

WISCONSIN STATE SENATE

Frank Lasee

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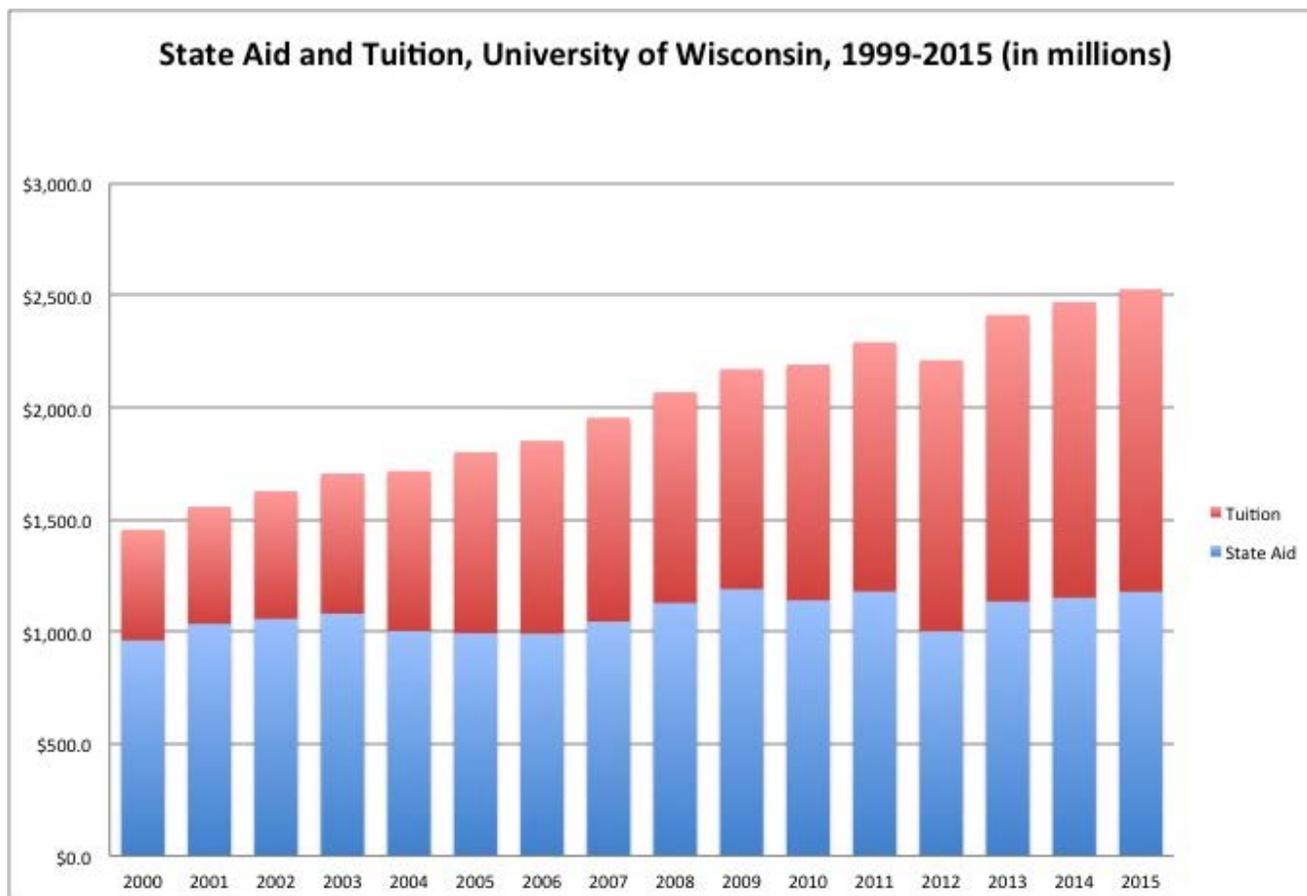
Lasee's Notes February 12, 2015

Lasee's Notes is a way for me to communicate directly with you on key issues of our day and to champion limited government, lower taxes, and individual liberty. How we respond to these issues today, will affect the direction of our state and nation tomorrow.

I look forward to hearing from you about the issues of concern to you. Please feel free to contact me, Sen.Lasee@legis.wisconsin.gov or (608) 266-3512. If you are planning to be in Madison, please visit, I look forward to seeing you at the Capitol.

The UW Budget: True Finances Revealed

The median Wisconsin household income is about \$50,000. If that income were reduced by 2.5% it would come to \$48,750 (about \$100 less per month). A mere 2.5% budget reduction is what is being asked of the UW System. **With a \$6.1 billion annual budget, 35,000 employees (for reference the City of Manitowoc has 34,000 residents), 26 campuses and \$700 million in cash reserves, the UW System has many opportunities to get lean, find efficiencies and make your tuition and tax dollar stretch farther.**



State Aid has remained stable, but tuition has gone up significantly

In the State Budget, the Governor proposed a \$150 million annual reduction to the UW System amounting to only 2.5% of their total \$6.1 billion budget. He also proposed extending the tuition freeze we put in place two years ago to protect students and their families from skyrocketing tuition.

The University has tried to tell you that the cut is too deep. Two and a half percent is reasonable, measured, and appropriate for an institution the size of the UW System and can be worked with while still keeping it the high-quality institution of higher learning that it is.

