February 10, 2015

To: Chancellor Dennis J. Shields  
From: Faculty Senate  
Re: New hire in the chancellor's office  

Rationale

The University of Wisconsin-Platteville faces a fiscal crisis of disastrous proportions, and a task force has offered a list of 86 budget-cutting recommendations that do not come close to addressing what amounts to a $13 million budget shortfall. We note that a significant number of recommended cuts involve personnel whose annual incomes rarely exceed $70,000. Some examples: One cut in Media Technology Services would save $40,000; moving the Department of Media Studies into the School of Business would save an estimated $117,000 (this is in addition to a prior cut made to the department, resulting in an overall 43 percent reduction in FTE); eliminating academic staff positions in the enrollment and financial aid offices would save about $54,000.

We also note that important outreach efforts, such as the Midwest Multiculturally Inclusive Conference, are recommended for suspension, cuts or conversion to cost-recovery status. The MCIC suspension, for example, would save about $54,000.

In addition, searches for tenure-line faculty are being suspended and faculty lines are being converted to instructional academic staff. Yet, the chancellor’s office is filling a position, special assistant to the chancellor, that has remained vacant for a year. Red Book data indicate the chancellor’s office will pay $121,200 to Rose Smyrski to fill that position.

Motion 1

We, the Faculty Senate of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, recommend that the chancellor rescind the offer of employment to Rose Smyrski, or offer her the position at the median salary of a full professor in the College of Liberal Arts and Education.

Motion 2

We, the Faculty Senate of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, recommend that the chancellor offer a gesture of support to his beleaguered colleagues by returning 10 percent of his salary to the university.

Motion 3

We, the Faculty Senate of the University of Wisconsin-Platteville, recommend that the chancellor urge his administrative colleagues to consider returning 10 percent of their salaries to the university as a gesture of support.
University of Wisconsin-Platteville Chancellor Dennis J. Shields announces the return of Rose Smyrski as special assistant to the chancellor following her one-year leave of absence to assist the UW Colleges and UW-Extension as interim assistant vice chancellor of communications and external affairs.

"Rose's background in education and governmental relations will be of great help during this critical time," Chancellor Shields said. "Her experience, particularly in legislative affairs, ensures that we will continue to build strong relationships in the legislature and tri-state area. Her most recent experience as interim assistant chancellor for external relations at colleges and extension has her well prepared for a broader role at UW-Platteville in leading our campus' interactions with the many and varied external constituencies that are integral to the health of our university. We welcome her back to help fill these important roles."

Smyrski was appointed special assistant to the chancellor in 2012. Prior to the appointment, she served as the interim legislative liaison for UW-Platteville. Before coming to UW-Platteville in fall 2011, she was the chief of staff for a Wisconsin state senator for six years. She also was a research assistant for a state representative and served as a legislative assistant for other state senators and representatives. Her federal experience includes six years with the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a liaison between researchers and federal, state and local governments. Smyrski earned her Bachelor of Science in natural resources and her master's in developmental policy and public administration from UW-Madison.

"I am thrilled to be coming back to UW-Platteville," she said. "I look forward to assisting the university in delivering on its mission."