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## Tammy Baldwin desires financial-aid increases

by Natalie J. Mikhail, State Editor  
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Tammy Baldwin desires financial-aid increases

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As a graduate of UW-Madison, U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin, D-Madison, told the Badger Herald she is concerned about financial aid and the stress surrounding increasing tuition costs.

She said Pell grants and general financial aid should be both a state and federal issue.

"We have seen a dramatic change in how people cobble together to pay tuition for college," Baldwin said.

With the poor state of the current economy, Baldwin, a member of the House Budget Committee, said she is very concerned about losing ground in keeping up with Pell grants and state and federal financial aid.

She supported an amendment to the education budget in March that increased the maximum Pell-grant award to \$4,500, an increase of \$500 from 2002. However, the Congresswoman said the amount should reflect more of the students' actual costs.

"We should increase the maximum amount that a Pell grant can be to keep up with tuition costs," she said.

Another financial-aid matter affecting UW students concerns a recent bill passed in the state Assembly Thursday, barring students with drug convictions from receiving government financial aid. This bill is in compliance with a 1998 decision made by former President Bill Clinton in the Higher Education Act.

Baldwin, however, said she disagreed with the state's vote.

"I don't think it's necessary, especially with the federal law in place," Baldwin said, adding that the federal law is also inhibiting.

"There are far more serious crimes that people can do and still receive financial aid," Baldwin said. "I think that sends a horrible message."

She said the federal college-financial-aid law is incredibly broad, but it incorporates juvenile assistance, except in one case. Baldwin said she

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believes in giving people opportunities to live crime-free lives.

State Rep. Rob Kreibich, R-Eau Claire, co-author of the Wisconsin legislation, said he disagreed, saying students who disobey the law should not be rewarded.

"The UW System has made curbing drug and alcohol abuse on campuses a priority. UW is spending time, resources and personnel on the issue ... subsidizing the education of convicted drug dealers undermines those efforts," Kreibich said in a statement.

In the meeting, Baldwin also emphasized the changes the United States has seen since the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, including increased safety precautions, enactment of the USA PATRIOT Act and the war in Iraq.

As a member of the House Judiciary Committee, Baldwin said she sees many problems with the use of the Patriot Act. One of the committee's responsibilities is oversight of laws passed. With U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft's changes and views of the law, the number of times the act has been used is classified, making oversight difficult and causing increased skepticism.

However, Baldwin added that some of its provisions are important in the fight against terrorism.

"Some of it makes sense in a world that is changing technologically," Baldwin said.

The war on terror has been a major concern for Americans, and Baldwin said that while she supports troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. should limit its control in these areas to allow international policy to play a bigger role.

"I'd love to see [the United States] move as rapidly as possible in international policy ... and as quickly as possible to empower Iraqis more," she said.

Baldwin voted against the Bush administration's request for an \$87 billion Iraq package.

"I have not seen an adequate strategy," she said concerning the intent of the funds.

She said she did support a smaller spending bill that directly benefits troops, however.

"I don't believe we have any right to withdraw troops immediately," she said. "I think we still have responsibilities there."

Baldwin's suggestions include working with allied forces and giving up some control of the area.



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