of the 100+ page audit report and the best additional information available on its release date, March 13, 2007. He is responsible for the content. For questions or comments, contact him at 608 266-9430 or pgabriel@districtboards.org.



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE

Joint Legislative Audit Committee

Committee Co-Chairs:
State Senator Jim Sullivan
State Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz

For Immediate Release

March 13, 2007

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Audit Analyzes Technical College Personnel Policies and Practices

(Madison) Today, the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) released its evaluation of personnel policies and practices used by the 16 campuses of the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). The 16 technical college districts are local units of government, governed by locally appointed boards. Each is responsible for establishing compensation levels, fringe benefits, and personnel policies. In its comprehensive report, LAB evaluated employee compensation and fringe benefits, use and reporting of leave time, procurement of consulting services, and the use of settlement agreements to resolve personnel issues.

LAB found that the average base salaries of WTCS faculty are among the highest reported nationally. Their average annual earnings also exceeded the average annual earnings of full-time faculty at the two-year University of Wisconsin (UW) Colleges by approximately \$22,000. When LAB compared full-time faculty earnings in the ten technical college districts that also contain a four-year UW System institution, they found that in 7 of the 10 districts, average earnings were higher for WTCS faculty than for UW System faculty.

LAB reports that, under new accounting rules, all public employers will be required to more fully disclose the costs of non-pension post-retirement benefits. Of the 16 technical college districts, 13 have estimated their benefit liabilities, which range from \$3.3 million for the Northeast district to \$228.6 million for the Milwaukee Area district. LAB notes that the magnitude of Milwaukee Area's liability suggests the district could be challenged to meet its future financial obligations without significantly increasing revenues or significantly reducing its operating budget.

Eight technical college districts reported a total of ten retainer agreements for professional services in FY 2005-06. Six of the ten contracts were with employee health care benefits consulting firms. LAB found that Waukesha County and Madison Area technical colleges entered into retainer agreements exceeding \$25,000 without following the competitive selection process required by law.

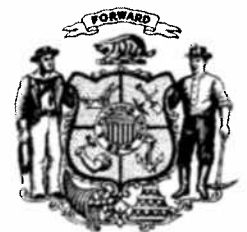
Twelve of the 16 districts reported that they had resolved personnel issues by negotiating settlement agreements with their employees, most commonly due to unsatisfactory work performance. From July 2002 through March 2006, LAB found that 81 settlement agreements were negotiated, including 17 by the Gateway district. Approximately one-half of the 81 agreements involved administrators. Settlement payments totaled \$1.5 million and 47 of the 81 agreements provided employer-paid health insurance benefits for varying periods of time.

Co-chairs Sullivan and Jeskewitz intend to hold a hearing on the audit report in mid-April. Interested members of the public are invited to testify before the Joint Legislative Audit Committee at that time. Copies of the audit may be obtained from LAB's Web site at www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab or by calling (608) 266-2818 to request a copy of report 07-2. A podcast of the report highlights is also available on LAB's Web site.

###



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE





SUE JESKEWITZ

State Representative • 24th Assembly District

For Immediate Release

March 13, 2007

For More Information Contact:

Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz

(608) 266-3796

Jeskewitz Finds Technical College Audit Findings Problematic

(Madison)... Today, audit Co-chair Suzanne Jeskewitz (R-Menomonee Falls) applauded the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) for its comprehensive evaluation of personnel policies and practices used by the 16 campuses of the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS). The LAB evaluated employee compensation and fringe benefits, use and reporting of leave time, procurement of consulting services, and the use of settlement agreements to resolve personnel issues.

“I was aware of the disturbingly high wages at Milwaukee Area Technical College, but I was shocked to learn that high wages for faculty at technical colleges span the entire state,” stated Co-chair Suzanne Jeskewitz (R-Menomonee Falls). “Average base salaries for WTCS faculty are the third highest in the nation (\$61,065) only behind California and Michigan, in comparison to the average of \$33,565 per capita income for all Wisconsin residents (23rd nationally).”

LAB found that average annual earnings exceeded the average annual earnings of full-time faculty at the two-year University of Wisconsin (UW) Colleges by approximately \$22,000. When LAB compared full-time faculty earnings in the ten technical college districts that also contain a four-year UW System institution, they found that in 7 of the 10 districts, average earnings were higher for WTCS faculty than for UW System faculty.