In an effort to continue reducing spending, thus saving your tax dollars and university students dollars, the Governor has proposed agency mergers, program consolidations, and other creative ways to reduce the burden on tax payers with minimum impact to services our residents enjoy. The UW System is a large portion of the state's budget so it must share in this effort to get the most from our taxpayer money and university student dollars.

A Brief History

The UW System has dealt with funding reductions in the past. Under former Governor Doyle, the University of Wisconsin System was cut by \$250 million. Instead of finding efficiencies, the UW's solution was to increase tuition on the backs of students and families.

In the 2013-14 budget, Governor Walker proposed a \$181 million increase in funding for the UW system. Then in a review by the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau we discovered that the UW system had been playing a shell game with its finances, with about \$650 million in unallocated reserves.



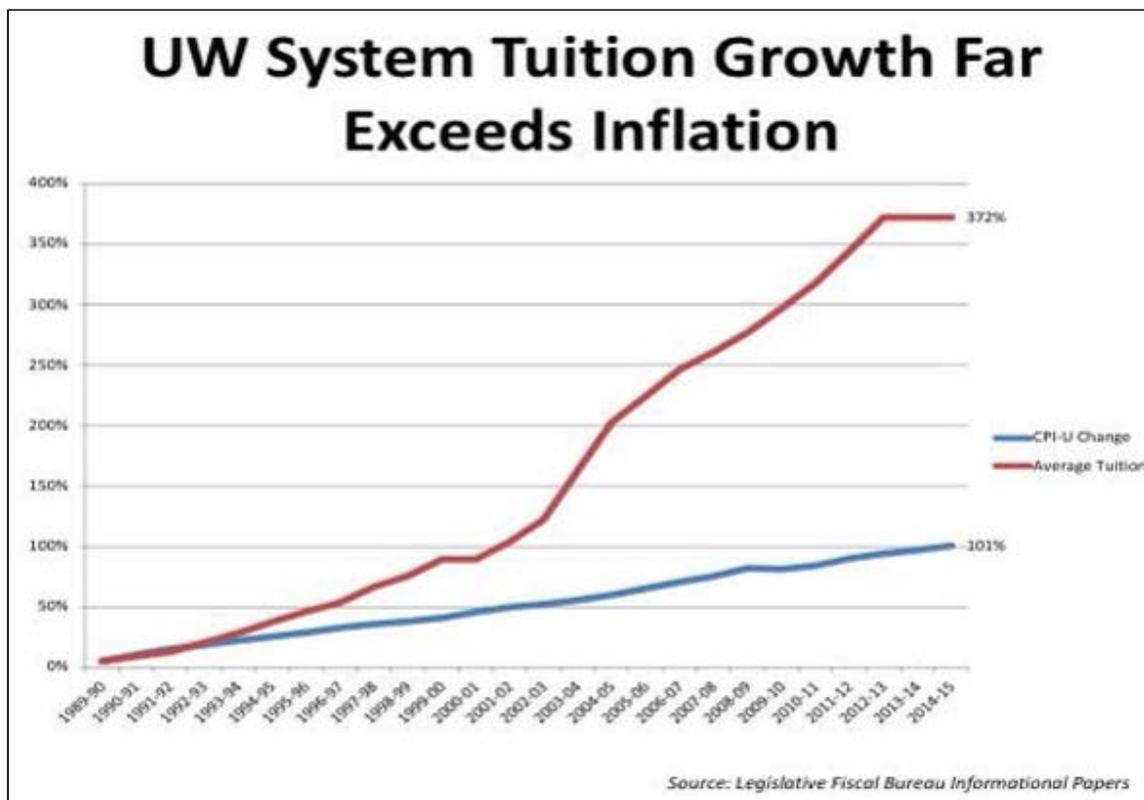
“Oh look! \$650 million. I wonder what’s under the other shells?”

The majority of the surplus came from tuition revenue and totaled more than \$414 million. What is even more disturbing is that the UW system [raised tuition by 5.5 percent in each of the six years prior](#) generating an additional \$35 million per year. So the Legislature put in a tuition freeze and saved students and families from unnecessary tuition gouging.

Unlike Doyle’s \$250 million cut and skyrocketing tuition increase, Governor Walker’s proposed reduction and tuition freeze includes options so the UW can better manage funds and find cost savings. I believe there are lots more savings to be had because of Act 10. **Unless our government budgets are squeezed, these benefits to taxpayers and those getting government services, will not be realized.**

Tuition Today

At a cost of more than \$24,000 a year for an in-state student to go to UW Madison, some students and families probably disagree with UW-Madison Chancellor Rebecca Blank’s assertion that tuition is not high enough.



This is an interesting chart that shows how much tuition has grown in relation to inflation. Going to college should be affordable to more students—not less. UW System, please do your part to reverse this alarming trend.

In order to ensure students have access to the good things UW offers, the UW needs to get serious about prioritizing spending that is important to the UW System's mission, without pricing tuition out of reach for students and families.



As always, if you have any comments or thoughts regarding the subject of this Lasee's Notes, please feel free to contact me.

If you would like to be removed from future mailings, [email me](#) and ask to unsubscribe.

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