



Sacred Heart UNIVERSITY

Testimony for the
Appropriations Committee
Sacred Heart University
March 6, 2019

On behalf of Sacred Heart University, I am submitting testimony on H.B. 7148: AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE EBIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTEENTH, 2021, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THERFOR.

In particular, I want thank you for your ongoing support of independent colleges in Connecticut by maintaining funding for need-based financial aid through the Roberta Willis Scholarship Program. We understand that significant fiscal challenges remain. However, given those very challenges, maintaining funding for need-based financial aid to provide access and opportunity to higher education for low-income residents of this state is critically important, and I hope that your commitment to maintain funding for this program will continue.

Funding need-based college financial aid programs is a necessity, not a luxury. But over the past decade, millions of dollars have been cut every year from vital programs aimed at attracting and retaining college students, the lifeblood of our State's future growth and prosperity. For example, for 2016/17, Sacred Heart University's Roberta Willis Scholarship allotment was \$648,500, which allowed us to help 169 students. For 2017/18, we received \$327,744, which benefitted 127 recipients. Many of the students we are unable to serve through this program are electing to leave Connecticut – they are enrolling in institutions out of state, and the likelihood they will return is slim.

The independent colleges play an important role in educating students for our state's workforce. We award the majority of the degrees earned in key growth areas such as engineering, computer science, research and the health sciences. Many of our graduates do internships and residencies in-state and often choose to remain in Connecticut after graduating. As these numbers shrink, so will the interest of employers in remaining in or relocating to Connecticut.

Funding for need-based aid for students attending all of our state's institutions of higher education must continue to be a priority. It is a critical tool for both retaining much-needed young talent in Connecticut and for providing access for low-income students. Our state's attainment gap, which is the abyss between whites and minorities in attaining a post-secondary credential, is one of the worst in the country.

If we choose to ignore these gaps in achievement and education funding, the long-term results for Connecticut will be disastrous. Students and their parents will continue looking elsewhere for their college education, and current and future employers will follow.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John J. Petillo".

Dr. John J. Petillo, president
Sacred Heart University

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

My name is Scott Krupa, and I am an undergraduate student at the University of Connecticut. I am a Finance major who is also heavily involved on campus. I am an active member of clubs ranging from the professional fraternity Delta Sigma Pi to the UConn Red Cross organization. I am writing to testify on the Budget Hearing for Higher Education.

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 overwhelming 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.

UConn provides over 20,000 undergraduates like me with an affordable and high-quality education. Personally, my largest draw to UConn was being able to have the ability to attend an affordable school that also had an impressive education. Honestly, UConn Storrs was not really on my mind in the midst of my college application process. One day, UConn Storrs ordered a bus and sent it to Stamford High School with the promise of receiving a group tour around the campus. At that moment, UConn showed me the extent of how far they will go to show you what they have to offer. What I took away from that visit was a glimpse into my future. Walking around, I fell in love with every piece of UConn and knew it was where I wanted to spend my next four years. When it came to deciding on schools, I was between UConn and Fordham University. I received no money from Fordham even though it costs upwards of \$65,000. UConn was less than half of the price and was still able to offer more than everything that I was looking for in my college experience. The one part of attending UConn that I was worried about was the sheer size. When I arrived on campus, all my fears were left behind. Right now, we are able to fund smaller classes for more personalized learning. This style is aimed to help as many people succeed in the classroom possible. Even if you are in a larger lecture, it is accompanied with a smaller "discussion section" to help with any questions you may have, homework, and any other aspects that help to make our students more accountable. Not only does UConn take care of its students, but its academic reputation has grown tremendously. Even though I am only a freshman, a lot the older people that I have met through Delta Sigma Pi and around campus have shown me the extent of and why employers are so fond UConn graduates. We are not only hard-working and smart, but when we are competing for jobs against Ivy League graduates, we tend to show how much more we want it. From all the positive that UConn and UConn's students have done, it would not have been possible without the proper funding and support that UConn receives to further all the things we have, wish to, and will accomplish. I hope that some of the things that I mentioned show how necessary it is to be well-funded in order to maintain and improve our opportunities within higher education.

Sincerely,

Scott Krupa

Stamford, CT

scott.krupa@uconn.edu