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Strengthening Wisconsin.*

PROFS Statement on Governor Evers' Action on 23-25 State Budget

PROFS commends Governor Tony Evers for vetoing language in the 2023-25 state budget bill that would have cut Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) positions in the University of Wisconsin System.

The Republican-controlled Legislature's attack on DEI was punitive and short-sighted. It would have hampered UW-Madison as it competes for talent in the global higher education marketplace and tarnished the university's reputation.

PROFS further thanks the Governor for preserving funding for a pay plan for state employees, including UW faculty and staff. The funding includes a 4% increase retroactive to July 1. The increase is desperately needed for university employees dealing with the impact of inflation.

PROFS requested that the Governor take these two actions with his veto pen, and we are pleased with his decision to do so.

Unfortunately, the GOP budget missed the opportunity to fund other important priorities for UW-Madison, especially given the state's \$7 billion surplus. Most notably, the new Engineering Building, the Arts relocation project, and Music Hall project were stripped from the Governor's capital budget by the Legislature.

The budget also cuts \$32 million – the amount legislators say the university spends on DEI initiative – and forces UW System to come back and ask the Joint Finance Committee for that money, which can then only be used for “workforce metrics” as defined by legislators in state statute. This is effectively a cut to the university's budget, and forced redistribution of resources, at a time when the UW, like everyone else, is facing spiraling inflationary costs.

PROFS will continue to advocate for the building projects and other funding that UW-Madison needs to continue providing the results that Wisconsinites have come to expect from UW-Madison.

July 5, 2023