

**REPORT ON UW-MADISON'S  
NONRESIDENT ENROLLMENT LIMIT WAIVER  
AND REVISIONS TO RPD 7-3, "UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM  
FRESHMAN ADMISSIONS POLICY"**

**REQUESTED ACTION**

Adoption of Resolution C., modifying RPD 7-3 and the nonresident enrollment limit as it applies to UW-Madison.

**Resolution C.:** That, upon the recommendation of the Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the President of the University of Wisconsin System, UW-Madison must enroll a minimum of 5,200 new in-state undergraduate students each calendar year, based on a three-year rolling average. For purposes of this Resolution, in-state students are defined as Wisconsin residents and Minnesota reciprocity students, consistent with Legislative Fiscal Bureau usage (Informational Paper 83, January 2019). The Board of Regents expects UW-Madison to continue to honor its commitment to enroll 3,600 Wisconsin freshmen within this broader policy but recognizes UW-Madison's commitment to in-state students is best measured by more than just incoming freshmen and should include reciprocity and transfer students alike. The nonresident enrollment limit (Regent Policy Document 7-3, section III) as it applies to UW-Madison is repealed.

**SUMMARY**

In December 2015, the Board of Regents established a temporary enrollment policy for UW-Madison, lifting the non-resident enrollment cap of 27.5% included in RPD 7-3, and requiring the university to enroll a minimum of 3,600 Wisconsin students in its fall freshman class each year. The Board also asked UW-Madison to provide a report describing admission and enrollment activity and other outcomes resulting from the waiver, in December 2019.

As part of her enrollment report to the Board of Regents, UW-Madison Chancellor Rebecca Blank will also request that the Board repeal the nonresident enrollment limit as it applies to UW-Madison.

**Presenter**

- Rebecca Blank, Chancellor, UW-Madison

**Related Policies**

- Regent Policy Document 7-3: University of Wisconsin System Freshman Admissions Policy

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A) Memo to the Board of Regents from Chancellor Rebecca Blank, dated November 26, 2019
- B) Proposed changes to Regent Policy Document 7-3, University of Wisconsin System Freshman Admissions Policy



November 26, 2019

TO: Members, UW Board of Regents  
FROM: Rebecca Blank, Chancellor, UW-Madison *RB*  
RE: Renewal of enrollment policy for UW-Madison

#### BACKGROUND

In December 2015 the Board of Regents established a new enrollment policy for UW-Madison, putting this new policy in place for four years. Hence, we are returning in December 2019 to review that policy and to request that the existing policy be reaffirmed in a somewhat revised version and put in place without an expiration date. This will facilitate our long-term enrollment planning at UW-Madison. Of course, the Board has the right to return to this policy and discuss modifications at any time in the future.

Prior to December 2015, the Board required that no more than 27.5% of the undergraduate student body be out-of-state students. Note that under the Minnesota-Wisconsin reciprocity agreement, MN Compact students are treated as in-state students for admission purposes and thus were not included in the 27.5%. For monitoring purposes, the 27.5% line was compared to a three-year rolling average of enrollments among all undergraduate students.

In December 2015, the Board lifted the cap for UW-Madison and instead required that the campus enroll a minimum of 3600 Wisconsin students in its fall freshman class each year. This recognized the demographic shifts in the state that were reducing the number of high school graduates over time. A 3600 minimum was a strong standard, higher than the average number of high school graduates we enrolled over the previous 10 years and required UW-Madison to enroll a growing share of WI high school graduates over a time period when the population of those graduates is flat or declining.

Note, however, that this new policy was quite different along several dimensions. It focused only on new freshmen students, ignoring our substantial number of new enrollees who transfer into UW-Madison, most of them WI students. It also ignores students who start in the spring rather than the fall. And it dismisses our MN Compact students, even though they are treated as in-state for admissions purposes and the reciprocity agreement impacts our Wisconsin enrollments. (That is, in the absence of reciprocity we would have more WI students and fewer MN students. Hence some number of MN students come to Madison and essentially replace WI students who go to MN due to reciprocity.)

