Resolution regarding the “Blueprint for the University of Wisconsin Beyond COVID-19”

Whereas President Cross’s “Blueprint for the University of Wisconsin Beyond COVID-19” introduced to the Board of Regents on May 7th calls on the UW System to shift “from the convener/collaborator/coordinator” model of engagement with the comprehensive institutions to a serving as a “director and manager” on an aggressive timeline to consolidate and eliminate programs at the state’s comprehensive campuses;

Whereas the Blueprint is to be implemented amid crisis and uncertainty related to the Covid-19 pandemic, creating distraction and destabilization at a time when our institutions must be focused on safety and support of students;

Whereas the degree and duration of fiscal challenges to the UW System remain unclear and the connection between program array and financial challenges is neither developed nor supported in the Blueprint;

Whereas the Board of Regents risks cutting academic programs that give our institutions integrity and purpose, potentially compromising the ability to retain high-quality faculty and staff and the ability to attract and retain students, further degrading institutional fiscal security;

Whereas the faculty of each institution is charged by Wisconsin Statute, UW Board of Regents policy, and by prevailing practices with the primary responsibility for advising the Chancellor regarding academic and educational activities;

Whereas the program array is developed and nurtured by faculty at each institution in consultation with multiple stakeholders and students to provide a high-quality comprehensive liberal arts education in their community and region;

Whereas the Blueprint was developed without consultation of, or participation from, campus administrators, faculty, academic staff, university staff or students, and makes no effort to engage the future participation of campus shared-governance groups;
Whereas the primary responsibility for decisions on matters that affect the curriculum rests with campus faculty shared governance;

Whereas meaningful shared-governance processes at each institution contribute to decisions that are best able to serve the needs of our students, staff, campuses, communities, region, and state;

Whereas meaningful shared-governance processes at each institution work to fulfill the promise of the Wisconsin Idea on behalf of all citizens; and

Whereas the restructuring envisioned in the Blueprint is being proposed by an outgoing UW System President and will hamper the ability of a new UW System President to craft an inclusive and shared vision of the future of the UW System:

The Faculty Senate of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh calls on the Board of Regents to:

Recognize that campuses are focused on addressing an enormous range of issues related to planning for multiple methods of instructional delivery and keeping our students and staff safe in the next academic year;

Delay consideration of the proposed Blueprint until a new UW System President can engage with all UW system stakeholders in shaping a plan for the future of the UW System;

Support formal, ongoing, and robust consultation with the shared-governance groups of each university with a focus on maintaining and enhancing quality academic instruction;

Respect institutional autonomy and the role of shared governance in decision-making affecting the structure, academic program array, and mission of each UW System institution; and

Be an advocate for state and federal funding to support the long-term well-being of the University of Wisconsin System.

Approved by the Faculty Senate (12-May-2020)