

# The Crisis Confronting the University of Wisconsin

*A plain story of fact, addressed  
to the Legislature and the  
people of Wisconsin*

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If the financial measures now before the Legislature are enacted into law, they will not only prevent the development of the University, but they will also cripple it beyond recognition.

No such recommendations have ever been made to any Wisconsin Legislature during the past sixty years, nor, so far as I know, to any Legislature in the group of states to which Wisconsin belongs.

E. D. Birge

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# The Facts

By THEODORE KRONSHAGE, Jr., *President of Board of Regents.*

THE REGENTS of the University presented financial requests to the Board of Public Affairs which were designed to meet the necessities of the University for operation during the coming biennium and to take care of part of the building needs which have accumulated in the decade or more during which there have been substantially no appropriations for buildings at Madison.

In operation the main requests of the regents were for (1) the small additions needed to maintain present operations; (2) increase for the operation of the medical school and hospital made necessary by the occupation in October of the Wisconsin General Hospital; (3) the restoration of the appropriations for books, apparatus, etc., to about the same amount as was granted for 1921-23; (4) an addition to the appropriation for University Extension made necessary by increased work.

For buildings and land the regents presented various projects aggregating nearly \$3,000,000. All of these, except that for the school of education, represent delayed projects, long overdue, and of a type which has been already met in every neighboring state. No appropriation for a major educational building has been made in Wisconsin since 1915 and this (the Physics Building) was a re-enactment of an appropriation of 1913. Meanwhile our students have doubled in number.

The regents did not expect to secure the full sum during the coming biennium, but they hoped to receive an appropriation extending over a number of years so that a reasonable building program might be adopted and carried out.

The Legislature in 1920 appropriated \$1,350,000 for a hospital and nurses' home. The hospital is now completed and occupied and the contract for the nurses' home has been let. This is a great institution for public service and a notable addition to our facilities for medical education. But it does not relieve in any way the difficulties regarding class rooms, offices, and laboratories for the thousands of additional students in courses other than medicine. The appropriation was made out of excess funds already raised for the soldiers' bonus, not from funds raised by taxation for University buildings. In neighboring states, during the same years, similar hospitals of equal or greater cost have been built in addition to millions of dollars appropriated for educational buildings.

Such was the situation last December, when the regents placed their requests before the Board of Public Affairs.

This Board recommended to the Legislature appropriations which result as follows:

A. *As to buildings.* In 1923 the University bill recommended by the finance committee to the Legislature carried \$815,000 for land and buildings, including a conditional appropriation of \$200,000. This recommendation passed both houses but was lost on a question of taxation, so that not a cent of the money came to the University.

The Board of Public Affairs recommends to the Legislature of 1925 an appropriation of \$591,000

for buildings and nothing for land during the biennium. The needs accumulated during more than ten years are entirely ignored, and the appropriation reduced far below even that which the Legislature of 1923 was ready to give us.

B. *As to operation.* All requests for increase are refused. On the contrary the requests for the item of "general operation" are reduced by over \$471,000 for 1925-26 and over \$608,000 for 1926-27. During the current year the University will spend under this head about \$2,800,000, of which some \$600,000 comes from students, etc., and \$2,200,000 from the State. Under the appropriation recommended the sum allowed under this head is about \$2,659,000 for each year of the coming biennium, of which over \$600,000 comes from other sources than the State. This is about \$200,000 less than the University is expending this year for these purposes, if we include the staff and other expenses of the partially occupied hospital. It is less than has been budgetted in any of the last three years.

Large reductions are also recommended in requests for maintenance, books, and apparatus, and University Extension. If these recommendations are adopted by the Legislature, the only recourse of the University will be to dismiss students and close schools or departments so as to reduce expenses within income.

Altogether, the regents had asked for all kinds of purposes connected with operating the University, about \$271,000 for 1925-26 more than the budget for 1924-25. This includes the large increase for hospital and medical school. The recommendation of the Board of Public Affairs reduces this by more than \$600,000 or to a level more than \$300,000 below the budget of this year.

These reductions are recommended in the face of the known fact that certain large increases must be made at once. For instance, the hospital must be provided with a staff and operated, and the full salaries of the surgical and medical staff come under the law from University funds.

The long delay in building appropriations—a delay without parallel in any other state about Wisconsin—has been slowly but surely discouraging and cramping the work of the University. This policy of gradual extinguishment of educational efficiency it is proposed to continue for two years more, and perhaps indefinitely.

