



Testimony of Goodwin University in Support of the Continued Funding for the Roberta Willis Scholarship Program Contained in the Governor's Proposed FY21 Budget Adjustments.

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing Regarding the Governor's Proposed FY 2021 Budget – February 18, 2020

Goodwin University, a private non-profit higher educational institution located in East Hartford, with over 3,500 students (97% CT Residents) coming from 136 Connecticut cities and towns supports the year-over-year flat funding of the Roberta Willis Scholarship Program contained in the Governor's Proposed Fiscal Year 2021 Budget Adjustment..

Goodwin University would like to thank the members of Appropriations Committee for its on-going support of Connecticut's independent colleges and universities by maintaining funding for need-based financial aid despite significant state fiscal challenges in the current and recent years.

While Goodwin University understands that significant state financial challenges remain, it urges the Appropriations Committee to maintain the flat funding for the Robert Willis Scholarship.

Many Goodwin students are in a borderline poverty situation. In a typical year, it is not uncommon to have approximately one-third of Goodwin students and their families categorized in the "\$0-0" Expected Family Contribution (EFC). This means they have no assets to help offset the costs of their college education. In a typical year, it is also not uncommon that 80-90% of our students are eligible for some type of financial aid.

Accordingly, the Roberta Willis Scholarship Program is critical to those students' ability to begin, sustain, and complete their college education.

Goodwin University and its students have seen a significant reduction in the previously named Governor's Scholarship Program now Roberta Willis Scholarship funding over the past several years. Accordingly, the number of students we are able to serve with this funding has been reduced as well:

In **FY 2013-2014**, Goodwin students received approximately \$1.7M in Roberta Willis Scholarship funding which was distributed to some 1,600 students with an average award of \$1,100.

In **FY 2017-2018**, Goodwin students received \$579,250 in Roberta Willis Scholarship funding reaching some 540 students for an average award of \$ 1072.00.

For **FY 2018-2019**, Goodwin students received \$697,920 in Roberta Willis Scholarship funding representing an \$118,670 increase from the previous year. Approximately 387 students received an average award of \$1,800.

For **FY 2019-2020**, Goodwin students will receive \$653,937 in Roberta Willis Scholarship funding or a \$44,000 decrease from the previous year. While the current year awards have not been fully allocated, it is expected that approximately 350 students will be eligible with an approximate average award of \$1,868.

Goodwin University and its students are truly grateful to the Governor, the Appropriations Committee and Connecticut General Assembly for its on-going support of Connecticut's private college students through the continued funding of the Roberta Willis Scholarship Program.

Goodwin University urges the Appropriations Committee to support the flat year-over-year funding of the Roberta Willis Scholarship funding contained in the Governor's FY 2020-2021 Biennial Budget.

Gary Minor
Senior Director, College Relations
Goodwin College
(O) 860-727-6733
(C) 860-471-0379