



# CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

**Testimony for the Appropriations Committee  
From Connecticut College  
Sean Martin, Director of Financial Aid  
February 15, 2017**

I respectfully submit this testimony on behalf of Connecticut College and in **opposition to proposed cuts to the Roberta B. Willis scholarship program.**

First, please let me be clear: We are grateful to the legislature for its ongoing support of the private college sector and for maintaining some funding in the scholarship program. We understand the state is facing some very tough fiscal challenges this year, but we beseech you, please do not cut the Roberta Willis Scholarship Program (formerly known as the Governor's Scholarship Program) any further. Any cuts to this important scholarship program will adversely impact Connecticut students — please help make that impact as minimal as possible for the sake of our financially needy students.

The Roberta Willis Scholarship Program supports some of our most needy students. In this current academic year, 2016-17, 14 Connecticut students — half of whom are underrepresented students — at Connecticut College received a total of \$38,917 in the Roberta Willis Scholarship Program. This funding allows Connecticut College to admit more financially needy students from Connecticut and, in turn, helps us educate Connecticut students who stay in Connecticut after graduation and contribute to the state's economy.

Connecticut College's allocation through this scholarship program for its financially needy students has already been reduced 87 percent since 2013, from \$309,552 to \$38,917. In fact, from 2015 to 2017, our institution's allocation has been cut 48 percent, from \$75,208 to \$38,917. Unfortunately, the number of students who receive this important scholarship funding has been reduced accordingly, from 120 in 2013 to 14 in 2017.

Connecticut College is extremely generous to financially needy students. In 2016-17, we awarded nearly 5.3 million in institutional need-based aid to 166 Connecticut residents who are undergraduate students at our institution.

I like to think of the state scholarship funding as a partnership. In this partnership, the state acknowledges the significant investment Connecticut College makes in Connecticut students with its own investment, an investment that allows the College to broaden access among highly needy Connecticut students.

There is no deep pocket for these Connecticut-based scholarships at Connecticut College. Our endowment at June 30, 2016, was valued at \$263 million, but the spend rule limits our annual draw from the endowment to 5 percent. This 5 percent helps fund our operating costs, but mostly our operating budget is funded through tuition.

For example, at Connecticut College, our total grant budget in 2016-17 is \$36.9 million. Of that, only \$4 million is funded from the endowment. Most of the endowed scholarship funds are earmarked for students with specific characteristics, majors or interests. The balance of our annual grant budget is funded through tuition revenue, annual fundraising and gifts. In this economy, Connecticut College is mindful of our price and its impact on our ability to continue to enroll and fund deserving students. If the Roberta Willis Scholarship Fund is cut, we will have to make some difficult choices. Quite frankly, we would have to admit fewer high-need students from Connecticut.

Connecticut College is proud to be able to meet the full demonstrated financial need of our students. We are committed to educating Connecticut residents — it's a commitment that dates back to our founding more than 100 years ago — and we need support from all sectors, including the state and federal government, to make this happen.

I encourage you demonstrate your commitment to the students of Connecticut — students who may find their best fit for college at a private college in the state. Show your commitment to Connecticut students by supporting the funding of the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Program.

Thank you.