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## **PROFS Statement on the Closure of UW-Milwaukee at Waukesha County:**

### ***Universities of Wisconsin and UW-Milwaukee must follow Regent policies regarding plan to close UW-Milwaukee-Waukesha campus***

On Monday, March 11, 2024, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Chancellor Mark Mone wrote a letter to the UWM community announcing the closure of the UWM campus at Waukesha County. This is the fifth two-year campus of the Universities of Wisconsin to close in the last two years.

What struck us about the letter from Chancellor Mone was his announcement that the closure would affect about 100 employees, which would include layoffs “to include tenured faculty.” One of the core principles of the rights and responsibilities of faculty is that tenured faculty can only be terminated for cause, for reasons of financial emergency, or – as described in UW system policy – program discontinuance. And there are guarantees of due process for faculty who are affected in all three instances.

As dire as the circumstances are for some of the universities (two and four year alike) of the Universities of Wisconsin, in no case has the System or the individual university declared financial emergency. It is clear enough that the closure of the Waukesha County campus of UWM is for reasons of program discontinuance (every program, with the exception of those linked to an agreement with the Waukesha County Technical College), and a pretty drastic version of it, too.

But it is not clear that either the Universities of Wisconsin or UWM are following their own policies. Regent Policy Document 20-24 requires that any proposed discontinuance follow standard program review policies at the affected campus, that a faculty review panel examine the proposal for discontinuance that would lead to faculty layoffs, that faculty in the affected units be consulted by the panel, and that the panel’s proposal be reviewed by the Faculty Senate before it is approved by the Board of Regents. And even if the discontinuance is approved, affected faculty are afforded the right to appeal, and “institutions shall devote their best efforts to securing alternative appointments for faculty laid off.”

The closure of UW campuses is surely affected by the slow erosion of state support for the Universities of Wisconsin. But those effects are compounded if the universities themselves do not follow their own carefully crafted policies on how to treat faculty who are caught up in the consequences. We urge the Universities of Wisconsin and UWM to follow their policies on program discontinuance. Failure to do so just continues to erode the rights and responsibilities of their faculties, which undermines the quality of the education offered at all UW campuses.

March 21, 2024