The proposed reduction in funds for operation strikes directly and immediately at the life of the University. If carried out, the result will be—in the words of President Birge—"to cripple the University beyond recognition."

In this emergency—the like of which has not confronted the University since the far-off days of the Civil War—the University addresses the legislature, the people of the state, and its alumni.

*The issue concerns not only the life and work of the University; it even more deeply concerns the good name of Wisconsin.*

THEODORE KRONSHAGE JR.,  
*President of the Board of Regents.*

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## The Crisis Confronting the University

The Regents of the University have presented requests for money enough to operate the institution for the coming two years, and to begin a building program that has been held up for ten years past, during which time student attendance has doubled.

In answer to the request of the Regents, it has been officially recommended to the Legislature that only a small portion of the request for buildings be granted.

There has further been recommended a CUT IN OPERATION OF A MILLION DOLLARS, and other cuts in maintenance, extension teaching, books and apparatus, etc., of nearly HALF A MILLION MORE.

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What will be the result of such recommendations?

*Do the people and the Legislature of Wisconsin deliberately desire that their State University shall be crippled and degraded?*

*Do they wish their sons and daughters to be shut out from the privileges of higher education?*

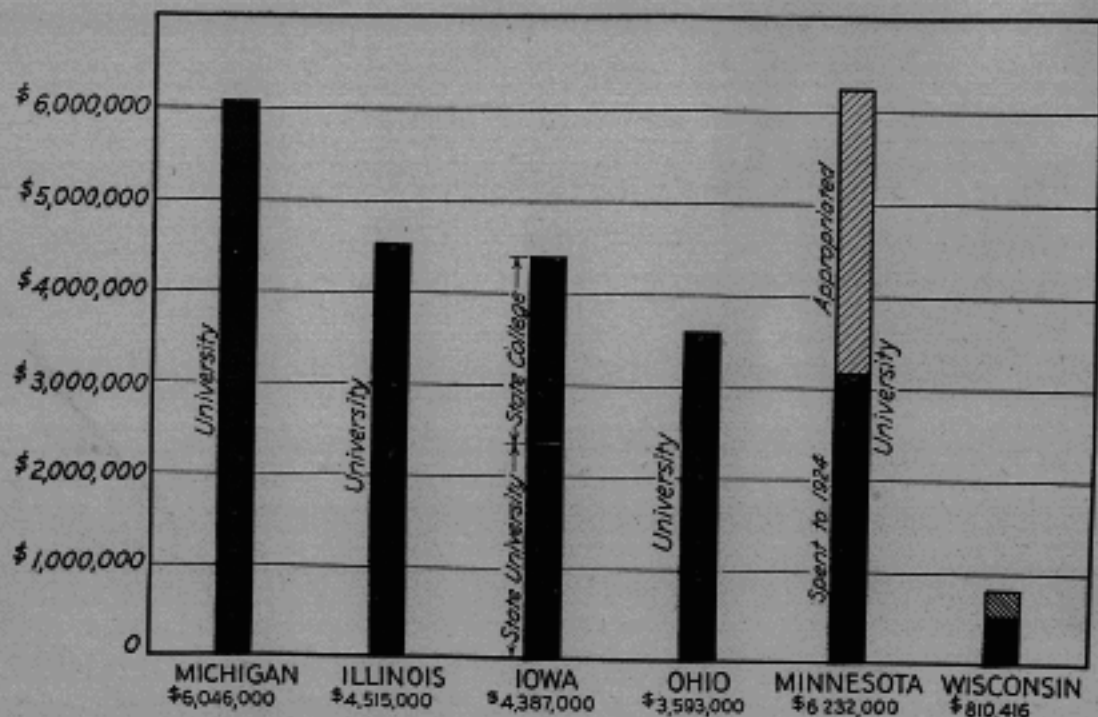
If this amount of financial support is withdrawn, which alternative do they suggest to the administrative officers of the university as a means of retrenchment? Will they decide to starve and shrink the whole institution at Madison to one-half its proper size, or will they elect to lop off a leg and an arm, to close up, for example, the College of Engineering and the State Hospital, and provide nourishment enough for only the maimed remnant of the whole body?

Or do they prefer that one-half the students at the University of Wisconsin, four thousand out of eight thousand, shall be chosen to receive an education, and that the other half shall be sent home?

Will they acquiesce in deciding that this disgrace shall be visited upon the State of Wisconsin?

