

# Task Force Findings, Solutions

## Findings, Solutions by Task Force on Higher Education in Washington County: A Community College Concept

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# Future of Two-Year Colleges in Washington County: A Community College Concept



## Introduction

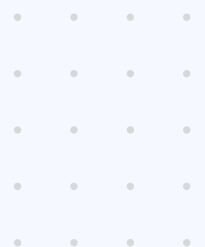
Washington County Executive Josh Schoemann commissioned a task force of county leaders in October 2022 to find a solution for the declining prospects of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee at Washington County (UWM – WC). The task force has done deep due diligence on the complicated dynamics involved in a sharp enrollment drop at the West Bend campus and what can be done about it. After three months of hearings from a broad selection of stakeholders, the creation of a community college concept under the governance of Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC) became the most compelling solution. Here is an executive summary of the findings of the task force:

- **Accelerating Crisis** -- The drop in enrollments at UWM-WC has been precipitous. The highpoint at the campus was nearly 1100 enrollees. Ten years ago the headcount at University of Wisconsin – Washington County, then known as UWWC, was 998 students with a full time equivalent (FTE) of 742. The consolidation of the colleges into the four-year UW universities accelerated the enrollment decline. At the end of 2022, the satellite campus of UW-Milwaukee had a head count of 387 and an FTE of 280, a decline of about 70%. Long and short, the consolidation has not worked well.
- **UWM-WC Has Lost its Raison D'etre and Joie de Vivre** -- The last decade of continuing cuts at UW Milwaukee took a toll on its two satellite campuses in Waukesha and West Bend. UWM eliminated athletics at the local campus, the café where students gathered, on-site student services that have been moved to Milwaukee, like admissions, and extracurriculars like theater and student clubs. The once bustling campus is a shadow of its former self.
- **MPTC Also Sees Enrollment Declines** -- The two-year West Bend campus of Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC), which is headquartered in Fond du Lac, has lost about 20% of its student body, but remains a viable institution. It has a strong funding base from tuition and the district's large property tax base.
- **UWM-WC Disconnected** -- There is a striking difference in the level of connectiveness in Washington County for UWM-WC and MPTC – West Bend. The latter is deeply connected with the five surrounding K-12 districts, with the four-year colleges in the region, and with the business community. After its local dean position was cut, the UWM satellite campus has become largely disconnected from social dynamics, economy and institutions in Washington County.
- **Funding Sources for UWM-WC** -- The annual budget for UWM-WC is roughly \$3 million, made up of a combination of tuition, fees and \$1.3 million GPR. The county owns the campus and its buildings.

- **College Costs Sharply Lower at Two-Year Colleges** – Tuition for a year at UWM- WC runs about \$4750. Tuition for a year at MPTC–WB for a full load runs about \$4000. That is roughly half of what it costs at UW-M and UW-Madison. With room and board, the cost of UW-Madison for a year is about \$28,500 and for UW-Milwaukee about \$21,300. Both two-year campuses are a bargain for starting a college career.
- **Many Factors Undermine Two-Year Enrollment** – First off, many high school students headed for higher education earn many credits through Advanced Placement courses and dual credit courses toward their freshman year. Some attain the full 30 credits; so they qualify as sophomores. That cuts the market for the two-year colleges in half. The declining pool of 18-year-old graduates has been going on for several decades, and no end is in sight. The hot job market attracts many students who skip college altogether, but who possibly return with employer tuition reimbursement. In short, prognosis for enrollment increases at the two-year level is not good. Only four-year flagship colleges and elite universities are seeing enrollment increases, with few exceptions.
- **Students Customize Education Pathways** – Many students work full or part-time and adapt their college programs to their work and family lives. They go online for some credits. They spread their education over more years. They stack up credits from different colleges. They stack up credits through skill-based certificates. They also build up non-credit, certificates and credentials. Nimble education institutions are accommodating their changing needs and demands.
- **New Dynamics, Current Predicament Scream for Consolidation** – UWM-WC and MPTC -WB are only four miles apart. The UW Board of Regents has recently enabled the technical colleges to compete directly with the UW colleges for offering an associate degree in general studies and liberal arts. They are now in over-lapping head-to-head competition. Two sets of administrative overheads are being paid for by taxpayers. One would suffice if consolidation of the two campuses took place. The predominant method for delivering two-year college education across the country is that of a “community college.” These unified colleges offer a technology track and a general studies track. In the technology track, they offer certificates and associate degrees for careers such as the trades, nursing, information technology, and applied business. The general studies track offers the first two years toward baccalaureates.
- **Funding Would Follow Students** – In a consolidation, the funding would follow the students. Tuition, of course, would follow the students to a community college. If the UW colleges were merged into the technical college system, the existing base of property tax support would stay in place or be enhanced.
- **Students Better Served in a Community College Concept with Strong Culture** – The value proposition for students and their families would be highly advantageous. The tuition would be low. Room and board would be sharply reduced by living at home. Hybrid courses that include online learning would accommodate work schedules. Athletics and extracurriculars would be instituted or restored. A café and gathering spaces would be made attractive. Cultural events would be part of the campus life. Kids would have fun while working hard on their studies and their careers.



