

I'm honored to be here today to represent the school that I love and am proud to be a part of. My name is Monica Smith and I'm an undergraduate mechanical engineering student in the Eurotech program at UConn. Eurotech is a 5-year double degree program in which students study an engineering discipline, German language, and spend a year studying abroad in Germany.

On behalf of the students of UConn, I want to thank you for your support. UConn is a top university and the UConn 2000 and 21<sup>st</sup> Century UConn initiatives have allowed us to continue to expand and improve, but more needs to be done. As President Herbst and Provost Choi have said, we are at capacity.

When I applied to the engineering program at UConn as a high school senior, I was rejected, despite the fact that I was in the top 25% of my graduating class and had impressive SAT scores. I spent a semester as a non-degree student before re-applying and being accepted to UConn in the Academic center for exploratory students. There were then two more semesters before I was accepted into the Mechanical Engineering program. Many students wouldn't have persevered like I did. UConn Engineering almost missed out on me and has surely missed out on many other driven, passionate students.

At UConn I have taken advantage of many of the opportunities being an engineering student has to offer. Last summer, through my involvement as a UConn UTC Engineering Ambassador, I interned at Pratt and Whitney in East Hartford. Last semester I continued with Pratt and Whitney doing research on 3D printing at the newly formed Additive Manufacturing lab on the UConn Depot Campus. 3D printing is an additive technology in which an object is built layer by layer. In his State of the Union address, President Barack Obama said, "... [3D printing] has the potential to revolutionize the way we make almost everything." These words show that it is an exciting time to be an engineer. This is just one example of the cutting-edge research being done at UConn.

Additionally, I'm one of two co-presidents of UConn Engineering Ambassadors, which is an outreach organization committed to inspiring younger students (PreK-12) to pursue engineering or other STEM fields. Since the formation of the club two and a half years ago we have reached out to over 7,000 students in schools across the state, 3,000 of those in the last semester alone. So I'm telling you, the students are out there and it is unacceptable that we are turning down these qualified students when UConn can't graduate enough engineers to fill the need in Connecticut. UConn has an impressive retention and graduation rate. This speaks to UConn's ability to engage its students. The methods are already in place to educate the future leaders in our state, we just need the funding to grow.

There is no better investment, than the investment in the future for our state. We are that future. Myself and the students who stand behind me are excited and inspired. We will change the world. We urge you to continue your support for the future of our state.