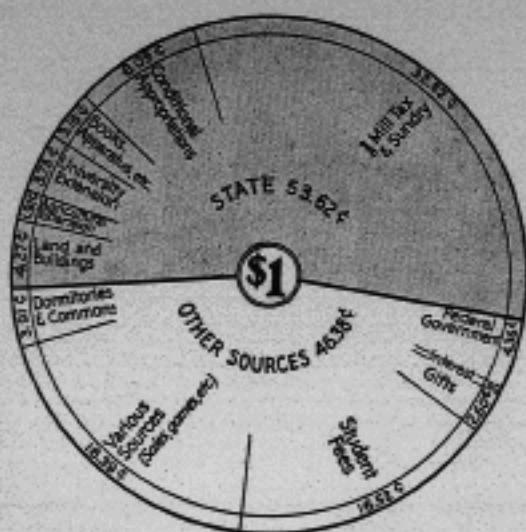
Or will they see to it that the present University Appropriation Bill, which asks the smallest amount necessary to conduct the work of the university for the next two years, shall be passed in its present form?

There can be only one answer. Wisconsin can afford to educate her children. She can provide adequately for her State University.

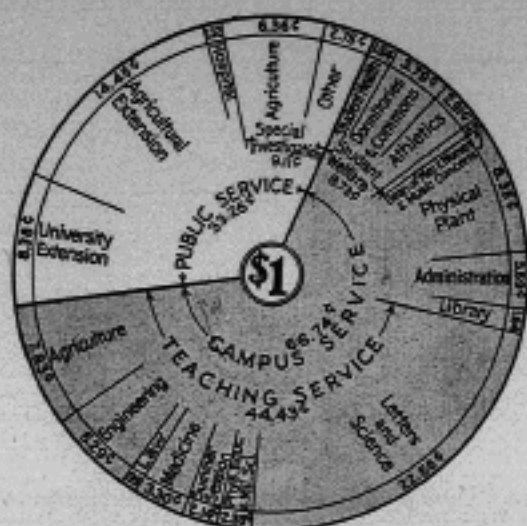


### Appropriations for Educational Buildings and Land 1919-1923 Excluding Appropriations for Hospital Buildings

*This chart shows what the leading state universities of the middle west have received in legislative appropriations since the war.*



Where the University Dollar Comes From 1923-1924



Where the University Dollar Goes 1923-1924

## Our Neighbor States Give Generously for University Buildings

While Wisconsin has been standing still for a decade, other states have appropriated money generously for university buildings.

The chart does not show the money appropriated in any state for hospitals, because these are not educational buildings. Wisconsin has had \$1,350,000 for a hospital and a nurses' home, but these in no way relieve the demand for class-room space. Furthermore, this money was not raised for the university, but was appropriated from a surplus in the soldier bonus fund. It would not have been possible to secure it for class room buildings. If the State Hospital is added to Wisconsin's column, similar addition must be made to the other columns.

Your university has acquiesced in the economy program of the state for the last ten years, and even in its present requests is asking for a bare minimum. But it dare not postpone longer the beginning of its building program.

These states have learned from Wisconsin to value their universities; they have followed our program of development. Shall we now make ours a fourth-rate institution, while theirs forge triumphantly into the first class?

Is Wisconsin more destitute than her neighbor states, than Iowa or Minnesota? Will she deny her children an education, when they can afford an education for theirs? Is this progress? Is this economy?

