

**From:** [Summers, Greg](#)  
**Subject:** Statement Regarding the Proposal from President Cross  
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Colleagues,

I'm sure you've all seen the news stories regarding [President Cross's proposal](#) to the Board of Regents suggesting a systemwide program prioritization exercise and the possible consolidation of academic programs. This would be unnerving under normal circumstances, I know. But coming amid a pandemic, it is even more so.

Here is what I know thus far. Until this morning, I had heard President Cross allude only vaguely in calls with the chancellors about the need to look carefully at the program array. Several weeks ago, he asked System Vice President Anny Morrobel-Sosa to work with the provosts on this idea. During our weekly provost meetings, we've discussed it, again vaguely, for a few minutes here and there. But until this morning, I was unaware there would be a Regent proposal, and unaware of any defined outcomes or timelines for this initiative.

Some newspapers have likened this proposal to a statewide version of Point Forward. Given how fraught that discussion remains on our campus, I've come to hate mention of these words as much you likely do. Nevertheless, the comparisons are fair, so I propose we try to learn from our experience.

As your provost, I made lots of mistakes in those discussions. I failed to push for clearly defined metrics to guide our own program discussions, I failed to communicate with enough urgency the magnitude and immediacy of our financial issues, and I failed to work as closely with faculty, staff members, and students as I could have. Ultimately, I left the campus feeling that Point Forward was a plan and not a process or a proposal. But we've all worked hard in the past year to learn from and overcome our mistakes, myself included. We've improved our communication and collaboration; the campus is formulating a more focused strategic plan; and governance has defined clear program metrics and provided thoughtful recommendations on the implementation of a new budget model. Whatever process UW System is now launching, we are better prepared to work together to participate.

And we must work together. While the pandemic appears to have widened many of the social and political rifts that divide our nation, at UW-Stevens Point we have united in so many ways that offer promise and hope. Let's please continue to work with one another in that spirit.

This morning, I reached out to Mary Bowman and Jason D'Acchioli and promised that Common Council will be deeply engaged in whatever program prioritization lies ahead. Mary and I will both insist that faculty, staff members, and students are also involved at the System level. The challenges we face in higher education were real before the pandemic, and they are

more urgent now. We must not pretend otherwise. But equally, we must confront these problems together as a community.

Thanks very much.

Greg

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