



AFT • AFL-CIO  
**AFT-Wisconsin**  
*A Union of Professionals*

March 29, 2021

Dear legislator:

We write with regard to LRB-2310/1, a bill eliminating certain restrictions on the respective educational roles of the University of Wisconsin System and the Technical College System.

The higher education unions in AFT-Wisconsin support expanding curricular offerings across the state, so that any student can easily access the full diversity of education programs in Wisconsin. We are concerned, however, that if this bill passes, it would discourage the existing cooperation between the UW System and the Wisconsin Technical College System.

Currently, the technical colleges and the UW system have an excellent working relationship in most cases. Part of the reason for this is that the majority of the technical colleges and all of the UW campuses are bound by statute to seek approval from the other institution to expand academic programming that is within that system's purview. Many UW campuses and technical colleges have fashioned articulation agreements for seamless transfer, often giving students a direct path to a degree within a geographic region.

We worry that eliminating this policy will incentivize some technical college and UW campuses to replicate programs and to compete with each other for the same pool of students. That competition could very well put pressure on campuses—particularly campuses that were previously part of the UW two-year colleges in addition to technical colleges—in a race to the bottom that might ultimately lead to campus closures.

We urge you to slow down this process, and we ask you not to co-sponsor or commit to voting for this bill in this session so you can determine what unintended consequences that might result from this legislation. We would be more than willing to meet individually, with the rest of the Colleges and Universities Committee, or with your caucus to elaborate on these concerns.

Sincerely,

Kim Kohlhaas, President  
Jon Shelton, Vice President, Higher Education  
Lisa Conley, Vice President, Technical Colleges  
Mike Lussenden, Treasurer  
Luke Matthews, Regional Vice President