News

Maric speaks at UW-Madison for chancellor position

by Mikayla Bunnell
NEWS EDITOR
SHE/HER/HERS
mikayla.bunnell@uconn.edu

University of Connecticut President Radenka Maric spoke at an hour-long public forum as one of three finalists to be chancellor at University of Wisconsin-Madison on Friday.

At the forum, Maric spoke about increasing public trust and affordability in higher education, infrastructure maintenance, student mental health and student athletics as being major opportunities and challenges facing UW-Madison.

When asked why she applied for the job of chancellor, Maric talked about how UW-Madison is one of the "top research world-renowned institutions." She mentioned working on collaborations between the university and UConn, such as the Network for Advanced Nuclear Magnet Resonance, a UConn-led project that works to develop a diagnostic medical tool. UW-Madison has one of the largest reactors of the network, Maric said.

"So knowing the institution and knowing the quality of the institution was very appealing to me," Maric said at the forum.

She also said she values Wisconsin being a land-grant, flagship institution like UConn.

"I truly believe in social mobility and opportunity to educate many people for the benefit of the state," Maric said. Wisconsinites, she said, "value that knowledge created in the classroom and on this campus benefits community, benefits the ocean and benefits society writ large."

Maric continued to answer questions about what kind of impact she'd like to leave on the university should she become chancellor and how she would translate the "Wisconsin idea" into practice.

"I will be present in the community. I will be present with faculty. I will be present with students. I will understand the needs. I will talk to legislators. I will see what are the needs and what are the priorities and how to position the university to do better on those priorities," she said.

She highlighted her experience working with unions at UConn, which she said she has a "great relationship" with, and called unions "great partners," especially in the budget process.

She also talked about how she would foster open debate at UW-Madison while building a welcoming campus culture.

"We are such a diverse community, and we have to give the voice to everybody, and giving the voice to everybody will not happen without free expression and inviting people to express themselves," Maric said. "Civil discourse is very important, and the ability to listen and respectfully disagree is very important. So the free expression should never be stopped."

Maric's forum was controversial on the UW-Madison campus. Organizations such as UW-Madison's Student for Justice in Palestine and The Teaching Assistants Association, a graduate student union, spoke out against Maric being chosen as a finalist, primarily due to her handling of student expression on campus relating to the Israel-Palestine conflict and the events of Oct. 7, 2023.

"Hiring Maric would threaten to turn UW's stance of institutional neutrality into a mockery of itself, wielded — alongside government surveillance — to suppress student expression that Maric finds objectionable, but ignored when she wants to express her own opinions," the union wrote in statement last week. "It is clear to us as students and workers at UW that Maric is incapable of creating a safe and equitable workplace."

UW-Madison's Students for Justice in Palestine held a rally, "Maric out of Madison," just before her forum on Friday to "show the university that [they] will not accept her leadership," according to an Instagram post.

Special thanks to UW-Madison's student paper, The Daily Cardinal, for providing the recording of Maric's forum.



The Students for Justice in Palestine organization march past the Engineering Building II on Sept. 24, 2026. The SJP chapter at UW-Madison staged a protest outside her speech on Friday.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL JEFFERS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS



President Radenka Maric spoke at the University of Wisconsin-Madison on Friday. She has been nominated to be their chancellor.

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When did Republican strongholds last flip to Democrats?

by Krisztian Elcsics
STAFF WRITER
HE/HIM/HIS
krisztian.elcsics@uconn.edu

The 2026 midterm election saw a wave of Democratic victories, including historic upsets in traditionally Republican states like Texas, Kansas and South Carolina.

For decades, Democrats have struggled to compete in statewide elections across these three states.

However, voter frustration over rising living costs, the war in Iran and concerns about President Donald Trump's administration contributed to the Democratic shift, The Guardian reported. This led to Republicans losing 45 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and eight seats in the Senate as of Nov. 15, according to AP.

Third-semester political science student Andrew Buscemi said the turnout reflected a clear demand for change in direction.

"This election really showed people took their vote seriously and wanted something different rather than continuing the Congress we had the last two years," he said.

In Texas, Democrat James Talarico defeated Republican Ken Paxton with 55.1% of the vote in the Senate race, AP reported. He became the first Democrat to win a Texas Senate seat since Lloyd Bentsen in 1988.

In the Texas governor's race, Democrat Gina Hinojosa defeated Republican Greg Abbott in the governor's race with 52.8% of the vote, according to AP. She becomes the state's first Latina governor and the first Democrat elected to the office since Ann Richards in 1990.

Democrats also won the races for attorney general, lieutenant governor and 14 of Texas' 38 U.S. House seats, AP reported.

"This is an outcome that you really didn't think was possible," UConn Political Science Professor Stephen Dyson said. "Democrats have wondered for many years if they could get even close in Texas and possibly win a resounding victory."

Kansas voters also elected a Democrat to the U.S. Senate for the first time since George McGill in 1932. Democrat Adam Hamilton defeated Republican Roger Marshall with 51% of the vote, AP reported.

In the Kansas governor's race, Democrat Cindy Holscher defeated Ty Masterson with 50.3% of the vote to succeed Democrat Gov. Laura Kelly, who has held the office since 2019, according to AP.

Other Democratic victories in Kansas include attorney general and one of four U.S. House seats, AP reported.

In South Carolina, Democrat Annie Andrews defeated Republican Darline Graham in the U.S. Senate race with 51.1% of the vote, according to AP. This is the first time a Democrat has won this race since Fritz Hollings in 1998.

Democrats also won two of South Carolina's seven U.S. House seats, AP reported.

Dyson said the results in all three states proved how unexpected the Democratic victories were.

"Democrats winning Senate seats in Texas, South Carolina and Kansas are outcomes that you really didn't think were possible," he said. "It's really incredible to see states that are deep red turn blue by huge margins."



Senate-elect James Talarico and Governor-elect Gina Hinojosa celebrate a victory with Whataburger, a Texas-founded burger chain restaurant. Talarico and Hinojosa achieved historic statewide victories that ended Republican incumbents.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @GINAFORTEXAS AND @JAMESTALARICO ON INSTAGRAM



Senate-elect Adam Hamilton addresses a crowd with a victory speech after winning a seat in the senate. He is the first Democrat elected in Kansas to the U.S. Senate since 1932.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @HAMILTON4KANSAS ON INSTAGRAM

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