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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **UW-W United condemns hateful demonstration on UW-W campus and calls for political officials to stop demonizing higher education and defend DEI programs and initiatives**

(Whitewater, WI) - UW-W United condemns the hateful demonstration at Knilans Hall on Sunday 1/21 by an alleged white supremacist organization, threatening the safety of our community. We stand in solidarity with our campus community leaders in opposition to the ignorance, fear, and hatred that motivates white supremacist organizations.

It is important to contextualize these events within the ongoing animosity toward Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives from local and national leaders and media. The "deal" that was unduly struck by UW System President Jay Rothman and State Assembly Speaker Robin Vos severely undermines our ability to serve the underrepresented and marginalized groups that hate groups like Blood Tribe target. The misinformed and vitriolic attacks on higher education and DEI initiatives will continue to encourage acts of bigotry, hate, and ultimately violence.

With the xenophobic reactions to a growing migrant community in Whitewater, the community is at a culturally charged inflection point. *We demand that our public officials stop fueling this culture of fear around higher education, immigration, and DEI and protect our most vulnerable community members.*

Events like this are a stark reminder that bigotry continues to be a powerful and destructive force in our society and community. Higher education is supposed to be the antidote to hate, ignorance, and violence. Higher education is supposed to instill forbearance, wisdom, and virtue. It is why we need to invest in and defend DEI rather than marginalize it. We need to re-invest in the workers who educate the public so that our universities can fulfill their responsibility to the next generation of labor.