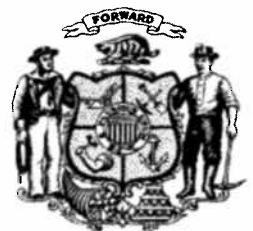
“As someone who represents part of the Milwaukee Area’s district, I was also troubled by the size of their liability for other post-employment benefits,” said Jeskewitz. “Considering that their annual operating budget is approximately \$224 million, a debt of over \$228 million dollars is a big concern.” LAB reports that, under new accounting rules, all public employers will be required to more fully disclose the costs of non-pension post-retirement benefits. Of the 16 technical college districts, 13 have estimated their benefit liabilities, which range from \$3.3 million for the Northeast district to \$228.6 million for the Milwaukee Area district.

Jeskewitz looks forward to examining the audit’s findings more closely during a public hearing in mid-April. Copies of the audit may be obtained from LAB’s Web site at www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab or by calling (608) 266-2818 to request a copy of report 07-2.

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WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



JIM SULLIVAN
STATE SENATOR



5TH SENATE DISTRICT

Wisconsin State Senate

For Immediate Release
March 13, 2007

Contact: Senator Jim Sullivan
608-266-2512

Sullivan Appreciates Audit Bureau's Technical College Findings
WTCS commitment to training a skilled workforce is necessary for employers and businesses to prosper in today's technically driven economy

(Madison) Senator Jim Sullivan (D-Wauwatosa), Co-Chair of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee thanked the nonpartisan Legislative Audit Bureau (LAB) for its independent evaluation of personnel policies and practices used by the 16 campuses of the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS).

The 16 technical college districts are local units of government, governed by locally appointed boards, and supported by local businesses and employers for their unique ability to quickly address regional workforce development needs. Each local board is responsible for establishing compensation levels, fringe benefits, and personnel policies. "I am very mindful of taxpayer dollars and using those dollars to train the skilled-workforce that drives Wisconsin's economy," said Sullivan.

"While I appreciate LAB's independent analysis, I am not convinced comparing WTCS faculty to two-year college faculty captures the salary costs necessary for our technical colleges in a technology driven economy. It's like comparing apples to oranges," said Co-Chair Jim Sullivan (D-Wauwatosa).

"For many years, business leaders and employers throughout Wisconsin have expressed concern about current and future shortages of skilled-workers and their ability to sustain and expand their businesses," said Sullivan. "Technical colleges need to provide the workforce training these employers and businesses need. In certain skill areas, WTCS needs to attract and retain experienced and qualified instructors from private industry."

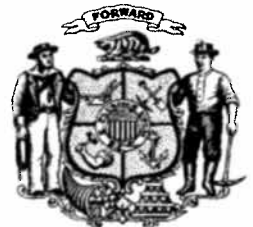
"I am pleased to see the retainer agreements, like the excessive one we saw at Gateway, have been lowered to reasonable levels saving taxpayers money," said Sullivan. LAB's audit reports that, eight technical college districts reported a total of ten retainer agreements for professional services in 2005-06. Six of the ten contracts were with employee health care benefits consulting firms. LAB found that Waukesha County and Madison Area technical colleges entered into retainer agreements exceeding \$25,000 without following the competitive selection process required by law.

Joint Legislative Audit Committee Co-Chairs, Senator Sullivan and Representative Jeskewitz look forward to examining LAB's audit report during a public hearing later this year. Copies of the audit may be obtained from LAB's website at www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lab or by calling (608) 266-2818 to request a copy of report 07-2. A podcast of the report highlights is also available on LAB's Web site.





WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Matthews, Pam

From: Handrick, Diane
Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2007 3:52 PM
To: Matthews, Pam
Subject: FW: Tech System leaders respond to evaluation of personnel policies
Attachments: lab_audit_release.pdf

From: Mackey, Sara E. [mailto:sara.mackey@wtcsystem.edu]

Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2007 3:48 PM

To: Schwarm, Kyle G.; Clancy, Dan - WTCS; Cullen, Kathleen E - WTCS; Zylstra, James E - WTCS; Foy, Morna - WTCS

