

The Wisconsin Technical College System Budget

Wisconsin Student Government 2004 Position Paper

Submitted by: Fox Valley Technical College

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The purpose of the Wisconsin Technical College System is to serve Wisconsin residents that seek improved career opportunities and earning potential. This is through 16 separate technical college districts. The main objective of technical colleges is to promote a workforce of skilled employees for Wisconsin's business and industry that will assist the state's economic prosperity. WTCS serves Wisconsin's citizens in economic health, quality of life and most importantly, educational success. The technical colleges fuel a continuous cycle of putting Wisconsin citizens back to work. WTCS graduates stay in Wisconsin and contribute to the tax base.

The budget is broken down into five major funding sources: Property tax, state aid, federal aid, tuition fees, and miscellaneous fees, however contracts with local and state industries and business, campus bookstores and food services are other revenues that contribute to the budget. Wisconsin Student Government student delegates are the voice to not only their local and political leaders within their communities, but to our state legislators and congressional representatives. Our state and country has endured tough economic times, however the WTCS has seen a significant increase in enrollment. As an example, in 2002 the creation of a more focused Homeland Security was formed. Wisconsin Technical Colleges are instrumental in providing the skills and training for public safety careers such as: Police, Fire Fighter, EMS and Nursing. As of fall 2003, out of the sixteen technical college districts, fourteen schools enrollment increased; the lowest at a 3% increase and the highest at a 12.5 % increase from 2002.

WTC students represent over 450,000 Wisconsin residents. We, as voters and taxpayers united to ask our legislators not for an increase or decrease in fiscal funding. Instead, we ask that

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our state representatives maintain and preserve our current budget to secure a financial future for our state and its technical colleges for the following three specific reasons:

1.) **WTCS adapts to the business and industrial needs for the state which promotes direct tax revenue.**

- For every dollar invested in the WTCS, the state of Wisconsin receives two dollars in just over 2 years. This promotes financial stability as taxes are generated for the state of Wisconsin versus other states.
- WTCS graduates account for 3.9 billion dollars of additional annual earnings for Wisconsin.

2.) **In 2002, the Bush administration with the help of Congress established the Homeland Security Administration. Terrorism is a threat to both national and local security; therefore Wisconsin Technical Colleges are instrumental in providing the skills and training for public safety careers.**

- With a maintained budget for every credit completed in the fields of health care and public safety, a WTCS student will average a \$131 per year in the work force; for every fulltime year, they will earn an additional \$3940 per year. An educated and thusly financially rewarded graduate will provide a better-prepared first responder to terrorist threats.

3.) **By the year 2005, 80% of the jobs in Wisconsin will require a post secondary degree, while 20% will only require a Bachelors degree. Therefore, it is imperative that our legislators maintain flexible funding through increased state higher education grants similar to the federally funded Perkins Acts and Adult Education and Family Literacy Act.**

- General Purpose Revenue or Wisconsin Higher Education grants are funded by state revenue tax dollars. The allocated tax dollars for the WTCS schools is critical to both our state and nation for the following reasons:
 - 1.) Wisconsin's health care industry is at a critical standpoint. Over the next ten years there will be a demand for health care jobs to supplement the increase of elderly citizens. Wisconsin's Health Care and Education Grants purpose is to increase student enrollment through health care courses and programs to keep current with new technology.
 - 2.) Wisconsin has allocated grant funds to assist displaced homemakers. This grant focuses on reducing barriers to employment and allows participants to obtain the skills needed for both personal and educational development.

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- 3.) Our manufacturing industry is moving into the next generation of technology. Instead of manufacturers moving their businesses to other states, the WTCS contributes to supplying the manufacturing workforce with skilled workers. State grant money allows Wisconsin citizens to have better earning potential and quality of life by remaining in the state of Wisconsin and contributing to the tax base.
- General Purpose Revenue Grants also coincide with other federal funding for students. These grants provide services to assist students to stay in school and complete their degrees. Two specific federal grants have assisted WTCS students' for the following reasons:
 - 1.) The Perkins Fund provides the WTCS \$14 million in funding each year.
 - 2.) The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act serves 73,000 Wisconsin residents annually in basic educational services such as English as a Second Language and in work place literacy.