Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representatives DiMassa and Horn, and members of the Appropriations Committee;

My name is Mihir Sharma, and I am an undergraduate student at the University of Connecticut. I am currently pursuing a degree in Civil Engineering with a minor in Business Construction Engineering Management. I am writing to testify on the Budget Hearing for Higher Education.

Choose 1-2 of the following rationales for why state appropriation support for UConn is necessary and important, and expand briefly using an example (suggestions below):

- Support for UConn is instrumental in the education of a highly skilled workforce for the state.
  - My education experience at UConn prepares me for a future which is filled with opportunities to grow and contribute to the betterment of our community. As an undergraduate student studying Civil Engineering, my UConn degree will prepare me to contribute towards improving the infrastructure for the state of Connecticut.

- Continued state investment in UConn adds value to a UConn degree, making employers eager and enthusiastic to hire recent UConn graduates and alumni across the state.
  - Specific examples-- the job placement rate from your department, examples of notable alumni contributions to Connecticut from your department, if you have accepted a job in CT after getting a UConn degree.

- Support for UConn allows the university to recruit and retain dedicated and skilled faculty and staff, which is foundational to quality undergraduate education.
  - I chose UConn over other universities for college because of the reputation of my program, the resources to complete complex and integrated research related to the field of civil engineering, the renowned and expert faculty, etc.

- Support for UConn directly stimulates Connecticut’s economy, providing jobs throughout the state, bringing and keeping UConn graduates in the state and driving innovation and entrepreneurship in the state.
  - Specific examples:
    - If you moved to/ stayed in CT for your role/study at UConn--when you did that, did you bring a partner/family, did you rent or buy a home, how has your presence contributed to the economy.
If you work in a program that includes a private partnership, if you are involved in an outreach program in a local community, if you are involved in an entrepreneurship/innovation program that is creating jobs otherwise investing in the state.

If you are in a program that relies heavily on research grants and contracts, emphasize how that research both enhances innovation and the $150 million in total grant revenue also creates jobs and stimulates state economy.

Support for UConn provides over 20,000 undergraduates like me with affordable and high-quality education.

- Specific examples: If you were a CT resident prior to enrolling at UConn, how did affordability and access of a UConn education influence your decision to pursue your degree here instead of going elsewhere?
- Quality and accessibility of that education depends on continued investment (declining state support = larger classes, higher tuition, etc.)

UConn is a vital asset to the State of Connecticut and maintaining state support for UConn is critical to my continued access to quality education. In the past, the state budget has provided generous support to UConn’s important mission of providing education, service, and research to the state and residents of Connecticut, and I strongly encourage you to continue this generosity in the next budget.

Sincerely,

Mihir Sharma

Resident of Storrs

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