



Representing UW-Madison Faculty.  
Strengthening Wisconsin.

## Legislative Update

PROFS, the Public Representation Organization of the Faculty Senate, is a non-profit organization representing UW-Madison faculty. PROFS monitors legislation and lobbies the governor, members of the legislature, and members of Congress. PROFS has a long history of effectiveness over the past 40 years, including leading the fight to ensure retirement contributions are taken pre-tax, saving the average faculty member about \$1,800 per year and successfully lobbying for the new Chemistry Building project.

PROFS is currently working on the following:

### **Mark Cook Bills, legislation that would streamline Regent-approval process for businesses in which faculty have a financial interest**

Assembly Bill 38 and Senate Bill 42, bipartisan legislation named in honor of the late UW-Madison Animal Science professor Mark Cook, have begun to move through the legislative process. Both bills have had public hearings and AB 38 has passed the Assembly. The Senate Committee on Universities, Technical Colleges, Children and Families will vote on SB 42 on Tuesday, August 27.

These companion bills are a top legislative priority for PROFS and are the result of the work of PROFS' Entrepreneurial Work Group, which was led by Cook. If passed, this legislation will expedite and strengthen the process for Board of Regent approval of projects that involve companies or non-profit organizations in which faculty or staff have a financial interest. Last session, the legislation was approved unanimously in committee and by voice vote in the Assembly, but never received a floor vote in the Senate before the end of the legislative session.

### **Higher Education Affordability Forum**

PROFS will host a campus forum on affordability in higher education on Thursday, October 24. William and Mary Economics Professor David Feldman and UW-Madison Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration Laurent Heller will participate on the panel. Complete panel information and additional details will be available soon.

### **2019-21 Biennial Budget**

The focus of PROFS' efforts every two years is the state budget process. In Wisconsin, the governor introduces a state budget in odd-numbered years. The Legislature's powerful Joint Finance Committee, a 16-member committee represented equally by members of the Senate and Assembly, does much of the work on the budget. The majority party holds 6 of the 8 seats in each house. The budget process usually concludes in early summer when the governor signs the bill into law. The governor's line-item veto powers allow for fairly substantial changes to be made to the bill passed by the legislature.

Governor Tony Evers signed the 2019-21 state budget into law in July. While the Republican-crafted budget provided for much-needed support for capital projects, including the Veterinary Medicine, Natatorium, Sellery Hall, Kohl Center and Camp Randall and Fieldhouse projects, the budget fell far short of the funding originally proposed by Evers for operational costs. The final budget also included two 2-percent raises for faculty and staff, less than the 3 percent raises recommended by the UW System Board of Regents. The raises go into effect January 1, 2020 and January 1, 2021.

### **Join PROFS!**

PROFS is funded entirely by voluntary monthly contributions and needs the support of all faculty to be most successful. Please consider joining PROFS today. Membership information is on the PROFS website: [profs.wisc.edu](http://profs.wisc.edu).

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