Chancellor Rebecca M. Blank  
Morgridge Friends Distinguished Chair of Leadership

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With this new policy, UW-Madison was able to take advantage of its very deep and growing pool of out-of-state applicants. Our out-of-state applications have doubled over the past 10 years at the same time as the quality of the average applicant has risen. Since fall 2015, we have increased our out-of-state enrollments by an average of 250 per year. In fall 2015 we had 2042 non-resident (non-WI/non-MN) incoming freshman. In fall 2019, we had 3079 non-resident freshmen. If we were to look at the pre-December 2015 calculation of our out-of-state enrollments relative to the 27.5% cap, in 2015 that calculation showed us with 27.1% out-of-state students among all of our undergraduates. In 2019, using the same calculation, we were at 32.9%.

Meanwhile, our admission of Wisconsin freshman has stayed strong. We have enrolled between 3617 (Fall 2015) and 3797 (fall 2019) WI freshmen in each of the past five years. As a result, the share of WI high school graduates coming to UW-Madison the fall after they graduate has increased steadily. In 2010, it was 4.9%; in 2019, we are at an estimated 5.8%. In short, our commitment to Wisconsin has grown stronger over the past decade. We are admitting about two-thirds of all Wisconsin applicants in recent years. This is well above the percent of out-of-state applicants who are admitted.

At the same time, we have also provided stronger outreach and access to Wisconsin students.

- When the policy changed, we were encouraged to work harder at UW-Madison to enroll high-ability WI students who applied to a national set of schools, rather than having them leave the state for college. In response we launched the Wisconsin PRIME program, a high-touch recruiting program aimed at high test-score WI students. In fall 2015, we had 883 WI students with an ACT score of 31 or higher (the top 10% of ACT test-takers). By fall 2019, we had increased this number by almost 30% to 1142 WI students. In part because of this program, the average quality of our Wisconsin freshmen students has increased along with the average quality of our out-of-state students.
- Using some of the additional funds raised by increased out-of-state admissions, we have created both Bucky's Tuition Promise (which assures that all WI students from families below \$60,000 income will have their tuition and fees covered for four years at UW-Madison) and Badger Promise (which assures that all WI transfer students from first-generation families will have two years of tuition and fees covered at UW-Madison.) These programs substantially expanded our support for lower-income WI students. In Fall 2019, around 20% of our incoming WI students were attending UW-Madison on one of these programs.

Finally, not only are we recruiting and providing financial support to WI students, but we also have an exceptionally high graduation rate. Bringing students to UW-Madison is only good if they are successful here. Our six-year graduation rate is among the top 10 public schools in the country. Our time to graduation fell below 4 years for the first time ever this past year, which reduces student debt. 54% of our graduating seniors left UW-Madison with zero debt this past year.

In short, the commitment to WI students at UW-Madison is stronger than it has ever been. But it's important to note that our increase in out-of-state student enrollment is good for the state as well. It's good because it helps us fund high-quality programs for all students at UW-Madison, as well as scholarship aid for WI students.

But it is also good because it brings high-ability young people into the state of Wisconsin. We brought about 3000 out-of-state students into UW-Madison in Fall 2019. These are great students who will spend at least four years in the state. We work with local and regional businesses to provide recruitment opportunities for internships and full time employment after graduation. At present 21% of our out-of-state students are in WI a year after graduation. This is quite a high share, particularly given this is not a state with a top-10 metropolitan area or with as many Fortune 500 companies as many other states. As Wisconsin faces major shortages of skilled workers, UW-Madison brings more young talent into the state than any other entity.

#### PROPOSED POLICY

The Board resolution proposes a slightly revised enrollment policy for UW-Madison moving forward. We would like the Board to enact this proposal without an expiration date. Of course, the Board has the right to revisit it at any time, but we need a stable planning horizon.

The 3600 target we have been operating under is challenging for several reasons. Our share of WI high school graduates has increased at UW-Madison and our applications from WI students have been flat. (In fact, we've worked hard to make sure our applications were flat, at a time when many schools have seen declines.) Furthermore, other schools in the System have faced serious enrollment pressures in recent years. As Madison takes a greater share of WI high school graduates, pressures on the other campuses in the System only increase. While we will continue to meet this number for incoming freshmen in the fall, it would be difficult to increase it.

