



July 22, 2010

Mary Jo Green, Chair
Connie Hutchison, Executive Secretary
Higher Educational Aids Board
131 W. Wilson Street
PO Box 7885
Madison, WI 53707-7885

Dear Board Chair Green and Executive Secretary Hutchison:

On behalf of the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) Board and students across the state, we request that the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) seek additional grant funding for WTCS students through the Wisconsin Higher Education Grant (WHEG) and the Undergraduate Minority Student Retention grant. We urge HEAB to include requests for increased appropriations for these programs in its 2011-13 biennial budget proposal and seek a statutory change that ties future increases in WTCS WHEG to annual increases in WTCS tuition.

As you know, significant numbers of WTCS students have limited financial resources. During the 2008-09 academic year, 64,091 WTCS students (17.8% of statewide enrollment) qualified as economically disadvantaged under federal definitions. Of WTCS students who apply for financial aid, 36.3% are not expected to contribute to their educational costs under federal ability-to-pay calculations because their financial resources are so limited. In contrast, only 16.3% of Wisconsin's independent college and university students and 14.7% of UW System students are not expected to contribute to their educational costs under federal ability-to-pay calculations. WTCS students have the greatest unmet financial need when compared to University of Wisconsin and Wisconsin private college students. According to HEAB, WTCS student average unmet financial need in 2008-09 equaled 38.0% of the average cost of education.

State funding for the WTCS WHEG grants has not met demand in several years. Almost 25,000 WTCS students did not receive the WHEG award for which they were eligible during the 2009-10 academic year because the WTCS WHEG appropriation is woefully underfunded. By May 2010, WTCS WHEG was fully awarded for the entire 2010-2011 academic year even as the number of financial aid applications continues to increase.

The WTCS Board realizes that HEAB, like all state agencies, will likely seek to exercise restraint in its 2011-13 biennial budget request. At the same time, we cannot ignore the financial

Daniel Clancy, President

4622 University Avenue, PO Box 7874 Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7874 608.266.1207

TTY: 608.267.2483 Fax: 608.266.1690 e-mail: info@wtcsystem.org

www.wtcsystem.org www.witechcolleges.com

needs of our students and the important role WTCS graduates play in improving the state's long-term economic health. Therefore, to address the immediate need for additional student financial aid resources, the WTCS Board respectfully asks that the HEAB 2011-13 budget request include:

- **\$23.4 million GPR for WTCS Wisconsin Higher Education Grants, including an additional \$11 million in FY 2011-12 and an additional \$12.4 million in FY 2012-13.** This increase would help ensure continued access for the growing number of WTCS students needing financial assistance to attend college and reduce the unmet financial need of WTCS students.
- **\$253,900 GPR for Minority Undergraduate Retention grants, including an additional \$81,900 in FY 2011-12 and \$172,000 in FY 2012-13.** This increase would help reduce the financial barriers of Wisconsin students of color in accessing education and training that lead to high-skill, high-wage careers.
- **a statutory change that links WTCS WHEG increases to tuition (program fee) increases.** The WTCS Board believes this change is important to ensure that the gap does not continue to increase between the WHEG available for WTCS students and the demand for these grants.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the issues before HEAB that require action in the next biennial budget. We hope this is helpful to your deliberations.

Sincerely,



Stan Davis
President
Wisconsin Technical College System Board



Daniel Clancy
President
Wisconsin Technical College System

cc: WTCS Board Members
HEAB Board Members
DOA Budget Analyst