Cc: Rob Hartung; Synovia Youngblood; Jim Gribble; Allan Kehl; Ann Greenheck; Anne Reid; Brent Smith; Burmaster, Elizabeth A - DPI; Hunter Oemig; Jose Vasquez; Lorraine Carter; Mary Quinnette Cuene; Peggy Rosenzweig; Phil Neuenfeldt; Gassman, Roberta - DWD; Adrian Lorbetske (E-mail); Barbara Prindiville; Bettsey Barhorst ; Bryan Albrecht ; Chuck Levine; Darnell Cole (E-mail); David Buettner (E-mail); Edward Raspiller; Eric Larson (E-mail); Gayle Hytrek; Jeffrey Rafn (E-mail); John Clark (E-mail); Karen Knox (E-mail); Lee Rasch (E-mail); Lori Weyers; Lori Weyers; Michael Lanser; William Ihlenfeldt (E-mail)

Subject: Tech System leaders respond to evaluation of personnel policies

For immediate release
 March 13, 2007

Contact: Morna Foy, 608-266-2449
 Jim Zylstra, 608-266-1739

WTCS leaders respond to Audit Bureau evaluation of System personnel policies and procedures

MADISON – Today, the Legislative Audit Bureau released its evaluation of technical college personnel policies and procedures. The Bureau evaluated the colleges' use of sick leave, vacation and sabbaticals, compensation, post-employment benefits, retainer agreements and the use of settlement agreements.

"I was pleased with the Audit Bureau's findings that districts' leave reporting systems accurately record reported absences and the districts generally comply with sabbatical and retainer agreement policies and procedures," said System President Dan Clancy. "The Wisconsin Technical College System will implement the Audit Bureau's recommendations for improvement in these areas, as well as for reporting district settlement agreements and plans for addressing post-employment benefits," added Clancy.

The Audit Bureau also noted differences in the earnings of WTCS and UWS full-time faculty and identified the many factors that can influence faculty compensation, including tenure, the employment market, collective bargaining agreements, and the level and type of fringe benefits. President Clancy added, "The responsive career and technical education the technical colleges provide requires faculty with significant industry experience and who are willing to work flexible schedules. As the Audit Bureau noted, local college staffing decisions, such as the use of part-time faculty or the extent to which faculty teach extra classes, can affect individual faculty earnings."

"On behalf of the entire System, I would like to thank State Auditor Mueller and her staff for the professional manner in which they conducted this review of sensitive personnel matters," said Wisconsin Technical College System Board President Mary Quinnette Cuene. "The Board will discuss the Audit Bureau's findings and recommendations in detail at its next meeting after board members have had a chance to review the report." The Technical College System Board's next meeting is March 27-28, 2007 at Moraine Park Technical College in Fond du Lac.

The Wisconsin Technical College System has 16 technical college districts throughout Wisconsin, which offer more than 300 programs awarding two-year associate degrees, one and two-year technical diplomas and short-term technical diplomas. In addition, the System provides the majority of customized

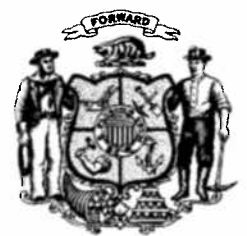
training and technical assistance to Wisconsin's business and industry community. More than half of all adults in Wisconsin have accessed the technical colleges for education and training. Find more about educational programs at www.witechcolleges.org.

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Sara Mackey
Marketing Communications Assistant
Statewide Marketing
Wisconsin Technical College System
4622 University Avenue
Madison, WI 53705
Tel: (608) 264-6963
Fax: (608) 266-1690
mailto: sara.mackey@wtcssystem.edu
www.witechcolleges.org
www.WhereCommunitiesTurnFirst.org



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Matthews, Pam

From: Meyer, Todd M USA Mr USA AMC-SWA-AFSBn-KU [todd.m.meyer@kuwait.swa.army.mil]

Sent: Tuesday, March 13, 2007 2:04 PM

To: Rep.Jeskewitz

Subject: Technical college Instructors Salaries

Rep. Jeskewitz,

I am writing you on the article that I read on line at:

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/W/WI_TECHNICAL_COLLEGES_AUDIT_WIOL-?](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/W/WI_TECHNICAL_COLLEGES_AUDIT_WIOL-?SITE=WIFON&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT)

