DATE: January 23, 2019
TO: UW System Task Force for Advancing Teachers and School Leaders in the State of Wisconsin
FROM: Karen Schmitt, Interim Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
RE: Charge to the Task Force Members

**Background.** On July 6, 2017, Education Committee Chairperson, Regina Millner initiated discussion with the Board of Regents regarding an initiative related to teacher education. Regent Millner sought an analysis of how to respond to reduced enrollment in our UW System Schools and Colleges of Education, as well as how best to provide teachers and leaders for Wisconsin schools, especially for rural school districts and in response to demand for teachers in high need content areas. Over the past year, the UW Board of Regents Education Committee has convened an educational series of speakers and panels to report on challenges and opportunities in teacher and school leader preparation and retention at both the state and national levels. After discussion of these critical issues with the Education Committee at the December 2018 Board of Regents meeting, the UW Office of Academic and Student Affairs (OASA) was asked to charge a task force to address the following priority challenges, questions, and substantive issues, and to develop an evidence-based report with actionable proposals.

**Priority Challenges.** Based on the information reported to the Education Committee, we have identified two priority challenges that are of particular concern:

1) The decline in enrollments across all of the UW System Schools and Colleges of Education not only in teacher education programs, but also in teacher certification and school leadership programs; and

2) The low number of certified teachers and qualified administrators graduating from UW System Schools and Colleges of Education programs relative to the high-demand for these educators across the State of Wisconsin.

**Questions to Address.** As a result of these challenges, I request that you develop an evidence-based report with actionable proposals to address the two following questions:

1) How can the UW System work collaboratively with key stakeholders to develop financial incentive programs for students to: improve affordability, reduce student loan debt, address teacher workforce shortages in Wisconsin, and increase access, enrollment, and graduation from teacher education and administrative leadership programs at UW Colleges and Schools of Education?

2) How can the UW System engage with key stakeholders to understand their concerns, and to consider how to raise public esteem for the teaching profession in the State of Wisconsin?
In order to facilitate your work, please know that UW System staff and faculty experts from UW-Madison have worked collaboratively to identify key issues and questions regarding higher education financial incentive programs. In addition, these staff members and faculty experts will continue to support and provide resources for the Task Force during the pendency of this project.

**Substantive Issues to Address.** Accordingly, the Task Force is encouraged to address within the report the following issues related to both financial incentive programs and public esteem for the teaching profession:

1) **Financial Incentive Program**: What are the optimal parameters for a successful financial incentive program for graduates who become certified by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and serve either as teachers or school leaders in Wisconsin School Districts?

2) **Cost Coverage**: What direct costs could be covered by a financial incentive program for eligible students while enrolled in UW System Schools and Colleges of Education programs (tuition, fees, living expenses)?

3) **Governance and Coordination**: How can UW System ensure coordinated oversight of the program with existing scholarship and loan forgiveness programs, including but not limited to:
   - The [Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program](#), which is offered by the US Department of Education.
   - The [Teacher Loan Program](#), which is administered by the State of Wisconsin Higher Education Board.
   - [Bucky's Tuition Promise](#), which is administered by UW-Madison and available to all undergraduate students.

4) **Administration**: How is the program and associated funding to be administered and evaluated to ensure financial sustainability, responsiveness to state needs, continuous improvement and ongoing success?

5) **Research**: How can the program evaluation structure provide research opportunities for university scholars, so as to develop a model program, which inspires other states across the country to emulate our best practices and success?

6) **Retention in the Profession**: How can we work with key stakeholders to increase retention of teachers and school leaders in the State of Wisconsin? In particular, how can we utilize student transfer, existing programs, and “grow your own” degree programs to incentivize retention in high need fields and school districts?

7) **Communication**: How can we develop communication and implementation strategies to help Wisconsin residents understand the opportunities afforded by participation in a financial incentive program? For example, high school advisors, as well as college recruiters and advisors, could assist us in building public knowledge about the program, which would, in turn, increase enrollment in Schools/Colleges of Education.
The Task Force will be co-chaired by Diana Hess, Dean of the School of Education at UW-Madison; and Deborah Kerr, Superintendent of Schools, Brown Deer School District. Dr. Laura Dunek, UW System Special Assistant for Governance and Strategic Initiatives will provide support for the Task Force by convening meetings, fulfilling research requests, and writing draft materials for final approval by the Task Force.

It is my expectation that this work will be accomplished in a focused and timely manner in order to provide a report to UW System Office of Academic and Student Affairs by May 1, 2019 for presentation to the Board of Regents Education Committee on June 6, 2019.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this important effort. Your engagement will provide the needed expertise and enthusiasm for this initiative to ensure its success.

CC: President Ray Cross
    Regents
    Chancellors
    Provosts