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January 16, 2020

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## **Former UW–Oshkosh Leaders Failed Wisconsin**

OSKHOSH, WI — Wednesday, former UW–Oshkosh Chancellor Richard Wells and former Vice Chancellor Tom Sonnleitner pleaded guilty in Winnebago County Circuit Court to one count each of misconduct in office as part of a plea deal reached with prosecutors. Wells and Sonnleitner were each sentenced to pay a \$5,000 fine, plus \$70,455 in restitution. Prior to sentencing, Wells stated, “It was never my intent to hurt the institution; it was to help, and I’m sorry.”

Representative Dave Murphy (R – Greenville), chair of the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities, issued the following statement regarding the guilty pleas:

“Saying ‘sorry,’ won’t restore the trust of donors, the community, and the legislature that was lost when Chancellor Wells and Vice Chancellor Sonnleitner committed misconduct in office. ‘Sorry,’ won’t restore the \$11 million that UW–Oshkosh and state taxpayers lost due to the bad promises Chancellor Wells made. ‘Sorry,’ won’t undo the destruction the UW–Oshkosh Foundation and its student scholarships incurred.

“Wells and Sonnleitner abandoned their responsibilities to their students when they put empire building in front of education. College administrators need to keep their focus on the classroom.”

In response to a non-partisan audit of the relationships between University of Wisconsin System institutions and foundations, Rep. Murphy and State Senator Robert Cowles (R – Green Bay) introduced Assembly Bill 370 to address ongoing issues that permitted the Oshkosh misconduct to go unnoticed until administrators left the university. AB 370 was recommended for passage by the Assembly Committee on Government Accountability and Oversight on December fourth and is now eligible for a vote in the State Assembly.

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