

Addendum to the February 13, 2020 Report of the Faculty Rep to the UW-La Crosse Faculty Senate

Item 1. Our concern over retitling of Instructional Academic Staff.

The proposed retitling of our IAS [Instructional Academic Staff] is a collective concern of our faculty senate and of our campus. UW-La Crosse has been a unified voice on the key issues that have been identified regarding the retitling of Instructional Academic Staff.

In addition to efforts by the UW-La Crosse Faculty Senate, and UW-La Crosse Human Sources and the UW-La Crosse administration, I have very carefully followed this issue. At every opportunity, we have weighed in on the problems we see with the single “lecturer” category. Our faculty senate colleague, Sue Anglehart, has been the lead individual and an inspiration on this issue. Overall, our position is that: a) there should continue to be ranks within the title or titles assigned to IAS as a result of the TTC initiative; and b) that the new titles should be formalized in policy across the UW System.

Many individuals who are hired as IAS remain at UW-La Crosse for years. Although IAS are subject to more frequent contract renewals than are tenure-track faculty, many of these teaching professionals make significant contributions to their units and to the university as a whole. Meaningful recognition of the professional contributions of our IAS can only be done through procedures that include advancement in rank as well as increases in compensation.

Why should the faculty senate be concerned?

*In addition to the potential negative impacts of a single title on our IAS, faculty senates should be on guard for potential threats of IAS retitling to tenured and tenure-track faculty, and to our work. Given the **Budget Squeeze**, IAS positions will become an increasing share of teaching positions within our units. Departments need to set performance and achievement standards for permanent IAS based on their contribution to unit mission. Employee morale is the energy that powers performance. IAS represent a permanent class whose welfare is inextricably linked to the success of our departments and campuses.*

Item 2. Observations and Ideas: Financial Support, Budgets Issues, and Factors Feeding Declining Enrollments. The last item covered in the report of the Faculty Representative of February 4 are budget cuts across the state’s Comprehensive campuses. Some figures included in the report are proposed cut, or cuts that are being made during the present fiscal year or biennium. Specific estimates are provided for Oshkosh, Stevens Point, Stout, and Whitewater.

The ability of our state to fund its university system at its current level is the greatest challenge we face. The broader environmental factors that will continue to have a significant impact on the University of Wisconsin System’s financial viability include conflict in funding priorities between political factions in state government, resulting in, at best, modest GPR increases to higher education, stagnation and decline in the farm and industrial economies of the state, and a

declining population. And the key determinant of population growth within all U.S. regions is the “pull” of jobs, since native populations have in recent years faced decline.

Wisconsin’s economy has for decades been undergoing a decline in two of its key traditional economic mainstays: agriculture and manufacturing.

Agriculture. Wisconsin is currently undergoing a major farm crisis. In 2018, more than 500 USDA registered dairy farms went out of business. Farm closings in 2019 were significant higher than for 2018. **Dairy Herd Management**, a group that follows the dairy industry, reports that an additional 818 dairy farms went out of business in 2019 [https://www.dairyherd.com/article/wisconsin-loses-818-dairies-2019-largest-decline-state-history].

It is important to understand that the decline in the number of farms disproportionately affects small and medium-size operations. Milk production has not substantially declined. However, a key factor is that native-born labor has been largely replaced by immigrant labor, and at a fast rate [https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/immigrants-are-backbone-of-wisconsin-s-dairy-operations/article_7acae07a-ed29-557c-84f0-c4465de00e5f.html]. However, “immigrant labor” is an abstract term. Dairy farms are increasingly powered by Mexican labor.