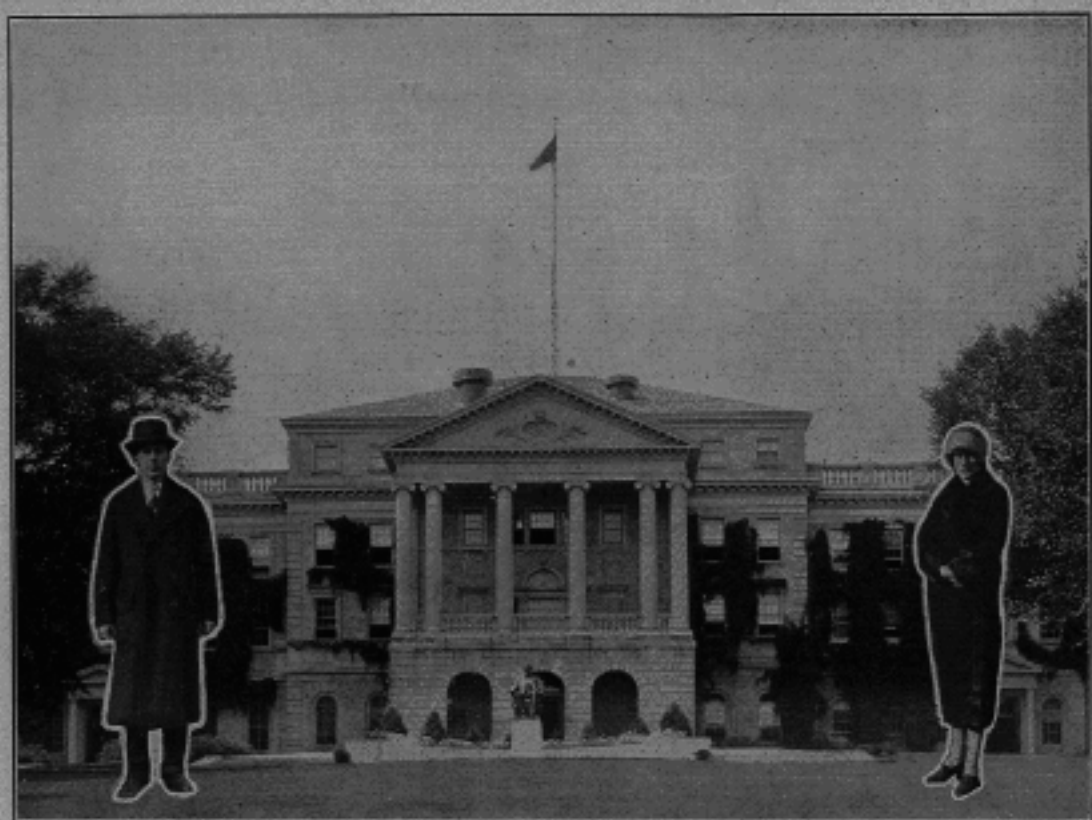
### **The University is Nearly 50% Self-Supporting**

When considering the requests of the university, bear in mind that nearly 50% of the money it spends each year is raised by the university itself.

All the money received from student fees, athletic games, dormitories and meals, gifts, sale of butter and livestock, and other sources, is paid into the State Treasury and appropriated out again by the Legislature. Only 53.62% of its support comes from the taxpayers; the other 46.38% is of its own providing.

Furthermore, one-third of the money appropriated to the university—and only half of this, remember, comes from taxes—is spent in state service, in which the University of Wisconsin leads the world. Extension teaching and agricultural experiment station work are the chief examples. This service has been called "The Wisconsin Idea in State Universities." Because of it, President Eliot of Harvard declared Wisconsin to be "The Leading State University."

When you hear that "the university costs the state five million a year," remember that this is NOT TRUE. Only half of the appropriation is raised by taxes. And a THIRD of the whole sum is spent in serving you, the people of the state, in your own towns, cities, and farms. The other two-thirds is spent on the campus, in educating your sons and daughters.



### They Could Hardly Get Inside in 1913

*The University buildings were overfull then, but students could be accommodated.*

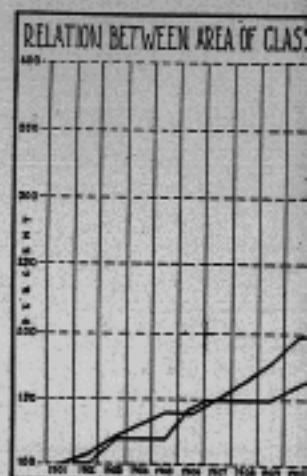
The fathers and mothers of the state look upon higher education as the birthright of their children. In increasing thousands the young people of Wisconsin are graduating from the high schools and pressing on to the University.

What do they find when they come there? A university trying to teach 8,000 students in the buildings that were built for 4,000. A faculty needing 124 full time teachers to bring it up to the same proportionate strength as it had in 1911. Students refused admission to classes they wish to enter, because lecture rooms are not large enough to hold them. Library reading in many cases discontinued because the library, built for a student body of 2,000, will not accommodate one of 8,000. Professors whose "teaching load" has in many cases been doubled since 1908.

