

Walker Announces Zero-Growth UW System Budget Proposal

Written by Wisconsin Assembly Democrats

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MADISON – In a letter sent on July 25th, Governor Scott Walker told most state agencies they will receive no new funding in the next budget, and that the University of Wisconsin System schools will have their tuition frozen. A tuition freeze and a zero-growth budget, combined with inflation, means the UW System will face, essentially, another budget cut.



“It’s inconceivable that Governor Walker and the Republicans in the Legislature inherited one of the best university systems in the world and have done nothing but attack it,” said Rep. **Dana Wachs**

(D-Eau Claire), the ranking Democratic member on the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities. “Other states, and private industry, understand the importance of higher education for job growth. For example, General Electric is moving their headquarters from a Connecticut suburb to Boston. Their CEO said that spending on R&D at Boston’s 55 colleges and universities has spun off thousands of businesses and a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem which will benefit their power and clean energy, health technology and aeronautics divisions.”

“Wisconsin has strengths in these very same industries,” added Wachs. “GE sees vast business and workforce development opportunities because of Boston’s colleges and universities. In contrast, Governor Walker and Republicans in the Legislature look at the UW System and see an enemy to be attacked. Only eight states invest less in their higher education system than Wisconsin. Even Governor Mike Pence’s state of Indiana invests more than 21 other states. How many potential GE’s have the Republicans scared away from investing in our state?”

Since Republicans took control of state government, the UW System has lost \$795 million in state funding. This has led to larger class sizes, fewer class offerings, and the loss of excellent faculty and staff to termination, early retirement, and employment opportunities in other states.

In addition to these drastic cuts, Republicans have continuously rejected proposals introduced by Democrats that would create refinancing programs to ensure that students can attend UW System schools without accumulating massive debt. Wachs also stressed that while freezing tuition may be helpful in the short-term for students, without providing additional support for UW

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System schools Republicans have created an unsustainable higher education system in Wisconsin.

Our colleges and universities have an economic impact of billions of dollars everywhere in the state. Supporting them will lead to the development of incredibly exciting and innovative technologies. It will also develop the students who will eventually take those technologies and create businesses and jobs in every region of Wisconsin.

"If the Governor and legislative Republicans do not invest in the UW System, Wisconsin's long-term economic prospects will look less like Boston and more like Mississippi," says Wachs.