



Legislation Text

File #: 62508, **Version:** 2

Fiscal Note

No appropriation required.

Title

Calling on UW-Madison Administrators to make changes to the 'Smart Restart' Plan.

Body

WHEREAS, coronavirus (COVID-19) has infected millions worldwide, over six million in the US, and nearly 9,000 in the Madison community; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Wisconsin - Madison, is a highly accredited research institution founded in Madison in 1848; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Wisconsin - Madison promotes the Wisconsin Idea; a belief that education should influence people's lives beyond the boundaries of the classroom; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Wisconsin - Madison has a fiduciary responsibility to protect the health and promote the wellbeing of Madison-area residents; and,

WHEREAS, WI Statute 62.11(5) directs that "the council...shall have power to act for the government and good order of the city, for its commercial benefit, and for the health, safety, and welfare of the public",

WHEREAS, on June 17th, 2020, Chancellor Rebecca Blank, sent a university-wide communication titled 'Planning a Smart Restart for UW-Madison,' which indicated an executive decision to welcome students back on campus; and,

WHEREAS, on August 24th, more than a third of the Dane County Board of Supervisors and nearly half of the Madison City Council signed a letter demanding virtual learning and public disclosure of COVID-19 metrics; and,

WHEREAS, August 26th, 2020 was the first-day having university students on-campus; and,

WHEREAS, on August 27th, 2020, Public Health Madison & Dane County reported a record spike of 84 cases in one day; and,

WHEREAS, on September 4th, 2020, the Associated Students of Madison, the official student government on campus, released a statement in support of a Moral Restart; and,

WHEREAS, on September 9th, 2020, the University of Wisconsin - Madison reported a record-high 290 new positive cases in one day; and,

WHEREAS, on September 9th, 2020, the University of Wisconsin - Madison declared a two-week quarantine for students living in residence halls Sellery and Witte and a shift to online classes; and,

WHEREAS, on September 9th, 2020, Public Health Madison & Dane County declared downtown Madison a

high-risk area and directed residents and employees in the area to assume you were exposed to COVID-19 and monitor yourself for symptoms; and,

WHEREAS, on September 9th, 2020, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi sent a letter to UW System President Tommy Thompson and Chancellor Rebecca Blank imploring the leadership team to send students home and expand the testing capacity of University Health Services (UHS); and,

WHEREAS, on September 16th, 2020, the Big Ten Council of Presidents & Chancellor's voted to resume Big Ten Football the weekend of October 24th, with Chancellor Rebecca Blank voting in the affirmative; and,

WHEREAS, on September 16th, 2020, Public Health Madison & Dane County, Dane County Executive Joe Parisi, and Madison Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway released a statement showing concern and dismay over the decision to resume the Big Ten Football Season; and,

WHEREAS, on October 1st, 2020, the Dane County Board of Supervisors enacted RES 217 (<https://bit.ly/3jx6zHS>) "Urging the University of Wisconsin-Madison to Discontinue In-Person Classes;" and,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Madison Common Council calls on UW-Madison Administrators to make the following changes to the 'Smart Restart' Plan:

- Only offer online instruction and use it as the default modality until ~~Public Health Madison & Dane County reports zero (0) cases for fourteen (14) consecutive days,~~ with an exception only for independent study credits necessary for international students to maintain their visa status;
- Drastically expand the current testing and contact tracing capacity of University Health Services (UHS);
- Not allow students to return to on-campus housing ~~until there are zero (0) new cases in Dane County for fourteen (14) days,~~ granting exceptions for those who would be financially or physically burdened or for those who would provide a risk of further spread;
- Create strict precautions to prevent any risk of spread to other communities and immunocompromised people when students leave campus;
- Proactively engage students, faculty, and community members through listening sessions, surveys, and other modes of communication to gather adequate input;
- Reconsider plans to move forward with the Big Ten Football season and create strict guidelines to reduce the opportunity to spread COVID-19 as much as physically possible;
- Actively engage in anti-racist practices by empowering BIPOC communities on campus and take extreme steps to diminish the disproportionate impact COVID-19 has on marginalized communities;
- Create a New Badger Experience that connects people across the country and globe through new digital mediums, all while reducing this pandemic's impact on our communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Madison Common Council urges the University of Wisconsin-Madison to discontinue in-person classes and to take drastic steps to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on this community; and,

BE IN FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Madison City Clerk send a copy of this resolution to UW-Madison Chancellor Rebecca Blank, UW System President Tommy Thompson, the UW System Board of Regents, Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers, Wisconsin Senators Miller, Erpenbach, Risser, and Wisconsin Assembly Representatives Sargent, Taylor, Hesselbein, Subeck, Stubbs, Anderson.