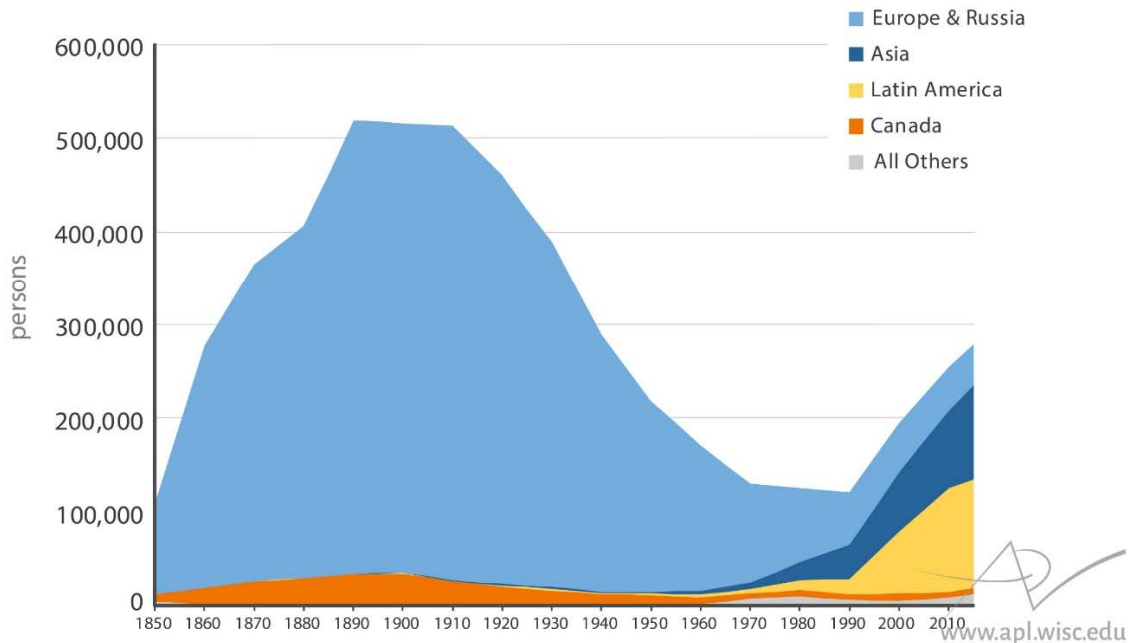
Manufacturing. Wisconsin's reliance on manufacturing is high compared to the United States as a whole. In 2015, Wisconsin employed about 16% of its labor force in manufacturing, while the U.S. employed about 8% of its labor force in manufacturing. And BLS data show that from 1998 to 2012, manufacturing in the state declined from about 600,000 to about 450,000 [source: Bureau of Labor Statistics]. This is on top of steep declines in manufacturing in the industrial Midwest in the decades that preceded the 1990s.

Although the use of immigrant labor in manufacturing has received less media attention, it is clear that – given the structure of Wisconsin manufacturing – immigrant labor has constituted an increasing share of employment in this sector. In some industrial sectors, including in the poultry and furniture industries of western Wisconsin, and in meat-packing in general, Mexican origin populations have become an important element in the labor force.

Demographics. Due to the decline in the U.S’ and Wisconsin’s fertility rate, a population increase can only result from immigration, including immigration from other regions of the United States, or from other countries. While about 13% of the U.S. population was foreign-born in 2015, less than 5% of Wisconsin’s population was foreign born.

Based on published sources, what are the origins of most of Wisconsin’s “foreign born” population? As the figure below shows, the vast majority of the state’s “foreign-born” residents are from Latin America and the very large and extremely culturally-varied “Asia” region. A closer look at these general [and largely meaningless “ethnic”] demographic categories indicates that about 38% of all “Asians” in Wisconsin in 2015 were Hmong and the overwhelming elements within the “Latin American” category are from Mexico.

Foreign-born Persons by Origin Region and Year
 Wisconsin, 1850-2015, U.S. Census Bureau estimates



Source: <https://www.wiscontext.org/changing-faces-wisconsins-foreign-born-residents>

Item 3. The UW System Presidential Search. Some time ago, I emailed the link to the position announcement which was released by the UW President Search Committee. The fact that the qualifications for the position of UW System President does not include an advanced academic degree caught the attention of a number faculty around the state, including of our own Anne Galbraith. Others have defended the fact that a degree requirement is not formally included in the qualifications.

An issue that was previously publicized is that there is no faculty representation on the UW President Search Committee. The Faculty Representatives are continuing to make a concerted effort to be included in the process. A number of Reps have agreed to produce video-recorded statements highlighting the importance of including them in candidate screenings. If a tangible product is created and promulgated, I will share it with everyone ASAP.

Georges Cravins
 2/13/2020