

UW-Madison to Cut 400 Jobs, Close Programs in Response to Anticipated State Budget

Written by GBP Staff

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UW-Madison Chancellor makes announcement on Friday due to historically-large state budget cuts proposed by Walker Administration. UW will drop courses and reduce class seats. Shortsighted budget continues de-investing in our world class University of Wisconsin System and is devastating to our future competitiveness say officials.

MADISON - Chancellor Rebecca Blank announced on her blog Friday that the University of Wisconsin-Madison will eliminate about 400 positions and will close or restructure several academic programs across campus over the next two years in response to anticipated state budget cuts.

The College of Letters and Science, which teaches nearly 60% of the overall credit hours at UW-Madison, will drop roughly 320 courses across departments by the end of fiscal 2017. Fewer courses and class sections will reduce the total number of class seats by nearly 9,000, according to the college's dean, Karl Scholz.

The course cuts go hand in hand with the elimination of 92 positions in Letters and Science: 48 faculty and 44 academic staff, including instructional staff, Scholz said. Graduate students who teach labs and introductory courses also would be affected as UW-Madison's largest college cuts \$7.4 million, or 5%, of its \$145 million base budget.



Blank said information technology, agriculture and the arts would be among the academic areas facing closures and mergers. But she said all parts of campus will feel the effects of staff reductions and budget cuts.

Ultimately, Blank said, cuts will likely lead to larger class sizes, reduced course options and fewer undergraduate advisers. Retention rates and time to degree also could be affected

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because this is just the beginning of cost-cutting measures, she said.

The job cuts announced Friday are the second major set of job losses linked to the damaging state budget proposal. Last week Slinger-based GeminiCares, Inc. announced they are going out of business and laying off their more than 700 employees due to Governor Walker's dramatic proposed changes to Wisconsin's long-term care system. The news is devastating not only for those who are losing their jobs but also for seniors, people with disabilities and others who depend on these vital services.

Cuts to the UW are very unpopular among Wisconsin residents. The latest Marquette Law poll released yesterday found 70 percent of those surveyed oppose the proposed \$300 million cut to the UW system.

In a statement released Friday in response to the UW-Madison's announcement, Assembly Democratic Leader Peter Barca (D-Kenosha) said "Today's announcement confirms that the Republicans' extreme budget is already leading to hundreds of job losses in our state. At a time when Wisconsin is 40th in the nation in job growth and 42nd in wage growth, the last thing we need to do is dis-invest in our world class higher education system."

"Cutting the University of Wisconsin is not only wildly unpopular – it is also incredibly shortsighted," said Barca. "It is bad enough when one of our Big Ten athletic opponents gets a competitive edge on the playing field, but what's even worse is how other universities are pulling ahead in academics. It's devastating to our future competitiveness when other institutions are making new investments in academics at the same time that we are de-investing in our world class University of Wisconsin System."