

**Appropriations Committee Testimony**  
**University of Connecticut, School of Engineering**  
**Dr. Daniel Burkey, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education and Diversity**  
**February 10, 2016**

**Talking Points and Notes:**

Good afternoon Co-Chairs, Ranking Members, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Dr. Daniel Burkey, and I am the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education and Diversity at the UConn School of Engineering, as well as a faculty member in the Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering. I have spent most of the last 13 years in higher education, but have also worked in the private sector as a practicing engineer.

I wanted to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today, and to take my few minutes of time here to tell you about the important work that the School of Engineering is engaged in, and how continued budget cuts and the uncertainty regarding the state's budget commitment to the University are detrimental to our continued growth and success. Specifically, **I am here to request that you reconsider the Governor's proposed budget cuts to UConn.**

In 2012, the year before I became associate Dean, our freshman enrollment was approximately 450 students, which was commensurate with our overall enrollment at the time of about 2100 students. In the Fall of 2013, to show our strong support for the Next Generation CT legislation, we committed to significantly increasing our enrollment over the coming years to meet the demand for high quality engineering graduates in the state. That fall, we had a freshman class of nearly 650 students – representing an almost 50% increase in enrollment at the freshman level. We have continued at that pace for the last several years, welcoming another 700 students to engineering this fall (including regional campuses), for a current enrollment of 3046 students. To put that number in perspective, in the Fall of 2005, just 10 years ago, our engineering enrollment was 1566 – We've doubled the engineering population in a decade.

It is estimated that 37% of the state's economy is driven by various forms of engineering, and UConn is responsible for producing almost 50% of the engineering degrees in the state – a huge impact. We work extremely closely with many of our industry and state partners, CT-based companies such as Pratt & Whitney, General Dynamics Electric Boat, the CT Department of Transportation, and, here today with us, Fuss and O'Neill, one of the leading Civil and Environmental Engineering firms. All of these companies have emphasized to us, repeatedly, the need for more, not fewer, highly skilled engineering graduates.

As the president said in her earlier testimony, continued operational cuts to higher education and specifically to UConn make it increasingly difficult to carry out our core mission of education. It is easy to accept more students – but the infrastructure that allows us to serve those students – cutting edge facilities, highly skilled and sought-after faculty, and the staff needed to support both the research and the educational missions - are not as easy to develop, and take years of sustained support and grow to their fullest potential. As the state continues to try to attract opportunities in advanced manufacturing, biosciences, and other technological fields, it is absolutely crucial that we continue to support the mechanism by which we provide those industries with a highly skilled and homegrown workforce. Budget cuts to UConn not only effect us today, but cumulatively, severely weaken our capacity to meet the future needs of the state. Thank you.