Even more important, the 3600 figure alone is not a good indicator of our commitment to in-state students. It does not include any transfer students, and it does not include students who start in the spring rather than the fall semester. If the Board wants to assess and assure a commitment to WI students, it should look at all of our incoming WI students. Furthermore, it would be helpful to recognize that MN Compact students are treated as in-state students for admission purposes and were considered in-state students under the prior policy (and we collect in-state tuition from them). As noted above, we have fewer WI students and more MN students at UW-Madison because of reciprocity.

Finally, using a minimum number that is a hard line rather than a multi-year rolling average creates ongoing challenges. We have aimed well above the 3600 figure each year because it is an absolute number we cannot fall below and there is always random variation in the number of students who accept our offer of admission but then don't show up in September.

As a result, we propose the following policy, as the resolution indicates:

*The Board would require that UW-Madison enroll at least 5200 new in-state students into an undergraduate degree program in each calendar year. This includes freshmen and transfer students and counts both MN Compact and WI students as in-state, as did the earlier policy. This 5200 will be based on a three-year rolling average. Furthermore, the Board expects that UW-Madison will continue its commitment to enroll 3,600 Wisconsin freshmen as part of this 5200 but recognizes that the commitment to WI students is best measured by more than just incoming freshmen and should include reciprocity and transfer students alike.*

The data below show where our admissions have been in recent years. In general, we have had 600-700 MN compact students in each class and have averaged around 700-800 WI transfers. As the data below indicate, we have been slightly above 5200 in each year. Transfers are continuing to decline, however, as the number of students in two-year Wisconsin schools is plummeting. Furthermore, we enrolled a larger-than-expected freshman class this past year (due to higher-than-expected acceptance rates) and need to reduce our freshman class size this coming year. This leads us to ask for a 5200 minimum moving forward.

**Enrollment data at UW-Madison**

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>
Required minimum WI Freshmen enrolled in fall semester	3600	3600	3600	3600
New WI freshmen enrolled at some point during the year	3695	3760	3764	3817
New MN freshmen enrolled at some point during the year	638	598	701	683
New WI transfers enrolled at some point during the year	875	860	840	727
New MN transfers enrolled at some point during the year	47	51	65	66
Total	5255	5269	5280	5293

**Proposed changes to Regent Policy Document 7-3  
University of Wisconsin System Freshman Admissions Policy**

That, upon recommendation of the President of the University of Wisconsin System, the Board of Regents adopts the attached UW System Freshman Admissions Policy as amended, replacing and hereby superseding Regent Policies 72-5 on Nonresident Undergraduate Quotas, 72-11 on the Freshman Admissions Policy, 86-5 on the Use of the American College Test, 87-8 on Traditional and Nontraditional Freshman Admissions Policy, and 97-4 on Competency Based Admissions.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM FRESHMAN ADMISSIONS POLICY  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM FRESHMAN ADMISSIONS POLICY

The University of Wisconsin System has long recognized that higher education serves as a crucial pathway for advancing individual self-knowledge and knowledge of the world, fostering new knowledge and ideas, preparing individuals for future leadership positions, and for promoting the economic vitality of the entire state. To provide the highest quality educational opportunity for all students in a diverse learning environment, this policy allows each institution to admit students whose academic preparation, background and personal experience suggest that the student will succeed at the institution, benefit from that educational experience, and contribute to the educational environment.

This policy provides minimum requirements for freshman admissions, and broad criteria for evaluating qualified applicants through a comprehensive, individualized review process. In the implementation of this policy, individual UW institutions may establish more specific requirements, consistent with the principles and requirements of this systemwide policy.

I. Admissions Requirements

Freshman applicants, both resident and non-resident, must satisfy the following minimum requirements to be eligible for consideration for admission:

- A. Graduation from a recognized high school or the equivalent.
  - 1. A recognized high school is one which either (a) is accredited by a regional accrediting association or state university or (b) is recognized or accredited by a state department of public instruction or its equivalent.

