



Media Release

For Immediate Release
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Contact: Rep. Katrina Shankland
(608) 267-9649

Rep. Shankland Responds to UW System’s Projected \$170 Million Financial Loss Due To COVID-19

STEVENS POINT – Yesterday, the University of Wisconsin System released its first forecast of the expected UW System’s coronavirus-related financial impact, estimating a \$170 million minimum loss for the spring semester alone. While the UW System received \$47 million in stimulus funding from the federal government, an enormous funding gap of approximately \$123 million remains, affecting all 26 campuses. For example, UW-Stevens Point is facing an estimated \$5 million loss this semester, and these initial projections are expected to continue to grow.

Rep. Katrina Shankland (D-Stevens Point) issued the following statement in response:

“The UW System is vital to fulfilling the Wisconsin Idea, strengthening our economy, and supporting research and workforce development in our state. For every dollar we invest in our world-class higher education system, the state receives a \$23 return on investment. Yet our campuses have struggled in recent years as majority politicians have slashed their budgets, refused to fund tuition freezes, and forced them to spend down their reserve balances – the very funds meant for crises like these.

“I am deeply concerned about the financial pressures that will be exacerbated as the impact of COVID-19 on our campus communities continues to unfold. I sincerely appreciate the UW faculty, staff, and leaders working to ensure that students are supported through these uncertain times and to ensure that our campuses can remain afloat.

“Higher education plays a crucial role in our state, especially during economic downturns. It is critical that we ensure our campuses stay open across the state, in both rural and urban areas. We must come together as policymakers to ensure that we support our UW System students with equity and access through these times of hardship. I call on my legislative colleagues to work with the UW System to support their request for \$59 million in emergency aid. We must help make ends meet with all due urgency, and we must also support our students’ future with fair and sustainable funding in the next state budget and beyond.”

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