

# UWSP finds ways to deal with state funding cuts

**G**ov. Scott Walker is expected shortly to sign the first budget of his administration. The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point will be deeply challenged to manage our portion of a coming \$250 million cut in state funding to higher education that translates to a cut of more than \$4 million for our campus.

Our spirits are lifted a bit, however, by the budget's plan to begin to free the UW System from some of the red tape that gets in the way of how each university manages resources on its own campus. This idea was at the



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center of a firestorm earlier this year, when it came to light that a plan for the flexibility had been developed only for UW-Madison.

Thanks largely to the work of the Joint Finance Committee, whose first budget field hearing we hosted in April, the plan to shift more decision power to the campus level has been extended to all of the state's public universities. It is not a complete plan, but it is a beginning toward

giving UWSP greater ability to manage our resources and shape our future.

I want to thank the hundreds of UWSP friends who advocated on our behalf with the Wisconsin Legislature. The many who spoke out contributed to our eventual success in helping lawmakers see the wisdom of keeping the UW System intact and enabling our institutions to move forward together.

Our main point resonated across the political spectrum — when restrictive government bureaucracy in areas such as contracting and personnel can be proven to waste money and time, and even stifle

our local economy, then it is time for a change.

Our dedicated faculty, staff, students and neighbors deserve special thanks for all that they do to keep the university focused on its purpose — to transform lives and to transform our community.

UWSP continues to move ahead. In the coming weeks, you will be hearing more about the breakthrough work underway at our Wisconsin Institute for Sustainable Technology, particularly in an innovative project to convert everyday waste into a product that will benefit our state's transportation infrastructure.

We continue to reach out to our alumni and friends across the globe, as private support grows ever vital to us. We are also especially grateful when our friends right here in Wisconsin invest in the future we can provide. That's what ST Paper LLC of Oconto Falls just did with a gift to the UWSP Paper Science Foundation. We'll use the funds to create scholarships within our paper science and engineering program and to establish an endowment. This commitment to the future professional leadership of one of our state's crucial industries is exactly the kind of engagement we expect will

be on the rise in the coming years.

The central message during our economic downturn is that public higher education is part of the solution. As our leadership in Madison gets on board with us, and as we reach out to more partners in the private sector throughout our state, I believe we can return Wisconsin to its rightful place as the nation's leader in excellence in public higher education. And I believe that the movement begins right here, in Stevens Point.

*Bernie Patterson is chancellor for the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.*