



January 14, 2021

The Honorable Tony Evers, Governor
State of Wisconsin
State Capitol
Madison, WI

Re: 2021-23 State Capital Budget, UW-Eau Claire Science and Health Sciences Building

Dear Governor Evers:

On behalf of the Chippewa Valley area business community, we're writing to ask you to include the second phase of funding for the UW-Eau Claire Science & Health Sciences Building in your 2021-23 State Capital Budget. Replacing Phillips Hall has been and remains the Chamber's highest priority for the past two budget cycles. We are fortunate our area bipartisan legislative delegation agrees.

We appreciated your leadership in 2019 in proposing and securing the funding for phase one. As you said here in Eau Claire on the day you announced it, "The state's investment will leverage taxpayer dollars to support the Chippewa Valley's emergence as a healthcare innovation hub, while also investing in a visionary campus that is tackling some of the most pressing healthcare and technology issues facing rural Wisconsinites."

Indeed, there is no other current project that is more important to the future of our regional economy and workforce than this urgently needed replacement for the aging and outdated Phillips Hall. In our lobbying effort two years ago, we told lawmakers that this project would be a model for how to build major projects across the system, which is one of the primary reasons it received so much support. Including the second phase of funding in this current budget cycle is essential to successfully achieving the goal for UWEC to design a unified, efficient building, thereby allowing for a shortened construction timeline, cost savings for taxpayers, and timely completion to successfully realize all of its potential benefits.

And as you asserted in your original recommendation two years ago, the positive ramifications for our regional economy and workforce go well beyond the direct impact for one UW institution. Those include:

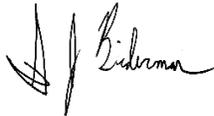
- The innovative research collaboration with Mayo Clinic Health System that will leverage benefits well beyond the campus boundaries, yielding advances in medicine and addressing critical shortages in rural healthcare.
- Its focus on research and collaboration with area business and industry, which will spark innovation and new business spin-offs, key components to a stronger economic future for our state.
- Creation of opportunities that will enhance Wisconsin's ability to attract and retain talent in STEM fields, including the long-term goal with the Mayo partnership of making UWEC one of the nation's top Pre-Medicine undergraduate institutions.

- The emerging partnership with Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) that includes its recent donation of a \$350,000 high performance computer cluster, matched with the same amount from the National Science Foundation. This partnership plans to establish the Blugold Center for High Performance Computing with significantly larger supercomputer systems in this new building. HPE recently purchased Cray and will be making a public announcement about their long-term plans for the Chippewa Valley sometime in the next month.

UW-Eau Claire continues to build a strong track record as a true community partner, even more so with this project representing an investment in northwest Wisconsin's core economic infrastructure. UW System Interim President Tommy Thompson has personally told us of his support for this project, and has frequently spoken about its attributes, including at a recent Wisconsin Tech Council meeting where he highlighted the compelling need for the upgrade of UWEC's science facilities.

Thank you for your consideration. We would welcome any dialogue or questions about the importance of this project to our community, and the timeliness of continuing it in this budget cycle.

Sincerely,



Scott Biederman, Chair
Board of Directors



David W. Minor
President & CEO

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cc: Secretary Joel Brennan, Dept. of Administration
UW System Interim President Tommy Thompson

Chippewa Valley Regional Legislators
Senator Kathy Bernier
Senator Janet Bewley
Senator Jeff Smith
Senator Rob Stafsholt
Rep. Dave Armstrong
Rep. Jodi Emerson
Rep. Jesse James
Rep. Clint Moses
Rep. Warren Petryk
Rep. Treig Pronschinske
Rep. Donna Rozar
Rep. Rob Summerfield
Rep. Shannon Zimmerman

Co-Chairs, Joint Committee on Finance
Senator Howard Marklein
Rep Mark Born

State Building Commission Leg Members
Senator Andre Jacque
Senator Jerry Petrowksi
Senator Janis Ringhand
Rep Jill Billings
Rep Rob Swearingen
Rep Robert Wittke