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## PROFS, Inc. Annual Report for 2022-2023

### *I Charge*

PROFS, the Public Representation Organization of the Faculty Senate, is a non-profit organization formed by the Faculty Senate in 1976. The function of PROFS is to represent the UW-Madison faculty's interests – with particular emphasis on compensation and benefits, the university budget, and legislation affecting the university and important regulatory issues – before the state legislature, the governor, Regents, and other state and federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

### *II Participation*

PROFS is a voluntary contribution-funded organization, wholly supported through payroll deductions by faculty. Contributions are one-tenth of one percent of one's salary deducted each pay period.

### *III Organization*

#### **Leadership**

The elected members of the University Committee serve as the PROFS Board of Directors. The 2022-23 Board of Directors were:

- Lauren Papp\*, Chair (School of Human Ecology)
- Michael Bernard-Donals\* (English and Jewish Studies)
- Fernando Tejedo-Herrero\* (Spanish & Portuguese)
- Susan Thibeault (Surgery)
- Li Chiao-Ping (Dance)
- Ellen Zweibel (Physics)

Much of the work of PROFS is done by the President, Michael Bernard-Donals, and members of the Steering Committee:

- Jerry Braatz (Extension)
- Erika Bullock (Curriculum & Instruction)
- Bradley Christian (Medical Physics)
- Christy Clark-Pujara (Afro-American Studies)
- J. Michael Collins (School of Human Ecology)
- Mark Copelovitch (Political Science and La Follette School of Public Affairs)
- Julie Dawson (Horticulture)
- Dorothy Farrar Edwards (Kinesiology)
- Nicholas Hillman (Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis)
- Lori Lopez (Communication Arts)
- Christa Olson (English)
- Eric Sandgren (Pathobiological Sciences)
- Steph Tai (Law)
- Anja Wanner (English)
- Terry Warfield (Accounting & Information Systems)
- Claire Wendland (Anthropology)

- Kirsten Wolf (German, Nordic & Slavic)
- University Committee members noted with an asterisk (\*) above

### **PROFS Bylaws**

The PROFS bylaws, last updated in 2021, specify that the University Committee serves as the Board of Directors. The bylaws also stipulate that the Steering Committee membership includes at least three current University Committee members, at least three prior University Committee members, at least one Faculty Senator, one member of the Budget Committee, and one or more at-large faculty members. Members who do not serve on the University Committee serve three-year renewable terms. Current University Committee members may serve renewable one-year terms while on the committee.

### **Legislative Representative**

Jack O'Meara continues to serve as PROFS Legislative Representative. He meets regularly with the Board of Directors and Steering Committee to update them on legislative proposals affecting the faculty, establish PROFS' positions on legislation, and determine action. Mr. O'Meara also meets with individual legislators and other officials throughout the year to discuss PROFS issues and urge support of the faculty's position. PROFS arranges for members of the Steering Committee and other faculty members to meet with legislators, state officials, Regents, and members of the media, and to testify at legislative hearings.

### **Administration**

Michelle Felber is the administrator and website/social media editor. She communicates regularly with faculty via email and through posts to the PROFS website, Facebook page, and Twitter feed, manages PROFS's banking and investment accounts and handles accounts payable, and oversees PROFS membership recruitment. PROFS's bylaws require a financial review every three years, most recently completed in 2021.

### **Lobbying**

PROFS is required to register with and report to the State of Wisconsin Ethics Commission, filing a lobbying report twice a year. PROFS also reports its interest in bills, topics, and budget items, and its position if taking one. Reports can be found on the Ethics Commission website, [ethics.wi.gov](http://ethics.wi.gov).

#### *IV Communication*

PROFS communicates regularly with all faculty through email updates and posts to the PROFS website ([profs.wisc.edu](http://profs.wisc.edu)), Facebook page ([facebook.com/PROFSUWMadison](https://facebook.com/PROFSUWMadison)) and Twitter feed (@PROFSUWMadison).

