



University Relations

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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News Release

UW System seeks investment in Student Success and Workforce Development Initiatives to help address demographic trends

MADISON – The \$25-million Capacity-Building Initiatives proposed by University of Wisconsin System institutions would expand access to high-demand fields, increase internship opportunities, and enhance undergraduate research.

UW System Board of Regents President John Robert Behling sees the initiatives as a way to address demographic trends.

“To position Wisconsin for long-term academic and economic success, we have to graduate more students in key fields. This requires targeted investments in our public universities,” President Behling said. “Our capacity-building initiatives focus on adding resources to move students efficiently toward high-demand degrees so they can meet the demands of Wisconsin’s workforce.”

According to preliminary figures, enrollment at seven UW System institutions increased in fall 2018 compared to the previous year. Reflecting demographic trends, however, overall enrollment dropped 1.5 percent. The data shows UW System institutions enrolled 170,827 students this fall compared to 173,425 last year.

Addressing the demographic challenges, UW System President Ray Cross and Board leadership last year called for an unprecedented restructuring of the UW System by joining 13 two-year campuses to seven four-year institutions to facilitate easier transfers for students and to provide greater operational efficiency.

“The UW System is leading the way to position our students for success. The capacity-building initiatives proposed by campus leadership are innovative and strategic, and I look forward to hearing more detail at the Board of Regents meeting this week,” President Cross said. “To continue to build for the future, we must continue to invest in public universities, a critical component of Wisconsin’s educational ecosystem.”

The Capacity-Building Initiatives include expanding Wisconsin’s talent pipeline by adding hundreds of students to high-demand fields such as health care, engineering, and computer science; helping students make progress toward a degree; expanding internship and undergraduate research opportunities; and spurring entrepreneurship and innovation among faculty and in communities.

[Find the 2018 preliminary enrollment figures here.](#)

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The University of Wisconsin System serves more than 170,000 students. Awarding 36,000 degrees annually, the UW System is Wisconsin’s talent pipeline, putting graduates in position to increase their earning power, contribute to their communities, and make Wisconsin a better place to live. More than 80 percent of UW System graduates stay in Wisconsin five years after earning a degree. The UW System provides a 23:1 return on state investment. UW System institutions also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin’s culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy.

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