



# University of Connecticut

## Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

### Public Hearing

March 19, 2013

### Testimony

by

**John Saddlemire**

**Vice-President of Student Affairs**

Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony on Raised Bill 6604, *An Act Concerning Student Fees*.

The University of Connecticut believes that the current statutory framework governing student organizations, which has been in place for decades, is effective. Additionally, we are concerned that the legislation would create special treatment for a single student organization.

At UConn, there are currently more than 600 student organizations. Most apply for funding through a long-established process where the organizations apply for funding through the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) for their operational costs. Additionally, there are seven student organizations which currently, or have in the past, receive funding directly from a fee assessed on the student fee bill and are referred to as “trustee organizations.” The trustee organizations are operated in compliance with C.G.S. Sections 4-52 through 4-57a, the Comptroller’s Office Accounting Procedures Manual for Activity and Welfare Funds and relevant state and University policies. The trustee organizations are: The Daily Campus newspaper, Graduate Student Senate (GSS), Nutmeg Yearbook, , UCTV television, WHUS radio and Undergraduate Student Government (USG).

The University feels obligated to monitor student trustee organizations very carefully to ensure that student fees are expended in a manner consistent with state statute and University policy. Audits are conducted regularly and if audit findings result, the University works with the student organizations to address the findings. In cases where audit findings cannot be addressed, an organization may lose its status as a trustee organization.

In 2012, due to audit findings, UConnPIRG lost its trustee organization status and is currently in the process of applying to restore it. In fact, just last week – in a University-

wide referendum – students voted to put UConnPIRG’s fee back on the student fee bill in 2014. This is a first step in regaining their status and the Division of Student Affairs looks forward to working with them during the rest of the process. It is important to note, however, that UConnPIRG is still a student organization and can apply for funding through the USG process until they regain their status as a trustee organization.

In closing, I thank the Committee for its interest in this issue and reiterate the University’s belief that the current statutory framework governing student organizations is sufficient.

As always, thank you for your continued support of the University of Connecticut.