

Written Testimony

(February 18, 2020 Budget Hearing on Higher Education)

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

My name is Sharon Uwanyuze, and I am a graduate student, a Research Assistant in the Institute of Materials Science (IMS), in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering (MSE) at the University of Connecticut, and a member of the Graduate Employee Union (GEU-UAW Local 6950). My main roles include conducting competitive research in high-temperature materials, assisting to teach undergraduate and graduate courses in MSE, and serving as a student leader for a couple of student organizations. My ability to attend UConn to earn a degree while providing core research and teaching, relies on state investment and funding. 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. For example, In my teaching and mentoring of undergraduate researchers, I prepare them for a real-life job in a research laboratory, foster skills such as carrying out reliable experiments and scientific writing, which directly impact local research facilities by providing skilled labor. Furthermore, as a graduate student studying Materials Science and Engineering, my UConn graduate degree will prepare me to do innovate high-temperature resistant materials for aerospace applications, much-needed materials for the big aerospace industry in 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. Furthermore, ample funding for UConn allows us to maintain a reputation as a competitive and strong university, ensuring that we can recruit and retain dedicated and skilled faculty and staff. I chose UConn over other universities for my graduate program because of the reputation of my Materials Science and Engineering (MSE) program, particularly the microscopy resources to analyze samples. For example the newly open Innovation Partnership building (IPB), with world-class microscopy equipment.

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,

Sharon Uwanyuze

PhD student/ Materials Science and Engineering - UConn[Storrs

sharon.uwanyuze@uconn.edu