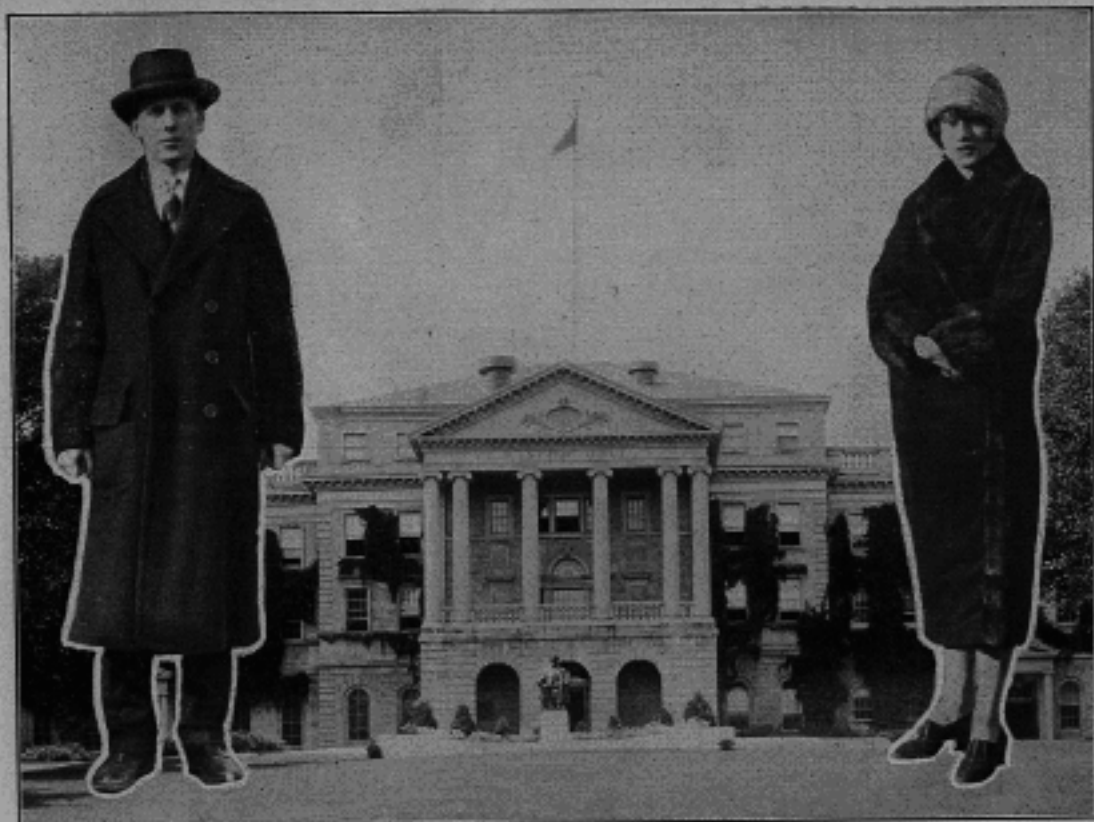
How can close and sympathetic contact be maintained between a faculty so crowded and hampered, and their students? Mass production, factory methods, are inevitable to an increasing degree.

These boys and girls are the finest and most precious product of Wisconsin. They deserve the best we can give them. Their future is the future of our state. It is for them the university pleads.

To provide classrooms that these boys and girls could get into, there has not been appropriated for



*Upward goes the line attendance, a gain of 300 floor space has gone up*



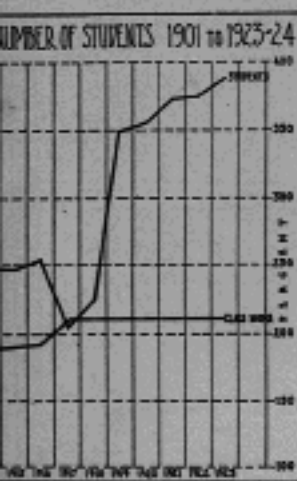
### How Can They Get Inside in 1925?

*Since 1913 the student attendance has doubled—and class-room buildings have practically stood still.*

the University of Wisconsin a dollar which it could spend since 1913.

