



Appropriations Committee

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Testimony

By

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University of Connecticut

S.R. No. 4 Resolution Proposing Approval of a Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the University of Connecticut Board of Trustees and the University of Connecticut Professional Employees Association (UCPEA)

H.R. No. 3 Resolution Proposing Approval of a Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the University of Connecticut Board of Trustees and the University of Connecticut Professional Employees Association (UCPEA)

Distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Scott Jordan, Executive Vice President of Administration and Chief Financial Officer for the University of Connecticut. With me today is Michael Eagen, UConn's Director of Labor Relations and Kathy Sanner, President of the UConn Professional Employees Association. We are here seeking your approval of two resolutions, Senate Resolution 4 and House Resolution 3, concerning the collective bargaining agreement between the University of Connecticut Board of Trustees and the University of Connecticut Professional Employees Association Local 2695 AFTCT, AFT AFL-CIO (UCPEA).

UCPEA represents nearly 1900 professional staff on the Storrs campus and at regional campuses in Avery Point, Greater Hartford, Stamford, Torrington, Waterbury and the Schools of Law and Social Work. UCPEA is comprised of the non-teaching professionals who support the core academic and student service missions of UConn. UCPEA has members in virtually every department and work unit in the institution including facilities managers, engineers, admissions officers, residence hall directors, physicians, nurses, accountants, academic advisors, culinary professionals, financial aid counselors, librarians, information technology staff and many others.

Two thirds of the members are women and the vast majority earn between \$40,000 and \$70,000 annually.

The proposed five-year agreement provides critical tools that will permit UConn to better control costs and more efficiently manage its professional workforce. The agreement contains important provisions that address longstanding operational concerns of the University. The agreed-upon changes are focused on updating antiquated or ineffective systems while making modest but strategic investments to reward excellence, increase worker productivity, and promote professional development and career advancement.

We were able to negotiate minimal across-the-board increases while also securing a 14% increase in the standard workweek. We were also able to discontinue the “no layoff” job security provision that existed in the prior statewide SEBAC agreement. Key elements of our innovative agreement include:

General Wage Increases: The agreement includes general wage increases of only 2% in FY17 and 1% for each remaining year of the contract. These increases are less than the rate of inflation and standard cost of living increases. All additional compensation in the agreement is tied to performance and productivity. Unlike virtually every other state employee bargaining agreement, there are no step increases or annual increments in this agreement.

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>FY 17</i>	<i>FY 18</i>	<i>FY 19</i>	<i>FY 20</i>	<i>FY 21</i>
General Wage Increase	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%

A pool equal to 1% of pay for UCPEA employees will be created each year to be distributed to a select group of employees whose job performance demonstrably exceeds expectations as follows: .5% as merit raises for those employees who have advanced the mission and goals of their department and sustained a level of performance that consistently exceeds their peers and .5% as one-time performance payments for extraordinary job-related achievement and/or completion of a significant and important departmental or university project or goal.

By way of comparison, the salary increases in the proposed UCPEA agreement, inclusive of merit, are significantly lower than the increases recently awarded to state police. The current state police contract, presented to this committee last March, includes 3% general wage increases plus 2% annual increments over a three-year duration. Inclusive of merit pay, the proposed UCPEA agreement provides for increases that average only 2.2% per year - less than half of what was awarded to state police last year.

Increased Workweek: If the proposed agreement is approved, the current 35-hour workweek for UCPEA employees will increase by 14.3% to 40 hours. The increase will be phased in by one and a quarter hours per week annually beginning July 1, 2017 (Year 2 of the 5 year agreement) until the workweek is 40 hours on July 1, 2020. UConn was able to negotiate a reduction to the wage increase that has historically been provided to state employees following an increase to the standard

workweek. Employee base pay will be increased by 2.5% for each of the four years that the workweek increases instead of proportionate 3.5% increases that have always been awarded in similar circumstances.

Employees hired after the contract becomes effective on July 1, 2016 will begin as 40-hour employees and will not receive this 2.5% increase.

Reductions in Force: The proposed UCPEA agreement contains no restrictions on UConn's ability to control the size and composition of its workforce. Moreover, the reduction in force language now allows for significant savings by permitting UConn to provide severance payments equivalent to half the notice period that is guaranteed to employees facing layoff. Previously, such payments had to be equivalent to 100% of the notice period.

Classification and Reclassification: At no additional cost to the University, an antiquated job classification system and the associated job titles/descriptions will be overhauled and updated in accordance with a clear framework that the parties have mutually established. The system will include the opportunity for career progression within a classification based on increased job proficiency over time. Employees will be able to advance within a job classification by demonstrating increased experience, training and skill development. Human Resources management will have direct oversight and control of reclassification decisions and appeals.

Compensatory Time: The Agreement limits awards of compensatory time off to those situations where an employee is required to work extraordinary hours beyond their standard workweek. Compensatory time may now only be accrued or "banked" if it cannot be used during the pay period it is earned. The Agreement also caps compensatory time for positions where irregular hours are customary.

Vacation: The Agreement reduces the number of vacation days that can be used without prior approval and prohibits terminated employees from receiving a payout for unused vacation time. In exchange, UConn agreed to a modest increase in the maximum number of days that can be paid out upon retirement or resignation.

Probationary Periods: The Agreement provides for probationary periods when an employee accepts a new position through promotion, transfer, re-hire or recall from layoff. Currently only newly hired employees serve a probationary period

Duration: Five-Year duration from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2021. The University and UCPEA feel this is a fair agreement that will benefit the state, our students and the workforce. We believe that the proposed agreement will lead to a smaller, more skilled, motivated and productive professional workforce. Thank you for your consideration and continued support of the University of Connecticut. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.

