

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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News Release

## Wisconsin drops to 44<sup>th</sup> in public funding of four-year universities

*Nearly 800 signers, including more than 500 business groups or officials, support increased investment in the Universities of Wisconsin*

GREEN BAY, Wis.—Wisconsin is now 44<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states in public funding of four-year universities – a drop of one spot – according to the latest national study of higher education funding.

Universities of Wisconsin President Jay Rothman said today that the State Higher Education Finance report, released this week and covering funding in 2024, is further evidence of the urgency for more state investment in public universities.

"Wisconsin is renowned for its affordable and accessible public universities. Yet we can't languish at the bottom anymore without seriously jeopardizing Wisconsin's economic vibrancy," said Rothman. "The budget proposal before the state legislature for the UWs would simply bring us up to the middle nationally in funding, but it would provide essential investments to preserve the quality and advance the innovation that Wisconsin expects of its UWs."

Rothman also announced today that nearly 800 business officials, business groups, and individuals had signed a letter of support for additional state investment in the UWs. They include 20 state and regional business organizations that have signed on their support for the UWs.

"The UWs are proud to be joined today by business leaders to share the support of hundreds of representatives of businesses and organizations throughout the state," said Rothman. "Coming from the private sector, they know what I know – that Wisconsin will not win the war for talent if it does not make sound and competitive investments in higher education."

He made the announcement ahead of a panel discussion at TitletownTech about the role the UWs play in the economic vibrancy of northeast Wisconsin as well as the entire state.

Among the signatories are representatives of the following: Green Bay Packers, Milwaukee Bucks, Northwestern Mutual, Sentry Insurance, Rockwell Automation, Epic Systems, Skyward, Delta Dental, Bartolotta Restaurants, Quad, Snap-on, Exact Sciences, Uline, and Oshkosh Corp. Twenty business groups from around the state have also signed on, including New North, Greater Oshkosh Economic Development Corporation, Oshkosh Chamber, Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce, Greater Milwaukee Committee, BioForward, HOAN Group, and the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce.

"When the Green Bay Packers need talent, we scout more than the football field," said Packers President and CEO Mark Murphy. "In order to remain one of the most successful and beloved sports franchises in the world, we also need that talent the Universities of Wisconsin develop for our state."

"From day one, TitletownTech has partnered with the Universities of Wisconsin because breakthrough ideas become great companies when education and industry collaborate," said Craig Dickman, managing partner of TitletownTech. "Investment in our universities unlocks the next generation of entrepreneurs and innovations that will drive Wisconsin's economy forward."

Dickman is a member of the panel at TitledTownTech to be led by Regent Ashok Rai, President and CEO of Prevea Health. In addition to Dickman, the panel features Anna Murphy-Pociask, Marketing Coordinator, Oshkosh Convention and Visitors Bureau; April León, Manager of Nursing Education, Aurora BayCare Medical Center, Green Bay; and Jose Villa, Vice President of Commercial Lending, Fox Communities Credit Union, De Pere.

"Larger employers, especially in health care, know of the critical need to recruit and retain talent here in Wisconsin," Rai said. "Our UWs, from our comprehensives to our flagship, are key to meeting the future workforce needs here in northwest Wisconsin and across the entire state."

The State Higher Education Finance report (SHEF) was produced by the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association and has been a respected source on state higher education funding for years. It defines public funding as both state funding and tuition. Find the report, including state rankings in Figure 4.2, at <https://shef.sheeo.org/report/>.

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*The Universities of Wisconsin serve approximately 164,400 students. Awarding nearly 36,000 degrees annually, these 13 public universities are Wisconsin's talent pipeline, putting graduates in position to increase their earning power, contribute to their communities, and make Wisconsin a better place to live. Nearly 90 percent of in-state Universities of Wisconsin graduates stay in the state five years after earning a degree. The universities provide a 23:1 return on state investment. The Universities of Wisconsin also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin's culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy. Learn more at [wisconsin.edu](http://wisconsin.edu).*

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