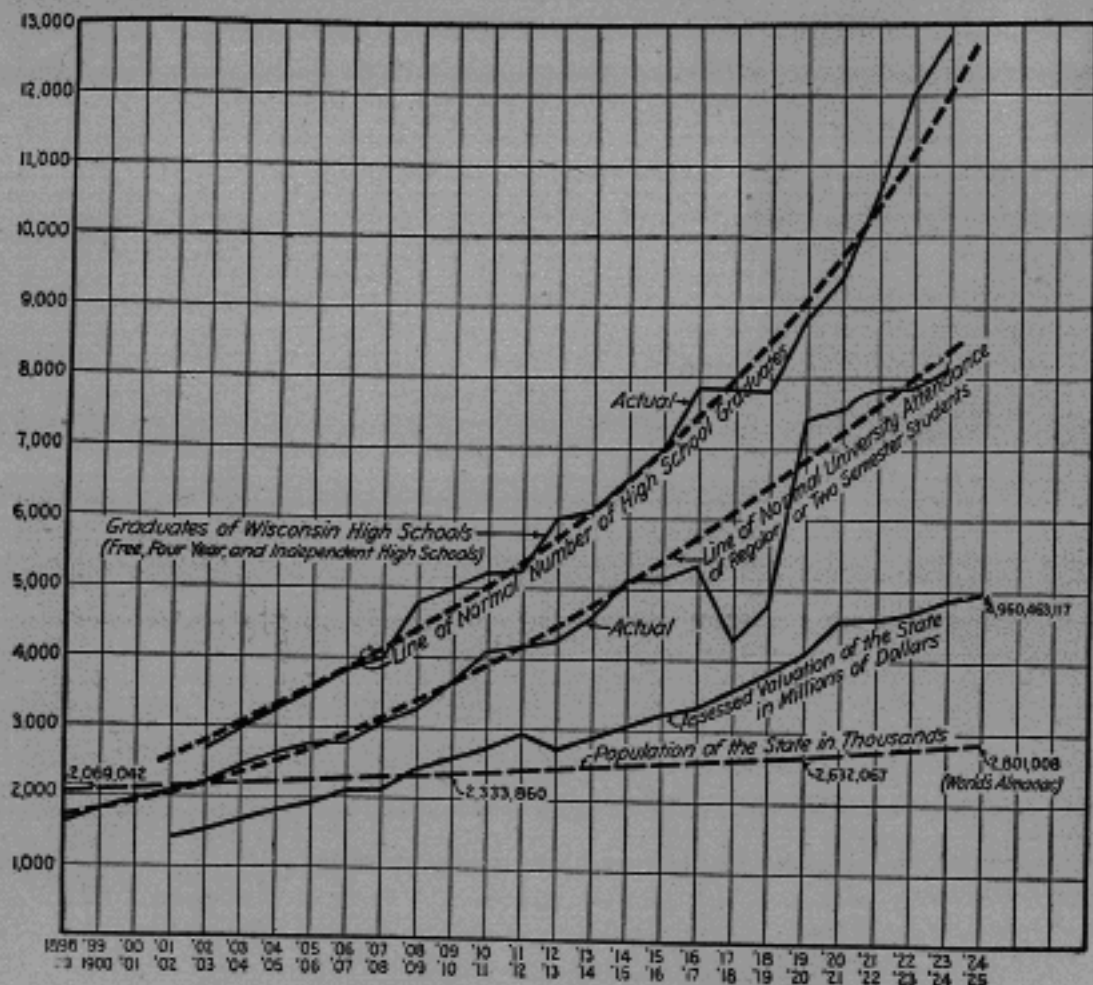
It is true that upon the books of the state the university is charged with land and buildings since 1919 in the amount of \$810,416. But let us analyze this amount.

Look back at the first chart in this booklet, at the little black nubbin that stands beside the towering columns representing appropriations for universities in other states. Included in this figure is \$150,000 for a University Extension building at Milwaukee, which the Regents have not been permitted to spend. It includes \$90,000 for an addition to the chemical laboratory. The sum was so small that its use would have constituted a waste of the state's funds. There is also included in this amount \$191,500 for boilers, tunnels, electrical equipment, water mains, etc., construction made necessary by the building of the Wisconsin General Hospital, but nevertheless charged to the University. The balance of the appropriations went for various buildings connected with the agricultural experiment and branch stations and certain repairs, remodeling, improvements, and lands connected with the university plant.

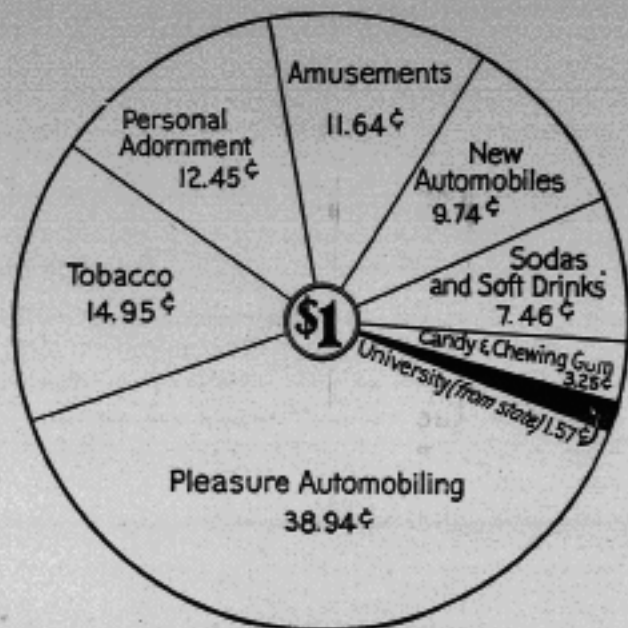


by the increase in student  
1900, but the increase in  
%.