- **Precedents Exist for WTCS Community College Branding and Concept** – Madison College in Dane County, and Nicolet College that serves the seven counties around Rhinelander, have succeeded for a long time. Branded as Madison College, and still incorporated as Madison Area Technical College, serves 12 counties with eight locations. It has roots back to 1912 and rebranded itself a “Madison College” in 2010. It serves about 30,000 students per year. Nicolet College, which dates back to 1967, serves seven counties. It has more than 1800 students, most part-time. They both offer a technical occupation track and a liberal arts credit track toward baccalaureate degrees. Both are led by a local board under the governance of the board of the Wisconsin Technical College System. They have led the way to an integrated model for two-year higher education in Wisconsin. Their models can be replicated in other parts of the state where current two-year systems operate independently side-by-side.
- **General Studies Faculty Could be Integrated** -- Washington County has no preconceived notions or dispositions on the technical handling of human resources in the event of a merger of resources between the two campuses. As a matter of fact, however, UWM-WC employs professors with PhDs as their principal teachers. The students love their face-to-face educational experiences with these highly educated professionals, who mostly live in the community. It is also important to know that 41% of the general education faculty at MPTC-WB hold doctorates and that their pay scale has a range of \$78,000 to \$103,000. The average salary is \$87,590 – much higher than the estimated base salary of \$60,000 at UWM-WC. The technical colleges have always had a modicum of general studies education. Under the merged resources of a community college concept, it stands to reason that there may be an opportunity for both MPTC and current UWM-WC professors.



# A Once Bustling Campus Loses Vitality

Compared to the once bustling hallways and classrooms of the West Bend campus of the University of Wisconsin, it's now "a ghost town," observed one of its long-time proponents. Gone are more than half of the student body, the sounds and camaraderie of athletics, many of the student services, many of the extracurriculars, the fresh-cooked food cafeteria, the opportunity to take junior and senior year classes toward a baccalaureate. Community engagement with what was once a centerpiece of the community has diminished. Said one passionate alumnus, "They took away the personality of the campus."



## Local Campus in Dire Straits

Faced with a long-term trend of fewer high school graduates each year, a hot labor market, and a growing aversion to student debt, the West Bend campus of the University of Wisconsin has experienced a precipitous drop in student enrollment over the last five and ten year periods.

Washington County campus is not alone in the pattern of enrollment fall-offs. The 13 UW colleges overall have lost roughly half of their student bodies. (See chart at end of this chapter.)

Ten years ago, the head count at the University of Wisconsin -- Washington County, then known as UWWC, enrolled 998 students with the full time equivalent (FTE) of 742. At the end of 2022 the UWM-WC campus had a head count of 387 and an FTE of 280.

Five years ago, then university President Ray Cross consolidated the 13 two-year UW campuses into the 12 four-year comprehensive campuses across the state. The West Bend campus, along with the Waukesha campus, was merged into UW-Milwaukee.

Since the consolidation in 2018, the decline in enrollment has accelerated. The head count in 2018 was 744 with 559 FTEs compared to the current FTE count of 280. Long and short, the consolidation has not worked well for most of the 13 former UW colleges.

Take into account that 2020 and 2021 were heavily impacted by the Covid pandemic when students were restricted from some on-site classes and recruiting was inhibited.

The falloff in enrollment was exacerbated by budget stresses at UWM, which has also faced sharp enrollment declines. UWM budgets were cut every year. That affected the West Bend campus. Recruiting and marketing dollars were cut back. The long-standing position of dean of the campus, a high profile leadership position in the community, was eliminated. UW System dropped athletics for students. Student services were curtailed to one staff member.

While these cuts may have been necessary from a UWM budgetary perspective, they were a drag on local enrollment growth. Successive deans, for example, had served as the principal recruiting officers for the campus by establishing connections with the five surrounding feeder K-12 school districts.



## Outlook for Labor Market Impacts



The extremely high demand for workers in Washington County and the surrounding areas are likely to be with us for at least a decade or more. The county had an all-time unemployment low of 2.6% in 2022, while the state was also near record lows at 3.7%.

Challenging long-term factors are at play in the labor shortage:

- Record retirements of baby boomers turning 65,
- The long tail of fewer births during the recession 2007-2009 that will hit at the 18-year mark of 2025. A similar “birth dearth” will start in 2038 because of the long-term downward trend in US births.
- In addition to Help Wanted signs out front at many employers, wages have jumped by 5% or more on average, creating a pull into the workforce of high school graduates who might have gone for higher education in earlier times.
- The flow of legal immigrants was severely reduced during the Trump administration of 2017 to 2021, reducing the supply of available workers. The Biden administration has not moved decisively to restore the long-term influx of legal immigrants to the historical pattern of one million per year.
- Labor force participation dropped several points to approximately 65% in Wisconsin following the pandemic. People who were laid off found other ways to live their lives without an 8 to 5 job. Women, especially, have been slower to go back to full time jobs.

The tension between employers seeking young people for their operations and colleges seeking enrollments of high school graduates will continue, and it will greatly change the dynamics for colleges and universities.

Employers have moved with vigor to fill their ranks with untrained workers and then to educate them on-the-job to increase their skills. Nimble two-year colleges can respond by offering skill-specific short term education modules and actively engaging with local employers. They become “credential colleges.”

Further, continuing education programs for the work force will be hybrid by mixing on-line education with teacher-facing classes.

## Competition with Technical College

The Wisconsin technical college system has proved far more agile at accommodating changes in the labor marketplace than the University of Wisconsin. The 12 satellite UW campuses, for the most part, have been neglected, while the technical colleges have moved aggressively into “general studies.” That was the traditional role of the UW colleges. So they are now in direct competition for liberal arts offerings.

