



Sacred Heart UNIVERSITY

Testimony for the
Appropriations Committee
by Julie Savino, Executive Director, University Financial Assistance
Sacred Heart University
February 10, 2016

On behalf of Sacred Heart University, I am submitting testimony in opposition to HB 5044, AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2017, which seeks to cut and consolidate the Governor's Scholarship Program.

We are grateful for the legislature's ongoing support of our sector through maintaining funding of the Governor's Scholarship Program. We understand that the state is facing very significant fiscal challenges. That said, we are asking that you please not cut the Governor's Scholarship Program any further.

This program supports some of our state's neediest students at Sacred Heart University. For the academic year 2015-2016 across the three Governor's Scholarship Programs—Governors Merit Need Based, Governors Need Based and Governors Academic Incentive Award—Sacred Heart University awarded 318 students \$982,900. These students are our most economically disadvantaged Connecticut students; 204 are Pell recipients, have an overall average Federal Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) of \$4,885 and an average unmet need of \$10,405.

Our institution's allocation has already been reduced by \$690,613 (2013 received \$1,395,972; 2015 received \$705,359) or 49.48 percent since 2013, when the Governor's Scholarship Program was created. In 2012, we received \$1,586,206 in need-based aid. This year we received \$705,359 in need-based aid. In 2012 we were able to award money to 579 needy Connecticut residents. This year, we made awards to 253 students, leaving 476 enrolled students whose federal EFC is less than \$11,000 without an award.

The decline in available funds did not allow Sacred Heart University to extend any offers for state need-based grant assistance to potential new students for the first time since 1973. Unfortunately, 761 Connecticut students accepted for admission in the fall 2015 with a federal EFC of less than \$11,000 did not enroll.



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Sacred Heart University is sensitive to the financial needs of our Connecticut undergraduate students of whom 519 are Pell eligible. We award \$13,017,035 in institutional aid to 1,019 Connecticut undergraduate students who demonstrate federal need. This year we will educate 3,791 Connecticut students and will graduate an estimated 928 Connecticut residents.

Please do not consolidate this grant program and do not give the Office of Higher Education (OHE) greater discretion to determine how much funding is allocated to this program. OHE has significant discretion already, and this has led to challenges for students and institutions. In particular, it has meant no predictability or transparency as to who gets what each year and has resulted in very few or no new awards for incoming students.

Sacred Heart is committed to serving as a partner with the state and to provide low-income Connecticut students access and opportunities. Please do not adopt the Governor's recommendations to cut and consolidate this program which will further impact our capacity to do so.

Thank you very much.