

Feb. 14, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

When we focused on the “Gold Arrow” of Nurturing Human Resources for 2010-11, little did we imagine what elevated significance that would have or how our environment could have changed so rapidly. When we included “empathy” in our new mission statement, could we have thought that we would need some of that empathy ourselves?

As I’m sure most of you are aware, the so-called “budget repair bill” with all the contents I listed on Friday will move to the legislature this week and passage in some form is expected. Over these intervening days, I am talking to our Regents, our regional legislators, and business and community leaders who might exert some influence on its outcome. I know that many of you are working individually and collectively to mitigate consequences of the governor’s proposals on our neighbors and ourselves.

There are many misperceptions about state employee and specifically university employee salaries and benefits as being significantly above those in the private sector. We all need to be aware of the facts and make sure that we communicate them to our legislators and fellow citizens. Here, for example, are the median annual base salaries of our employee categories:

Classified employees (419 employees) \$31,540

Unclassified (810) \$53,217

LTE (88 who are in the WRS) \$25,140.

Since the governor’s announcement on Friday, I have been truly impressed by our campus community’s response. I share the genuine concern for those most affected by regressive elements of this proposal, namely LTE and low-salary employees. We have been working with the Women’s Commission to see how we might address the difficult status of LTE employees, and this bill will make that task even more urgent.

In your emails and conversations, I see and hear a deep commitment on this campus to a strong Eau Claire culture that puts quality, each other and our students at the very front of our concerns. I am very proud of the distinctiveness of your responses to these challenges. It is that distinctiveness that has made us a great university and that will keep us strong in a changing environment in the future. As individuals and organizations consider their ongoing responses, keep in mind our responsibility to one another and to our students who are continuously shouldering a greater share of the cost of their own education.

This current wave of legislation likely will not be the last of changes we face. I will continue to provide updated information as it becomes available, and additional information is also available online through our main Web page under Budget Update (<http://www.uwec.edu/News/statebudget.htm>).

Chancellor Brian Levin-Stankevich, Ph.D.