October 19, 2018

UW System Board of Regents
1860 Van Hise Hall
1220 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706

RE: Letter of Support for UW-Eau Claire Science and Health Sciences building project

At their meeting of October 9, the Eau Claire City Council affirmed their support for funding the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire’s Science and Health Sciences building in the 2019-21 state budget, and encourages the Governor of Wisconsin and Wisconsin State Legislature to support this project as passed by the UW System Board of Regents. It is essential that this building project be approved for $109 million in the 2019-21 budget and $147 million in advanced enumeration for the 2021-23 state budget to ensure that this new facility is prepared to serve UW-Eau Claire and this region well into the future.

This proposed building will have a major impact on northwestern Wisconsin’s ability to attract and retain talent in STEM fields, while also increasing capacity for pre-professional science and health sciences education to address this region’s critical shortages in rural healthcare and innovation. The UW-Eau Claire Science and Health Sciences building should be recognized as a valuable investment in critical economic infrastructure that can help ensure northwestern Wisconsin’s long-term economic vitality. For the Chippewa Valley to remain vibrant and competitive economically, it is essential that the university’s talented STEM and pre-professional health sciences students have the opportunity to conduct collaborative research alongside industry leaders in state-of-the-art facilities. UW-Eau Claire’s current science building, Phillips Hall, cannot meet the existing demands of a modern STEM education, let alone provide for future growth. A new facility with room for flexible, interdisciplinary research would be a strategic investment in this area’s burgeoning high-tech and healthcare industries.

In their resolution, attached, the Eau Claire City Council members indicate that advanced enumeration for funding in the 2021-23 Wisconsin State Budget is essential to ensure this project is completed without additional inflation and that Phillips Hall can be demolished in a timely manner to eliminate ongoing maintenance and operational expenses. Further, in the resolution, Eau Claire City Council members encourage the construction of a building that achieves high energy efficiency and environmental standards, in keeping with sustainability goals shared by UW-Eau Claire and the City and recognizing the significance of the proposed building site neighboring the Putnam Park State Natural Area and the scenic Chippewa River.

The interconnections with business and healthcare innovators made possible by this project, like UW-Eau Claire’s research collaboration with Mayo Clinic, will increase the likelihood that these bright young minds stay in Wisconsin after graduation. This project has our City Council’s enthusiastic and resolute support.

Sincerely,

Dale Peters
City Manager
cjm

Attachment
RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION INDICATING SUPPORT FOR THE UW-EAU CLAIRE SCIENCE AND HEALTH SCIENCES BUILDING PROJECT.

WHEREAS, the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire has a significant impact on the recruitment and retention of high-talent students to northwestern Wisconsin; and

WHEREAS, UW-Eau Claire’s science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and health sciences graduates possess crucial skillsets that meet talent needs for this region; and

WHEREAS, UW-Eau Claire’s current science building, Phillips Hall, was constructed in 1963 and 1966 and was not designed to accommodate modern scientific instruction and inquiry; and

WHEREAS, Phillips Hall’s infrastructure is so obsolete and inefficient that, while it is only one of 33 buildings maintained by UW-Eau Claire, it accounts for 27 percent of all annual campus work orders; and

WHEREAS, Phillips Hall’s teaching and research spaces are inflexible and do not allow for the interdisciplinary collaboration with outside industries that typify a modern STEM education; and

WHEREAS, conducting research alongside industry partners provides valuable experience to undergraduates that, in turn, makes them more attractive to prospective employers; and

WHEREAS, these experiences also expose students to professional settings and business organizations in the surrounding area, increasing the likelihood that they choose to live and work in this region after graduation; and

WHEREAS, the inability to meet the existing demand for academic research and laboratory spaces is a challenge for industry innovation and student recruitment and retention; and

WHEREAS, the UW System Board of Regents has approved a plan to replace Phillips Hall with a new UW-Eau Claire Science and Health Sciences building; and

WHEREAS, UW-Eau Claire’s Science and Health Sciences building project requires $109 million in the 2019-21 state budget, including approval for $13.7 million in private philanthropy; and

WHEREAS, this building project requires advanced enumeration of $147 million in the 2021-23 budget, bringing the project’s total budget to $256 million; and
WHEREAS, providing state funding for a new Science and Health Sciences building at UW-Eau Claire would allow for the construction of critical economic infrastructure to support northwestern Wisconsin’s talent recruitment and retention needs in STEM and health sciences fields; and

WHEREAS, state support for a new Science and Health Sciences building at UW-Eau Claire would allow for the construction of a state of the art facility that embodies the university’s commitment to environmental sustainability and technological innovation, replacing one of the most inefficient buildings on campus.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Eau Claire City Council supports the inclusion of UW-Eau Claire’s Science and Health Sciences building in the 2019-21 Wisconsin State Budget as recommended by the UW System Board of Regents.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that advanced enumeration for funding in the 2021-23 Wisconsin State Budget is essential to ensure this project is completed without additional inflation and that Phillips Hall can be demolished in a timely manner to eliminate ongoing maintenance and operational expenses.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Eau Claire City Council encourages the construction of a building that achieves high energy efficiency and environmental standards, in keeping with sustainability goals shared by UW-Eau Claire and the City and recognizing the significance of the proposed building site neighboring the Putnam Park State Natural Area and the scenic Chippewa River.

Adopted,
October 9, 2018

(SEAL)

Vice President/Acting President
Andrew Werthmann

(SEAL)

City Manager Dale Peters

(ATTESTED)

City Clerk Carrie L. Riepl