[SITE=WIFON&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/W/WI_TECHNICAL_COLLEGES_AUDIT_WIOL-?SITE=WIFON&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT). As a former instructor at Moraine Park Technical College out of the West Bend Campus. I will have to agree that these instructors are over paid. I was a Web Developer Instructor from 2000 to 2005. The reason why I say that these instructors are over paid is because of the lack of experience that they have in the field. For example before I was teaching at Moraine Park I had to work my way up to gain my experience in the work force. Yet the other Web Developer Instructor worked two years in the Moraine Park Library and also worked in creating the scoring guide lines for the on line courses for two years before this instructor was hired as the Web Developer Instructor. Yet this instructor had a very little experience in creating high end dynamic web sites. Yet this instructor was making 30K to 40K more a year than my self. The reason why this instructor was making more than me was because she has been working for the college for 5+ years in the library. One should look at the hiring process at the technical college system. The reason why I say this is because I have applied for the same position for two different times. The first time the college hired a person with no web development experience but they do hold a Master Degree in Art. Most of the staff of the Wisconsin Technical College System will agree that their salaries are in line with the industry so they can get quality instructors. Yes that would be the case if the Wisconsin Technical College System would hire the instructors from industry but they end up hiring the instructors for education. I believe that the instructors should be paid for industry standers of pay. I can not see a plumber instructor getting paid \$72,000 per year when they only make \$40,000 per year. Those salary number may be off for that position but if you would look at some lower paying fields that are being taught at the technical colleges why should the instructor have a salary that is up to ten times what that the students would make in that given field. The salaries should be based off of what the industry not by the education behind that instructor. If an instructor has a PHD and they have never worked in the field that he/she are teaching in why should that person be making over what some one with ten years of experience is that same field. Yet the person with no degree and they have over 20 years of experience in their field can not make the same. Yet the students who have been taught by the instructor with no degree would have more knowledge in the field. Which would make those students more employable, which would be better for the student and the state of Wisconsin.

Since I am not a voter in your area, I am a voter in Wisconsin working in Kuwait in supporting OEF(Operation Enduring Freedom) and OIF (Operation Iraqi Freedom). Thank you for your time.

V/r

Todd M. Meyer
AWRDS/MWB Database Administrator
Stanley Associates
Camp Arifjan, Kuwait

DSN 318-430-4501
COM 011-965-389-4501
MOBILE 011-965-927-9625
E-mail todd.m.meyer@swa.army.mil

03/13/2007



Matthews, Pam

From: on behalf of Rep.Jeskewitz
To: lcole@charter.net
Subject: RE: Technical College Faculty Pay

Dear Larry,

Thank you for your e-mail. You ask what you can do as a Wisconsin resident and taxpayer about this issue. My suggestion is for you to get to know the members of your technical college board (Madison Area Technical College) and voice your concerns to them. Being aware of budget discussions and voicing your opinions to board members during the budget process is an important function taxpayers can do. I am not aware of public attendance in your technical college district, but in many there is little input from property taxpayers who are not employees of the district. You can also contact your legislators, Rep. Andy Jorgensen and Sen. Scott Fitzgerald, as well.

Because technical college boards are not elected it is important that more concerned taxpayers get involved and are aware of how technical college boards are spending your money. Some will say that elected boards will fix this, and while it sounds like an easy fix, it also has the potential to create additional problems. Either way, as long as it is your property tax dollars being spent, residents need to watch and voice their support or concern for how ~~the~~ ^{your} money is being spent.

Sue

Office of Representative Sue Jeskewitz

*Madison: 608.266.3796
 Toll free (in Wisconsin only): 888.529.0024
 Rep.Jeskewitz@legis.wi.gov*

From: Larry Cole [mailto:lcole@charter.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 14, 2007 8:56 AM
To: Rep.Jeskewitz
Subject: Technical College Faculty Pay

Rep. Jeskewitz,

This morning I read the article in the Wisconsin State Journal regarding the pay of technical college faculty members. I was dumbfounded. Pay practices, along with exceedingly generous benefits that apparently are retained in retirement, are an outright abuse. It is hard for me to imagine why Wisconsin taxpayers tolerate this.

