

July 20, 2015

AAUP/AFT-Wisconsin Joint Statement on Wisconsin Biennial Budget

The AAUP and AFT-Wisconsin stand together in condemning the attacks on higher education that the Wisconsin Legislature included in its biennial budget, which Governor Walker signed into law last Monday. We call on the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents and the UW System and campus-level administrations to work with their faculty and academic staff to reconstitute the language previously included in Chapter 36 into system-wide and campus policies.

The legislative changes to tenure, due process, and shared governance and the \$250 million cut to the UW System budget are direct attacks on academic freedom and the working conditions of faculty and academic staff as well as the learning conditions for students at the University of Wisconsin. Moreover, they are also an attack on the university as a public good that exists for the benefit of all citizens of the state, a vision of higher education that has shaped the UW System since the formulation of the Wisconsin Idea in 1904.

While we recognize that Governor Walker's line-item veto does preserve job security rights for academic staff, at least for now, we lament that he did not further protect the rights of those who teach and research at the university. We remain especially concerned about the language regarding layoff of tenured faculty due to "a budget or program decision regarding program discontinuance, curtailment, modification, or redirection," a change which could seriously undermine the mission of the university.

We further note that the \$250 million cut to the UW budget, a cut which coincides with the legislature's decision to provide \$250 million in public funding for a new stadium for the Milwaukee Bucks, further underscores the Walker administration's commitment to lining the pockets of billionaire businessmen at the expense of the students and families of the state of Wisconsin.

Now that this budget has been signed into law, we encourage the Board of Regents to move swiftly to put in place policies that follow AAUP policies and standards and we encourage campus administrations to work through the appropriate faculty and academic staff governance bodies to promulgate these policies at the campus level. We also encourage faculty and academic staff at the University of Wisconsin to organize support for such policies on campus through institutions of shared governance and other organizations on campus.

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