



INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA-UAW

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**Public Hearing Testimony  
Appropriations Committee  
Madelynn von Baeyer –UCONN Graduate Assistant and Member of UAW GEU Local 6950  
Governor’s Budget – University of Connecticut**

Good evening Senator Bye, Representative Walker and Members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Madelynn von Baeyer. I am a graduate assistant (GA) at the University of Connecticut (UCONN) in the Anthropology department and a member of UAW Graduate Employees Union Local 6950.

On behalf of 2,200 UCONN graduate teaching and research assistants I am here to present testimony on the Governor’s budget proposal for the University of Connecticut. First, we want to thank this committee and this legislature for its ongoing commitment to UCONN as the state’s flagship university.

While we understand that the UCONN budget draws on varied and diverse sources of revenue, we believe strongly that the state has an obligation to continue its investment in UCONN as a precious resource for our state. We hope that during your continued budget deliberations concerning UCONN, you will consider this investment a top priority.

As a graduate assistant (GA), I am a student but also an employee. I teach three discussion sections per week and spend 15 hours per week helping undergraduate students with their studies, grading their exams and providing them academic assistance. In addition to my workload as a GA, I am working on my graduate degree to advance my academic career. The annual salary of a UCONN GA is \$18,000, many of us have families, live off campus and are taxpaying members of our communities.

We are here tonight because we believe that investing in UCONN is good for Connecticut. UCONN is critical to providing accessible, affordable quality higher education to Connecticut working families and is an engine of economic development and job creation.

As GAs, we play a proud and critical role in these contributions by providing vital teaching and research functions at UCONN. We are intimately aware how important our work at UCONN is for the state’s citizens as well as stimulating the state’s economy. For example, UCONN generates \$11.80 for every state funded dollar, supports 24,235 jobs and its alumni working in Connecticut earn an additional annual income of \$55.8 billion.\*

Our work as teaching assistants is critical to accessible, quality education for thousands of undergraduate students each year. This allows young people, 75% of whom are from Connecticut, to earn college degrees and go on to contribute to our economy. In fact, just this morning, President Herbst told you that UCONN has an overall 81% graduation rate and a 78% graduation rate within the minority student body. As GA’s we are especially proud of this because we play a direct role in the teaching, mentoring and support of the state’s undergraduate student body.

Our work includes teaching stand-alone courses in writing that is critical to informed citizenship, running lab sections for thousands of pre-med students who will go on to become doctors and engineers, holding office hours, grading papers, and providing feedback that is critical to a quality educational experience.

As Research Assistants, we carry out experiments in wide-ranging innovative fields of research like sustainability, energy and poverty that bring \$150 million into the state. In addition to bringing revenue, this research helps stimulate the state economy through start-ups that grow out of the basic research done at UCONN. In fact, the overall impact of UCONN's research enterprise is \$373MM, supports and sustains 2,081 jobs and brings in \$15.2MM state and local tax revenue.\*

As legislators, you have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to UCONN. You have shown that quality, affordability, accessibility and excellence are essential for Connecticut's institutions of higher education.

**From the frontlines of making UCONN a top-notch teaching and research institution, we urge you to invest in the future by maintaining full support for our university.**

Thank you.

*\*UCONN Annual Impact on the CT Economy. <http://economicimpact.uconn.edu/>*

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