

18-1291

# Western Technical College

THE ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE

September 12, 2018

Mayor Tim Kabat  
City Council Member Marcou  
City of La Crosse  
400 La Crosse Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601

Dear Mayor Kabat and City Council Member Marcou:

We would like to express our concern over the City's proposal to charge for on-street parking adjacent to Western Technical College's downtown campus.

During a time when businesses are begging for skilled workers, we need to pull together as a community to come up with solutions, not barriers. Students are choosing to come to La Crosse for their education. Every program we offer leads to local jobs, and 73 percent of Western graduates stay in this district. We ask you to reconsider your pending decision and show these students we want them to stay here and work.

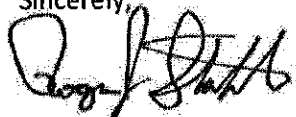
Adding fees to parking on Western's streets comes as a tax to our students. While we completely understand the concerns of the residents of the surrounding neighborhoods, we believe this plan will have unintended consequences that impact the welfare of students.

The majority of Western students have already overcome substantial obstacles to attend college. Adding one more barrier can easily make them give up. Many just don't have the extra \$80 or more per month to spare. If they did, they would have purchased a permit for our parking lots. Western's parking fee is \$100 or less per academic year and that fee is a struggle for many. Bringing down the cost of permits would only exacerbate the problem by overfilling the lots and causing students with permits to still have to pay for street parking. With limited options, these low-income students will be forced to park further away from campus and into surrounding neighborhoods.

Our final concern is that as community partners, we did not have the opportunity to discuss this issue prior to the public announcement. We would still welcome a chance to talk in person. Please feel free to contact either of us directly.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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