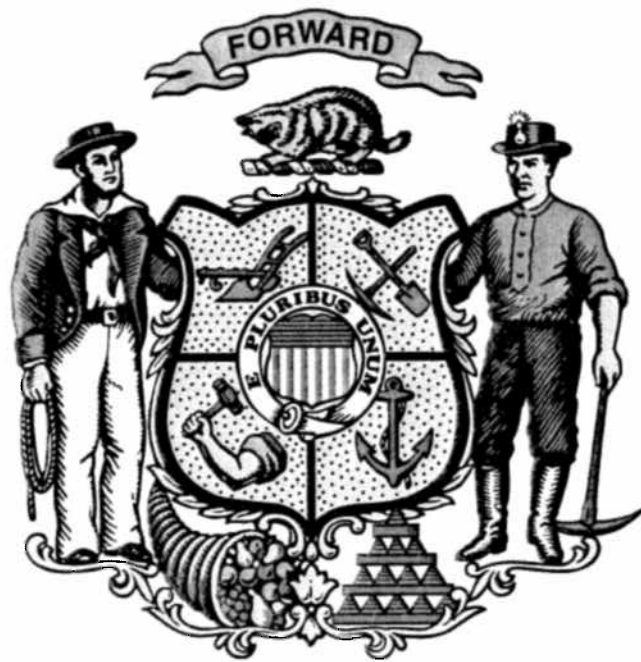
To whom is Wisconsin Technical College System accountable to? All I see is the assessment on my annual property tax bill, another 6.2% increase this past year. And this to help support the faculty being the third highest paid in the country

You were quoted in the article. I am angry as you suggested I should be. Please advise what steps I as a Wisconsin resident and taxpayer can/should pursue.

Thanks for your diligence.

Larry Cole
 620 Indian Hills Dr.
 Waterloo, Wi. 53594

03/14/2007



Handrick, Diane

From: Ann Engelman [aengelman@earthlink.net]
Sent: Wednesday, March 14, 2007 9:12 AM
To: Rep.Jeskewitz
Subject: Wisconsin State Journal

I just finished reading the front page article on Technical college faculty. Your quote, "I would hope the public will get very angry about this." is irresponsible. I am angry about that. Anger does not help any community try to get along. If you want change, do it in a mature way.

Don't call for citizens to be angry. Something to be angry about. . .

come down and have a look at what the over funded, out of control Department of Transportation is going to do to our city neighborhood along Hwy 106 in Fort Atkinson. Why not research how much the DOT spends in our state compared to others?

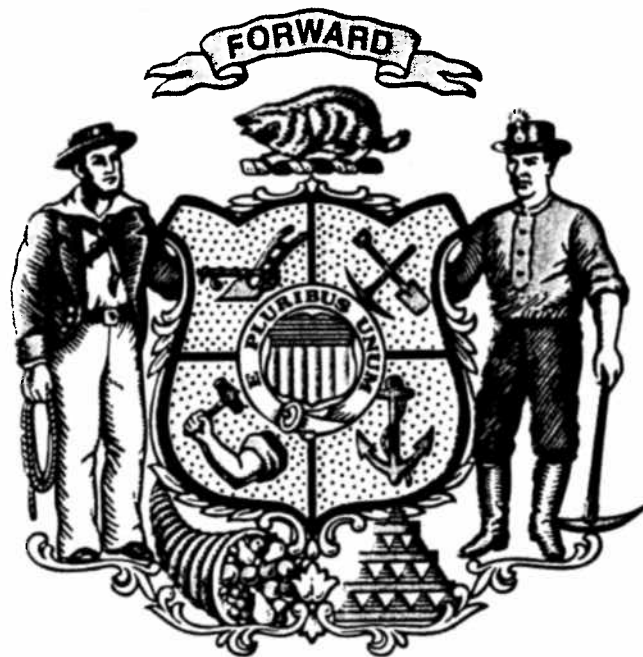
Leave the Technical colleges alone. . .they, at least, are helping to educate students, hopefully some that will stay in our state and not be angry about their education that allows them to give taxes back to our state.

Shame on you,

Ann Engelman

428 E. Sherman Ave

Fort Atkinson, WI 53538



March 15, 2007

Representative Suzanne Jeskewitz
Room 314 North
State Capitol
P.O. Box 8952
Madison, WI 53708

RE: Technical College Faculty Pay Article

Dear Representative Jeskewitz:

This letter is in response to quotes attributed to you in the article that ran in the March 13, 2007 Wisconsin State Journal *Technical College Faculty Is Well Paid*, written by Ryan J. Foley.

In that story you were quoted as saying: *"This audit is telling us that we've gotten out of control with our benefits and our salaries in the technical college system,"* and that, *"I would hope the public will get very angry about this."*

If this is your true feeling about what technical college faculty are worth, I believe you are seriously mistaken.

