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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UW-W UNITED OFFICERS MEET WITH UW-W ADMINISTRATORS: DISCUSS MEET AND CONFER RELATIONSHIP AND THE INFLUENCE OF PRESENT AND FUTURE BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS

Meeting Attendees: Chancellor Corey King, Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs John Chenoweth, Faculty Senate Chair Kimberly Nath, UW-W United President Brandon Thomas, UW-W United Vice President David Simmons, and UW-W Secretary Nathan McGovern

“We exist.” - Nathan McGovern

(Whitewater, WI) - UW-W United officers met with administrators and Faculty Senate officers as a "group of faculty/staff" per the request of the Chancellor's office. When asked why the administration would not recognize UW-W United as a legal organization, King expressed his lack of knowledge of Wisconsin labor laws and incorrectly suggested that unions are "illegal" in the state of Wisconsin. UW-W United officers explained that while Act-10, Wis. Stat. 35.095 (3) (a) (2011) strips most public unions of collective bargaining rights, labor organizations have the right to form under U.S. Const. ammend. I. McGovern said "we exist." King said he would look into the matter but never acknowledged UW-W United as a legal organization.

A spirited conversation ensued about the budget and financial state of the university. Administrators painted an optimistic picture of our immediate ability to meet budgetary constraints without eliminating programs or laying off faculty/staff. Nonetheless, the administration communicated the fragile balance of the budget, highlighting the rising institutional costs (healthcare, utilities, etc.) despite the long tuition freeze. King suggested that small shifts in enrollment could lead to significant budgetary deficits.

UW-W United officers expressed concerns about the lack of funding for the UW System and established an expectation that faculty and staff employment should be prioritized regardless of budgetary constraints. McGovern made a strong and impassioned case for protecting tenure as one of the most important components of our limited compensation.

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Administrators did not guarantee that programs and jobs would be safe in the near future. However, Chenoweth said that decisions about the program array will be made in concert with faculty and staff governance. King also informed us that the Deloitte (private consulting firm) report will be coming out at the beginning of April and that it will potentially inform budgetary planning and decisions. UW-W United members have expressed concerns about the report from this agency, so the organization will be monitoring the administration's evaluation and use of the findings.

Finally, Simmons informed King about AFT-Wisconsin's petition for a legal meet-and-confer relationship, which can be accessed in the link below. As the administration has yet to acknowledge UW-W United as a legal organization, the group encourages members and colleagues to sign the petition to pressure administrators across the UW system to treat their local labor organizations with the respect they deserve.

https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/support-our-uw-system-workers-in-their-fight-for-the-public-higher-education-we-all-deserve?link_id=0&can_id=898d2fd8fa3a373d5bccb701076779de&source=email-uw-workers-need-our-support-take-action-now&email_referrer=email_2249199&email_subject=uw-workers-need-our-support-take-action-now

UW-W United officers were grateful for the opportunity the administration offered to discuss workplace issues. Nonetheless, UW-W United does exist and urges the administration to recognize the organization, which is in the best interest of UW-W faculty and staff in their workplace. UW-W United officers made it clear that they want a seat at the table when big decisions about the institution are made. UW-W United also made it clear that it stands up for faculty and academic staff on campus and will hold the administration accountable for decisions that affect the workplace of teachers on campus.