



Sacred Heart UNIVERSITY

**Testimony for the
Appropriations Committee
From
Julie Savino
Executive Director of University Financial Assistance
Sacred Heart University
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On behalf of Sacred Heart University, I am submitting testimony in opposition to Governor Dannel Malloy's budget proposal to exclude Connecticut students who attend Connecticut private colleges from receiving state financial aid funds through the Governor's Scholarship Program, beginning next year. The proposal would cut \$4.6 million in FY16 and \$7.6 million FY17 with further cuts assumed in future years as current recipients graduate.

Everyone appearing before you is going to lament reduced spending in the face of increased need – that's a reality, and one we all share. And while it's my job to promote the university and students I serve, I also am here representing the dozens of other private institutions and the thousands of children – our future teachers, civil servants, manufacturing workers, engineers, healthcare researchers and professional caregivers, IT workers and government officials -- who can't speak for themselves today.

Let me share a few important numbers that reflect just the role Sacred Heart University plays in meeting the diverse needs of Connecticut's families, employers and communities.

Between 2013 and 2014, Sacred Heart University:

- Provided \$4.3 million in need-based, institutional aid to Connecticut-based undergraduate students.
- Enrolled 518 Pell grant recipients who also were Connecticut residents. In fact, approximately 56% percent of the University's total Pell grant recipients are from Connecticut.
- Received nearly \$1.4 million in Governor's Scholarship funding that went to 511 students.

What these numbers don't depict is the large number of minority students receiving aid, many of whom are Connecticut residents and will graduate in four years to take their place in our State's workforce. Also, on the front end of their college experience, state aid is an important determinant in a student's decision to stay in-state or leave.

In the end, the reality is we all need to keep a balanced budget, so if this support is not available from the state, it does not get replaced without tuition increases (which we are all trying to minimize) or reductions in other expenses, which we have all been doing for the last seven years. The impact of the elimination of this funding is real and will be felt by the neediest students and the local economies. I believe, it is very short sighted, especially considering the \$141.33 million impact Sacred Heart University has on Connecticut's economy, including \$12.59 million spent by our students.

As important, Sacred Heart University is intricately woven into the fabric of some of our State's neediest communities. We serve cities like neighboring Bridgeport with a wide range of supplemental educational programs, school-to-career projects, educator-development efforts, grants and volunteer outreach.

Another critical factor these budget numbers don't depict is our deep sense of community. Our students, faculty and staff contribute more than 50,000 hours to community service annually, much of it locally. Our mission has always been to do more than prepare our students academically -- we want to encourage these young men and women to work and live and make contributions to the human community for the rest of their lives.

Students at Sacred Heart are pursuing career opportunities in medicine and biomedicine, research and the sciences. We are producing tomorrow's information technology pioneers, mathematicians, volunteer coordinators, teachers and leaders, many of whom will remain in Connecticut. In fact, we have more than 23,000 alumni living in our State.

For more than 50 years, Sacred Heart University has been hard at work earning the respect and loyalty of tens of thousands of students, parents and alumni. From an initial enrollment of fewer than 200 students in 1963, we have grown to a student body of close to 7,000, with dozens of challenging academic programs across a wide variety of disciplines. We offer more than 50 associate, bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs.

But more than just degrees, our innovative programs teach the skills employers value and Connecticut needs. We not only teach students how to think, but how to do. That is our legacy, and by preserving financial assistance and education dollars in the new budget, you help preserve hope for Connecticut children and a future that benefits all of us.

Thank you for your time and consideration -- we look forward to our continued collaboration.