

February 21, 2011

Message to graduate assistants

Dear colleague,

I understand the difficult nature of the times ahead of us as the Governor's budget repair bill and the state's budget issues will have a far-reaching impact on all state employees, including all of faculty, academic staff, graduate assistants, and classified staff.

The UWM faculty, students, and administration value highly the work done by our teaching and project assistants. While we cannot influence the decision to include higher health insurance contributions in the budget repair bill, we will work our hardest to preserve your appointments, stipends and tuition remissions at UWM. UWM cannot achieve its mission and its strategic goals without a strong body of graduate students many of whom work as graduate assistants in various capacities.

During these difficult times, it is also important that everything is done to project a positive image of what we all do at UWM – teach and support our students, engage in scholarship and research, and provide service to our professions and to the community. In this context, I would urge you to meet all of your obligations to students without fail. UWM administration supports your right as an individual to express your opinions and will work hard to support you in all possible ways. In return, I ask that you do not cancel any of your classes or office hours for students. It is important that we send a message to the public that we, collectively, do sincerely care about our students' education. If you need to miss a class for a legitimate reason, please contact your department chair or supervisor to arrange for coverage rather than canceling the class.

Thank you for your understanding and take care.

Johannes Britz.

Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs