June 11, 2015

Dear Members of the Academic Staff Executive Committee:

As we are all aware by this point, the Wisconsin Legislature’s Joint Finance Committee recently passed an omnibus motion as part of the 2015-17 biennial budget that amends current state statute regarding the University of Wisconsin System. One of the more significant amendments involves the role of faculty, staff and students in the shared governance process.

We do not yet have final language for the changes in shared governance, but have at this point only a high-level summary. Until we get final language, we can’t be certain exactly what these changes will look like. This letter is based on what we can infer from the summary language. I want to share with you my views on the issue, and make clear how I intend to approach shared governance going forward.

Regardless of the outcome of the legislative process, I remain absolutely committed to shared governance as it has been historically practiced at UW-Madison since the establishment of the University of Wisconsin System nearly four decades ago. The active participation of the academic staff in governance is, and will continue to be, crucial to the decision-making process at the university. It’s the transparency and vigor of shared governance — through consensus building, the active exchange of views, and honoring the experience and expertise of the academic staff — that has helped build the strong academic community that has made UW-Madison one of the premier research universities in the world.

My intention is to work closely with you and the Academic Staff Assembly, the University Committee the Faculty Senate, and the university community to ensure that even with the changes proposed in the omnibus motion, Academic Staff Policies and Procedures, FP&P and related legislation continue to serve as the principal documents on which shared governance at UW-Madison is based. The shared governance committees enshrined in FP&P will continue, and the structure and operations of the university laid out in that document, in Faculty Legislation, in ASPP and in Unclassified Personnel Policies and Procedures will continue.

I look forward to continuing to work with you and our campus colleagues to guide the University of Wisconsin-Madison so that it continues to serve as a resource to our students, to the citizens of the state, and beyond.

Sincerely,

Rebecca M. Blank
Chancellor

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