

From: Campus Announcements

Sent: Friday, May 29, 2015 9:21 PM

Subject: Campus Announcements - Joint Finance Committee action, Budget update #17

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

The Joint Finance Committee today voted to recommend a smaller cut to the UW System budget -- \$250 million, rather than \$300 million as the governor first proposed. While a large cut, we welcome any reduction.

The best news for UW-Stevens Point is the Joint Finance Committee approved differential tuition for our campus – if students support it in a referendum. We have long sought differential tuition, in place at 10 of 13 comprehensive UW campuses, as a way to level the playing field. The additional tuition would relieve bottleneck courses and provide academic advising so students can graduate on time. Our Student Government Association has done an outstanding job in leading the charge to adopt differential tuition and will likely prepare a student referendum for late in the fall semester.

Other good news for UW-Stevens Point is funding was both restored and increased to support the Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facility in Bayfield and the Paper Science and Engineering's paper machine operation.

We are grateful to the Joint Finance Committee for including differential tuition in the omnibus motion. We appreciate their efforts and those of our legislators and others who have worked to restore special funding of select programs and to lower the budget cut. My stretch goal is to get through this without any involuntary layoffs, and reducing the cut by \$50 million will be helpful in trying to meet that goal.

Joint Finance recommended significant changes to faculty tenure and shared governance. We will analyze these and other changes and provide more information as it develops.

The committee supported a tuition freeze for state resident undergraduates for the next two years.

Attached is the Joint Finance Committee omnibus motion and an initial summary of the changes to the governor's proposal adopted by the committee, prepared by the UW System Budget Office.

Today's action is a recommendation from the Joint Finance Committee. It's important to note that the budget is not final until the Assembly and Senate approve, and the governor signs it. At that time – which could be late June – we expect to learn the actual cut for UW-Stevens Point.

We will continue to follow the legislative process and work with our Budget Review Advisory Council and our shared governance groups on how to implement the changes.

Recent months have been challenging for all of us. I am proud of the unwavering support and professionalism our faculty, staff members and students have shown throughout this process. I remain hopeful about the future and our commitment to provide students the best possible education at an affordable price.

Sincerely,

Bernie L. Patterson, Chancellor