

Good Morning Chairman Toscano, members of the BOT,

I'm Brad Simpson, Associate Prof of History and Asian and Asian American Studies and Director of Graduate Studies for the History Department. I want to talk about the impact the planned budget cuts of 15% or more in the five year budget plan will have on our teaching and research.

I came to UConn from Princeton University ten years ago, and was proud to become a faculty member at what I consider to be one of the best public universities in the country. A growing undergraduate population finishing in record time with less debt than at peer institutions, attracting world class faculty and graduate students engaged in cutting edge research, and contributing in innumerable ways to the state economy, as recognized by the Wall Street Journal and other publications.

These gains are the result of years of patient investment in our physical infrastructure, faculty, staff, and students. They have made the university a force multiplier of social mobility for Connecticut residents, and for economic growth.

The proposed budget cuts will make many of these investments worthless. They will act as a force multiplier in reverse and cost the state far more than the cuts themselves. What will be left behind is a shadow of the university that UConn is on the verge of becoming.

Let us be clear. These budget cuts are a conscious choice to destroy the teaching and research capacity of the University - a self-inflicted wound. As a director of grad studies, I can assure you there is no way to meet these budget targets. Imposing these cuts in one or two years will mean the end of many if not most graduate programs at UConn and the research and teaching they enable. The history department's graduate program has been here since 1948 - and our graduates teach at the University of Wisconsin, Spelman College, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Connecticut State University, and many other places where students benefit from their experience.

These cuts will make UConn a less attractive place for researchers, make it harder to win Federal grants, and dramatically degrade our contribution to the state's knowledge economy.

These cuts will also radically undermine undergraduate education in every department, and on every campus. I teach in Science 1, an innovative new 200-seat lecture hall that enables our graduate teaching assistants to work directly with students in a small group setting. In two years it will likely stand empty, because there will be no graduate students to run labs or discussion sections in large classes. The history department alone will lose half or more of our teaching capacity in the next two or three years.

These cuts will mean fewer classes for undergraduates, longer time to graduation, and, crucially, millions of dollars in increased debt for thousands of Connecticut families whose children will need more time to get their degrees, and eventually lower enrollments. Decades of investment in our physical and intellectual infrastructure will have been wasted, and UConn will be crippled for years if not decades to come. These are not cuts that can be made and then restored down the line. The damage they will do cannot be repaired. I strongly urge you to not impose these cuts, but to fight for the sustained, permanent, and adequate funding that Connecticut families and students deserve.