

**MINUTES OF THE MILWAUKEE AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE
LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE MEETING
September 16, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

The regular quarterly meeting of the Legislative Task Force was held on Wednesday, September 16, 2020 and called to order by Janice Falkenberg at 12:00 p.m. via a 'Google Meet' virtual meeting.

A. ROLL CALL:

Members Present:

Janice Falkenberg, Dr. Vicki Martin, Bohdan Zachary, Jennifer Mikulay, Charles Bruders, Equan Burrows, Richard Busalacchi

Guests:

Ramie Zelenkova of Hubbard, Wilson, & Zelenkova, LLC

B. COMPLIANCE WITH OPEN MEETINGS LAW

The Legislative Task Force meeting was noticed to be in compliance with the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM JUNE 17, 2020 MEETING

Minutes were approved by consensus of all members.

D. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Legislative Update

a. Local

- Janice reported a discussion was had with County Exec. David Crowley for future collaborations with the college for community based key-initiatives - more information to come.
- Fiserv Forum and MATC to be early-voting sites
- College's student housing facility approved by the WTCS board

b. State

- The nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau continues to monitor tax collection reports, economic forecasts, and federal legislation on findings that might impact the state's budget. The most recent monthly report was released in early July. The July report says that preliminary tax collections for June 2020 were \$370 million below collections of June 2019. For the 12 months of the 2019-20 fiscal year, collections are \$749 million, or 4.7% below those over the same 12 months in 2018-19. The delayed filing tax deadline has made it difficult to get a clear fiscal picture, generally. The next report is expected at the end of this month.
- Last month the Governor announced Executive Order #80 creating the Governor's Task Force on Broadband Access (also a M-Cubed initiative). The task force will advise the governor and Wisconsin State Legislature on broadband actions and policy, including strategies for successfully expanding high speed internet access to every residence, business, and institution in the state; initiatives for digital inclusion; and pathways to unlocking and optimizing the benefits of statewide, affordable access to broadband for all communities in Wisconsin. The first meeting is this week.
- The Governor's Task Force on Student Debt released its final report this month. The Wisconsin Technical College System Board was represented by Brandon Trujillo. Keyimani Alford, the president of the Wisconsin Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators also served on the task force, among many others. The task force forwarded eight recommendations to the Governor for his consideration:

Create a Borrower Bill of Rights and Student Loan Ombudsman -

Wisconsin should adopt a Borrower Bill of Rights (BBOR) and create an Office of the Student Loan Ombudsman that licenses student loan services and creates loan servicing standards. The BBOR would create a legal mechanism to enforce those standards when not adhered to by the loan servicer. The Student Loan Ombudsman would act as an independent advocate for student borrowers, providing needed customer protections to navigate the student loan repayment process and enforce the BBOR.

Enhance Proprietary School Regulations and Reinstate the

Educational Approval Board - Wisconsin should strengthen its oversight of proprietary schools through enhanced regulations, robust involvement in NC-SARA, and the reinstatement of the Educational Approval Board.

Financial Literacy Education - Financial literacy education is designed to empower students to make sound financial decisions regarding how they pay for higher education and can help ensure that student borrowers fully understand the terms of their loans.

Increased Need-based, Targeted Aid and Create a Statewide Promise Program - Increasing funding for Wisconsin's need-based aid programs and implementing a statewide Promise Program would make college more affordable for students. In turn, students would borrow less to attend college.

Loan Counseling - Loan Counseling is designed to help borrowers understand and manage their loans. Public, non-profit, and for-profit colleges can deliver counseling online, in-person, or by mail and must have a designated expert available to answer students' questions. Some states have enacted policy change aimed at providing borrowers with the tools they need to successfully navigate their borrowing experience.

Loan Forgiveness - Loan forgiveness programs forgive a portion of an eligible borrower's student loan debt. Most programs target relief for those working in high-demand professions, living in specific geographic areas, or earning a low- to middle-income wage.

Refinancing - Student loan refinancing provides relief to borrowers by allowing them to refinance their loans to receive lower interest rates. Refinancing can both lower monthly payments and shorten the time it takes a borrower to repay but comes at the cost of losing federal student loan protections. Existing programs tend to disproportionately benefit higher-income borrowers.

State Student Debt Relief Tax Credit - Implementing new tax credits for Wisconsin student debt holders is one vehicle for helping alleviate the student debt burden. Tax credits can also be offered as incentives for employers to assist employees with student debt payments.

- State Board Budget meeting - \$12 million to be requested for WTCS students to provide upwards of 2,000 with academic support; \$50,000 to be requested for firefighter programs across the state.

c. Federal

- No updates to report.

E. NEXT MEETING DATE

Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at 12:00 p.m. via Google Meet

F. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.