



# JERRY L. O'CONNOR

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For Immediate Release  
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## **Statement of Representative Jerry O'Connor on Announced Closing of the UWO- Fond du Lac Campus**

**MADISON** – As a member of the Assembly Colleges and Universities Committee, State Representative Jerry O'Connor (R-Fond du Lac) released the following statement regarding the announcement this week by UW-Oshkosh Chancellor Andy Leavitt that “he has been directed to begin the work to discontinue teaching and learning at that campus and transition in-person education based there by June 30, 2024.”

Representative O'Connor has commented, “This announcement came as a shock to many in our community who have not been close enough to observe declining trends in attendance for campuses like UWO-Fond du Lac. This is a devastating loss to a community such as ours.

In all levels of education, we are faced with declining student populations starting in K-12 and continuing into our College schools. This is forcing changes in many schools and campuses to re-align their education models to meet the changing demographic trends in student populations.

Last year news came of a similar decision for UW-Platteville's Richland Center campus. Because of that announcement, there have been numerous discussions involving UW-Oshkosh, County Executive Sam Kaufman, the City of Fond du Lac, Senator Dan Feyen, myself, and Envision Greater FDL. Conversations have taken place that worked under the assumption that the economics and the size of our FDL campus attendance would result in changes. That time has come to our FDL campus.

Our focus centered on what we could do to re-purpose the unused portions of the FDL County-owned campus. Senator Dan Feyen and I have looked at ways we could pass legislation to provide transition funding from the State to repurpose facilities such as Fond du Lac and Richland Center.

In discussions with the Chancellor's office, I feel confident that in the short term, our students will receive the most equitable treatment available from UW-Oshkosh. For the long term, we already have resources and local government officials engaged to create a positive outcome for the local County investment in this property. Please contact my office to see if we can answer any of your questions or hear ideas you have to re-purpose this property.”

*The 52nd Assembly District includes portions of the City of Fond du Lac and the townships of Fond du Lac, Empire, Eden, Byron, Oakfield, Lamartine and Eldorado.*