



Stephen L. Nass
Wisconsin State Representative

TO: Special Task Force on UW Restructuring and Operational Flexibilities

FROM: Representative Steve Nass
Chairman - Assembly Colleges and Universities Committee

DATE: June 4, 2012

RE: Tuition

I apologize for being unable to attend the next meeting of the special task force on June 6, 2012. I will be traveling to the meeting of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) Executive Committee in South Dakota.

According to the agenda, the special task force will be discussing tuition authority for the UW System. The Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB) has prepared a discussion paper on this subject containing several questions for consideration. I wanted to share some brief thoughts on this discussion.

First, I want to share with the special task force my intention to have the current law 5.5% tuition cap extended for two more academic years (2013-2014 and 2014-2015). My effort will also call for continuing the current law language prohibiting the enactment of new differential tuition plans in the UW System for two more academic years.

Second, I believe the Legislature must have a role in approving tuition levels as part of the biennial budget process or stand alone legislation. A system can be developed that provides flexibility to a point for the Board of Regents, but allows the Legislature to act as a balance in the interests of affordability for middle class families. Such a system would have a maximum level of tuition increase requiring only the Board of Regents approval. However, an increase above the designated maximum level would trigger the need for legislative authorization.

Third, I oppose the continued use of broad stream differential tuition plans that are nothing more than a surcharge on all students or in essence a backdoor general tuition increase at individual campuses. There can be reasonable use of differential tuition plans to pay for specific program costs.

Finally, I strongly oppose the use of tuition revenues to fund need-based financial aid in the UW System. These plans would require continued and significant increases in tuition to provide additional assistance to low-income students. The tuition increases would have a devastating impact on middle-income students.

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