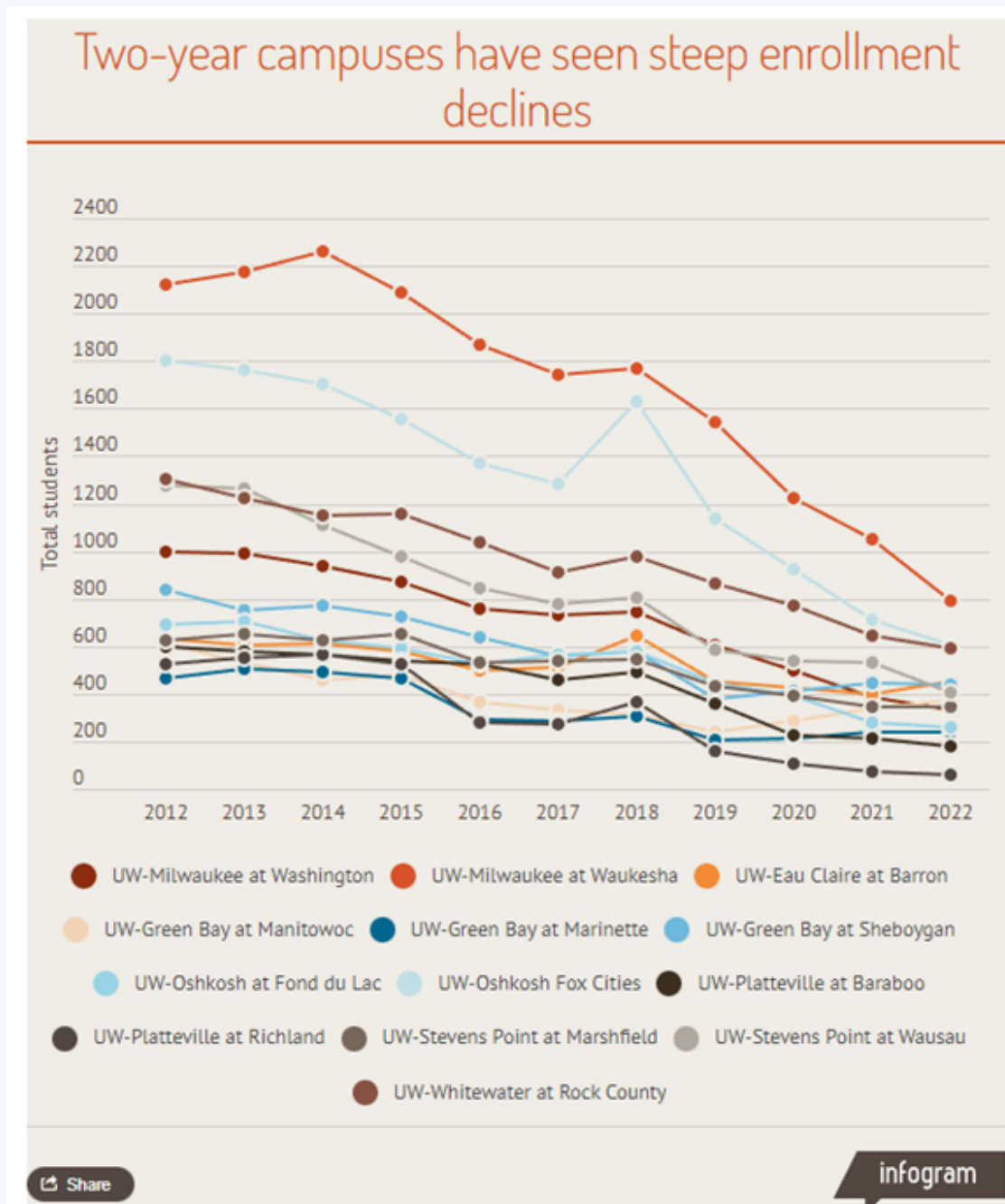
Both MPTC and UW at Washington County offer associate degrees in the arts; MPTC also offers an associate degree in sciences.

Innovative solutions that provide clear and credentialed pathways through the education system to productive careers are emerging. That will be a subject addressed in subsequent chapters.

The failure of the UW to adapt to new delivery methods can be seen in the recent closure of the UW-Richland Center campus, which had declined to only 60 students. The financial numbers may make the case for closure of that campus, but the primary philosophy of the University of Wisconsin that the borders of the University are the borders of the state – The Wisconsin Idea – is not served by the shutdown of rural campuses.

Better solutions, which are being sought by the Washington County task force for sharpening the Washington County education model, must be surfaced and implemented.

### UW Two-year Colleges Enrollment Decline



## UW BRANCH CAMPUSES ENROLLMENT HEADCOUNT 2018-2022

Institution	Subcategory	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
UW-Milwaukee at Washington County	Total	332	387	500	605	744
UW-Milwaukee at Waukesha County	Total	790	1,049	1,221	1,542	1,767
UW-Eau Claire-Barron County	Total	455	401	423	454	642
UW-Green Bay, Manitowoc Campus	Total	373	341	287	237	311
UW-Green Bay, Marinette Campus	Total	242	240	215	203	306
UW-Green Bay, Sheboygan Campus	Total	440	447	411	381	581
UW-Oshkosh Fond du Lac	Total	258	281	394	444	579
UW-Oshkosh Fox Cities	Total	605	714	925	1,134	1,629
UW-Platteville Baraboo Sauk County	Total	179	216	225	360	494
UW-Platteville Richland	Total	60	75	108	159	366
UW-Stevens Point at Marshfield	Total	344	346	395	431	545
UW-Stevens Point at Wausau	Total	404	531	536	587	802
UW-Whitewater at Rock County	Total	593	644	771	862	975
UW Colleges Online	Total	0	0	0	0	0





