

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

My name is Micah Goodrich, and I am both a graduate student and graduate assistant at the University of Connecticut and a member of the Graduate Employee Union (GEU-UAW Local 6950). I chose the University of Connecticut to pursue my PhD because of its dedication to affordable education for undergraduates and its commitment to graduate research. Quality and accessible education depends on continued investment. As such, the impact of my teaching, research, and service at UConn will suffer if we are faced with larger class sizes, higher tuition, and diminished resources. Since UConn is a public university, it has a unique role in bridging research, teaching, and service commitments to local communities across the state. Without investment from the state, UConn would not be able to train graduate students to research or to provide impactful teaching practices. I am writing to testify on the Budget Hearing for Higher Education.

Support for UConn is an investment to develop a highly skilled workforce for the state. In my teaching and advising work with undergraduate students in the English department, I prepare students across fields to construct written oral arguments, develop critical thinking and analysis, and understand rhetorical communication. In my capacity as an instructor, I help students foster skills to compose and transfer ideas through writing and other multimodal platforms. In my First-Year Writing courses, I show students the connection between theoretical reading and applied service. For instance, in a course inquiry centered on “waste”, students learn the ideological scope of waste and its rhetorical use in media while developing concurrent projects that address waste on campus and in our wider local communities. As a graduate student studying literature, my UConn graduate degree will prepare me to do archival and manuscript work, historical book preservation, and engage in public humanities work; much-needed and important skills that bridge the work of academia with public libraries, historical preservation, and public learning for the state of Connecticut.

Continued investment in UConn upholds and adds value to a UConn degree, making employers eager and enthusiastic to hire both recent graduates and all UConn alumni across the state. In the UConn English Department, our job placement rate is among the highest in the country. Approximately 75% of graduate students who have completed PhDs in English between 2003-2018 have secured full-time academic teaching positions, and of these approximately 60% are tenure-track positions. Recent UConn English PhD students have accepted full-time academic positions at institutions such as Rutgers University, the University of Louisiana, Rhode Island College, and the University of Southern Maine. In many instances, UConn English PhD alumni are in full-time positions at other state-funded universities because UConn historically prepares graduate students to balance research, teaching, and service in ways that private institutions do not directly accommodate.

UConn is a vital asset to the State of Connecticut. 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,

Micah Goodrich



Graduate Assistant at UConn in the English Department
Willimantic, CT
micah.goodrich@uconn.edu