

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN FRESHMAN ADMISSIONS POLICY
SECTION III – NON-RESIDENT ENROLLMENT REVISION**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The University of Wisconsin System Freshman Admissions Policy (RPD 7-3) 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.” Section III of the admissions policy specifies a non-resident undergraduate enrollment limitation not to exceed 25% at any UW institution. Minnesota reciprocity students are in a separate category, and not counted as either residents or non-residents.

The 25% non-resident enrollment limitation has been constant since the merger that created the UW System in the early 1970s. Prior to merger, there was a time period when the non-resident enrollment limit for the University of Wisconsin ranged from 25 to 30%. One of the first resolutions passed by the UW System Board of Regents in May 1972 was to adopt a policy limiting non-resident undergraduate admissions to 25% for each UW System campus. UW-Madison historically has had enrollments closest to the RPD 7-3 enrollment limitation.

REQUESTED ACTION

Approval of Resolution I.1.c., authorizing the modification of section III in the Board of Regents Admissions Policy, RPD 7-3, Non-resident Enrollment, as shown in the attachment.

DISCUSSION

The UW-Madison fall 2012 undergraduate enrollment of 30,500 includes nearly 6,300 new freshmen, the largest freshman class UW-Madison has ever enrolled. This class includes 3,515 Wisconsin residents, the most since fall 2005, and ranks among the highest resident freshman enrollments since the merger that created the UW System. Due to a variety of factors, the freshman class also includes nearly 2,000 non-resident students. The unanticipated and increased number of non-resident freshmen choosing to enroll at UW-Madison contributed to UW-Madison’s non-resident enrollment of 25.8%. This is the first year since merger that UW-Madison has exceeded the limitation of 25% non-resident students. UW-Madison’s historic average population for non-resident undergraduate students is approximately 24.5%.

UW-Madison seeks modification of the UW System Freshman Admissions Policy to provide Wisconsin resident students access to more diverse ideas and cultures by expanding opportunities to interact with international and out-of-state students, while also increasing the institution’s flexibility to manage its enrollment and resources. Employment recruiters indicate that it is important for future employees to have exposure to diverse people, cultures, and ideas in

order for them to be successful in the diverse and global work environment and markets in which they operate. As part of its enrollment management plan, UW-Madison will develop and implement a multi-year plan that will guarantee at least 3,500 enrollments per year for Wisconsin resident students in each fall new-freshman class. That is, UW-Madison will admit to its freshman class each fall at least 200 more Wisconsin resident students over its traditional admissions target. The requested policy revision also represents a modest attempt to generate additional revenue and ease policy restrictions to help strengthen the University's commitment to educational access and quality. UW-Madison will use the additional revenue generated through a slight increase in non-resident enrollment to build on its national and international reputation for educational excellence.

This is an opportune time to revisit this part of the policy and to determine whether or not it needs to be adjusted, given the fundamental changes that have transformed higher education over the past two decades and the impact that would occur to Wisconsin resident admissions if UW-Madison attempted to regain compliance with the 25% threshold from the present position of 25.8%. The following considerations should be weighed in view of the underlying population demographics of Wisconsin and in the context of UW-Madison's basic financial model.

According to UW-Madison:

- The institution must maintain total undergraduate enrollments of approximately 29,000 (current levels) with a non-resident percentage of at least 25% to sustain and support its existing level of base budget funding;
- To maintain a total undergraduate enrollment of 29,000, UW-Madison must enroll approximately 6,000 new students each year in the fall new freshman class;
- Given the parameters above, to return to the 25% threshold (currently 25.8 %) over a three-year period, UW-Madison would have to enroll about 3,700 resident students in the fall new freshman class each year—a number that far exceeds historic levels and that would create additional financial pressures and bottlenecks; and
- Since the number of Wisconsin high school graduates is declining and will continue to decline over the next several years, the proposal to commit to enrolling 3,500 Wisconsin resident new freshmen by admitting 200 more Wisconsin resident students represents an enrollment of a higher fraction of the high school class than in recent years, and a higher number than the average of the past several years.

CONCLUSION

UW-Madison is more competitive nationally and internationally than ever before. However, it is alone among Big 10 institutions in having a policy that formally limits non-resident enrollment. UW-Madison's analysis suggests that increasing the 25 % threshold to 30% would provide the institution with enough flexibility to guarantee unprecedented access to qualified resident students at essentially the highest of historic levels, while at the same time generating the revenue needed for UW-Madison to sustain its base budget commitments.

Assuming modification of the non-resident enrollment limitation, UW-Madison would implement the following multi-year enrollment management plan:

- Guarantee 3,500 enrollments (200 additional resident students admitted in each incoming fall new-freshman class). As stated above, this would guarantee resident enrollments at essentially the highest of historic levels; and
- Enroll freshman non-resident students (beyond the 3,500 residents per year) to maintain total undergraduate enrollments at approximately 29,000—the level necessary to sustain base budget commitments.

Projections indicate that such a plan would result in a non-resident undergraduate population that would vary between 25.8% and 26.9% of overall enrollment over a five-year period, eventually resolving to a steady state of 26.7%. Also, if implemented, the plan might generate marginal revenue growth above the level required to sustain the current base budget. Because annual enrollment numbers are subject to many factors outside of the control of an institution, including but not limited to students applying to multiple institutions and increasing incidence of transfer, it is recommended that the threshold be subject to a three-year rolling average.

RELEVANT POLICIES

- RPD 7-3 University of Wisconsin System Freshman Admissions Policy
- Chapter 36, [Section 36.27](#), Wisconsin Statutes, *Tuition*
- Chapter 35, [Section 36.27\(3\)](#), Wisconsin Statutes, *Tuition Remissions*
- RPD 32-5 Tuition Policy Principles
- Financial Administration Tuition and Fee Policies for Credit Instruction

Attachment

***REGENT POLICY DOCUMENT 7-3, "UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM
FRESHMAN ADMISSIONS POLICY," SECTION III, "NON-RESIDENT ENROLLMENT"***

Current:

Non-resident undergraduate enrollment must not exceed 25% at any UW institution. Each institution may limit the admission of non-resident new freshmen to ensure that the total undergraduate non-resident enrollment does not exceed 25%. This limitation does not include Minnesota reciprocity students.

Proposed revisions:

~~Based on a three-year average, the Non-resident undergraduate enrollment must~~shall not exceed ~~25~~30% at any UW institution. ~~Each institution may limit the admission of non-resident new freshmen to ensure that the total undergraduate non-resident enrollment does not exceed 25%.~~ This limitation does not include Minnesota reciprocity students.

Proposed final:

Based on a three-year average, the non-resident undergraduate enrollment shall not exceed 30% of the total undergraduate enrollment at any UW institution. This limitation does not include Minnesota reciprocity students.