



October 22, 2024

Dear Chair Representative Nedweski, Vice Chair Senator Tomczyk and Study Committee Members:

The Greater Whitewater Committee has been attending meetings of the Wisconsin Legislative Council Study Committee on the Future of the Universities of Wisconsin System, with particular interest on the funding distribution model that allocates General Purpose Revenue dollars (GPR) back to all the Campuses. We have been aware of inequities in the funding approach for years and shared our concerns with President Rothman and Regent President Walsh many times. We also advocated for an Assembly bill in the 2022-23 legislative session. Presentations shared by Professor Compas and Provost Morgan on September 26, 2024, at the study committee meeting were alarming and demonstrate why action must be taken to change the formula.

As a group representing businesses from the Whitewater area, we have advocated for a review and change to the GPR formula for some time. Lack of transparency of the funding formula makes it difficult to understand how significant the inequities are. As most students enrolled in all the comprehensive campuses come from areas near the respective campuses, we feel the current GPR formula hurts students and their parents who work and pay taxes in the Whitewater area.

In FY 2024, UW-Whitewater received approximately *half the system average* distribution which translates into \$26 million shortfall. As a result, over the past 10 years, relative to the average GPR distribution per student, UW-Whitewater received \$238 million less than they should have been allocated. This leaves fewer resources to recruit and retain quality faculty, develop innovative programs, provide competitive scholarships, and properly market all that UW-Whitewater has to offer.

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UW-Whitewater (UWW) has repeatedly demonstrated that it responsibly uses the limited state resources it is allocated. Despite the headwinds they face from the UW System funding model, UWW is growing, this year having its largest enrollment in 4 years, and continues to offer exceptional value to its students and to the state.

- According to the Wall Street Journal's 2025 Best Colleges in the US, UWW is the best public regional comprehensive college in Wisconsin and is the overall best college for student experience in the state.
- In this time of teacher shortages, UW-Whitewater licenses the most teachers in the state of Wisconsin, serving a critical need in the state and region for K-12 educators. Our Special Education Department received the 2024 University of Wisconsin Board of Regents Teaching Excellence Award for demonstrating exceptional commitment to and effectiveness in teaching.
- UWW has the largest business college in the state. U.S. News and World Report calls our online MBA the best single college program in Wisconsin, and Whitewater is the home of one of the few prestigious AACSB accredited Doctor of Business Administration programs in the nation. In fact, UWW is in the top 2% of the world's business colleges.
- UWW offers more than 175 majors and minors, including a new collaborative degree program in partnership between UWW's Rock Campus and Edgewood College offering a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.
- Whitewater has a mission to serve students with disabilities, serving 1,300 students. In wheelchair basketball, the men's and women's programs have seventeen intercollegiate national championships, and twelve current or former student athletes participated in the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, including nine who earned gold or silver medals.
- UWW is consistently recognized for its exceptional support of military and veteran students. For the eighth consecutive year, UWW was named one of the top "Colleges of Distinction," a national honor that recognizes campuses for exceptional teaching and dedication to military and veteran student success.
- UWW is the best value in the Universities of Wisconsin, as our combined tuition, room, and board is less expensive than other UW System schools. It has the largest textbook rental program in the state, saving students upwards of \$2,000.
- All (99%) of UWW graduates are employed full-time or enrolled in graduate school within a year of graduation.
- UWW leads the UW System with 79% of our alumni continue to call Wisconsin home 10 years post-graduation, meaning an investment in Whitewater students is a direct investment in Wisconsin's future.



We are requesting that the Study Committee recommend an end to the current GPR allocation method and request that the Board of Regents establish a fair and transparent GPR distribution formula, with a goal of reaching a much more equitable distribution of GPR per student within 5-10 years. Additionally, we request that the study committee recommend the establishment of a 3–5-year mandatory review and update of a new transparent GPR formula.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jeffery Knight'.

Jeffery Knight

President and CEO

Greater Whitewater Committee