

Walker Wants \$300 Million Cut Out of UW System

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Governor Scott Walker proposes drastic cuts in state funding for The University of Wisconsin System in return for "more independence" to allow the university to raise tuition as much as it wants starting in 2017. Students and parents left holding the bag.

MADISON - The University of Wisconsin System will have its state funding slashed by \$300 Million or about 13 percent over the next two years, under the budget Gov. Scott Walker will submit to the Legislature next week, the governor told The Associated Press on Monday.

Walker released details of his budget plan as it affects the UW System to the AP ahead of a public announcement on Tuesday.

UW had asked for an increase in funding of \$95 million over the next two years — money that it argued was needed given that Walker was calling for another two-year tuition freeze. Walker is going forward with the tuition freeze, but is calling for the additional \$300 million cut as well.

All the cuts and freezes would be balanced by "more independence" for the UW according to Walker. Walker is proposing turning the 13 four-year campuses and 13 two-year colleges that comprise the UW System into a public authority, a structure that would cut the university loose from a wide array of issues that are currently mandated by state law. More advantageous to the UW, the Legislature would have no ability to stop the university from raising tuition as much as it wants starting in 2017.

UW President Ray Cross said he supported the structural changes, but he would work to reduce the budget cut.



Reaction to the Governor's proposals from Democratic legislators was swift.

Assembly Democratic Leader **Peter Barca (D-Kenosha)** released a statement today rejecting Governor Walker's plan to slash the additional \$300 million in state funding from the University of Wisconsin System. According to Barca, budgets "are about priorities and once again dramatically slashing higher education in the 21st Century global economy will drastically take Wisconsin in the wrong direction".



In a statement also released today, Sen. **Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay)** said:

"This is unfortunate news for students, their parents and anyone who cares about keeping higher education affordable for all Wisconsin families. Students who are going to be attending a UW campus and their parents should hold onto their wallets. Starting in 2017 under the Governor's proposal, UW campuses will be allowed to raise tuition as much as they want. Many students will find themselves priced out of attending a UW campus or being forced to take on even more student loans to pay their tuition."

"The UW System is one of the best publicly owned systems in the nation. It is a driver of our economy and new business creation all across our state. Thanks to the Governor and Republicans handing out tax breaks to corporations and special interests like candy we have a \$2.2 billion deficit and talk of cutting another \$300 million from our UW campuses. Instead of talking about the Governor's plan to abandon our universities we could and should be talking about how we can invest in them", Hansen said.

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