

REPRESENTATIVE TERESE BERCEAU PRESS RELEASE



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Governor Releases Self-Preservation Budget

Representative Terese Berceau (D – Madison), the ranking Democrat on the Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities, released the following statement regarding provisions in the governor’s proposed 2017 – 2017 state budget that will adversely affect UW System students and faculty:

“This governor has been quite successful at fooling 51% of the voters every four years. The re-election budget he offered today shows he’s deep into campaign mode once again, hoping Wisconsinites will buy his attempts to fix things and forget about the fact that he broke them in the first place.

“The UW System has already been grievously harmed by the governor’s interference, both monetarily and in terms of reputation and prestige. His previous cuts cost UW – Madison its top-five ranking in research standing for the first time in decades.

“The governor’s “big brother” plan to monitor and record how many hours each instructor spends in the classroom could have significant consequences, especially for a major research institution like UW – Madison. Our campus brings in about \$1 billion annually in research grants, yet professors won’t get “credit” for all the time they spend outside of the classroom conducting that research, applying for those grants, and publishing the results. Prioritizing and rewarding direct instructional time is completely contrary to the Wisconsin Idea that the UW System’s reach should extend well beyond the classroom and benefit people’s lives in every corner of the state.

“Even Assembly Speaker Robin Vos gave a cool reception to the governor’s idea for a tuition cut, and instead recommended that more financial assistance go to needy students. It appears the budget will do nothing to help almost 1 million state residents who have \$19 billion in student loan debt.

“I am also extremely concerned about the opt-out proposal for student fees. These fees are how we fund services and activities that support the entire campus community. They pay for contracts with the Rape Crisis Center, bus passes, a food pantry, and textbook rental at UW – Madison. Allocable fees support the student radio station at UW – Stevens Point, which gives students real world media experience that helps them get jobs in the industry when they graduate. At UW – Milwaukee, they pay for the Military and Veterans Resource Center and for nighttime transportation services so students are safe on campus after dark.

“Does it really make sense to save less than one hundred dollars in student fees and then pay hundreds to buy regular bus passes or thousands to buy textbooks? Are we actually going to tell victims of dating violence or sexual assault that they have to pay to access services through the Rape Crisis Center?

“This level of micromanaging the university is foolish and dangerous. It hurts students more than it helps them. The university has been the main economic engine of this state despite, not because of, the governor. Don’t get fooled again. This budget is all about positioning the governor for re-election, not about positioning the state for success.”

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