Let me state that I am an accounting instructor at Madison Area Technical College and have worked for the college for the past twenty-one years. I will also tell you that I am a life-long Republican, so I certainly have no hidden political agenda with your comments. If you doubt this, I can easily give you many names of my Democrat friends at MATC who can confirm my party allegiance.

Do I feel that I am adequately compensated for my services? Yes. Do I feel I am overpaid? Of course not. You must keep in mind that before any teacher at MATC reaches the highest pay level, they must have at least fifteen (15) years of teaching experience and have reached a certain level of education. My educational background includes having a bachelor's degree in Accounting (I am a licensed CPA) and a Juris Doctor (I am also a licensed attorney in Wisconsin).

My beginning starting salary twenty-one years ago was \$23,000. So the fact that I am paid approximately \$82,000 a year seems very reasonable for a person with twenty plus years of experience.

To keep all of this in perspective, last fall I was personally told by two different accounting professors (one from UW-Whitewater and one from Marquette University) that new Accounting PhD's without any teaching experience are commanding starting salaries of \$120,000 to \$150,000 dollars. That is the current market for accounting instructors. So I guess you could say that I am really being "underpaid."

Another example of current market conditions is this. A fellow accounting faculty's daughter was recently hired by a national CPA firm in Milwaukee. Her starting salary, without any prior accounting experience and without having passed the CPA exam, will be \$50,000 when she begins work for them after graduation in May.

The fact that our average base pay of approximately \$75,000 was cited as the third highest in the nation doesn't automatically mean that we are being overpaid, especially when compared to current market conditions. I conclude that my colleagues around the country are being grossly underpaid.

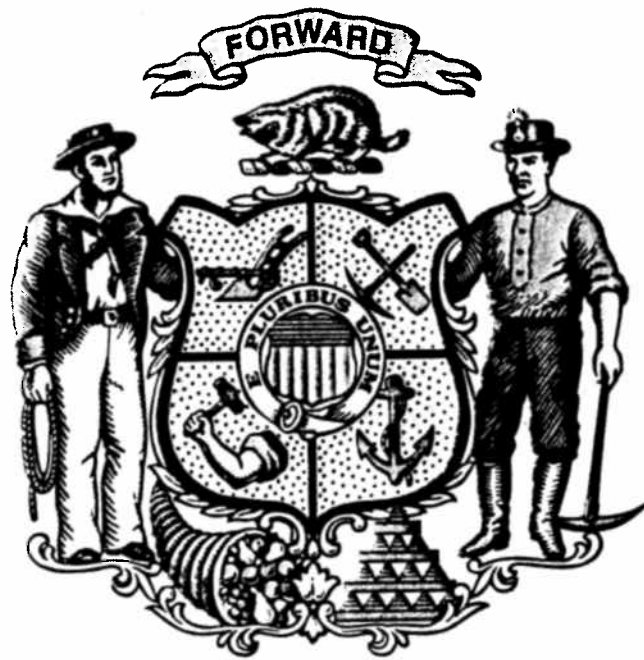
Finally, my salary and benefits were obtained through the hard work and dedicated efforts of colleagues through the legal collective bargaining process over many years of negotiations. While I certainly do not agree with everything my union says or does, I have absolutely no disagreement over the basic right of employees to collectively bargain.

My colleagues at MATC are hard working dedicated instructors who are performing a valuable service for this community. I believe we are making a positive difference in our student's lives and our community as a whole. That is why I teach and will continue to do so until I retire. To denigrate us with comments like yours is simply irresponsible.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

William A. Padley, JD, CPA
Accounting Instructor
Madison Area Technical College
3550 Anderson Street
Madison, WI 53704
608-246-6653
wpadley@matcmadison.edu





State of Wisconsin

3/20

LEGISLATIVE AUDIT BUREAU

Joe / Sam -

At the end of our briefing last week,
I told you about the faculty who took
large numbers of courses. Enclosed in the
documentation for that statement.

