



**Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee**

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**Testimony**

**By**

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**Vice-Provost**

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Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committees, thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony today on the House Bill 6919, *An Act Concerning Outcome-Based Financing*.

The University of Connecticut embraces accountability and is continually setting new benchmarks and achieving goals. We take seriously our responsibility to provide the state with a return on the state's tremendous investment in UConn over the past two decades.

I would respectfully ask the members of the Committee to remember that UConn operates within an extremely competitive environment. Our accountability is demonstrated in how UConn performs in that environment. It is reflected in the number, quality and diversity of student applications, enrollments and graduates; in the quality of the teaching and research faculty we attract and retain; in the number and amount of research grants we secure; in the impact we have on Connecticut's economy; and in the number and amount of private philanthropy we receive.

***What are the outcomes we have achieved?***

**Students:**

- While enrollments at many other private and public universities and colleges in the region are on a downward trajectory, mirroring demographic trends, the opposite has been true at UConn.
- In the fall of 1995, UConn received about 10,800 applications. This year, it was more than 32,000, an increase of 198%. More importantly, the academic quality and diversity of our applicants and our students continues to rise. In that time, enrollees' SAT scores have shot up by over 120 points. And about one third of students in our most recent freshmen class are members of minority groups. In 1995, that number was 15%.
- Continuing a trend of over 15 years, in the last three years, each freshmen class the university has enrolled has once again been more academically qualified and diverse than the class that came before it – with the most recent being the best in the history of the university. We are home to more honors students, valedictorians and salutatorians than ever before.
- UConn is keeping the state's best students here in Connecticut, helping to reverse what is often called the "brain drain."
- At UConn, our freshmen retention rate is 93%, including for minority students. That is well above the national average of 81% and 80% respectively.

- Our six-year graduation rate – which is the standard measure – is 81%, and is 78% for minority students, which are among the very highest rates in the entire nation, and far above the national average of 57%.
- Our average time to a degree is 4.2 years, which is also among the best in the nation.
- And in addition to the percentage rates, the actual numbers themselves continue to rise. In 1995, UConn awarded about 4,700 degrees. This year, that number is expected to be over 7,700. And once they graduate, most of our alumni continue to live and work in Connecticut.

### **Faculty:**

Our faculty is incredibly productive. For example, during the 2013-2014 academic year, 777 (66 %) of our full-time tenure track faculty, published 2,844 articles, the vast majority of them, 2,576, in refereed journals. The majority of our faculty, 943 (80%) delivered 4,363 scholarly presentations. Our faculty (32%) published 658 books and book chapters, filed 66 patents, and completed 651 artistic performances and exhibits. They also garnered 1,330 grants from state and federal agencies and foundations. In the 2013-2014 academic year, 67% of our faculty who are in departments that traditionally can garner grants, were awarded grants.

### **Economic Impact:**

According to an independent report, the University of Connecticut generates about \$3.4 billion worth of economic activity every year in the state, including more than 24,000 jobs and over \$202 million in tax revenue.

### **Private Philanthropy:**

Philanthropic support in fiscal 2014 to UConn increased by 27.4 percent over the preceding year, the highest level of private new gifts and commitments to the University in the 50-year history of the UConn Foundation.

While, we do not oppose outcome based funding or the Task Force contemplated in HB 6919, the University asks that the Committee consider the following modifications to the bill:

#### **1. Make it clear that outcome based financing should ONLY be initiated in years when UConn, CSU and the Community Colleges are receiving current services funding levels.**

Justification: The Governor's proposed budget recommends cuts to UConn's current services level of more than \$100 million during the biennium. It will be extremely difficult for the University to continue to meet goals in this challenging budgetary environment.

#### **2. Remove private institutions from outcome-based financing**

Justification: Given Connecticut's dire financial situation scarce resources should not be diverted from our state public colleges and universities to fund private institutions that have sizable endowments and larger tuition revenue streams.

If some form of outcome based financing is implemented, it should take into account the substantial achievements that have occurred over the past 15-20 years. The accomplishments of the past two decades prove that UConn does not need outcome based financing to direct our attention to accountability and achievement of institutional goals that serve the best interests of the state of Connecticut and its citizens.

Thank you for your consideration of these modifications and your continued support of the University of Connecticut. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.