**NOT ONE DOLLAR WAS AVAILABLE TO  
RELIEVE THE CLASS ROOM CONGESTION.**



**High School Graduates—University Attendance  
Assessed Valuation and Population of State**



**Luxuries—or a University Education?**

## The University is Forced to Grow

Has the State of Wisconsin stopped growing?

Have the demands it makes on its university declined?

Are its population and its assessed valuation dropping, so that its educational institutions need not advance to take care of an additional burden?

Look at the chart opposite, get out your pencil, and follow the lines. Upward swings the line showing the yearly increase in high school graduates. Nearly 13,000 of our young people received diplomas in the year 1924-25.

The fathers and mothers of the state were building between 1919 and 1924 new schools providing 7,789,900 feet of floor space costing \$40,522,400. But they were taking no thought of how the enormous number of graduates from these schools were to receive higher education in the state university.

Upward likewise goes the line showing the increased valuation of the state, from \$2,700,000,000 in 1910 to \$4,900,000,000 in 1924.

The state is not getting poorer.

Population, too, is steadily on the rise.

What do these figures mean? They mean that the state is growing, not standing still. The army of high school boys and girls, passing on through four years of university training, is needed by the state to keep those values rising. Brains put Wisconsin on the map; brains developed our dairy industry, our farming and manufactures. Minds trained by education are being demanded to keep Wisconsin in a leading position. Cut off our education, reduce the supply of trained leaders, and values will decline.

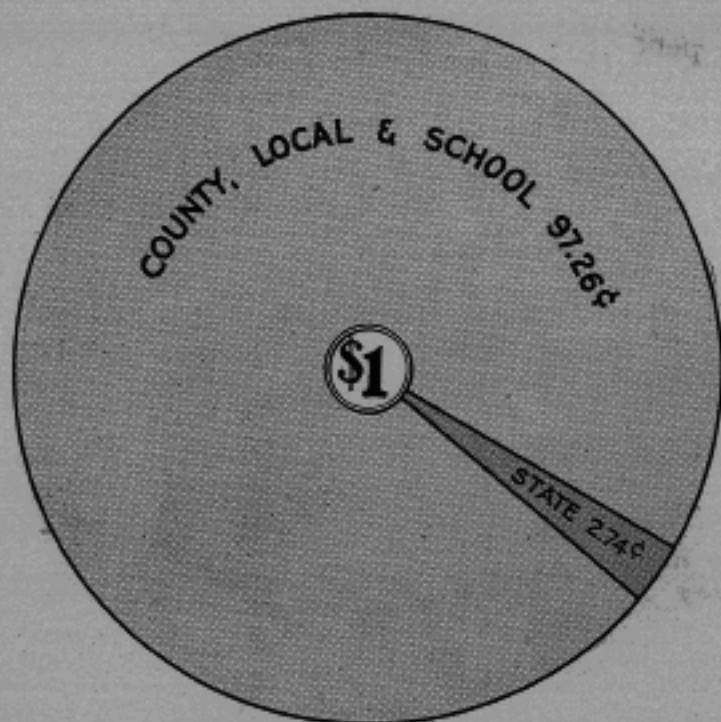
The university is forced to grow. The people of the state demand it.

## Wisconsin Spends Millions on Luxuries

The people of Wisconsin are not poor. The amount of money which they spent in 1924 for candy and chewing gum would operate two universities at the price which it costs the state to operate the University of Wisconsin.

Here are five simple facts worth knowing; they are illustrated in the accompanying chart.

1. In the year 1924 the people of Wisconsin spent more than four and one-half times as much for soft drinks and sodas as it costs the state of Wisconsin to maintain its State University;
2. More than seven times as much for movies and similar amusements;
3. About eight times as much for rouge and lipsticks and other articles of personal adornment;



*Economy Begins  
At Home*

*Wipe out the entire sum raised by general taxation for state expenses, and only three cents would be saved.*

## Buildings the University Needs Now

*A Six Year Program. Only a Part of  
the Appropriations to be Made Now*

1. An addition to Bascom Hall, built according to the same plans submitted and approved in 1913. This addition will be adequate if Bascom Hall is otherwise relieved.
2. An addition to the Library to provide additional reading and study space for students.
3. An addition to the Chemistry building, where congestion is intolerable.
4. An Education building to house the School of Education and relieve Bascom Hall. The teaching profession is the largest and most important profession in the state and should get its training and inspiration in schools provided by the state and not in private institutions.
5. Completion of the Wisconsin High School building, the laboratory of the School of Education. The first unit was authorized in 1913.
6. An administration building, to relieve Bascom Hall, and to gather under one roof the University's administration activities, now scattered all over the campus.
7. An addition to the Engineering shops, the first units of which were authorized in 1913.
8. Completion of the Extension building. The part now standing was built in 1912.