All the best -

Sam

WTCS Faculty Earning Over \$100,000

In our sample of 97 faculty earning over \$100,000 in FY05, the following five individuals had both the highest total earnings and the greatest amount of earnings beyond base their compensation:

- A Health Services instructor at Northeast earned \$124,610 more than her base salary of \$66,918 (\$191,528 total) by teaching four summer courses and 13 additional courses throughout the academic year, developing curriculum outside of work hours, and for advising a student club. She worked at Northeast for 28 years.
- A General Studies instructor at Northeast earned \$85,984 more than his base salary of \$67,878 (\$153,862 total) by teaching six summer courses and 16 additional courses during the academic year, and developing curriculum outside of normal work hours. He worked for Northeast for six years.
- An Industrial Equipment instructor at Gateway earned \$78,610 more than his base salary of \$68,109 (\$146,719 total) by teaching two summer courses and 19 additional courses during the academic year; working overload in his normal schedule; earning credits toward his Master's degree; and for developing curriculum outside of normal work hours. He worked for Gateway for five years.
- A Health Services instructor at Northeast earned \$76,834 more than his base salary of \$67,583 (\$144,417 total) by teaching four summer courses and 23 additional courses during the academic year; holding two open lab sessions; and for in-service pay. He worked for Northeast for 27 years.

- A Business and Information Technology instructor at Northeast earned \$75,252 more than his base salary of \$67,878 (\$143,130 total) by teaching six summer courses and 14 additional courses during the academic year, and developing curriculum outside of normal work hours. He worked at Northeast for 10 years.

WTCS Faculty Union Leadership

The following table includes available information on faculty union presidents who have reduced teaching workloads to perform union duties. The Staff Accounting System does not provide specific codes for union responsibilities.

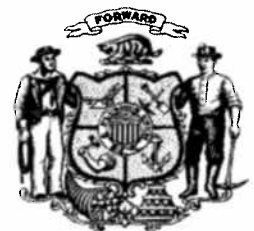
Faculty Union Presidents with Reduced Teaching Workloads
Fiscal Year 2004-05

District	Workload Reduction	Name	Position	FTE ¹	Earnings
Chippewa Valley	50 percent	Bilderback, Terry	Current President	1.20	\$76,062
Fox Valley	40 to 60 percent	Day, Robert	Current President as of 2/1/06	0.96	77,449
Madison	1.2 FTE release time shared among 5 union officers	Lowndes, Joseph	FY05 and Current President	1.31	95,619
Milwaukee	30 percent	Dee, Charles	FY05 and Current Executive Vice President	1.17	90,220
Milwaukee	60 percent	Rosen, Michael	FY05 and Current President	1.94	124,735
Waukesha	50 percent	Albrecht, Charles	Current President as of 1/06	0.96	75,052
Waukesha	50 percent	Mei, Ellen	FY05 President	0.96	73,440

¹ Based on the district's definition of a full-time workload and data contained in the WTCS Staff Accounting System



WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE



Matthews, Pam

From: Matthews, Pam
Sent: Wednesday, March 21, 2007 8:26 AM
To: Matthews, Pam
Subject: FW: Fwd: Tech Teachers Make Top Dollar

-----Original Message-----

From: Johannes, Sarah
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2007 4:00 PM
To: Rep.Jeskewitz
Subject: FW: Fwd: Tech Teachers Make Top Dollar

Rep. Jeskewitz:

Do you happen to have an address for Gail?

Thanks!

Sarah L. Johannes
Legislative Assistant
Representative Samantha Kerkman
66th Assembly District
103 West State Capitol
608-266-2530 or 888-534-0066
sarah.johannes@legis.wisconsin.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Kerkman, Samantha
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2007 3:52 PM
To: Johannes, Sarah
Subject: FW: Fwd: Tech Teachers Make Top Dollar

Can you ask Sue if she has an address for her?

-----Original Message-----

From: gailbailey@charter.net [mailto:gailbailey@charter.net]
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2007 8:42 AM
To: Kerkman, Samantha
Subject: Fwd: Fwd: Tech Teachers Make Top Dollar

> Date: Tue, 20 Mar 2007 4:46:35 -0800
> From: <gailbailey@charter.net>
> To: Sen.Sullivan@legis.wisconsin.gov
> Subject: Fwd: Tech Teachers Make Top Dollar
>

>> Date: Tue, 20 Mar 2007 4:42:08 -0800
>> From: <gailbailey@charter.net>
>> To: "Rep.jeskewitz@legis.wisconsin.gov"
>> <Rep.jeskewitz@legis.wisconsin.gov>
>> Subject: Tech Teachers Make Top Dollar
>>

>> Dear Rep. Jeskewitz:

>>

>> I am writing to you in response to the recent article in the newspapers about the salaries of Technical College Teachers. You voiced concern in the article about our salaries by saying "These are real concerns--this is the public's money."

