December 8, 2016

To: Dean Van Galen, Chancellor
116 North Hall
University of Wisconsin-River Falls

From: Mialisa Moline, Chair
Faculty Senate
University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Re: UWRF Faculty Senate Resolution 2016-17/5

The following resolution was approved unanimously with 18 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, by the Faculty Senate on December 7, 2016:

2017-19 Biennial Budget Resolution

Whereas, the University of Wisconsin System is known for its world-class reputation, history of educational leadership, academic priorities, and efforts to connect to the people of Wisconsin.

Whereas, the UW System has a $15 billion impact on Wisconsin’s economy each year. It ranks in the top 15 world-wide for its educational institutions “doing the most to advance science, invent new technologies and help drive the global economy.”

Whereas, more than 36,000 students graduate from the UW System each year – and more than 85 percent will stay in Wisconsin. These graduates work, raise families, and become productive taxpaying citizens. Wisconsin faces a looming demographic shift with an aging state population with a shrinking labor force and a decline in the state’s birth rate. This infusion of highly educated graduates into Wisconsin’s workforce is essential to the state’s economy.

Whereas, a college degree is one of the best investments a person can make — and the value of a UW System education is undeniable. UW alumni say their UW degree has opened doors in
their career that would not have been possible otherwise, and the data shows someone with a bachelor’s degree earns about $1 million more over their lifetime than someone with a high school diploma.

Whereas, the UW System has experienced a decline of $362 million in State funding from fiscal years 2012-17, while neighboring states continue to make steady investments in public higher education. When adjusted for inflation, the revenue coming to the UW System today from the State of Wisconsin is the lowest in the System’s history.

Whereas, through the 2020FWD framework, the UW System will inspire, connect and convene with the people, businesses, and communities of the State of Wisconsin. Through this vision, the UW System will reinvigorate Wisconsin’s economy and enhance the quality of life for all of our citizens.

Whereas, the UW System has proposed 2020FWD initiatives in its biennial budget request to help more students get in and through the educational pipeline faster and help keep them in Wisconsin after they graduate. This includes reducing time-to-degree, expanding college credit options for high school students, adding more options to transfer college credits, engaging businesses to help create job opportunities after graduation, and responding to the needs of non-traditional students, such as working adults.

Whereas, UW-River Falls is an essential component of local innovation, talent development, and entrepreneurship, fueling economic growth in one of the most rapidly developing parts of Wisconsin. UW-River Falls has demonstrated its commitment to providing innovative responses to the state’s talent and workforce needs, by adding new programs that meet both student interest and employer demand. Our hardworking, award-winning faculty are committed to the university’s core mission of teaching and learning, yet find time to collaborate with local organizations, developing partnerships such as internship programs, research collaborations, and business consultations, services which directly support the economic development of the River Falls community and broader St. Croix Valley. Research and innovation programs at UW-River Falls are supporting the development of new businesses in the region, and our university works with over 2,000 employers a year to connect qualified students with job and internship opportunities. UW-River Falls is also critically important to the vitality of this community, fostering a dynamic and inclusive
relationship with local citizens, and providing a variety of services and resources, including adult education opportunities, agricultural and food research and training programs, and several cultural and entertainment options.

Whereas, we recognize that Wisconsin is at a crossroads. We can choose to invest in our future, in the future of our children, and in the future of our state, or we can give the university system a lower priority and put our future at risk.

Therefore, we, the Faculty Senate at UWRF, support the UW System in its 2020FWD budget proposal.