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DATE: November 6, 2018
TO: Joe Gow, Chancellor, UW-La Crosse
FROM: Ray Cross, President, UW System
RE: Letter of Reprimand

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Ray Cross'.

Apart from my personal underlying moral concerns, I am deeply disappointed by your decision to actively recruit, advocate for, and pay for a porn star to come to the UW-La Crosse campus to lecture students about sex and the adult entertainment industry. While I understand and appreciate your commitment to freedom of expression and public discourse, as Chancellor, you need to exercise better judgment when dealing with matters such as these.

Furthermore, I found out about this controversial event, as did several members of the Board, through the media after the event – neither you nor your staff briefed us prior to it becoming public. Even you recognized this would be a “controversial issue” but you did not brief my office prior to your interview with the media or prior to it being released by the media. In light of my prior cautions about your interactions with the media and your need for a public information officer, this should not have happened.

This incident has prompted many to question the sources and uses of the Chancellor’s Discretionary Fund. As we continue to struggle for greater financial independence and public trust, your decision to spend money from this fund on a one-sided lecture by an “... [adult entertainment] performer, educator, and activist” unfortunately, puts all of our funding at risk. I fear your actions also detract from our budget request and our capital plan, which should be one of your highest priorities.

Therefore, you are being reprimanded for exercising poor judgment and for a lack of responsible oversight with respect to the use of state funds. This will impact your salary adjustment which, along with all the other chancellors, will be before the Board in December. Additionally, I will be calling for an audit of the sources and uses of the Chancellor’s Discretionary Fund for fiscal years 16, 17, 18 and 19 to date.

This Letter of Reprimand will be added to your file and become part of future evaluations.