#### *V Membership*

PROFS reaches out to new faculty members every fall and continues outreach efforts to veteran faculty members. Membership and contributions from members remain steady despite faculty retirements. In cultivating membership, PROFS emphasizes its past achievements including:

- Helping to secure funding for the Chemistry Building project
- Pay increases in the most recent budget cycles

- Leading the effort to ensure retirement contributions are taken pre-tax, saving each faculty member almost \$2,000
- Securing the implementation of first-day health insurance coverage

PROFS also emphasizes goals for the future:

- Gaining paid family leave for UW-Madison faculty and staff
- Acquiring greater management flexibility for UW-Madison, including tuition setting and the management of building projects
- Improving state funding for the UW budget, including competitive compensation for faculty
- Ensuring the principles of shared governance are observed with regard to executive searches and curricular, budget, and research issues
- Increasing funding for research and graduate education

Faculty may join PROFS by completing membership brochure available on the PROFS website, [profs.wisc.edu](http://profs.wisc.edu).

#### *VI 2022-23 Lobbying and Legislation*

PROFS was very active during the 2022-23 Legislative Session, meeting with key legislative and university leaders, including meetings with the Representative Dave Murphy, chair of the Assembly Colleges and Universities Committee, Regent Hector Colon, and members of Governor Evers' staff. In addition to formal meetings, PROFS participates in informal discussions at the Capitol and communicates via email, telephone, and text.

#### **2023-25 State Budget/Pay Plan**

The 2023-25 state budget process formally began with Governor Tony Evers budget address in February. With a projected \$7 billion budget surplus, the governor proposed \$104 billion in spending over two years, including a \$2.6 billion K-12 budget, a \$1.2 billion in middle-class tax cuts, a second year \$576 million increase in aid to local governments, almost \$250 million to seed a new family leave program for public and most private sector employees, and an additional \$305 million for UW System. The governor also called for state employee pay raises of 5% in the first year of the biennium and 3% in the second year.

Republican legislative leaders declared the governor's proposal dead on arrival and crafted their own budget working from the current 2021-23 budget. PROFS was very active in the budget process, lobbying for several priorities: a new Engineering Building, a competitive pay plan, adequate funding for UW System, and paid family leave. Ultimately, the budget passed along party lines, stripping \$32 million in UW funding and eliminating almost 200 positions that relate to diversity, equity and inclusion. GOP leaders also chose to not fund a new Engineering Building despite widespread bipartisan support. One bright spot that PROFS lobbied heavily on was a pay plan for state employees, including faculty, of a 4% increase effective on July 1, 2023, and 2% on July 1, 2024.

#### **Legislation**

PROFS follows dozens of bills each year. Some of the bills PROFS lobbied on in 2022-23 included:

- AB 67/SB 84, Merit Scholarship Bill, PROFS registered in favor of these bills and was present when signed into law by the governor. The legislation eliminated the sunset date for \$5,000 merit scholarships for qualified UW students.
- AB 19/SB 27, Spinal Cord Research Bill, PROFS registered in favor of these bills which directs the Department of Health Services to create a research grant program that would fund research on spinal cord injuries and rehabilitation.
- AB 26/SB 8, UW MIA Identification Project Bill, PROFS is registered in favor of this legislation that awards the UW-Madison MIA Project \$180,000 in each year of the 2023-25 biennium.
- AB 378/SB 377, Restrictions on Transgender Athletes Bill, PROFS is registered against these bills that would require transgender athletes to participate in sports that match the sex in which they were assigned at birth.

PROFS also lobbied on and monitored topics that were expected to become legislation:

- Gun safety legislation
- Legislation that would prohibit state employees from acquiring abortion training
- Legislation relating to campus speech and academic freedom

#### *VII Federal Relations Program*

PROFS continued to monitor federal issues and stayed in contact with the Wisconsin delegation offices regarding issues important to the faculty.

#### *VIII Campus Outreach and Events*

##### **Free Speech Forum**

PROFS and ASPRO, the Academic Professionals Organization, cohosted a campus forum on free speech and academic freedom in February. The forum followed the release of a UW System free speech student survey. The forum was moderated by President Michael Bernard-Donals and the panel included UW System President Jay Rothman, State Representative Rachael Cabral-Guevara (R-Appleton), and UW-Madison Political Science Professors Howard Schweber and Alex Tahk. The forum was streamed live by WisconsinEye.

##### **State Budget Forum**

PROFS and ASPRO cosponsored a campus forum on the 2023-25 state budget in May. The forum was moderated by PROFS Legislative Representative Jack O'Meara and the panel included State Senator Kelda Roys (D-Madison), State Representative Robert Wittke (R-Racine), UW-Madison Director of State Relations Crystal Potts, and School of Human Ecology Professor Michael Collins, who is also a member of the Steering Committee. The forum was well-attended and generated lively discussion.