



Stephen L. Nass

Wisconsin State Representative

February 24, 2011

Kevin P. Reilly, President
University of Wisconsin System
Room 1720 Van Hise Hall
Madison, WI 53706-1559

RE: UW-Madison as a Public Authority

Dear President Reilly:

It's well documented that I have not always shared your vision of higher education on certain issues relating to the administration of the University of Wisconsin System. In fact, we probably differ on more matters than we agree on in terms of the fiscal and policy leadership of the UW System.

However, on the issue of separating UW-Madison from the UW System and creating a public authority to operate that campus, I will oppose this proposal vigorously in the pending biennial budget process. I recognize that this proposal was developed in a cooperative manner between Chancellor Biddy Martin and the administration of Governor Scott Walker.

Frankly, I am disturbed by Chancellor Martin's secretive process to obtain inclusion of this proposal for UW-Madison in the Governor's Biennial Budget Bill. As an employee of the UW System, Chancellor Martin had a specific employment responsibility to obtain permission from the Board of Regents and the President of the UW System to lobby the Governor's Administration for such a major policy initiative.

This new model of governance for UW-Madison will guarantee massive and uncontrolled tuition increases for Wisconsin residents attending that campus. Already, some projections have suggested a 20% tuition increase over the next two academic years, if this public authority becomes law. Those tuition increase levels would be devastating to the middle class families of this state. It would permanently close the door for many of Wisconsin's middle class students to even consider attending our flagship campus.

Additionally, I have severe reservations regarding the public authority's proposed Board of Trustees. In particular, it is unacceptable to me that organizations with financial arrangements with UW-Madison would be guaranteed membership on the Board of Trustees (i.e., the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation, the Wisconsin Alumni Association, and the University of Wisconsin Foundation). These organizations have

specific financial relationships with UW-Madison and Chancellor Biddy Martin that raise serious ethical and legal questions.

Finally, I understand that significant fiscal austerity measures will be proposed for the UW System as a part of the 2011-2013 Biennial Budget. Such actions will be unavoidable and it will become necessary for major reforms within the UW System. However, I will fight to maintain UW-Madison as the flagship institution within the System. Its presence within the System has both financial and academic benefits to all of the other UW System campuses.

I am convinced that separating UW-Madison from the System would be a shortsighted policy with long term negative impacts for students, faculty and the taxpayers. While it would be a major accomplishment personally for Chancellor Biddy Martin and a power grab by a few elites associated with her campus, it would quickly prove to be a terrible policy decision by the Legislature and the Governor.

Sincerely,



Steve Nass

State Representative

31st Assembly District

Chairman, Assembly Colleges and Universities Committee