

Public Hearing Testimony
Appropriations Committee
Madelynn von Baeyer and Monique Golden –UCONN Graduate Assistants and Members
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 Employee Union Local 6950.

And my name is Monique Golden, a Graduate Assistant in the School of Education, also a member of UAW Graduate Employee Union Local 6950. On behalf of 2,100 UConn graduate teaching and research assistants we are here to express our deep concerns about proposed cuts to the University of Connecticut’s operating budget and urge you to prioritize UConn as a vital investment to the state.

As graduate assistants (GA), we are students but also employees. I (Madelynn) 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.

I (Monique) work doing research for my advisor for 10 hours per week, helping to advance the goals of my advisor and the mission of the institution. The average annual salary of a UCONN GA is \$18,000, many of us have families and live off campus and are taxpaying members of our communities.

We are here tonight because we believe in the mission of the university to make education at a top tier research university affordable to working families in Connecticut. We worry that these cuts will threaten the affordability and the quality of research and teaching at the state’s flagship public university.

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 of the importance of our work 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 dollars.*

As you heard in the previous panels, UConn is a vital and critical investment for the state as the educator of future informed citizens. Our work as teaching assistants allows young people, 75% of whom are from Connecticut, to earn college degrees and go on to contribute to our economy. Cuts like the ones you’re proposing jeopardizes UConn’s commitment to providing accessible, quality education, as well as limits the resources available to both the educators and the students at UConn, many of whom will continue to live and work in Connecticut for years to come.

As Research Assistants, we carry out experiments in wide-ranging innovative fields of research that bring \$150 million into the state, as well as provide training for future and current Connecticut citizens. For example, the School of Education, where I am a Research Assistant, supports the state's mission to provide an exceptional K-12 experience for its students by training the most qualified teachers and administrators to lead our schools to success. Through this training, we are equipping our state's future teachers and administrators to lead the charge at all of Connecticut's schools, K-12 and institutions of higher learning.

As legislators, you have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to UConn as the state's flagship university. You have shown that quality, affordability, accessibility and excellence are key components of our system of higher education in Connecticut.

Now is not the time to reduce the state's investment in higher education and the economic development fostered by UConn's research programs.

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/>*