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To: The Senate Committee on Economic Development, Commerce, and Trade
From: Sen. Dan Feyen
Re: Senate Bill 15

Mr. Vice Chair, members of the committee, thank you for holding this hearing today.

Students who complete internships in a state are more likely to stay in the state after graduation than students who do not. This bill builds off of this fact by creating a grant program to support businesses who are creating a paid internship program for the first time by assisting with the legal, human resources, and staff training expenses of creating the internships. The company must plan to hire at least 3 paid interns in the 3 year period following receipt of the grant to be eligible for the funding. The bill includes \$1,000,000 in funding over the biennium.

The results of this grant will be reported out in WEDC's Annual Report on Economic Development which details the results of all of the economic development programs that they administer.

The UW System had 150,211 undergraduate students in the 2017-2018 school year. The Wisconsin Technical College System had 187,053 Liberal Arts Transfer, Applied Associate Degree, and Technical Diploma students enrolled in the 2016-2017 school year. WAICU-member colleges and universities currently enroll nearly 55,000 students. While there is no great data source for the number of internships that exist in Wisconsin, what data we can compile suggests there are nowhere near enough internship experiences for every student in Wisconsin to gain an internship experience in this state. For example, the UW System's data suggests only 56% of seniors had participated in an internship experience at some point in their educational career.

If we can increase the number of internship experiences available in Wisconsin, we can increase the number of students having an internship experience in the state and the retention rates of students upon graduation. Given Wisconsin's current workforce shortage, this bill seeks to provide a support mechanism for growing the number of internships in Wisconsin.

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



MIKE ROHRKASTE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 55TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

To: Senator Feyen and members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development,
Commerce and Trade

From: Representative Mike Rohrkaste, 55th Assembly District

Date: February 13, 2019

Re: 2019 Senate Bill 15

Thank you for holding a hearing on Senate Bill 15 to create new internship grants.

As of the time of this writing, there are 89,394 open jobs posted on the Job Center of Wisconsin website. We have had record-low unemployment for 10 consecutive months. Simply put, we do not have enough workers in our state to fill the jobs we have available.

Full employment means increased revenue for our state. Those driving to work pay the gas tax which funds our roads. Those paying income tax are responsible for the largest share of revenue to fill the state's general fund coffers. Those paying property tax offer the largest support for our schools and education. We need to attract and retain more workers.

This bill will support businesses that are considering beginning their first internship program by assisting with the legal, human resources, and staff training expenses of creating the internships. More interns means more retention means more workers growing Wisconsin's economy – and more importantly, finding a pathway towards a family-supporting career.

I appreciate your consideration of this legislation.

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VITERBO UNIVERSITY
WISCONSIN LUTHERAN COLLEGE

TESTIMONY

By

Dr. Rolf Wegenke, President

Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (WAICU)

on

Senate Bill 15

to

Senate Committee on Economic Development, Commerce and Trade

February 13, 2019

Chair Feyen and members of the Committee, my name is Rolf Wegenke. I am President of the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, or WAICU, the official organization recognized in state law as representing the 24 private, nonprofit colleges and universities in Wisconsin and their 56,000 students. Thank you for holding this hearing today and for your attention to the important issue of supporting internship programs and internship opportunities for Wisconsin students and for Wisconsin employers. I appear before you today to support this legislation and to share information on WAICU-member internship programs and career development initiatives.

I also want to thank you for the recognition in the "co-sponsorship memo" of WAICU-members and WAICU students and the great potential that exists for creating more internship opportunities in all post-secondary sectors.

There are over 30 different groups meeting under the WAICU umbrella. One such group is the Wisconsin Private College Career Consortium. This group represents the career services directors at each of the WAICU institutions working together to develop relationships with employers and bring the best internships and career opportunities to students. WAICU-members' career services offices work together to match potential employers with employees drawn from their student and alumni/ae base. One of their most prominent initiatives is the annual Workforce, Career and Internship Fair, which in 2018 drew nearly 1,000 students and alumni/ae and 185 employers and graduate schools. The 2019 fair will take place next week Tuesday, February 19 at the Wisconsin State Fair Park. WAICU career directors regularly meet together with employers to better understand how WAICU-member colleges and universities can better serve their workforce needs. The career services offices provide many other critical supports to students and alumni/ae including resume assistance and critique, networking and educational events and mock interviews for students. Some WAICU-members require internships for all students and others are offering multiple internship opportunities for students throughout their college careers. In short, WAICU

has the “infrastructure” already in place and is eager to support the State of Wisconsin’s goals for increased internships. The attachments describe the infrastructure WAICU has put together working with employers and students.

WAICU itself administers a nonprofit internship program. The program is supported through the generous donations of two Wisconsin foundations. For this program, interns complete 400 hours of service over 10 summer weeks and receive a \$2,000 stipend and \$3,000 scholarship. WAICU is invested in students’ academic, professional, and personal development. In the most recent year, the WAICU program placed 23 students and received 96 applicants.

In addition, WAICU has created a joint jobs and internship website called WAICU Career Connect, to link with the State’s own WisConnect website. WisConnect was mandated by the Legislature and is the official, state-sponsored site for college students looking for an internship in Wisconsin. The WisConnect website is for all college students in Wisconsin, and for Wisconsin businesses looking to promote or create internship programs.

WAICU strongly supports efforts to provide employers with grant opportunities to develop internship programs. The importance of a well-developed internship program cannot be overstated. According to the 2018 National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) survey, 59 percent of employers offered full-time positions to their interns, and 77 percent of students accepted those offers. That’s a clear indication that internships work, for interns and employers in these times of workforce shortages, internships are proven, substantive ways to make a difference – both for the student and for employers.

