

Why the New Badger Partnership as a Public Authority Is a Good Thing

We in the University of Wisconsin-Madison stand now before the opportunity of a lifetime. (For me, quite literally so, since I had been on this campus only a few years when merger was initiated on Oct. 11, 1971, and had been a member of the Chancellor's staff only 10 months.) We also have the opportunity before us to develop policies and procedures for the management of universities which may well later importantly serve the needs of our sister institutions—just as the historical legacy of scholarship and research at the UW-Madison was felt to do by other institutions taking on the University of Wisconsin name at the time of merger.

With the New Badger Partnership we will **gain the opportunity**

- to develop and manage our own salary scales and appointment systems
- to adjust tuition wisely, in ways that relate to our Big Ten peer-group. (Such wisdom has not been guaranteed by the present system, for a previous Doyle budget raised tuition for students at Madison 19% one year and 20% the next.)
- to manage our own construction projects built with non-state funds (and to keep the 4% the State has charged us for that supervision.
- to keep all our non-state funds as our own funds, free from state confiscation to balance budget deficits elsewhere—as happened to \$10.8 million in program revenue funds over the 2009-11 biennium. (\$2.2 million of that came in “one-time” lapses in program revenue funds, generally taken from dollars saved for new projects or maintenance; such prudent fiscal management was wiped out by the assessment. Of course, these units were also included in the “savings” from salary reduction and mandatory furloughs, maintained over two years—for a total of \$10.8 million. Some of this money came from fees or funds paid largely by students—such as \$1,195,171 from the Union, or \$2,084,098 from Housing, or \$384,241 from Rec Sports—and \$707,479 came from Transportation Services, whose revenues depend largely on the parking charges staff pay.)
- to shift most state funds we receive among budget categories, so that we may apply a cost savings in one place to a need in another—a practice now practically impossible because of line-item appropriations instead of the block-grant the new

law envisions. (That block grant will include costs-to-continue in the second year for utilities and health insurance premiums.)

- to short-cut the layers of regulation from both System and State agencies in some kinds of actions, such as purchase of supplies unique to educational institutions, and to join with peer Big Ten Institutions to achieve particularly favorable terms of purchase.)

At the same time, we will keep, in a new Chapter 37

- **our status as a public institution** serving Wisconsin

- **all the provisions governing academic freedom and tenure and faculty governance** previously specified in Chapter 36. New Chapter 37 also stipulates the continuing applicability of Faculty Policies and Procedures and the Academic Staff Policies and Procedures

- **all the existing co-operative agreements** with other System institutions if we and they wish to do so. These agreements range from integration of some programs (e.g. nursing), to transfer provisions, to agricultural extension activities.

- **our participation in all state retirement, health benefits, sick leave conversion programs**, plus state legal representation and insurance indemnity if desired.

I understand that some fear that these new initiatives will lead to budget fights among institutions and to duplication of activities. Let me take the last first. This is an extraordinarily large and complex institution, with some of the management requirements of a small city. We must be staffed to manage these activities, and in fact Federal agencies like NSF or NIMH hold *us* responsible for that accountable management. But System and State agency oversight led to their also staffing to manage or oversee such activities—and duplication became frequent and perhaps unavoidable. There will be many kinds of duplication that can be eliminated with these changes.

And now to the issue of competition for scarce resources.

Merger came about in part to satisfy a demand for equal or approximately equal support for UW-Madison and other state four-year colleges. Undoubtedly

some of these currents will continue, but some things are different from the moment that occasioned merger. A UW-System was first formed in 1956 when the Wisconsin State College-Milwaukee and UW Extension Milwaukee merged to form the UW-Milwaukee. In 1968 then President Fred Harvey Harrington formed two other state schools—UW-Green Bay, and UW Parkside, and this expansion triggered the charges of unfair treatment that led to merger. The other state schools objected that Green Bay and Parkside were four year regional colleges like they were, but were benefiting from more generous funding for the University of Wisconsin. Merger occurred only 3 years later—on October 11, 1971 (Chapter 100, Laws of 1971).

This situation does not exist now, and it is unlikely to recur. Green Bay and Parkside are part of the UW System and will not have a special relationship to Madison different from other campuses. We do not need to become competitors in a zero-sum game. System institutions will keep the name University of Wisconsin. We will continue to welcome transfers from those schools and to collaborate with their staff. We can blaze the trail on management practices which can be adapted and administered for System institutions as it wishes by the current UW System administration, whenever it can agree with the Governor on the nature of that plan.

At the time of merger, the University of California System was widely touted as a model. It was not an appropriate model. The University of California System united universities with graduate faculties and a research mission, and the State Colleges in California were placed in a separate State College System. Here the flagship research university and the four year state colleges were placed in the same system. The regional four year schools here were generally founded as teacher colleges or technical training schools. Few had a graduate program, or had a graduate program confined to an MA or MS in Education. At the time of merger many had substantial numbers of faculty without terminal research degrees. Thus, unlike the University of California System, the UW System combined widely disparate institutions which needed widely varying levels of state support.

Widely disparate institutions do require disparate models of support. But the System president's situation makes it hard for him to advocate that one institution be treated differently in any significant manner—even if it is the sole major research institution in the state. The Board of Regents is appointed from different

geographical areas of the state in a way that sometimes results in regional affiliations, with individuals feeling responsible for representing the interests of one or two particular campuses, at least part of the time. And the result of these circumstances has sometimes made it difficult for the flagship campus to flourish as it should. Indeed, although our salaries have almost always been in the lower half of the scale for peer institutions, since merger, we have slipped appreciably in comparison to our peers.

We have not had a choice about whether or not we shall take a large cut in the upcoming budget. With the assistance of the new structure, we hope that the UW-Madison will be able to manage scarce resources in a way that enables it to regain its forward momentum and to continue to play the critical role that it must in educating the young people of Wisconsin and generating the research that is the key to new opportunities—in health, in employment, in well-being for all citizens, for tomorrow.

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