



RESOLUTION # 83-2116

TO: HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE LA CROSSE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ITEM # 2-10

**BOARD ACTION**

Adopted:   
For: 21  
Against: 2  
Abstain: 0  
Abs/Excd: 7  
Vote Req: -  
Other Action: -

**PLANNING RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE ACTION**

Adopted:   
For: 7  
Against: 0  
Abstain: 0  
Abs/Excd: 0

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTION**

Adopted:   
For: 9  
Against: 0  
Abstain: 0  
Abs/Excd: 0

**RE: Opposition to the UW-Cooperative Extension Multi-County Reorganization Plan**

**WHEREAS**, the process used to develop the UW-Cooperative Extension Multi-County Reorganization plan was flawed, not transparent, raises many unanswered questions, and provided little opportunity for meaningful consideration of County concerns, including asking Counties for options to address any share of revenue shortfall that is used to justify the imposition of the plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the plan likely jeopardizes the partnership between the UW-System and Wisconsin Counties, which implies working together to find solutions, not simply accepting a plan unilaterally imposed by a decision of the Chancellor of UW Colleges and UW-Extension; and,

**WHEREAS**, the current Cooperative Extension system has a proven track record of success for more than 100 years as a single County based model for governance, locally set levy contribution and individual County determined educational programming priorities under the policy guidance of each County Extension Committee designated by the elected County Board; and

**WHEREAS**, the reduction target allocated by the plan to Cooperative Extension of \$1.2 million annually, is about 5.8% of the Total \$20.46 million County Levy support for Extension by the 72 Counties, and does not justify the complete dismantling of the current County-based Cooperative Extension system when there are multiple options to address the budget shortfall; and,

**WHEREAS**, La Crosse County's share of the budget decrease would be approximately \$18,788 per year which equals 4.4% of annual tax levy support, but would not be needed in Calendar Year 2016 because of the attrition savings due to the vacant Agricultural Agent position; and

**WHEREAS**, there are up to 40 current faculty/academic staff educator vacancies within the system, providing sufficient savings to allow for an inclusive examination of cost saving options with Counties engaged as full partners, to consider if individual Counties are willing to contribute their proportionate share of the revenue decrease, or identify other non-levy revenue, or offer other expenditure reductions to make up their share of the shortfall allocated to Cooperative Extension by County; and

**WHEREAS**, the reorganization plan imposes a drastic and reckless change, eliminating 80 local faculty education positions, a reduction of nearly 50% in direct education staff, while adding an unnecessary bureaucratic layer of at least 18 "area-leader-director" positions who will not provide any face-to-face service and will not be accountable to local elected officials, community partners, program priorities, community needs, volunteers, funders or participants; and

**WHEREAS**, Wisconsin Counties are unlikely to continue the current level of County Tax Levy support in future years if direct educational services are decreased by up to 50%, thereby making the proposed multi-county educational delivery structure financially unsustainable.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the La Crosse County Board opposes the UW-Cooperative Extension Multi-County Reorganization Plan approved by Chancellor Sandeen on February 10, 2016.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the La Crosse County Board calls upon University System President Ray Cross and the UW-Board of Regents to direct the Chancellor of the UW Colleges and UW Cooperative Extension to retract all portions of the plan imposing a Multi-County system on County / Tribal Extension offices and engage Counties / Tribes as equal partners to consider individual County options to address their share of the \$1.2 million reduction target, approximately 21 cents per capita state-wide, which is equal to 1.93% of \$62,071,049 Total State/Federal Direct and Indirect Support plus County Extension Tax Levies, while maintaining the current single County Extension system.

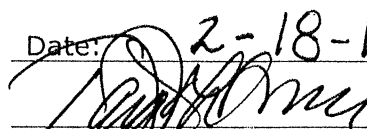

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that La Crosse County is willing to appropriate additional County funding to continue with the current level of service including filling the vacant Agricultural Agent position, while preserving the single County Extension service to La Crosse County citizens, program participants and volunteers.

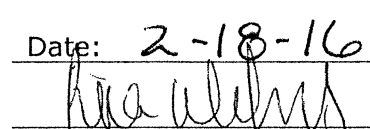

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that La Crosse County is not willing to continue providing local tax levy funding at the current level if direct educational faculty services are decreased by up to 50% as described in the plan, while eliminating accountability to the County Extension Committee and Board.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the La Crosse County UW-Extension Department Director and La Crosse County Administrator are hereby directed to solicit input to the UW-System regarding local concerns about the detrimental impact of the proposed multi-county reorganization plan from the more than 140 local partner organizations and 1,000's of program participants and volunteers in the four program areas: Agriculture, 4-H & Youth, Family Living and Community Natural Resources & Economic Development.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to all 72 Wisconsin County Boards / Extension Education Committee Chairs and County Extension Department Heads, the Wisconsin Counties Association, County Executives and Administrators, Governor Walker, President Ray Cross and the Board of Regents, Senator Shilling, Representative Doyle, Representative Billings, Assembly Speaker Vos and Senate Majority Leader Fitzgerald.

**FISCAL NOTE:** There should be no fiscal impact to La Crosse County in 2016, since there is a current unfilled vacancy in the Agricultural Agent position. The approximate share of the budget cut for La Crosse County is estimated at \$18,788 per year, or 16 cents per capita.

Date: 2-18-16  
  
 COMMITTEE CHAIR  
  
 RECORDING CLERK

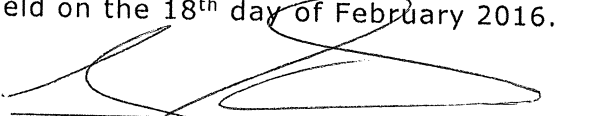
Date: 2-18-16  
  
 COMMITTEE CHAIR  
  
 RECORDING CLERK

	Reviewed Only	Recommended	Not Recommended	
Co. Admin.		<u>50</u>		Requested By: Tara Johnson, Board Chair Date Requested: February 18, 2016 Drafted By: Steve O'Malley, County Admin.
Fin. Director	<u>SPD</u>			
Corp. Counsel	<u>SPH</u>			
Board Chair	<u>[Signature]</u>			

Adopted by the La Crosse County Board this 18 Day of February, 2016

STATE OF WISCONSIN  
 COUNTY OF LA CROSSE

I, Ginny Dankmeyer, County Clerk of La Crosse County do hereby certify that this document is a true and correct copy of the original resolution required by law to be in my custody and which the County Board of Supervisors of La Crosse County adopted at a meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of February 2016.

  
 Ginny Dankmeyer, La Crosse County Clerk