



University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

Office of Provost and Vice Chancellor

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August 27, 2018

Ken Menningen,
Chair, UW-Stevens Point Common Council

Mary Bowman
Incoming Chair, UW-Stevens Point Common Council

Dear Ken and Mary,

I'm writing to request your assistance in comprising an Academic and Budget Advisory Work Group to assist me in creating a budget plan for the Division of Academic Affairs by October 12, 2018. (The group would need to meet frequently, likely one to two times a week for two hour periods.) The financial challenges we face at UW-Stevens Point are significant. Having exhausted our former reserves over a period of years to cope with enrollment declines and the continued tuition freeze, it is now imperative that we act quickly to balance revenue and spending. Despite cutting \$2.5 million from our budget last year, our additional decline in enrollment has only increased our ongoing structural deficit. Addressing this issue certainly requires reducing spending. I believe it also requires making appropriate investments to grow enrollment and would ask the group to consider these as well.

We don't yet have a firm budget reduction target from the Chancellor and Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs. However, if we are conservative regarding future enrollment projections, the required reduction within Academic Affairs is likely to be between \$4 and \$6 million from our main campus base GPR budget. Given that roughly 90% of our budget within Academic Affairs supports personnel, we may need to eliminate as many as 60 to 70 FTE positions. The recent addition of branch campuses to UW-Stevens Point has made the situation more complicated. The ongoing structural deficit at these institutions was roughly \$3 million last year and could be higher now. However, the addition of these campuses has also added new opportunities to our array of options, as well as new budget resources that we can utilize across our combined institution.

Consequently, I seek an advisory group to assist in formulating a plan to achieve this budget reduction, while at the same time maximizing our ability to continue serving the educational needs of central and northern Wisconsin. The work of the group will be shaped in the following ways:

- The work of this group will be confined as much as possible to academic restructuring, by which I mean both changes to the curriculum and the organizational structure of the

academic colleges and departments. I believe that both will be necessary to find this level of spending reductions.

- Because the focus is primarily curriculum, the group will be composed of the five deans, ten faculty members appointed by the Faculty Council chairs (outgoing and incoming) to represent the various colleges, two students appointed by SGA, and the Associate Dean for General Education. I will serve as chair. (We will find other opportunities to engage academic and university staff members in discussions.)
- The group will be advisory to the provost. In chairing the group, I will seek broad input and consensus as we move toward finalizing a budget plan, but there will be no formal votes. Given that these are budget-driven decisions, I will assume full responsibility for all final proposals.
- In considering how best to address UW-Stevens Point's current budget situation, this work group will review and consider the various alternatives that have been discussed on campus over the last several months, including Point Forward and the various alternatives offered by the Academic Affairs Committee, the PUDCC, and SGA. It will also include the work done over the summer by various academic departments as well as task forces working on a variety of curricular proposals, including the groups working on revisions to the General Education Program and the UW System Math Initiative.
- Potentially, following our completion of a budget plan, I would also like the work group to advise in the creation of a clear set of metrics by which academic programs will be judged going forward, to ensure that we never again have to make such abrupt financially-driven decisions. This can be accomplished in two ways: by creating a new program review process to replace the current effort, which has few clear metrics and yields few meaningful results; and by finalizing the implementation of a new budget model for the colleges that tangibly links funding to enrollment. Much of the foundational work for both these components is already in place from efforts made in the past two years. I believe it is imperative that we complete these tasks in the year ahead.

I recognize that finalizing an academic and budget restructuring plan will be a difficult and likely thankless task, especially given the short time we have remaining to complete this work. However, I also appreciate the potential opportunity to move this effort forward in partnership with shared governance. Please let me know if this is a direction we can pursue. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Greg Summers

Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs | [UW-Stevens Point](#)

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