# The Two-Year Campuses - How Connected?

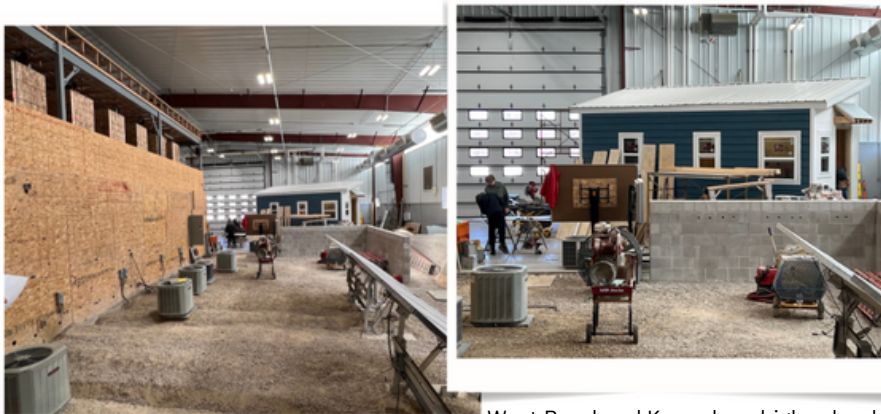


## Sharp Contrast in Connectivity

There is a tale of two campuses between the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee at Washington County and the West Bend campus of Moraine Park Technical College. For better or for worse, the technical college campus is far more linked to major constituencies critical to campus success than is the UW campus.

The two campuses are only 4 miles apart, a 7 minute drive. For reasons that escape the understanding and work of this Task Force, there is almost no interaction between the two community institutions.

## Dual Credit Increasingly Popular



West Bend and Kewaskum high school students build tiny house at MPTC

There are a number of ways to look at connectivity. The most important is through the eyes of students. They are the customers. Over the last 20 years a concept of dual credits has emerged across the country. Under this concept, high school students take one or more college courses for college credit in their junior and senior years. The courses can be taught at the high school by a college accredited instructor. Or they can be taught on the two-year campus, which requires travel by the students from the five high school districts, on the Washington County market.

At last count, the UW Milwaukee satellite campus had 40 dual credit students, while the technical college West Bend campus had 566. The technical college total was 47% of the last cohort of high school graduates from the five local K-12 districts.

By example, the West Bend district offers 298 courses for credit at MPTC. That connection yields 2000 credits for high school students. Those early credits save about \$180,000 in college tuition.

Clearly, high school students think primarily about the technical college as a way of building their credit portfolios before graduation. They also take advance placement (AP) courses for college credit at the high school.

## Hybrid Education Model Includes Online Courses

UWM offers a variety of online programs, including a 100 percent online degree and Flexible Degree Option for the Associate of Arts & Sciences Degree, and online options for the baccalaureate degree. Approximately 20 percent of UWM-WC's regular course offerings are online. MPTC also offers online courses.

## Another Metric: Two-Plus-Two Programs

Not surprisingly, the UW satellite campus in West Bend has an articulation pathway to the Milwaukee campus. The freshman and sophomore year are delivered at the Washington County campus, while the junior and senior years are delivered at the Milwaukee campus. There are variations on this pathway. Some students leave for a four-year campus after the first year.

Further, some high school graduates have amassed as many as 30 college credits by the time they graduate, which obviates the need for a freshman year at any two-year campus. Only 15% of UWM-WC students now stay to complete a two-year associate degree; they typically go on for a baccalaureate or other options. The two-year associate degree has obviously declined in value.

Moraine Park has a wider set of connections with surrounding four-year campuses. They have linked up with colleges such as UW–Green Bay, UW-Whitewater and private colleges like Lakeland, Marian and Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE).

Some of the K-12 districts have their own alliances with surrounding universities. West Bend, for example, has a two-plus-two alliance with UW-Green Bay and UW-Whitewater for education baccalaureates.

## Connections to Industry



The technical college district has a fundamental structure that embraces employers in many economic sectors. It has employers on its district boards across the state. That makes the technical college system more nimble and responsive to filling pressing gaps in the workforce. The UWM satellite campus has few such connections.

Every MPTC program has an advisory committee drawn from that part of the employment world.

## Employers Accelerate In-House Training



Class time for Carpentry Apprenticeship program at MPTC

Not finding sufficient help they need from local colleges, the fastest growing employers in Washington County are taking training matters into their own hands. They all face daunting challenges to keep their current job positions filled and to expand their workforces. The declining pool of available workers is the biggest threat to a growing economy in the county.

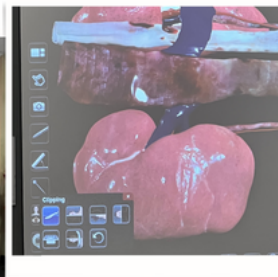
Take, for example, the West Bend Mutual Insurance Company (WBMI). It has grown from \$1 billion in sales in 2015 to a projected \$2 billion by 2024. It intends to grow to \$2.5 billion by 2028. To accommodate that growth, WBMI needs to add one employee per day in the coming years. It currently employs about 1500 people, with about 1000 at its West Bend Campus.

The fast-growing company hires any acceptable applicants, regardless of training and education background, and then uses on-the-job-training to get the newcomers up to speed.

There is a clear opportunity to complement the company's training efforts at the two-year college level.

Another example is Delta Defense, which has grown rapidly to 600 employees. Delta has built a seven-week training program for new employees, buttressed by a training program at the for-profit Kaplan University that offers the necessary courses for students to qualify for a license in property and casualty insurance. The local colleges are not involved.

## Demand for Healthcare Workers Greatly Exceed Supply



In this huge segment of the economy, almost 20% of GDP, many good jobs go wanting.

