



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Legislators Introduce Bills to Strengthen Shared Values in Higher Ed**

MADISON – Representative Dianne Hesselbein (D-Middleton), Senator Kelda Roys (D-Madison), and Senator Jeff Smith (D-Brunswick) introduced a pair of bills that will strengthen the UW System and restore rights to students, faculty, and staff. The UW System remains one of the primary economic engines moving the state forward. When former Governor Walker signed the 2015-17 biennial budget act, the UW System suffered a major blow in funding and autonomy.

“Our university system is an important part of the future of our state. When it comes to decision-making and valuing our community of educators, faculty, staff, and students we cannot compromise the place they have at the table. Our proposals work to restore trust and move our university system forward,” said Rep. Hesselbein.

Democratic legislators from the Assembly and Senate introduced the following pieces of legislation to strengthen our shared values in higher education:

LRB-2429 and LRB-3205 related to: Restoring Tenure to UW Faculty. This legislation would restore the tenure and probationary appointment provisions for faculty of the UW System that were in effect just prior to enactment of the 2015-17 biennial budget act.

“The University of Wisconsin must be able to recruit and retain the world-class faculty that are the heart of any higher educational institution – tenure is a necessary part of that. Tenure protections ensure that professors have the intellectual and academic freedom to engage in the ‘sifting and winnowing’ that is necessary to find the truth,” said Sen. Roys.

LRB-2428 and LRB-3204 related to: Restoration of Shared Governance to the UW System. The 2015-17 budget eliminated statutory language allowing shared governance on University of Wisconsin campuses by faculty, staff, and students. Their roles were downgraded from “active participants” to “advisory to the chancellor.” This legislation reverses those changes and restores the previous language.

“The UW System embodies collaboration and brings diverse perspectives together. Shared governance ensures UW faculty, staff, and students at campuses across the state have a seat at the table where important decisions are being made. This bill restores this longstanding tradition and ensures we carry on the UW System values we know and respect,” said Sen. Smith.

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