

Wisconsin Student Government

Position Paper 2009

WSG supports increased state funding for the Wisconsin Technical College System.

WSG supports improving financial aid resources for technical college students.

WSG supports increased credit mobility.

WSG supports adequate state funding for the veterans tuition remission program.

The students of our Wisconsin Student Government are aware that we face challenging times in our regional, national, and world economies. The students of our technical colleges are experiencing these hardships in a very direct way. We acknowledge the need to address our tax policy with sound judgment and an eye to our future through wise investment.

Wisconsin's Technical Colleges (WTCS) are the most common reeducation system for dislocated workers. As our state unemployment rates rise rapidly we must prepare for the influx of residents seeking this reeducation through the WTCS. Our state's technical colleges are well organized to quickly adapt to meet the needs of our community, but failure to support this system will inhibit Wisconsin's potential for recovery and continued success.

Investment in our technical college system provides the most beneficial return on taxpayer funds. An independent study by CCBenefits found that each public \$1 invested in the Wisconsin Technical College System generates \$2 dollars in new state tax revenue within two years. In addition to that study, an independent 2007 study by the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance found that each \$1 invested in the WTCS generates approximately \$4 dollars in new state economic output.

It is the responsibility of our elected representatives to acknowledge this opportunity for the economic and social success of our state. *Investment in our technical colleges is vital to the success of Wisconsin.*

State Funding For the Wisconsin Technical College System

The Wisconsin Technical College System is an educational institution that is a proven benefit to our communities and a sound investment of our state's assets. WTCS educates approximately one in ten Wisconsin adults. Nearly ninety percent of its graduates remain Wisconsin residents who contribute to the growth and success of our economy. In educating the employees that contribute to our state every day, the Wisconsin Technical College System is well positioned to adapt to the needs of businesses and industries in our state. It is a vital part of our state's future successes.

As employer and student demand have increased to meet the needs of our changing workforce, so have funding needs. Funding at the state level has not been sufficient to address WTCS efforts to meet these needs. The state's investment in WTCS for fiscal year 2007-08 represented less than 13% of the system's operating expense. WTCS spending is generally retained in-state, and it represents a positive investment by our government in the people and businesses supported by its activity. When funding does not meet the needs of our technical colleges the costs are shifted to the students and local residents. They, in turn, are denied the opportunity to help Wisconsin succeed when they are unable to shoulder the additional financial burden. By increasing our state-level funding we offer these opportunities to our neighbors and employers, and we build healthier communities.

By acting in support of WTCS now, the state supports our future workforce, grows our economy and meets the needs of future businesses. By the year 2012 Wisconsin will see more individuals retiring than entering the workforce. If we are not able to meet the needs of our business and industry we will not be able to retain their residency. The manufacturing, trades, and the healthcare industries will be first affected by the aging workforce, and these represent a significant part of our State's economy. ***We ask you to support the Next Generation Workforce investment in technical college as a priority in the 2009-2011 state budget.***

Financial Aid (Wisconsin Higher Education Grant Funding)

Our state's need-based financial aid to students is not matching the increasing costs of tuition. Additional investment in the Wisconsin Higher Education Grant for our technical colleges is needed to meet the demand presented by our students. The rate of increase in financial aid funding for technical college students over the past twelve years is approximately one-fifth that of the increase for the UW system. This discrepancy is placing additional financial stress on nearly ten percent of our state's population.

Students of the Wisconsin Technical College system are met with the largest need gap of any other students in the state. By closing the need gap (education vs. financial aid, income, other financial resources) for our technical students our state will greatly benefit in the increased growth rate of an adaptive, progressive, and highly valued workforce. ***We ask you to support the Higher Education Aids Board request for new investment in Wisconsin Technical College funding in the 2009-2011 budget.***

Increased Credit Mobility

The WTCS and University of Wisconsin System are both indispensable assets to our state that are designed to meet two distinct needs of our community. The UW system focuses on baccalaureate and graduate degree programs while our technical colleges specialize in career-oriented technical and vocational education. However, in a continually changing environment the needs of students are often found to be met by each institution at some point in their careers.

Sources Cited

Wisconsin Technical College System

Wisconsin Technical College District Boards Association

As our state economy continues to grow and develop to meet the needs of a global economy the people who support our economy have educational demands that are equally adaptive. The technical degree an individual has may eventually be insufficient to meet the requirements of their profession, and they must pursue additional university instruction. Likewise, many employers are finding their staff with the baccalaureate educations require additional training that can be acquired at a technical college.

Our present structure of credit transfer between the WTCS and UW system is not meeting the demand of our residents. Given this situation our students are forced to seek outside resources to fulfill their education needs which can often be met out-of-state. This structure does not foster the growth that we seek for our state, and *we ask that you support continued efforts to ensure WTCS students are able to transfer credits to the UW at a rate that matches much better transfer rates to private and out-of-state colleges and universities.*

State Support for Veterans Tuition Remission

The veteran's tuition remission program provides a 100% tuition remission for veterans and for family members of veterans killed or disabled during their service. This program was last funded at \$11.6 million to partially reimburse the WTCS and UW institutions for the cost of remission to eligible beneficiaries. This represents approximately 22% of the overall cost of the program. This under funding has resulted in program cost shifts to the students and local communities of our schools.

WSG honors and respects the service of our veterans and their families. Unfortunately, our students and communities are not in a position to bear the burden of funding veteran's tuition remission. *We ask you to support the full funding of the cost of veterans tuition remissions at technical colleges in order to discontinue shifting these costs to non-veteran student tuition and property taxes.*

Sources Cited

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