

## Chancellor's state budget update

**The following e-mail message was sent Feb. 18, 2009, to all UW-Eau Claire employees.**

TO: UW-Eau Claire Faculty and Staff

FROM: Chancellor Brian Levin-Stankevich

Last evening Governor Doyle announced his plans for addressing Wisconsin's \$5.7 billion budget shortfall. We are encouraged by his intent to protect quality higher education in Wisconsin. (You can read more about the budget at <http://www.wisgov.state.wi.us/>.)

While his commitment to higher education is greatly appreciated, the fiscal reality is that his proposed 2009-11 budget — which includes UW System cuts of up to \$174 million — will result in a significant budget reduction on our campus.

In the coming week we will learn more from President Reilly and UW System staff about the specific impact that this proposed budget will have on our university. In the meantime, there are some important things we do know now.

First, we appreciate that the Governor's proposed reduction plan has given us some flexibility in how we adjust our resources. The flexibility does not, however, make for easy decisions. We anticipate that the major impact on UW-Eau Claire's budget in the first year can be met without making permanent structural realignments. Those decisions, which may indeed be necessary in the second year of the biennium, will have the benefit of being fully informed by the PEEQ process.

How we make our difficult choices has never been more important. I have asked each division and college to provide recommendations for budget reductions and have already received hundreds of suggestions from faculty, staff and students. This input will be seriously considered. We also will use our PEEQ results, when we know them this fall, to refine and target our dollars even more strategically to our core strengths in the second year of the biennium.

Second, the budget recommends keeping tuition increases modest — between 5 percent and 6 percent, and includes increases to financial aid for resident undergraduates with need and who are below median state-wide family income levels.

Finally, we know the budget includes a zero percent pay plan for each year of the biennium. While certainly disappointing, it is not surprising given the magnitude of the state's fiscal problems, and in comparison with the kinds of personnel actions many other states have been forced to take. The proposed budget does allocate \$15 million to UW System for recruitment and retention.

Despite the difficult economic times ahead for Wisconsin, the Governor's budget reflects a shared belief that higher education remains a critical resource in helping our state weather what is to come. This is not a time for us to hunker down and avoid tough

choices. If UW-Eau Claire is to contribute to Wisconsin's future, we must take our vision for becoming a premier institution even more seriously. We must base our resource choices not on what will preserve the status quo, but on what will enable us to grow and to become the university we want to be.

This is a time to think in new and creative ways about how UW-Eau Claire can continue to give students extraordinarily high-quality educational experiences, graduate students in a timely manner, and provide our state and region with exceptional graduates who are prepared to be globally-competitive leaders in their communities and in their professions. As I noted earlier, I will share with you information as it becomes available regarding the budget and the impact it will have on our campus.

While the months ahead certainly will be challenging, the work we already have done on our campus through our strategic planning and PEEQ processes have positioned us well to address these challenges in a way that will keep UW-Eau Claire moving forward.