The education infrastructure for producing nurses is impressive. Local high schools offer advanced placement courses in the necessary sciences and foster dual credit programs with Moraine Park Technical College in nursing and other healthcare technician careers. The West Bend School District is developing a "Health Academy." The Moraine Park district has 250 nursing students, who after two years, are highly qualified to move on to four-year degrees at all the surrounding four-year colleges that offer nursing baccalaureates. They enter the four-year programs as full-fledged juniors.

The biggest nursing program in the state is at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee with 1400 students, and a total of 2,000 students in health sciences degree programs. There is an allotment of 40 transfers from UWM at Waukesha, none from UWM at Washington County. UWM also has 1700 students in health sciences degree programs.

The demand for nurses is very strong. It's higher than the current flow of graduates can accommodate. About 11% of registered nurse jobs at hospitals in Wisconsin were unfilled in 2021. The same is true of other medical specialties like imaging technicians (88 current openings across the Froedtert System), phlebotomists, surgical technicians, respiratory therapists and nursing aides are sitting vacant. Froedtert currently has 100 openings, often running as high as 200. "It's never been worse," said its HR executive, "The supply doesn't meet the demand."

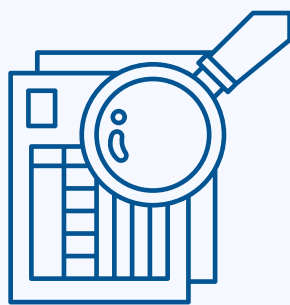
An aging workforce, the hangover from COVID, and a shortage of trainers has compounded the challenge.

Froedtert, like Delta and WBMI, hires almost any acceptable applicant and then uses internal training to advance their capabilities while they are being paid in low-skill healthcare jobs, such as medical assistants.

Long and short, the pipeline for developing healthcare workers is firmly established, but is not robust enough to supply the various healthcare needs in the region. The result of staff shortages can be excruciating; it has led to the shutdown of some hospital departments and clinics or the reduction of available service hours.

The two-year colleges have a wide open market opportunity to increase the flow of students into health worker occupations.

## Other Key Observations From Employers



- Students are not enthusiastic about virtual online classes; they prefer face-to-face education. They will use online methods when they are the only classes available in a particular subject.
- Employers generally have very low interactions with or awareness of the existence of UWM-WC. They generally have more experience with MPTC-WB.
- Continuing education of employees is increasingly in demand. Signicast Corporation of Hartford, for example, has sent 17 people to a leadership development program at UWM-WC.
- Certificate programs in narrow areas of expertise are a new way forward. They can be "stackable" into accumulative competencies for degrees.
- Some employers, like American Construction Services, have developed career plans with each employee. The trades, which MPTC has long served in the construction industry, need the two-year colleges to be nimble and quick in that fast-changing sector.
- Some companies in the county have tuition reimbursement subsidies for employees seeking degrees, but they are not heavily utilized.
- Froedtert is increasingly using social media channels to cultivate interest in working there.

# Voice of Customer - Students Seek Better Value

## Introduction:

It became abundantly clear during our hearings on the status and future of two-year collegiate education in Washington County that the traditional structure for post-high school education either no longer works for students or is being reinvented to provide better value for students – the combination of cost, quality of instruction and supporting services.

Students contacted by the task force showed ingenuity and flexibility on their journey to their desired careers. Many of them start, stop for a while, and then restart their educations as the circumstances in their lives allow. They are often not on traditional two-year and four-year tracks for a degree. That change in dynamics requires educational institutions from K-12 to baccalaureate to be as nimble and as flexible in their offerings.

Educational institutions have their own agenda, status quo programs, budgets, rules and regulations that lock them into fairly rigid ways of delivering education. That is changing as students' needs change. And it is changing as more entrepreneurial educators respond to the new marketplace.

## Tuition, Overall Costs a Major Challenge



The cost of higher education can be prohibitive for many youths and returning students. Degrees at elite colleges can run well over \$50,000 per year for tuition, books and room and board. Total Baccalaureate annual cost for attending the University of Wisconsin – Madison comes to about \$28,498 for a Wisconsin resident. \* Total cost for a four-year baccalaureate at University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee averages about \$21,306\* for a Wisconsin resident, somewhat depending on the chosen major. UWM-WC is a bargain compared to the downtown campus. Annual undergraduate tuition runs at about \$4,750 compared to \$8,091 at UWM and \$9,273 at UW – Madison.\*\* MATC-WB is even more of a bargain at an estimated tuition of about \$4000 per year.

Room and board when students reside on or near campus typically runs about \$10,000 per year. Obviously, students who live at home avoid the cost of commuting by going to a local campus.

In addition, students living at home often have connections to jobs in the community and less travel time to get to and from those jobs. They offset tuition and related costs with take-home pay. A majority of the students attending two-year campuses in Washington County work at part-time or full time jobs in addition to their academic load.

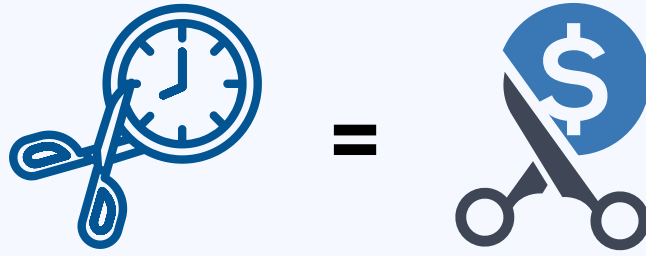
\*This cost includes Tuition and fees, course materials, housing, meals, personal expenses and transportation.

<https://financialaid.wisc.edu/cost-of-attendance/>

<https://uwm.edu/cost-aid/>

\*\*<https://uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/counselors/navigating-financial-aid/uw-system-tuition-chart/>





Fortunately, the five K-12 districts that serve as feeders to the county two-year colleges have long-established programs to introduce children to a wide variety of careers. Students who know where they are going for their careers have a big advantage, because they can start taking courses for credits that are career-oriented while still in high school.

