



Media Release

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Rep. Shankland Issues Statement Regarding the Universities of Wisconsin Releasing Financial Reports for Seven Campuses

STEVENS POINT—Today, the Universities of Wisconsin released financial reports for seven campuses, including UW-Green Bay, UW-Oshkosh, UW-Parkside, UW-Platteville, UW-River Falls, UW-Superior, and UW-Whitewater. Following the release of the reports, Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) released the following statement:

“The financial reports released today for seven Universities of Wisconsin campuses are both troubling and entirely predictable. In October, I drafted a [column](#) detailing what would happen to higher education in Wisconsin if immediate state action was not taken to remedy the financial hardships our public higher education institutions have endured for years.

“Now, unfortunately, these reports confirm many of the looming issues I warned about. The reports detail several factors that have contributed to the ongoing budgetary shortfalls – most notably, a significant lack of state support that has been exacerbated by above-normal inflation. However, declining enrollment, reduced participation rates, and a previously unfunded tuition freeze have also contributed to the System’s financial woes.

“The bottom line is the state can and must do more to support our public higher education institutions. The reports released today paint a bleak picture of a future that could include more campus closures, mass layoffs, and a reduction of services and access for students across Wisconsin. Just a few months ago, the Universities of Wisconsin announced that UW-Oshkosh laid off 20 percent of its staff, UW-Platteville Richland is closing, and UW-Milwaukee at Washington County and UW-Oshkosh Fond du Lac’s campuses would be stopping in-person instruction in June. I fear that more cuts and closures will be coming if the state continues this track record of underfunding our public universities.

“This is not a coincidence or happening in a vacuum. This was a deliberate policy choice – the state has over a \$3 billion surplus. This legislative session, Republican legislators chose to hold state funding to our Universities of Wisconsin hostage for months instead of addressing the projected deficits on campuses they represent. Over the years, they have passed budget cuts amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars to our universities. It only makes sense that this new report shows that the median level of funding for the System would take an additional annual investment of about \$440 million.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
Katrina Shankland
71st ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

“Wisconsin ranks 42nd in the nation for higher education funding. It’s time to step up. During this legislative session, I again introduced my ‘Reaching Higher for Higher Education’ legislative package to address the most pressing challenges impacting our state’s higher education institutions. These include providing funding for the UW and Tech College Systems, closing the deficit at Universities of Wisconsin System campuses with significant deficits, expanding need-based financial aid and tuition assistance programs for students, and ensuring affordability while helping increase enrollment.

“I reached out to my colleagues across the aisle to build consensus around these commonsense solutions; however, both during the budget process and throughout the legislative session, they weren’t interested in working together on supporting our public higher education institutions. It’s been clear that the majority party remains committed to playing politics rather than solving problems—even if it means hurting their own communities, as many of the rural branch campuses facing closure are represented by Republican legislators.

“Right now, Wisconsin is competing with surrounding states to recruit and retain a talented workforce and high-quality employers. By dramatically underfunding our public higher education institutions, one of the soundest workforce investments we can make, at a time when our state has a record surplus, our state is only hurting itself, as young people continue leaving our state for better opportunities elsewhere. This was the greatest takeaway I had after participating in a panel on the future of public higher education in Wisconsin at UW-River Falls recently – I heard from many attendees in the audience that our deliberate underfunding of our campuses is leading to prospective students leaving the state and not returning. We have work to do, and it must be together.

“The time to invest in Wisconsin is now. I again implore my colleagues from across the aisle to put partisan politics aside, prioritize the needs of your constituents, and together, we can ensure that our communities and campuses in every corner of Wisconsin will thrive for generations to come.”

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