

## **Resolution Condemning Academic Policymaking by Administrative Fiat and the Undermining of Shared Governance in the UW System**

*Whereas*, the Higher Learning Commission's guiding values state, "Governance of a quality institution of higher education will include a significant role for faculty, in particular with regard to currency and sufficiency of the curriculum..."<sup>1</sup>; and

*Whereas*, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) states, "Within a college or university, the nature of the accrediting process requires common enterprise among the faculty, the administration, and to some extent the governing board. The appraisal of the academic program should be largely the responsibility of faculty members. They should play a major role in the evaluation of the curriculum...in relation to the institution's objectives and in the light of its financial resources"<sup>2</sup>; and

*Whereas*, the Wisconsin Statutes state, "The faculty of each institution, subject to the responsibilities and powers of the board, the president and chancellor of such institution, shall have the primary responsibility for advising the chancellor regarding academic and educational activities and faculty personnel matters"<sup>3</sup>; and

*Whereas*, the Wisconsin Statutes state, "The academic staff members of each institution, subject to the responsibilities and powers of the board, the president and the chancellor and faculty of the institution, shall have the primary responsibility for advising the chancellor regarding the formulation and review, and shall be represented in the development, of all policies and procedures concerning academic staff members, including academic staff personnel matters"<sup>4</sup>; and

*Whereas*, Article III of the Constitution of the University Faculty and University Academic Staff of UWEC states, "The University Senate is a deliberative body empowered to act for the University Faculty and the Academic Staff in matters of faculty and academic staff responsibility and concern"<sup>5</sup>; and

*Whereas*, some faculty at UW-Stevens Point have alleged that administrators did not properly consult the faculty of that campus before informing them that the Department of Geography and Geology would be eliminated<sup>6</sup>, and that such decision was made as part of a plan to "restructure the College of Letters and Science... and eliminate positions within at least three departments"<sup>7</sup>; and

*Whereas*, some faculty at UW-Superior have alleged that administrators did not properly consult the faculty or academic staff of that campus<sup>8</sup> before informing them that "in consultation with university leaders, the decision has been made to suspend...majors and minors effective

immediately ... [and] ... programs have been placed on 'warning' status effective immediately..."<sup>9</sup>; and

*Whereas*, UW-Superior Chancellor Renée Wachter's claim that "no faculty will be laid off as a result of these suspension" is belied both by reports that she told UW-Superior faculty that cost savings would be achieved by faculty in targeted programs voluntarily leaving and by the Chancellor's power under the new tenure policy to lay off all faculty and staff in a discontinued program (tenured or not) "due to educational considerations" or financial reasons<sup>10</sup>; and

*Whereas*, the actions of the administrations at UW-Stevens Point and UW-Superior have been facilitated by a series of reforms that weaken the voice and autonomy of faculty and staff throughout the UW System, and in doing so, jeopardize the democratic traditions and norms that have made the UW System a world-class institution of public higher education: by weakening tenure,<sup>11</sup> reducing shared governance to a "subordinate" and advisory-only role,<sup>12</sup> and altering the composition of future Chancellor Search and Screen Committees to ensure that both the Committee and process are controlled by The Regents, at the expense of local campus and community stakeholders<sup>13</sup>;

*Be it therefore resolved*, the academic staff and faculty at UW-Eau Claire find the alleged actions to be in violation of the spirit of shared governance and exclusionary of the shared governance bodies of their relevant institutions; and

*Be it further resolved*, the academic staff and faculty at UW-Eau Claire denounce the alleged actions of administration at UW-Superior and UW-Stevens Point; and

*Be it further resolved*, the academic staff and faculty at UW-Eau Claire strongly oppose any future unilateral action taken by administrators at this or any other UW System campus that infringes upon either the ability of university faculty "to exercise its responsibility for the immediate governance of the institution"<sup>14</sup> or the ability of academic staff "to be active participants in the immediate governance of and policy development for the University;"<sup>15</sup> and

*Be it further resolved*, the academic staff and faculty at UW-Eau Claire strongly support a continuation of the open, accountable, and transparent practices of shared governance that the administration at UW-Eau Claire has historically supported through both word and deed.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hlcommission.org/Publications/guiding-values.html>

<sup>2</sup> AAUP Policy Documents and Reports. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. "The Role of the Faculty in the Accrediting of Colleges and Universities. Page 132. Johns Hopkins UP: Washington D.C. 2015

<sup>3</sup> Wisconsin Statute 36.09[4]

<sup>4</sup> Wisconsin Statute 36.09[4m]

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<sup>5</sup> University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Faculty and Academic Staff Rules and Procedures, 13<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2017, p. 12

<sup>6</sup> Personal correspondence from UWSP faculty to AFT-Higher Education Council Email List-serv, September 3, 2017 and October 10, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Lesk, Sari. "UW-Stevens Point plans to cut programs, staff amid declining enrollment," September 14, 2017, *Stevens Point Journal*, <http://www.stevenspointjournal.com/story/news/education/2017/09/14/uw-stevens-point-looks-program-cuts-amid-declining-enrollment/646673001/>

<sup>8</sup> Mangan, Katherine. "Plan to Phase Out 2 Dozen Programs Stuns Faculty at Wisconsin-Superior," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 1, 2017, [http://www.chronicle.com/article/Plan-to-Phase-Out-2-Dozen/241643?cid=wsinglestory\\_hp\\_1](http://www.chronicle.com/article/Plan-to-Phase-Out-2-Dozen/241643?cid=wsinglestory_hp_1)

<sup>9</sup> "Dear Colleagues" letter from Chancellor Renée Wachter, October 31, 2017

<sup>10</sup> Regent Policy Document 20-24, "Procedures Relating to Financial Emergency or Program Discontinuance Requiring Faculty Layoff and Termination"

<sup>11</sup> The removal of tenure from Wisconsin Statutes and the creation/modification of Regent Policy Documents 20-9, 20-23, and 20-24.

<sup>12</sup> The addition of Wisconsin Statutes 36.09[3m] and the modification of 36.09 [4], [4m], and [5].

<sup>13</sup> Regent Policy Document 6-4, "Selection Process for System President, Chancellors, Vice Chancellors and UW System Senior Leadership Positions," as amended October 5, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Faculty and Academic Staff Rules and Procedures, 13<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2017, p. 10

<sup>15</sup> University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Faculty and Academic Staff Rules and Procedures, 13<sup>th</sup> Edition, 2017, p. 11