



*For Immediate Release*  
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### **Rep. Shankland Calls for UWSP Informational Hearing on State Budget Cuts**

*Request comes in the wake of abruptly canceled presentation before the UW Board of Regents; media reports that UW System official deleted video for budget cut presentations*

Madison – As a result of the UW Board of Regents canceling scheduled presentations from UW System chancellors on how individual UW campuses are coping with budget cuts, Assistant Democratic Leader Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) released the following statement calling for a local hearing on the UWSP campus to discuss how the state funding cuts are being absorbed by the university:

“Earlier today, I asked UWSP Chancellor Bernie Patterson to hold a campus hearing on how the 2015-17 budget cuts will affect the UWSP community. The public has the right to know and taxpayers deserve answers. I am disappointed that the previously-scheduled presentation on the same topic to the UW Board of Regents was abruptly canceled earlier this month, and would hope that in the future UW System officials would share the video of the impact of the budget cuts on our colleges and universities instead of deleting it. It is vital that the chancellors and leaders of our various UW System institutions have a platform to discuss how they are dealing with substantial reductions in state aid while we are seeing surrounding states make increased investments in their public colleges, universities, and technical colleges. Wisconsin ranks third in the nation in cuts to higher education and third in the nation in its percentage of graduates with student loan debt. We need to have a serious discussion.

“While Chancellor Patterson and I have individually discussed the impact these cuts in state aid will have on the university, our students, faculty, staff, local businesses, nonprofits, local elected officials, and community members deserve to know how the university intends to absorb the \$6.5 million in state aid that Republican legislators approved in the 2015-17 state budget. The cut represents a 17% reduction in state aid and cannot be brushed under the rug. That is why it is so important to hold a public, informative hearing on this topic before the academic year concludes. I look forward to working with Chancellor Patterson to facilitate this hearing and want to thank him for his leadership in our community.

"According to information provided by UWSP, the 2015-17 budget cuts will result in more than 76 FTE positions being eliminated by the end of the 2017 fiscal year. This will also result in fewer course offerings at UWSP. The elimination of seven Life Science high-demand sections is predicted to create bottlenecks and could obstruct a timely path to graduation for pre-med students preparing for the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT). Faculty layoffs and vacancies will also lead to nine fewer sections being offered in the Computer Sciences field - at a time when area employers are clamoring for more computer science graduates."

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