



STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**Katrina Shankland**

71<sup>st</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

November 5, 2019

UW System President Ray Cross  
& Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin  
Van Hise Hall  
1220 Linden Dr.  
Madison, WI 53706

Dear President Cross and members of the Board of Regents of the UW System:

I am writing to respectfully request that you include student, faculty, and staff representatives on the search and screen committee for the new President of the University of Wisconsin System.

This newly named search committee does not follow decades of past precedent, with the committee omitting faculty and staff representation, and the only student being a student regent. Remarkably, the nine-member committee includes only regents, a former regent, chancellors, and provosts. In past searches, the composition of the search committee has always included UW students, staff, and faculty, following Wisconsin's strong legacy of robust shared governance in such highly critical decision-making. Shared governance is vital to the UW System, and representation and participation from all stakeholders – faculty, academic staff, university staff, and students – is crucial to the vitality of our UW. I am profoundly disappointed that this committee does not follow this long-held tradition.

The Wisconsin Idea states that education should influence people's lives beyond the boundaries of the classroom, and that "the boundaries of the university are the boundaries of the state." This guiding principle ensures that our university system is in place to benefit the entirety of Wisconsin, not exclusive to regents and campus administrators from the institutions with the strongest enrollment and budget scenarios. While we search for a president to lead us into a new era for the UW System, inhibiting the incoming president's ability to lead by excluding essential voices at the table is counterintuitive. No leader of our university system should want to start their new role with concerns from stakeholders because of the process by which they were selected and by which some stakeholders were excluded.

In the interest of continuing our strong tradition of shared governance, and for the future success of the UW System through challenging times ahead, I respectfully urge you to reconsider membership of the search for the new System president. An omission is a choice, and inclusion can be a choice too. You have the authority to add members as you see fit. Anything less than full representation of faculty, staff, and students in the search and screen committee will send an illuminating message to all of us. Thank you for listening as you work to create a stronger UW System by selecting a thoughtful leader.

Sincerely,

Katrina Shankland  
State Representative  
71<sup>st</sup> Assembly District