

WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

December 3, 2012

Gerald Whitburn

gwhitburn@aol.com

Member, Board of Regents

University of Wisconsin System

Dear Mr. Whitburn,

It is our great pleasure to represent in the state legislature the University of Wisconsin-Madison staff, employees, students and their families throughout Dane County. We take great pride in UW-Madison, and in the UW System as a whole, and believe a strong university system is central to the success of our state. Many of us are graduates of UW-Madison, having received not only an education from a world-class public university, but having experienced formative life events within the campus community which has shaped who we are as people, as legislators and as advocates. As the political tenor towards UW-Madison and the UW system as a whole fluctuates, our commitment to our UW system and the Madison campus will not. We are your champions.

It is with this devotion to our university system that we express concerns regarding the proposed Human Resources (HR) redesign. Though we have long been voices of advocacy for growth and flexibility for the UW System, we believe that these changes must be done in the context of preserving fair conditions for employees. We are hopeful that our feedback will help shape the decisions you make as a board.

With the elimination of collective bargaining, public employers were given the task of creating human resources systems that gave flexibility for the changes required by 2011 Wisconsin Act 10. This includes a "civil service" system to provide employees with the safety and security to promote productive workplaces while ensuring the ability for the university to maintain the highest caliber employees.

We believe that the HR redesign must include a grievance process, create some simple "job stability" rights, honor the commitment to current sick-time and vacation policies, and require some continuity between campuses. It was with shared governance that the University System was created and with shared governance that it has thrived. Without this commitment and a formal governance agreement, our students and employees lose the incentive to be an integral part of the campus community and our campuses' success.


The University of Wisconsin-Madison has a long tradition of progressivism, embodied for over 100 years in the "Wisconsin Idea"-that knowledge generated at the university should influence people's lives far beyond the boundaries of the campus. Indeed, the public service provided by university employees does just that. It is not for

fame or money that our public employees come to work every day for the people of Wisconsin; it is for the love of what they do. What happens on UW campuses radiates out into communities throughout this state. And the food on our tables and jobs in our community often begin with our UW campuses. This is why it is so imperative that the HR redesign be done right.


The "Wisconsin Idea" includes the ethic of educating students to be good stewards and responsible citizens. This same ethic must be embraced by the University System when examining ways to make HR more effective, transparent and flexible. Addressing the issues we outline in this letter would be another great example of the University of Wisconsin – Madison's commitment to its employees, our community and to the Wisconsin Idea. We expect nothing less from our esteemed university.

As always, we are ready to meet anytime to discussion revisions to the human resources restructure or any item of concern or need for the University of Wisconsin System. Thank you.

With Warm Regards,




Senator Jon Erpenbach

Representative Chris Taylor

Senator Fred Risser

Representative Brett Hulsey

Senator Mark Miller

Representative Terese Berceau