



*Representing UW-Madison Faculty.
Strengthening Wisconsin.*

Legislative Update

PROFS, the Public Representation Organization of the Faculty Senate, is a non-profit advocacy organization of UW-Madison faculty. Formed by the Faculty Senate and governed by the University Committee, PROFS provides a voice to faculty, allowing them to communicate directly with the governor, legislators, and members of Congress.

Election Update

Wisconsin, one of a handful of swing states, provided a narrow margin of victory to Vice President Joe Biden, helping give the Biden/Harris the electoral votes necessary to win the election. The Trump campaign continues to file lawsuits in several swing states before the Electoral College votes on December 14 in a last-ditch effort to overturn the election. The most recent lawsuits in Wisconsin were rejected by the State Supreme Court by 4-3 margins, with Justice Brian Hagedorn joining three liberal justices in the decisions.

Republicans maintain a strong majority in both houses of the Wisconsin Legislature, but they fell short of their goal to have a veto-proof majority. In the Assembly, State Representative Robin Vos (R-Rochester) remains speaker and State Representative Jim Steineke (R-Kaukauna) continues as Majority Leader, while Democrats will be led again by State Representative Gordon Hintz (D-Oshkosh) and Dianne Hesselbein (D-Middleton). State Senator Devin LeMahieu (R-Oostburg) was elected Majority Leader, replacing outgoing State Senator Scott Fitzgerald who was elected to Congress. State Senator Janice Bewley (D-Mason) remains Minority Leader.

2021-23 State Budget

The 2021-23 biennial budget process begins in earnest early next year. Governor Evers will deliver his budget address to the legislature on Tuesday, February 16. Once the budget bill is introduced, it is referred to the Joint Finance Committee for its work on the proposal. The committee usually holds public hearings on the bill around the state in March and April. Once passed by the Joint Finance committee, the bill moves through the State Assembly and State Senate before going to Governor Evers for his signature. Evers has expansive partial veto powers resulting in the ability craft changes to the final bill. The entire process usually wraps up in late June or early July, but has stretched into late summer or fall.

The Joint Finance Committee will have new leadership for the first time since 2013. State Representative Mark Born (R-Beaver Dam) will replace State Representative John Nygren (R-De Pere) who announced last week he was resigning from the Assembly, despite winning election earlier in the month, while Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu announced in November he would replace State Senator Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) with State Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green).

PROFS is actively engaged throughout the budget process and has already begun meeting with key legislative leaders to discuss budget priorities.

UW System Update State Budget Proposal

The 2021-23 UW System operating budget proposal includes a 3.5 percent increase over the biennium and features ten key initiatives, including a system-wide free tuition program for Wisconsin families earning less than \$60,000 annually. Other funding priorities include student loan forgiveness programs for state teachers, 20 new UW-Madison Division of Extension county-based agriculture positions, and support for the Freshwater Collaborative.

The 2021-23 capital budget includes two projects important to UW-Madison: a new engineering building and a new Letters & Science academic building to replace the aging Mosse Humanities Building.

Join PROFS!

PROFS is funded entirely through modest monthly contributions from faculty and needs the support of all faculty to be most successful. Please use the membership form on the PROFS website (profs.wisc.edu) to join.

Follow PROFS on  Twitter (@PROFSUWMadison) and  Facebook (PROFSUWMadison).

December 7, 2020

Public Representation Organization of the Faculty Senate University of Wisconsin–Madison

258 Bascom Hall 500 Lincoln Drive Madison, WI 53706 608-263-9273 www.profs.wisc.edu