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To: The Senate Committee on Universities and Technical Colleges  
From: Sen. Dan Feyen  
Re: Senate Bill 925

Hello, Chairman Roth and committee members. Thank you for taking the time today to hear testimony on Senate Bill 925.

The University of Wisconsin System is one of the largest public higher-education systems in the country. Students come from all over the world to attend Wisconsin's prestigious public universities.

We need to ensure that the UW System's admissions criteria is objective and transparent. It can be difficult to find a clear answer on the specifics of what admissions officers consider when making an admissions decision. Senate Bill 925 would remedy this by requiring each University of Wisconsin System institution to publish its admissions criteria on its respective website so prospective students could easily find that information.

Senate Bill 925 also requires the UW System to use objective admissions criteria when considering prospective students. With this change, UW institutions would still be able to utilize a holistic admissions process, using more data points than just grades and test scores. The intent of this bill is to ensure students are not being denied admission for subjective reasons like an admissions officer disagreeing with the content of an essay response. Admissions decisions would still be able to be made based on the quality of a student's essay response. We want to make sure that students aren't being denied admission to our state's world class institutions because of differing viewpoints.

The UW-System needs to be making unbiased, transparent admissions decisions when considering prospective students and Senate Bill 925 will help ensure that happens.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions the committee has.



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DATE: February 10, 2022

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Universities and Technical Colleges

FROM: DeeJ Lundgren, UW System Interim Associate Vice President for Government Relations

RE: Testimony on Senate Bill 925

Thank you, Chair Roth and committee members, for providing the UW System (UWS) an opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 925 (SB 925).

Currently, admission rates are strong across our 13 universities, reflecting our commitment to opening the doors of our public institutions to those who are interested in a university education. In fact, admission rates this fall are in the 90-plus percent range at 10 of our 13 universities. Each one of our universities offers different opportunities to meet the needs of individuals who want a university experience.

As written, this legislation would only serve to limit access to our public universities for many deserving and qualified applicants. Regulating objective admissions cut-offs, will result in more students being denied admission. Limiting access to enrollment to our schools will lead to declines in workforce needs of Wisconsin and allow out-of-state universities to enroll our students, at a time when we need to bolster both.

As our admission officials note, admissions review is both an art and a science. Objective measures are important when reviewing an application but cannot tell the holistic story of a student. These non-objective measures, including a student essay, can inform admission officials to other factors that may influence a student's academic success in college. Concerns regarding ideological discrimination in reviewing these subjective materials are already prohibited under 36.11 (3) (a), which bans partisan tests in admissions.

Setting an objective measure of a GPA minimum would not allow for more subjective considerations, such as reviewing academic success in core subject areas, rigor of these courses, or progression of a student's success over their high school career—all of which many of our universities use in reviewing an application. These objectives become even more important when reviewing applications of non-traditional students or trying to quantify a veteran's experience to objective measures. Ultimately, for all our universities, subjective admission materials provide the opportunity to admit many more students than these materials deny.

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The implementation of this bill would severely hurt overall enrollment across the UWS. This would have a detrimental impact not only on our campuses but would negatively impact our future workforce, and individuals who desire the opportunity to access the high-quality education our public universities provide.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.