State Budget Offers a Few Bright Spots

Earlier this summer, Governor Jim Doyle signed the 2009–11 Wisconsin state budget into law. This was an extremely challenging budget, closing a $6.6 billion state budget deficit, but the budget did contain a few items that are favorable to UW–Madison.

Bright Spots

After many years of hard work, UW–Madison faculty, along with all state employees, will be eligible for domestic partner benefits. Benefits become available on January 1, 2010.

PROFS has made enactment of domestic partner benefits a top priority in recent years. We told legislators over and over again that UW–Madison stood out like a sore thumb because we did not offer the benefits. Thanks to the many faculty who contacted their state legislators over the years in support of this much-needed legislation.

The budget also provided $15 million for the recruitment and retention fund, designed to attract and retain high-demand faculty. Competitive compensation for UW–Madison faculty has always been a top priority for PROFS.

Three research projects at UW–Madison also received restricted funds:

- The Wisconsin Institutes of Discovery, $8.2 million
- Wisconsin Bioenergy Initiative, $8.1 million
- Wisconsin Genomics Initiative, $2 million (The Medical College of Wisconsin, UW–Milwaukee, and the Marshfield Clinic also received funds)

Budget Cuts

Several provisions reflect the current financial crisis in the state. The budget calls for a $100 million base budget reduction for the UW System from 2009–11. UW–Madison’s share is $18.5 million per year. Additionally, the budget includes a 1 percent per year across-the-board reduction, resulting in a $5.7 million cut to UW–Madison.

Finally, previously agreed upon 2 percent pay increases were rescinded. In addition, all state employees must accept a furlough of 8 days per year in each of the next two years, essentially a 3.065 percent pay cut for faculty. Particularly frustrating is that even employees funded with outside funds must take the furlough. PROFS communicated the lack of common sense in this proposal, but to no avail.

Collective Bargaining

The biennial budget also included language that provides new rights for faculty and academic staff the opportunity to bargain collectively. While the governor partially vetoed a provision that denied academic staff a choice in collective bargaining, he preserved the criteria outlined by the Faculty Senate in 2002 regarding collective bargaining.

PROFS also worked closely with the Chancellor’s office and State Senator Fred Risser (D-Madison) to change a provision added in the Joint Finance Committee that would have given research assistants collective bargaining rights and required them to join the TAA. PROFS supported legislation that offered RA’s a choice regarding its representation. PROFS also worked to ensure the proper definition of RA was used in the statutes. Both items were included in the final budget.
PLEASE JOIN PROFS TODAY!

PROFS, Inc. is the voice of the UW–Madison faculty in working with the Legislature, state officials, federal officials, and the general public. Our work is never-ending. We thank the 1,000+ members of PROFS who support our efforts. We need the support of the entire faculty to have greater impact. All faculty not currently affiliated with PROFS are invited to join the organization by filling out the dues coupon below and sending it to 258 Bascom Hall.

PROFS, Inc. PAYROLL DEDUCTION

Name of employee ____________________________________________________________

Department ____________________________________________________________________________

In order to activate your deduction, the payroll department requires the following:

1. The last four digits of your Social Security Number __________________________ AND

2. Your Date of Birth ______________________________

I hereby authorize the University of Wisconsin to deduct from my salary each month of the academic year (September through May payrolls) a voluntary contribution to PROFS, Inc. of 1/10 of one percent of my gross salary for that month. This authorization will remain in effect each year until a notice of cancellation is received by the UW–Madison Payroll Office.

Signature _______________________________________________________________________

This authorization should be forwarded to 258 Bascom Hall.

8/09