## Wisconsin Spends Millions on Luxuries [cont.]

4. More than thirty times as much for pleasure automobiling.

Altogether, the people of Wisconsin spent in 1924 sixty-three times as much for luxuries as they did for the support of the State University. The accompanying chart illustrates the fact graphically.

The total sum paid out for these luxuries in the state in 1924 exceeded \$188,034,000.

Moreover, during the six-year period beginning with 1919 the people of Wisconsin invested approximately \$250,000,000 in automobiles, and—during the years 1920, 1921, 1922, and 1923—spent \$166,821,795 on highways on which to run the automobiles.

These figures indicate that our people as a whole are not suffering from want. **They indicate a condition of well-being and a willingness to spend money not only for the necessities and comforts of life but for pleasures and luxuries as well.**

The value of all capital invested in manufactures in Wisconsin in 1919, according to the 1920 census, was \$1,361,729,196.

The value of all farm property in the state in 1920 was \$2,667,282,997.

These figures were doubtless higher in 1924, because of the increase in population and prosperity.

But contrast all these evidences of Wisconsin's opulence with the support given by the state to the University. Only \$3,175,039 was given to the University by the state for the academic year 1921-1922.

## Economy Begins at Home

If all the state expenses raised by taxation on general property were wiped out at a blow, including the normal schools and the university, the saving would be **LESS THAN THREE CENTS** of the taxpayer's dollar.

Take out from the chart on the opposite page the thin wedge representing state expenses paid for by a property tax, and you'd still have 97.26 per cent left.

It isn't the university that makes the tax burden; the university costs at the outside only 1.8 cents out of the whole. (It really cost much less last year, only seven-tenths of a cent, because of the remission of over a million dollars in taxes.)

The saving which it is proposed to effect by denying necessary appropriations to the university is only a fraction even of this small part of the tax burden.

What costs money is the expense of local government. Economy begins at home.

## Regent Kronshage's Message to the State

Theodore Kronshage, President of the Board of Regents, has explained in detail the situation of the university in seven powerful newspaper messages to the people of the State of Wisconsin.

1. The University of Wisconsin has been slipping. Fifteen years ago its service to the state set the lesson to the nation, "For progress, strengthen your state universities." Other states did. Shall Wisconsin's university be allowed to decay?
2. Where the University Dollar comes from. By a peculiar system of bookkeeping which the state forces the university to use, the records make it appear that the university costs the state twice as much as it really does. Actually, only fifty-three cents comes from the taxpayer, while forty-six cents is raised by the university, paid into the state treasury, and appropriated out again.
3. How the University Dollar is spent. A third of the whole amount goes into state service, by which every farm, town, and city benefits. This service has been worth millions of dollars to every citizen. The cost to the state of instruction in 1924 for 8,000 regular students, 4690 summer school students, and 257 short course agricultural students was really only two million dollars, even if the entire cost of maintaining the plant be charged against the student body.
4. Building needs have piled up since 1913. Sums appropriated by the legislature of that year were in part repealed. No money for educational buildings has been given since, though attendance has doubled. With such denial of the university's needs as is contained in the proposals now before the Legislature, what wonder that the Regents have not found a president for the university?
5. Wisconsin spends millions on luxuries. The candy and chewing gum bill of the state alone would operate two universities. Wisconsin is not too poor to support its state university.
6. The university is trying to teach 8,000 students in buildings which were built for 4,000. Intolerable congestion makes crowded class rooms, bad ventilation, and "factory production" methods in education. Good work cannot be done under such conditions—you wouldn't expect it in your local high school, your factory, your office, your dairy barn—why in your State University?
7. Wisconsin's neighbors spend millions on buildings. Illinois has spent more than \$4,500,000 since the war; Minnesota more than \$6,000,000; Iowa, nearly \$4,500,000; Ohio, over \$3,500,000. All these are exclusive of very large new hospital developments.