Many graduating seniors have earned a good part of their credits required for a freshman year in college. Some have attained the full 30 credits needed for a successful freshman year. With the cost of college at \$10,000 on the low end to as much as \$30,000, the savings are huge. Part-time college students often stretch out the installments for full or two-year degrees over more years.

The accumulation of college credits while in high school can be attained in several ways: Advanced Placement courses for credits and dual credits for college courses delivered at the high school or the local college campus. The latter are taught by college professors or accredited high school teachers. Kids are not dumb; they have figured out they can sharply cut college costs before they even get to college.

An unfortunate side effect of credits earned in high school is that the two-year colleges have been undermined by that new reality. Their mission was to deliver the freshman and sophomore years for the college journey. The freshman market has been diminished. In effect, half of the traditional two-year mission has been eroded.

Further, state leaders have empowered the two-year technical colleges to compete directly with neighboring campuses by delivering general studies courses. In effect, technical colleges are now in the liberal arts business, formerly the job of the UW two-year campuses.

### How About Auto-Enrollment for High School Juniors?

Many upper-class high school students already have one foot in the collegiate world through taking college courses early. To increase enrollment on the two-year campuses, why not then send them a letter in the middle of their junior year that automatically enrolls them in the local two-year colleges?

Amidst a blizzard of higher education options, they would have one solid option right in front of them (and bring heightened awareness to the existence of the local two-year campuses, which is currently lacking). It would give them the confidence that there is one educational pathway for which they have already been accepted. It would eliminate the frustration of the clunky college admission system.

The local students could be tracked through the K-12 system; the two-year college systems would know exactly who they are getting as incoming freshmen.

That should help to boost enrollment at the two local campuses that are suffering from enrollment declines. The local two-year institutions would be saying, as Uncle Sam once did, **"We Want You."** In the transition from high school to college, the high school counselors and the college counselors could collaborate after acceptance on a customized career/education plan for each incoming college student.

Part of the customized plan would include apprenticeships and internships where appropriate for student journeys.

## Programs for Students in Need

Programs exist for disadvantaged students, and they need to be made obvious and readily available by guidance counselors in high school and at the two-year colleges. In addition, the University of Wisconsin four-year universities have made available the Wisconsin Tuition Promise. It started off on the Madison campus and has recently been proposed to the other 12 four-year campuses and their 12 satellite campuses.

## Online Education Must be Part of the Mix

Some of the pre-college courses can be hybrid -- a combination of in-person learning and on-line learning. One mom with two young boys has little time for commuting and attending courses on a rigid timeline. She is working her way toward two-year and four-year degrees almost entirely online. The hybrid model isn't going away, even if most students favor face-to-face classes.

## Credit Transfer Can Be a Mess

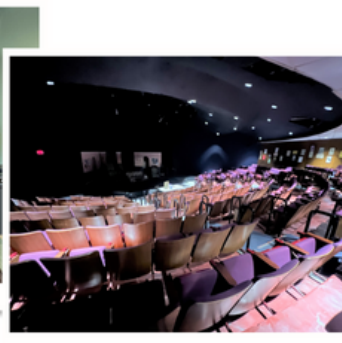
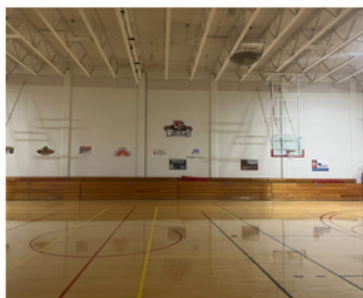
Emphasis has been placed by higher education leaders in recent years on seamless transfer of credits earned in high school, earned at the two-year level or earned at other four-year universities. But students still run into barriers when trying to transfer previously earned credits to their new college of choice.

Seventeen state legislators have moved to eliminate that issue. They have introduced Wisconsin Senate Bill 19 that would require the University of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Technical College Systems (WTCS) to implement universal course numbering and credit transfer programs over the next five years.

Under the new law, at least 72 credits of core general education courses must be transferrable between UW universities and WTCS. The bill, which was introduced by five state senators and 12 representatives in January, would make credit transfer automatic via a new computerized program.

Private and tribal colleges could participate on a voluntary basis through articulation agreement. We support this proposal.

## Students Want Some Fun and Gemütlichkeit



Intercollegiate athletics were stripped from the satellite campuses in Waukesha and West Bend by the UW System. The cafeteria where students gathered for conversation and interaction now serves pre-made food. There is a student activities coordinator who supports student life outside of class, and they have hired a recruiter, though it is difficult to fill and maintain pay. Extracurriculars like theater, students' clubs, and intramural athletics were curtailed. The campus lost its joie de vivre. It is now simply a place to take classes.

Craig Larsen, a graduate of the West Bend campus and later Concordia College, is an expert on local athletic activities. He is insistent that young people need physical activity and camaraderie. His views met with a consensus agreement of presenting students and task force members. Young people who are working hard at their academics also want to have some fun.

It is well-established in research that physical exercise and mental acuity go hand-in-hand. Larsen maintained that students involved with sports graduate at a higher level than their peers. Further, he said that his research review confirmed that two-year colleges with sports programs attract 13% higher enrollments.

Larsen pointed out that ample facilities for basketball, volleyball and soccer exist at UWM-WC. A new baseball field is available nearby. He estimated that intercollegiate athletics could be reestablished for about \$125,000 each.

