

Wisconsin Student Government

Position Paper 2010

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 and clarification for the veteran's education benefits.

The students of our Wisconsin Student Government are aware of the challenging times in our regional, state, and national economies. The students of our technical colleges have been tasked as the rebuilding force for our future economy. In order to be that force, we require the best training and facilities available to be as effective as possible when we reach the work force.

Investment in our technical college system provides the most beneficial return on taxpayer funds. An independent study by CCBenefits found that each public dollar invested in the Wisconsin Technical College System generates two 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 dollar invested in the WTCS generates approximately four dollars in new state economic output.

It is the responsibility of our elected representatives to acknowledge Wisconsin Technical Colleges as a resource. *Investing in Wisconsin Technical Colleges is vital to the rebuilding and success of Wisconsin's economy.*

State Funding for the Wisconsin Technical College System

The Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) 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.

Since 2000, WTCS full time equivalent students have increased from 60,000 to nearly 90,000. During this time period state aid has remained relatively the same. This translates to a forty five percent erosion in state support per student in just nine years. When funding does not meet the needs of our technical colleges, the costs are shifted to students and residents. New state investment will help to alleviate pressure on taxpayers and students while promoting job growth and economic recovery.

By supporting WTCS now, the state supports the future workforce, economic growth, and needs of future business. By the year 2012, Wisconsin will see more individuals retiring than entering the workforce. If we are unable to meet the demands of industry we will not be able to retain their residency. As these industries represent a large portion of our state's economy, losing them will be detrimental to Wisconsin's economic stability. ***We ask you to support the next generation of workforce by investing in Wisconsin Technical Colleges as a priority in the state's 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 University of Wisconsin 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

WTCS and University of Wisconsin Systems are both indispensable assets to our state that are designed to meet two distinct needs. The UW System focuses on baccalaureate and graduate degree programs, while our technical colleges cater to workforce-orientated technical and vocational education. However, an individual with a technical degree may eventually be insufficient to meet the requirements of a constantly changing workforce and will require additional education. Likewise, many employers are finding their staff with baccalaureate educations require additional training the can be acquired at a technical college.

Our present systems of credit transfer between WTCS and the UW System is not meeting the demands of industry and residents. Given this situation, our students are forced to seek out-of-state alternatives in order to meet their education needs. With greater credit mobility, industries will be able to send more employees to state educational facilities for additional training. This increased training will greatly benefit local and state industry. ***We ask that you support continued efforts to ensure WTCS students are able to transfer credits to the UW system at a rate that matches transfer rates to private and out-of-state colleges and universities.***

Veterans Educational Benefits

The state system for veterans education benefits has recently been revised. The new system of veteran tuition remission is very difficult to understand. Many veterans are unaware of their current benefits and how to apply them. In an economy where more and more young people are joining the military in hopes of receiving educational assistance, a well-defined and appropriate level of aid is necessary. Our veterans have represented our cities, counties, state and nation with the highest level professionalism and dedication to duty. *We ask that you support their dedication with an educational benefit system that is easy to understand and adequate to meet the costs of state education.*