

Feb. 4, 2015

Dear UW Colleges and UW-Extension colleagues and Board of Visitors members,

Last night Gov. Walker presented his 2015 Budget Address. I am pleased that he showcased one of our students: freshman Tanner VanDrisse from UW-Marinette.

What we know is that Gov. Walker has proposed a public authority model for UW System, a \$300 million cut over two years and a two-year tuition freeze.

The public authority model is, as the Governor proposes it, a long-term solution to a longstanding problem. It will give UW System the predictability of a dedicated funding source, in contrast to the current funding model. Whether you're a family of five or a collection of 13 campuses (and UW Colleges Online), a steady funding stream allows you to plan for the future – and that provides predictability for parents and students.

I'm grateful that my predecessors, Ray Cross and Aaron Brower, addressed the current biennium cut in a way that situated UW Colleges and UW-Extension well. We are moving forward from a financial position of strength as we face what may be a large, abrupt cut with significant impacts on all of us.

I know you would like specifics, in particular, about impacts on your campus or your program. At this point, we don't have details, including whether the proposed \$300 million figure will be reduced during the budget process, which may not be final until June. Nor do we know how UW System Administration will distribute cuts. We expect to find out more during the Board of Regents meeting Thursday and Friday. [Live video streaming](#) is scheduled Thursday afternoon and Friday morning.

You are the faces of UW Colleges and UW-Extension in your community, so your friends, relatives and neighbors will look to you for information about what this means to their beloved campus, program or service. As I have information and as we develop our budget advocacy strategy, I will share that with you. One opportunity for discussion will be Monday, Feb. 9, from 11 a.m. to noon for UW-Extension faculty and staff and from noon to 1 p.m. for UW Colleges faculty and staff, via WisLine Webcast (Mediasite) from The Pyle Center in Madison. Details will be forwarded Thursday. We count on your participation during the budget process, starting with the Town Hall Monday.

Thank you.

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