Note that MPTC-WB has no athletic programs or facilities, except for a disk golf course. Also note that because UWM is D-1 in basketball and baseball, programs in those sports at the two-year campuses are disallowed by the National College Athletic Association (NCAA).

### Some Advantages Remain at UWM-WC

On the academic side, the local UW satellite has some significant advantages. Most of the courses are taught by professors, not teaching assistants; class sizes are generally no more than 20 students. The professors and students are often on a first-name basis.

On the physical asset side, the UWM-WC campus is a modern facility with excellent classrooms, lab, a theater, a cafeteria and lunch space, a basketball and volleyball gym, and a soccer field.

The campus is located in a beautiful piece of kettle-moraine topography with hiking trails. The National Ice Age Scenic Trail runs adjacent to the campus, as does Silver Creek. It's an ideal setting for a small, intimate college. It can easily accommodate 1500 students.



In answer to the question, “Why aren’t our high school juniors and seniors choosing UWM-WC as a starting point for their post-secondary education”? Here are some confidential responses:

1. The economic advantage of attending college in county has been offset by on-line course offerings which have over-all cost advantages, such as no driving to class every day, and are viewed as more convenient.
2. The high participation rate in AP classes in high school is allowing students to stockpile college credits and offset the need to attend Gen Ed classes at UWM-WC.
3. Students who are considering UWM-WC see low enrollment, smaller than desired class sizes, few student services, and no student activities such as clubs or sports. Said one observer, “it’s like touring a ghost town.”
4. This generation of kids is highly social and has a negative view of the limited opportunities for social engagement at a “commuter campus”. Also, they would rather start building their social network at a 4-year campus than having to do so as a transfer student (coming as a junior).
5. Must offer 4-year degrees to be relevant. A community college (hybrid solution) was not viewed favorably. “It’s the same as we have now with a different name,” said one educator.
6. More students are choosing alternative options such as tech schools, apprenticeships, etc., realizing they don’t want or need a four-year college degree to support their career choices.
7. Many classes offered overlap with AP classes. Not enough variety offered.
8. Fewer course opportunities in person than in the past.
9. No athletics.
10. Lack of relevant curriculum offered – many students find that prerequisite courses for their desired degree program are not offered here, necessitating an earlier transfer.
11. Students are completing Gen Ed classes in high school as a result of taking AP courses.
12. It seems that most new and exciting UWM programming is being offered at the Waukesha campus. Washington County campus needs something to help it be viewed as “exciting.”
13. Transfer process to UWM and other 4-year campuses is viewed as confusing.
14. Gen Ed program at MPTC is cheaper.
15. There’s a rep from MPTC present at the high schools once a week, providing in person assistance/support. Not available from UWM-WC.

# Precedents for Combined Community College Concept

An analysis of how 50 states deliver two-year college education shows they vary widely. A preponderance of states use community colleges that have a dual track in technical training for such careers as plumbing, nursing, IT, and a general studies/liberal arts track that aims at baccalaureates in fields such history, English, economics, and mathematics. The community college is the predominant form of a two-year education in the states. Some states also have branch campuses of their four-year universities, and some colleges have technology colleges with the occupational track only.

Of interest, only 11 states, including Wisconsin, have two-year branches of their four-year universities. Also of interest, only 12 states, including Wisconsin, have post-secondary technical institutes organized separately from community colleges.

The community college model with dual tracks in the technical/occupational education and a parallel baccalaureate track in general studies/liberal arts is predominant across the 50 states.

Like Wisconsin, 19 states have more than one governing or coordinating board. Wisconsin has a Board of Regents for its 25 University of Wisconsin campuses and a separate governing board for its Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS).

There is precedent in Wisconsin for a dual-track community college concept operating under the auspices of WTCS. Madison College offers side-by-side technical training and liberal arts education in Dane County. Nicolet College, also part of WTCS, offers both occupational training and university-level liberal arts education in the district around Rhinelander. Both technical colleges have been branded as community colleges. Madison College also has a vibrant student life and athletic program.

Over the last 20 years, the technical college system has made aggressive moves into “general studies,” which is in direct competition with the now 12 UW two-year satellite colleges. The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents recently sanctioned that expansion and competition by creating transferability of all technical college credits at UW campuses.

What sense does it make to have two taxpayer-funded state institutions offering two-year associate degrees in general studies just a few miles from each other in a county?

As for the opportunity for the staff and faculty of the two institutions, it is important to know that UWM-WC employs professors with PhDs as their principal teachers. The students love their face-to-face educational experiences with these highly educated professionals, who mostly live in the community. It is also important to know that 41% of the general education faculty at MPTC-WB hold doctorates and that their pay scale has a range of \$83,000 to \$110,000. The average base salary is \$92,000 – much higher than the estimated base salary of \$60,000 at UWM-WC.

The technical colleges have always had a modicum of general studies education. The merged resources of the community college concept could create and opportunity for the UW faculty and the student body at UWM-WC as a jump start to its enlarged ambition of providing credits for a liberal arts baccalaureate.