Senate Bill 15 provides that the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation and the University of Wisconsin System jointly administer a program to award grants to businesses to develop an internship program. Because of the elaborate and extensive networks, both WAICU and the Wisconsin Technical College System have with both students and employers, I would suggest that you add the words to section 238.137, line 12 after the word administer...” in consultation with the Wisconsin Technical College System and the Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.” It is neither practical or efficient to ask the University of Wisconsin System and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to recreate or duplicate these already established networks in the other two sectors. It is time to work together.

I would be happy to answer any questions.

WORKFORCE FAIR:

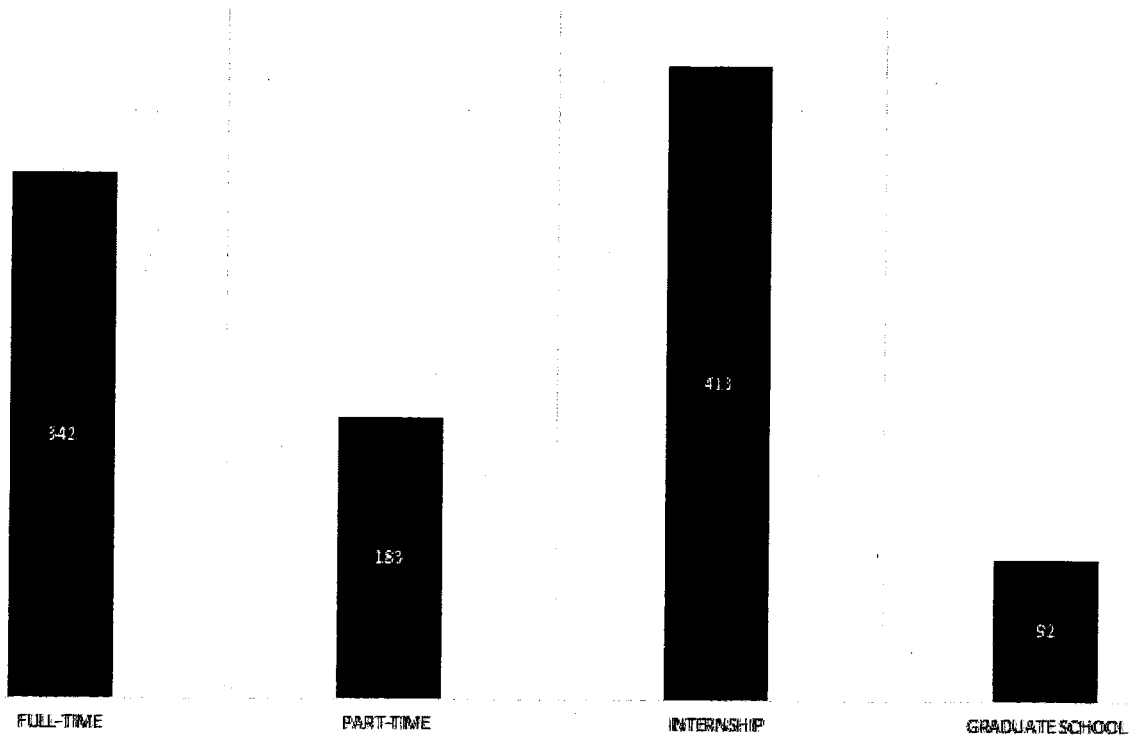
Jobs, Internships and Graduate Schools

2018 ATTENDEE SNAPSHOT

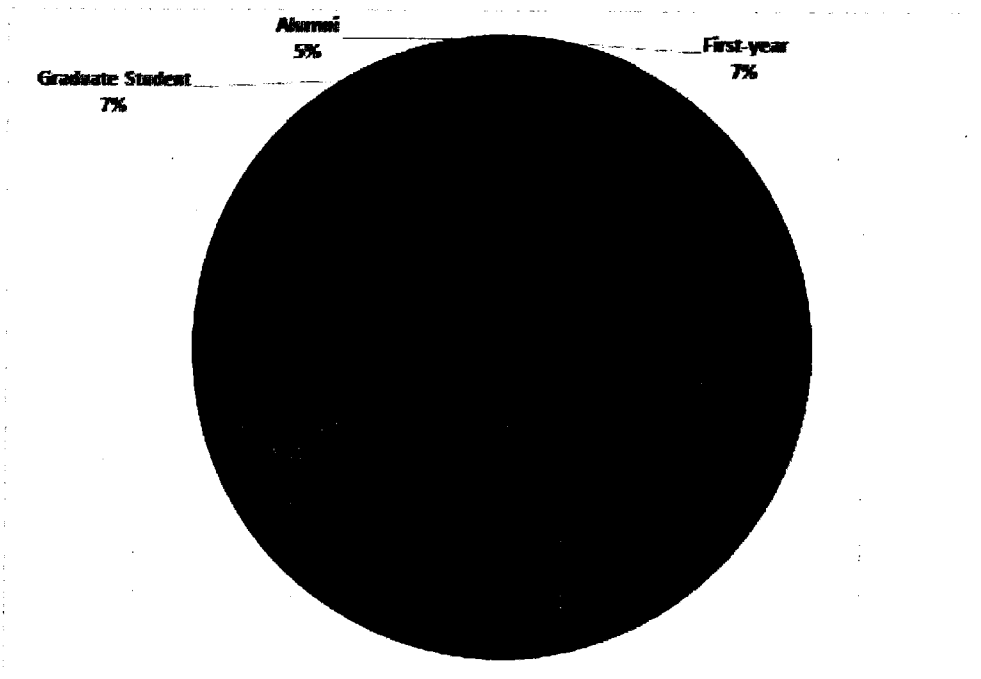


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