

## DOUBLE-DIPPING AT UW COMING INTO QUESTION



Officials at UW-Madison are questioning 447 workers at the campus who were re-hired after retiring because of a new employment policy that puts a stranglehold on double-dipping. According to state law in Wisconsin, employees who have retired are eligible to be rehired 30 days after they have retired. The rehired employees can receive a salary and a pension but cannot receive extra benefits such as health insurance. The new policy from UW-Madison uses the same 30 day period and limits employment to only one year in the majority of cases. "We wanted to have a procedure and policy that was more clear, and had more rigor associated with it, so we could avoid a situation where someone could be sitting in a re-hired annuitant position for multiple years without any sort of review," Darrell Bazzell, vice chancellor for administration at UW-Madison, said. "We didn't feel that was appropriate." The policy was developed by the administration of UW-Madison after a large number of employees began retiring in the spring. Many think it is in response to a UW-Green Bay vice chancellor who arranged for his re-hiring before he even announced his resignation. "There's no question the situation in Green Bay caught our attention," Bazzell said. "We were certainly mindful of situation as we formulated our own policy." Rep. Duey Stroebel, R-Cedarburg has introduced legislation that would prevent retired employees from claiming their pensions if they are rehired and work more than half-time. "People who double dip compromise the integrity of the entire system and antagonize Wisconsin taxpayers," he wrote in a news release introducing the bill. Most University officials defend the practice because it allows them to hire for a position with an experienced and qualified person if a position should open up out of the blue and without having to pay for health benefits. The officials also claim that more than half of the rehired employees are paid with non-state funds. "The employment of retired university employees is intended to address short-term needs of the university and is not to be used as a substitute for hiring on-going employees," the policy states. Some of the 447 rehired employees at UW-Madison retired in the 1990s, with the University spending \$18.6 million to pay formerly retired employees, which is around a savings of \$7.2 million that the University would have to spend on employees with fringe benefits. The list of rehired employees includes the following:

- clerical assistants who earn \$11.96 an hour
- faculty who return to teach a few courses part-time
- Alan Fish, the associate vice chancellor for facilities who earns \$148,256 annually
- Walter Dickey, the associate athletic director who earns \$138,848

About 70 of the re-hired employees are emeritus professors. One-third of the employees rehired had retired in 2011, which caused the University to look at the policy currently in place and consider revising it. The current policy dates back to 1993.