

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

Testimony for Joint Meeting

Appropriations, Finance, Commerce and Planning & Development Committees

Connecticut General Assembly

March 23, 2018

On behalf of the University of Hartford, I would like to submit to you brief comments on the Commission on Fiscal Stability and Economic Growth's recent report. It is an important document that deserves your attention and that requires wide circulation and discussion within the state. As someone who has been an active player in state economic issues for over 50 years while working in the private sector, state government and higher education, I can assure you that we are in a very critical period in the state's economic history and that thoughtful action is required. May I also note that haste and failure to carefully analyze the many options it contains can have unintended consequences for our future.

The report cites the important role that the independent nonprofit institutions of higher education in Connecticut play in economic growth and economic development. Each of us, in our own way, know what our host communities need (the University of Hartford has a 340-acre campus in three towns) and thus provide incredible assistance (see attached) in many forms to our communities and to their citizens. It is also clear that to provide opportunities for our graduates and to provide our faculty and students with real world experience we must continue to forge partnerships with private employers, not for profits and others throughout the state. We do not exist and operate in a vacuum.

The Commission recognized the opportunities and the needs to keep our private higher education institutions engaged in the state's efforts to grow jobs and the economy. It is an obligation we can, and we will meet. The Commission also supports the full funding of the PILOT program which is vitally important in maintaining positive relations between higher education and local communities.

What does concern us is the suggestion that there be enabling legislation to allow municipalities to charge nonprofits' service fees in lieu of taxes (SILOTS). This contains the opportunity to fundamentally change a major aspect of the private higher education financial model in Connecticut. It opens a door that could negatively impact the capacity of private institutions to support a revitalized Connecticut economy that the Commission is looking for. For many private

colleges in New England, our margins are thin and getting thinner. We work hard each year to maintain financial stability. As demographics change in our state, the need for more financial aid grows each year. Both public and private higher education institutions face a more competitive market. Public policy that is negative will only cause more problems. I dare say that few people in state government and the general public, know the extent of benefits we now provide our host communities that would be threatened by paying local government for services under a program that has not been vetted and analyzed.

Respectfully submitted:

John J. Carson

Special Advisor to the President

University of Hartford

March 22, 2018

UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

AN ECONOMIC ENGINE

UHART'S POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE CITY OF HARTFORD'S FINANCIAL HEALTH *

Entrepreneurial Center 203 residents served
Classes and small business advising **\$195,000** *estimated annual value*

Upper Albany Main Street 140 city businesses helped
\$750,000 *estimated annual value*

Hartford Scholars 96 student recipients
\$1.8 million *estimated annual value*

Hartford Partnership Scholarships 58 student recipients
\$70,000 *estimated annual value*

University of Hartford Magnet School 183 enrolled from Hartford
\$150,000 *estimated annual value*
from land lease of 6.6 acres

University High School of Science and Engineering 214 enrolled from Hartford
\$250,000 *estimated annual value*
from land lease of 21.6 acres

\$417,000 *estimated annual value for UHSSE students taking free college courses at UHart*

**Mort and Irma Handel Performing Arts Center
Community Room** 21 groups used a total of 90 times
\$15,000 *estimated annual value*

State Grant, Payment in Lieu of Taxes **\$4.8 million**

Academic-Year Enrollment 214 *full- and part-time undergraduates who are Hartford residents*

62 *full- and part-time graduate students who are Hartford residents*

UHart Faculty and Staff Living in the City of Hartford 127

UHart Alumni Residing in the City of Hartford 1,665

* figures from 2015–16 academic year