



*Representing UW-Madison Faculty.
Strengthening Wisconsin.*

PROFS Commends Governor Evers for Proposing a Very Strong Budget for the UW System and Other Initiatives to Generally Help the State

In addition to striving to give UW what it truly needs, given years of budget cuts and frozen tuition, the Governor's budget includes important items on domestic partnerships, gender equity, marriage equality, economic development, and legislative redistricting

February 19, 2021

PROFS, representing the UW-Madison faculty, commends Governor Tony Evers for proposing a state budget that will provide the UW System with the resources it needs to successfully recover from the pandemic and continue providing the results that the people of Wisconsin expect from UW-Madison. The budget also takes important steps to generally improve our state, including initiatives to promote domestic partnerships, gender equity, economic development, and fair maps through redistricting.

The Governor's budget includes the following for the UW:

- \$190 million in new funding for UW System, including more than \$50 million to fully fund a continuing freeze of in-state tuition.
- Unrestricted funding of \$20 million in each fiscal year to address student needs and COVID-19 pandemic challenges.
- Much-needed borrowing authority for the UW to pay for short-term expenses associated with athletic and academic programs.
- The ability for the UW System to designate certain program revenues for investment outside the State Investment Fund.
- Significant increases in financial aid through the Higher Education Aids Board to make college more affordable for Wisconsinites.

The budget also does the following:

- Reinstates domestic partnership benefits for all state and local government employee programs administered by the Department of Employee Trust Funds.
- Modifies current law to make references to marriage, spouses, and parentage gender-neutral, recognizing marriage equality, and providing greater flexibility and inclusion of all individuals, couples, and families.
- Expands the definition of employment discrimination to specify that employers cannot discriminate based on gender identity and/or expression.
- Requires the Legislature to take up the redistricting maps proposed by the People's Map Commission (created by the Governor). The Governor recommended that all legislative records on redistricting be retained for ten years and that all legislative meetings on redistricting comply with open meeting requirements.
- Provides new funding to support organic economic development like businesses that are spun off research at UW-Madison. This includes \$100 million for a new venture capital program.

PROFS lobbied the Governor's team for a strong UW budget and has a long history of lobbying for domestic partner benefits, gender equity, programs to encourage more business spin-offs from research, and fair maps in redistricting.

In addition to promoting faculty expertise on redistricting, PROFS has communicated to policy-makers that the state provides UW-Madison with funding to do the "nuts and bolts" of redistricting. The state can save a significant amount of money by using the resources and expertise that already exist rather than hiring expensive outside law firms and consultants.

The leadership of PROFS is concerned that the Legislature will keep the in-state tuition freeze while dramatically cutting the funding for the UW System. PROFS agrees that now is not the time to raise tuition. But, moving forward, the university needs to have all the tools that its competitors have. Tuition authority should be returned to the Board of Regents. It is the job of the regents to manage the System.

PROFS is the Public Representation Organization of the (UW-Madison) Faculty Senate, which represents the interests of the UW-Madison faculty. PROFS is linked to the shared governance structure at the university. The University Committee, the elected executive committee of the Faculty Senate, serves as the PROFS Board of Directors.