



To: Senator Bye, Representative Walker, and Members of the Appropriations Committee

From: C. Michael White, Professor and Head, Department of Pharmacy Practice

Re: State Budget Appropriations for UCONN

Date: 2/23/15

I appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony on the large proposed cuts to UConn's operating budget. While the construction of buildings makes for a picturesque campus, it is not the most critical piece of ensuring a thriving nationally recognized university. I think that people mistake capital investments, or the dollars allocate to that function, for investments in the long-term survival of UConn. If at the end of the day we have cutting edge buildings scarcely filled with mediocre faculty unable to meet the teaching, research, and public engagement mission of the university or the State of Connecticut, all of that investment will have been for naught.

UConn is unique among state universities in that our faculty transcend just educating students and inspiring them to stay in Connecticut. These are very important functions but our faculty do much more. The faculty are nationally recognized experts in their field and therefore conduct research that is vital to our state's economic vitality, support business interests in the state and State Governmental agencies that require our insight, support services for economically and ethnically disadvantaged citizens through direct action or indirectly by helping nongovernmental agencies write grant applications that sustains them. When major news events happen, more often than not, UConn faculty are asked to explain it to the citizens of the state because we are an unbiased authoritative source.

When faculty lines that can maintain or even raise the national stature of the university cannot be filled or are lost entirely, staffing is so decimated that faculty are performing tasks that distract them from their core functions, and there is a paucity of funding to replace computers or fix equipment, the university cannot be the economic engine that the state requires. UConn cannot thrive in an environment of continued state cutbacks of operational dollars coupled with restraints on tuition increases. In my school, we have had 8 budget rescissions in the past 12 years due to cutbacks in state funding. At approximately 3% reductions each time, we have lost 25% of our operational budget. With the extent of budget cutbacks proposed over the next two years due to the current budget, we will cumulatively lose over a third of our original operational budget. This is not a sustainable level of funding and is both counterproductive and demoralizing to the faculty. Even in the years without a budget rescission, the leadership in my school could not make major strategic investments because we were unable to determine if those investments would be lost in a subsequent budget cut or not. If you are always in a state of siege where you are stuck in your fox hole, you are not optimally looking for new opportunities. While we have the ability to recruit the best faculty in the country, it will be a harder sell

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if we cannot offer them stability, make them perform support services personally, and straddle them with excessive extraneous tasks that reduce their chances for success. I am happy to answer any questions you may have about this written testimony. Please contact me at [Charles.white@uconn.edu](mailto:Charles.white@uconn.edu) or 860-341-6513.

Sincerely,



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