



November 16, 2018

Raymond Cross
Office of the President
1700 Van Hise Hall
1220 Linden Dr.
Madison, WI 53706

Dear President Cross,

I am deeply concerned about the recent actions of UW–La Crosse Chancellor Joe Gow, as reported in the November 13, 2018 article in the La Crosse Tribune titled, [“Joe Gow says he was 'naive' in booking porn star; chancellor says he'll reimburse UW-L for appearance fee.”](#)

You and the Board of Regents are responsible for ensuring chancellors are accountable and responsible public servants. The next time Chancellor Gow’s performance is reviewed, which I hope is soon, I expect his self-proclaimed naiveté to be considered, especially when chancellors have been granted a great deal of autonomy and responsibility. Wisconsin cannot afford naive chancellors spending discretionary funds to invite porn stars to campus. Dr. Gow’s actions are particularly concerning at a time when our nation is finally heading in a positive direction with regard to preventing and building awareness around sexual harassment and sexual assault thanks to brave survivors coming forward to confront their harassers and assailants.

The pornography industry is notorious for its exploitation of participants and the negative views of women that it perpetuates. Moreover, this industry plays a pernicious role in normalizing harassment and assault, and propping up drug addiction and human trafficking rings.

The state legislature has taken direct actions to reduce human trafficking, make so called “revenge porn” a crime, and call to account individuals who violate basic human decency. Spending money out of the state treasury on a speaker who represents a highly problematic industry is, in my opinion, grave misjudgment bordering on malfeasance.

Chancellor Gow’s lack of judgement sends exactly the wrong message going into the next biennial budget process, when elected officials will once again be asking whether UW chancellors truly are good stewards of our taxpayer’s money.

Sincerely,

Dave Murphy
Chair, Assembly Committee on Colleges and Universities

cc: Members of the UW System Board of Regents
Senator Alberta Darling, Chair, Senate Committee on Universities and Technical Colleges