2. An applicant who has not graduated from a recognized high school must provide evidence of satisfactory completion of the requirements for a high school equivalency certificate or a diploma from a recognized high school, school system, or state department of public instruction based on the GED examination, the Wisconsin High School Equivalency Examination, or other established criteria. Applicants from alternative educational backgrounds, including home-schooled students, should contact the Admissions Office at the campus of interest for admissions information. Additional documents, testing, and a personal interview may be required.
- B. Completion of the UW application for admission and submission to the institution(s) by the required deadline.
  - C. Submission of ACT or SAT scores to the institution.
  - D. Satisfaction of academic unit requirements. Students must satisfy either (1) or (2).
    1. For students graduating from high school in spring, 1995 and thereafter, a minimum of 17 high school units is required. (One unit equals one year of high school study or the equivalent.) Thirteen of the 17 units must be distributed as follows:

English	4 units
Social Science	3 units
Mathematics	3 units
Natural Science	3 units
The remaining four units will be:  From the above areas, foreign language, fine arts, computer science, and other academic area	4 units
TOTAL	17 units

Each institution may specify additional unit requirements for the remaining four units and may specify required content for all 17 units. Students graduating from high school prior to spring, 1995, should consult with the Admissions Office at the UW institution(s) for the appropriate academic unit requirements.

2. In recognition of curricular initiatives occurring in many high schools that depart from a traditional Carnegie unit structure, the UW System Board of Regents has approved an alternative method by which an applicant may demonstrate that he



or she has satisfied the academic unit requirement. This is referred to as Competency-Based Admission.

High school officials may elect to prepare a UW System Competency-Based Admission profile in addition to, or in lieu of, the traditional high-school transcript for those students whose high school curriculum is not well described by the traditional Carnegie unit structure. The combination of the student's credentials must indicate evidence of preparation in English, social sciences, mathematics, and natural science at a level comparable to that assumed by the traditional academic unit requirements. The admission requirements at each institution for students who apply using Competency-Based Admission will be equivalent to the admission requirements for students who apply under the Carnegie unit system.

- E. An institution has the discretion to waive one or more of the minimum requirements for particular applicants where appropriate, based on the sound educational judgment that the student will succeed at the institution, benefit from that educational experience, and contribute to the educational environment.

## II. Admissions Criteria

Freshman applicants must demonstrate that they are prepared to do satisfactory academic work at the institution to which they are applying, and that, as members of the campus community, they will benefit from and enrich the educational environment and enhance the quality of the institution. In making this determination, applicants will be given a comprehensive review based upon the following criteria:

### A. ACADEMICS.

Academic factors are the most important consideration in making admissions decisions. Factors that will be considered include, but are not limited to, the quality and rigor of the applicant's college-preparatory coursework, grade point average, class rank and trend in grades.

### B. STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES.

ACT or SAT scores are used to provide additional academic information about the quality of the applicant's qualifications, but cannot be the sole criteria for admission. An institution may require additional test scores of some or all applicants as supplemental information.

### C. OTHER FACTORS.

Other considerations include, but are not limited to, student experiences, work experience, leadership qualities, motivation, community service, special talents, status as a non-traditional or returning adult, status as a veteran of the U.S. military, whether the applicant is socio-economically disadvantaged, and whether the applicant is a member of an historically underrepresented racial or ethnic group.

### III. Non-resident Enrollment

Based on a three-year average, the non-resident undergraduate enrollment shall not exceed 27.5% of the total undergraduate enrollment at any UW institution. This limitation does not include Minnesota reciprocity students. ~~This non-resident undergraduate enrollment limit does not apply to UW-Madison. Enrollments at UW-Madison will be reviewed annually to ensure that UW-Madison has operationalized the enrollment management plan that meets the goals of increasing the number of new Wisconsin freshmen admitted and enrolled relative to the 2009-2012 averages.~~

~~UW-Madison must enroll a minimum of 5,200 new in-state undergraduate students each calendar year, based on a three-year rolling average. The Board of Regents expects UW-Madison to continue to honor its commitment to enroll 3,600 Wisconsin freshmen within this broader policy but recognizes UW-Madison's commitment to in-state students is best measured by more than just incoming freshmen and should include reciprocity and transfer students alike.~~

### IV. Admissions Appeals

Applicants who are not accepted for admission may appeal for special consideration through a process defined by the institution.

### V. Admissions Policy Review

The Board of Regents shall review this policy every five years.

History: Res. 9290 adopted 2/9/07, created Regent Policy Document 07-1; subsequently renumbered 7-3. Res. 10142, adopted 12/07/2012, amended Regent Policy Document 7-3.