

Appropriations Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Hartford, CT

23 February 2015

To the Appropriations Committee,

It is imperative that the University of Connecticut not be forced into taking the 3.9% budget cut currently proposed in Governor Malloy's budget plan. Such a cut would cripple UConn, devastating student financial aid, reducing our already sparse workforce and slashing much-needed hiring and infrastructure programs. These cuts would seriously threaten all of our academic departments and degree programs, many of which have already been badly hurt by the economic downturn.

Since joining the UConn faculty twenty-five years ago, the university has attained national and international prominence, and become a major public research university. In less than fifteen years, the UConn has gone from 54th place in the US World and News Report ranking to 19th today. The students and faculty we now recruit, and the programs and research centers we have developed over that period are the envy of universities across the nation. Yet, the Governor's proposed budget cuts would destroy this growth, and drag UConn backwards – a tragedy not only for Connecticut, but for public education and research across the United States. This must not be allowed to happen; UConn needs continued state support and investment.

UConn generates about \$3.4 billion in economic activity annually in Connecticut, employing more than 24,000 people, and bringing over \$202 million in tax revenue to the state [figures taken from the recent report from the Tripp Umbach national research and consulting firm]. Moreover, the students we teach at UConn are tomorrow's leaders and innovators – the scientists, engineers, digital and media professionals, business leaders, and skilled work force so vital to the state's economic growth and essential to its future.

The State of Connecticut's commitment to the STEM industry must be continued. UConn has a long-standing proven record of being at the forefront of new STEM research and initiatives – something that places the university at the forefront of state, national and international innovations in this area.

I urge you in the strongest possible terms to vote “no” on the proposed cuts to the University of Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Michael Orwicz
Associate Professor
Department of Art and Art History
University of Connecticut