>>
>> There is an old Indian proverb which states "Walk a mile in my moccasins before judging me." I believe this saying for its authenticity and also because I am part Indian.
>>
>> I began teaching at Madison Area Technical College in 1992 at the base wage of \$33,000. I must say that our full-time teacher's union has been instrumental in negotiating cost-of-living wages for us, and I am very thankful for that. Our wages are good, but our jobs, if done correctly, are highly technical and highly demanding.
>>
>> Governor Doyle and many legislators speak about the "brain drain" in Wisconsin, where our young fully educated students leave the state to find their fortunes elsewhere. It is an ongoing problem our state leaders try to address and solve, and I teach my students about this and ask their opinions on it on a regular basis. I believe if teacher salaries are lowered, Wisconsin will experience a "brain drain" like it has never seen before, and the exodus will include many of the best teachers of our state.
>>
>> Perhaps on paper my salary seems "big." However, my job as a teacher is not just a job. It is WHO I am. My work does not stay within a structured 40-hour work week paradigm. I am constantly amassing knowledge for my students. I provide scholarships for them out of my own funds because I believe in education with all my heart and soul. I write recommendation letters routinely so my students will perhaps be the applicant selected for the job. I receive calls at home from potential employers. I keep my eye out for professional wardrobe "sales" for my students who have NOTHING and who cannot afford to look nice for a job interview.
>>
>> My job is not a job in the regular sense. It is WHO I am, and my students are my very life. In fact, I can say without a doubt, it was my students who saved my very life when my 20-year old son passed away in 2002. I had to get out of bed for them; they needed me. Otherwise, surely I would have died myself. Teaching is a give and take career, but it is a lot of "giving" by the teacher herself/himself.
>>
>> Do we want to attract workers who teach our children in a half-baked way, or do we want professionals who have knowledge and practical work experience also?
>>
>> The article also states that "the audit did not say how many classes instructors teach at technical colleges." In 2003-2006, with the downturn in the economy, my classes were filled and then some. So many people came back to school to try to earn a living in another way. I prayed to God each night to give me the strength to meet the demands of the increased number of students because physically I did not know if I could do it. For three years, I worked like an overachiever on steroids so I could help these adult students have a future. My proudest moments in life are when my students call or write to me and say "Mrs. Bailey, I got the job!"
>>
>> I do not think I am overpaid. Even if I was overpaid, my career is not about the cash. It is about investing in people, investing in our future, investing in our children adults of our great state of Wisconsin.
>>
>> Since that article was on the front page of the newspaper on March 14, it was the first thing I read when I woke up for the day. I went to school feeling dejected, but it never lasts long because when I see the students, my eyes light up. My students are my life!
>>
>> I hope you will think hard about the ramifications of making the Wisconsin Technical College teachers defend their jobs and their salaries because most of us can and will move to the private sector or perhaps move to another state.
>>
>> Even though I am a Nebraskan at heart because I was raised there, Wisconsin is a special state for me, and I do not want to see even more "brain drain" because of bad press for the teachers of Wisconsin.
>>
>> Respectfully,
>>
>>
>> Gail Bailey
>> Business Education Teacher and Proud of It
>>





SUE JESKEWITZ

State Representative • 24th Assembly District

May 23, 2007

Rep. Jeff Wood
ADDRESS

Dear Jeff,

At the May 14 meeting of the Task Force, I announced that this would be our last meeting.

Now that the task force has concluded, I want to personally thank you for your participation in the Speaker's Task Force on the Wisconsin Technical College System. Since we began working together in 2003, we have covered a lot of territory in our exploration of the WTCS. I think we have all learned much and the relationships we've built will be invaluable when we address issues pertaining to the WTCS in each of our roles.

This group has had informative and enlightening discussions encompassing the entire educational picture in Wisconsin, from K-12 through higher education. I'm particularly proud that we were able accomplish many of our goals, including increasing better credit transfer from the WTCS to the UW System, and fostering a more active dialogue between our higher education systems in the state. Our work to address funding issues, growth, curriculum, duplication and other concerns of the technical colleges has been a constructive dialogue that forged a connection with the many facets of education and the workplace in our state.

While the Task Force has officially ended, I am always receptive to ideas to maintain accountability and efficiency, and I hope you will let me know any concerns you may have in the future. I thank you for your valuable input, your time and energy, your perceptiveness and your inquiring mind.

Best wishes always,

Suzanne Jeskewitz
State Representative
24th Assembly District