## Co-locations of UW Colleges and Technical Colleges

Of the 12 UW Colleges, that are in close proximity to a technical college campus, seven are fewer than 15 miles apart. In addition to West Bend, they are:

- UWM-Waukesha and Waukesha County Technical College, 3.4 miles apart.
- UW -Oshkosh at Fond du Lac and MPTC Fond du Lac, 1 mile apart
- UW Green Bay-Sheboygan and Lakeshore Tech at Sheboygan, 3 miles apart
- UW Oshkosh-Fox Valley (Appleton) and Fox Valley TC at Appleton, 9 miles apart
- UW-Marathon County, Wausau and North Central TC, Wausau, 4 miles part
- UW- Whitewater at Rock County, Janesville and Blackhawk TC at Beloit, 10 miles apart



# Advisory Resolution Supporting the Concept of Creating a Pilot Community College System

## *WASHINGTON COUNTY, WISCONSIN*

Date of enactment: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of publication: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2023 RESOLUTION \_\_\_\_

#### Advisory Resolution Supporting the Concept of Creating a Pilot Community College System

**WHEREAS**, in the last 15 years, demographic trends impacted both UWM at Washington County leaving devastating enrollment declines; and Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC) with significant enrollment decreases; MPTC is still sustaining strong programming with fiscal responsibility, despite these challenges; and

**WHEREAS**, the Washington County Higher Education Task Force (the “Task Force”), comprised of leaders from industry, K-12 districts, higher education, government and elected officials, was convened by the Washington County Executive to evaluate and provide recommendations for sustainable higher education in Washington County; and

**WHEREAS**, the Task Force conducted eight due diligence sessions to examine higher education in Washington County from the perspective of:

- Current and future state
- K-12 programs in collaboration with institutions of higher learning
- Financial structure and sustainability
- Current needs of industry and employers in Washington County
- Voice of the student
- What other states are doing in two-year college education; and

**WHEREAS**, representatives of the higher education institutions in the county, along with Task Force members, provided significant data that was examined by the Task Force; and

**WHEREAS**, an examination of models and trends of two-year campuses across the country was conducted; and

**WHEREAS**, both UWM at Washington County and Moraine Park Technical College now offer competing two-year liberal arts associate degrees; and

**WHEREAS**, UWM at Washington County and its students are supported by scholarships from the Washington County Foundation (the “Foundation”); and

**WHEREAS**, the Wisconsin Technical college System has five long-standing dual track community college concepts – Nicolet College in Rhinelander; Madison Area Technical College in Madison (branded as Madison College); Milwaukee Area Technical College in Milwaukee; Western Technical College in La Crosse; and Chippewa Valley Technical College in Eau Claire serving as precedents for a similar community college concept in Washington County; and

**WHEREAS**, the investigation of the Task Force revealed that Washington County needs a new model for higher education that serves all relevant stakeholders and is a magnet to keep young residents in the community and this model must include the following characteristics:

## Advisory Resolution Supporting the Concept of Creating a Pilot Community College System

- Affordable – Incredible value – Offering high ROI to students
- Accessible in-person and on-line
- Customizable to each student
- Strong K-12 partnerships
- Responsive to employer needs
- Unmatched direct pipelines to Washington County communities
- Gateway for further education; and

**WHEREAS**, the Task Force has determined that to ensure a sustainable higher education system in Washington County, it is in the best interest of the students, residents, employers, school districts, taxpayers and both higher education institutions in the county to combine the resources from UWM at Washington County and the Moraine Park Technical College West Bend campus to create a community college concept in West Bend under the governance of Moraine Park Technical College; and

**WHEREAS**, the Washington County Higher Education Task Force recommends the creation of a pilot community college concept combining the resources of UWM at Washington County and Moraine Park Technical College to be implemented via legislative and policy actions, creating a post high school educational model with the following assets, services and educational offerings:

- Dual credit access in participation with area school districts
- Open enrollment for all citizens of Washington County.
- Solid financials derived from tuition, GPR, referendum-approved bonding, property tax support and Foundation scholarships
- Connectedness to the community, four-year institutions, school districts, employers and their apprenticeships and internships
- Stackable and easily transferable credits
- Hybrid curriculum, stressing face to face-based instruction, buttressed by on-line classes
- Intense individualized guidance for each student and counseling
- Foundation support for Washington County juniors and seniors
- Local administration and aggressive recruiting
- Powerful marketing efforts and resources
- Potential athletic teams and increased student activities pending funding and viability studies.
- Café and student union space
- Student government
- First generation student support
- Low-cost tuition as a differential
- 2+2 articulation agreements with regional universities, with locally taught classes, where applicable

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Washington County Board of Supervisors adopts the recommendations of the Washington County Higher Education Task Force and requests one-time state funding be granted to Washington County, by legislation, to create an endowment which must be used to:

- Lower student debt and provide tuition assistance



## Advisory Resolution Supporting the Concept of Creating a Pilot Community College System

- Fund the startup, including athletics and student activities
- Fund comprehensive branding and awareness of the community college concept
- Support capital improvements as approved by the appropriate governing body

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a local support board chaired by the Washington County Executive or his or her appointee, with remaining board members appointed by the Washington County Executive and confirmed by the Washington County Board of Supervisors, shall be created to manage the endowment, and to support and advise Washington County in distributing funding in support of the community college concept.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that Washington County, as it has for over 50 years with the University of Wisconsin System, will foster a partnership with MPTC West Bend Campus to support future facilities and needs of the community college concept as identified by the community and employers, and as approved by the Washington County Board of Supervisors and as approved, owned, and operated by MPTC.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution shall be sent to Governor Tony Evers, members of the Wisconsin Assembly and Senate and the Wisconsin Counties Association.

VOTE REQUIREMENT FOR PASSAGE: Majority

RESOLUTION SUMMARY: Advisory Resolution endorsing the concept of the creation of a pilot community college.

Approved as to form:

Introduced by members of the EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE as filed with the County Clerk.

Bradley S. Stern, County Attorney

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

Jeffrey D. Schleif, Chairperson

Approved:

Considered \_\_\_\_\_

Josh Schoemann, County Executive

Adopted \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

Ayes \_\_\_\_\_ Noes \_\_\_\_\_ Absent \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Veto

Voice Vote \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Partial Veto

(No fiscal impact.)