

Wisconsin Tuition Promise

Dear [legislator]:

Equal access to higher education is critical to the economic development of Wisconsin and also helps all Wisconsinites achieve the American dream. As you know, in 2018 UW-Madison established, “Bucky’s Promise” a program that guarantees scholarships and grants to pay for college for students whose household adjusted gross income is \$60,000 or less.

In his biennium budget, Governor Evers proposed expanding “Bucky’s Promise” to all UW System schools. I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for this program. At \$39 million over two years, this plan is a bargain for the state with an excellent return on investment. Not only will we be providing a broader educational experience and critical job skills for a significant number of Wisconsinites, for which the UW System is currently out of reach, but we’ll also be bolstering a generation of employees who can earn higher salaries and pay more taxes.

This proposal provides a clear, tangible benefit to current and future generations of Wisconsinites and an economic boon to the state’s general prosperity. The outlay is modest, yet the opportunities it promises are endless. Families across the state support this plan. Let’s make it happen.

Sincerely,

[name + hometown + zip code]

Student Mental and Behavioral Health

Dear [legislator]:

Like individuals across the System and the country, UW-Whitewater students have faced an unprecedented year of struggles. The strain has affected not only their educational pursuits but their overall well-being, physically, mentally, and emotionally. Promoting health in all areas needs to be a priority for our state.

At UW-Whitewater, we face an acute challenge supporting students’ mental and behavioral wellness. The number of students seeking help is dramatically increasing, yet the number of counselors available to support them has gone down in recent years. Budget cuts have eliminated multiple positions. This is not sustainable. At a time when the demand for mental and behavioral health services is higher than ever - a record number of visits were recorded in the 2019-2021 school year - we need to support this department that works so hard to support our students.

This investment will help move Wisconsin forward. These are students who have shown themselves capable of succeeding in college but simply encounter challenges along the way. Our counselors are an essential feature of the campus support system that ensures students stay in school, earn their degrees, and contribute to society long after they graduate.

Sincerely,

[name + hometown + zip code]

Freshwater Collaborative

Dear [legislator]:

In recent years, Wisconsin has become a leader for water-based businesses moving to the state. UW-Whitewater is poised to be a leader in preparing students to join this growing workforce, with multiple degree and certificate programs in the works that integrate freshwater initiatives into the curriculum. We need your help getting these programs off the ground. Additional staff and technology are required to take us from a position of great potential to the leading edge of the field.

The state of Wisconsin can become the epicenter of freshwater studies. A fully funded freshwater collaborative program would allow us to grow water-related programs and prepare the next generation of workers for a career in a high-demand field in our region. With your help, we can make it happen.

Sincerely,

[name + hometown + zip code]

Winther and Heide Hall

Dear [legislator]:

UW-Whitewater has the largest teacher education program in the state with a strong record of success placing students in teaching positions across the state. Indeed, 84% of our graduates go on to teach in Wisconsin schools. Our role in preparing future educators has never been more important in the midst of a statewide teacher shortage.

We need your help. Our infrastructure is in dire need of repair and Our current technology is not adequate. Our physical spaces, constructed many decades ago, are inadequate for the practice of many contemporary teaching techniques. Additionally, these spaces fall short of critical environmental standards, such as basic ventilation in the classrooms. I am writing to ask for your support for a vital initiative in the biennium budget: the renovation of Winther Hall, home of our education program.

Future educators of our children need access to current technology and safe classrooms to learn and grow into the educators this state needs. Renovating Winther Hall is a crucial investment that will serve K-12 students across the state.

Sincerely,

[name + hometown + zip code]

Expansion of Student Loan Forgiveness for Educators

Dear [legislator]:

UW-Whitewater has the largest teacher education program in the state, with a strong track record of success placing students in teaching positions across the state. Indeed, 84% of our graduates go on to teach in Wisconsin schools. Our role in preparing future educators has never been more critical amid a statewide teacher shortage.

Many new teachers are graduating from college with substantial loans. This debt is like an anchor around their ankles. In a state that ranks in the bottom half of average teacher salary, we need to do more for our K-12 instructors. An important step is to expand student loan forgiveness. Students receive up to \$10,000 in state loans per year, to a maximum of \$30,000. In the expansion of student loan forgiveness, 25% of their loans for each year would be forgiven by the state only if these students meet the employment requirements as teachers.

Future educators provide a vital service to communities across Wisconsin. These educators prioritize our children; we have a duty to prioritize them. If we don't, outstanding potential teachers will avoid the field altogether, or leave the state for higher-paying positions.

Sincerely,

[name + hometown + zip code]

Stipends for Student Teachers in the State

Dear [legislator]:

As many people are concerned, Wisconsin is facing a statewide teacher shortage. Part of the reason for this teacher shortage is that outstanding potential teachers are wary of going into the field because of concerns about future debt. Not only do they incur tuition and living costs while earning their credentials, but they work unpaid as student teachers as part of that training. Every year, these financial realities compel exceptional students with incredible potential to stay away from a field where they can make meaningful contributions. Wisconsin wants and needs these individuals to serve our K-12 community in the years ahead.

Although not currently in the State Budget, I am writing to ask for your support for student teachers receiving a \$500 stipend during their student teaching period. This is a small investment, but it can make a world of difference for our education students and allow them to focus more energy on honing their skills rather than work additional jobs to make ends meet.

Children are our future; we need to support those that are educating them. These selfless individuals already invest so much of themselves in our children. We need to invest in them. This is not an expensive program, but it is worth every penny.

Sincerely,

[name + hometown + zip code]