



**Wisconsin Conference of the
American Association of University Professors**

**Statement on Reaction to UW–Madison Chancellor
Appointment**

May 17, 2022

On Monday, the UW System Board of Regents voted unanimously to appoint Jennifer Mnookin as the next chancellor of UW–Madison. Within hours, many leading Wisconsin Republicans—both elected officials and candidates for statewide office—issued nearly identical statements of opposition to her appointment. We write to condemn these statements of opposition in the strongest possible terms.

We will not engage with the substance of the criticisms leveled at Mnookin, which are grounded in corrosive right-wing conspiracy theories. Rather, we wish to highlight the egregious nature of the statements themselves and the material threats to the UW System’s funding that they contain. The vice chair of the Senate Universities and Technical Colleges Committee [wrote the following](#): “If the Board of Regents truly believes that Mnookin is the best choice, then the next Republican governor and legislature should find it impossible to provide more taxpayer dollars or allow the board to increase tuition.” The Speaker of the Assembly [added](#), “I strongly hope the Board of Regents will reconsider their selection.”

These threats are beyond the pale. They constitute unacceptable political interference in the administration of the UW System, of a sort that has led to severe problems in the state university systems of [Georgia](#) and [North Carolina](#), among others. They are deeply inappropriate, and an embarrassment to the entire state. We call on these elected officials and candidates to retract their statements and apologize.

Finally, these threats are leveled at a board whose membership has been left in limbo by a state senate that refuses to hold hearings on gubernatorial appointees. We call on the state senate to immediately confirm the many Regent appointees who have been serving pending senate action, so that the board may operate with the independence and stability contemplated for it in Wisconsin statute.