

NEXT GENERATION CONNECTICUT

University of Connecticut

Overview:

- An initiative between the State of Connecticut and UConn to greatly expand research, educational opportunities and economic development with nationally unprecedented investments in UConn's science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) disciplines.
- Undergraduate enrollment would increase by 6,580 (approximately 30 percent). Almost 3,300 would be in STEM fields, including a 70 percent increase in engineering students.
- UConn's pool of highly talented STEM graduates would increase by 47 percent.
- UConn would hire 259 new faculty members in addition to the 290 joining the University in the current faculty hiring plan. Of the 259 new faculty hires, 200 would be STEM instructors, adding to the 175 new STEM faculty in current hiring plan.
- UConn would revolutionize its STEM facilities and create the premier STEM honors program in the nation. It would also enhance related academics, including relocating the Greater Hartford campus to downtown Hartford and expanding educational programs and establishing student housing at UConn-Stamford.
- The state would invest \$137 million in operating costs and \$1.54 billion in capital investments; UConn would contribute \$149 million in operating costs and \$235 million in capital expenses (the latter being redirected from the already-approved UConn 2000 allocation).

Questions and Answers:

Q. What will the state and UConn gain from this initiative?

A. Next Generation Connecticut will result in targeted, strategic investments in UConn facilities, faculty and students in STEM disciplines. That will fuel Connecticut's economy with new technologies, companies, patents and licenses; more high-wage stem jobs; and a pool of highly skilled graduates to fill them.

In the past decade, STEM jobs grew three times faster than non-STEM jobs, and the number is expected to keep growing. Connecticut needs to be in the forefront in creating those jobs and fostering home-grown talent at UConn to fill them.

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Q. How will UConn maintain its academic standards and compete for high rankings if you suddenly have to accept 6,500 more students?

A. We will not act quickly or suddenly. We will plan a careful growth strategy to accommodate the student population and work to attract top STEM students and other outstanding future students with our new programs and initiatives.

For example, the plan would enable us to create a new STEM Honors program and provides STEM scholarships for the most talented STEM students. Our growth will be over 10 to 12 years and, with our enhanced programs and new STEM initiatives, we are confident we can achieve this expansion with high-quality students who will want to learn in our new facilities and matriculate at a top STEM university.

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Q. Where are you going to put that many students? Will you build more dorms?

A. Our plan calls for the development of an Honors STEM facility and one to two new dorms. With the expansion into new phases of that building plan, we anticipate we will have sufficient housing for all new students.

We also plan to add residential facilities to our Stamford campus as part of this new initiative.

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Q. How will you afford the financial aid costs associated with taking on that many more students?

A. We have carefully planned and included those costs in the proposal for the consideration of the governor and legislature.

The STEM honors program, for example, will fund 1,400 full tuition scholarships per year by fiscal year 2020. Our funding plan also sets aside the same percentage of tuition-funded financial aid for the new students as we do for current students.

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Q. Enrollment in Connecticut schools is shrinking. Does that mean if you can't find enough qualified Connecticut students, will you accept more out-of-state students to meet this 6,500 number?

A. We will continue to draw the majority of our students from Connecticut. In fact, our goal is that 70 percent of this increase will comprise Connecticut students. We currently enroll 13 percent of Connecticut's high school seniors who are applying to college; our goal is to attract more of them to attend UConn.

In addition, we plan to enhance our STEM programs to make UConn a destination school for increasing numbers of out-of-state and international students. We should also note that we are increasingly a top choice for international students, and we expect the number to continue to grow in the coming decade.

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Q. You say this is a good fit between the Bioscience Connecticut, Jackson Labs and Storrs Tech Park initiatives. How so?

A. The STEM initiatives inherent in each of the initiatives will be a major draw for undergraduate and graduate students. The new *Next Generation Connecticut* initiative will also give students the opportunity to apply for research grants to conduct innovative STEM research, and the faculty and staff associated with Bioscience Connecticut, Jackson Labs and the Tech Park will be a major asset for recruiting talented students and other faculty members.

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Q. UConn got \$2.3 billion for UConn 2000/21st Century UConn. Why didn't you upgrade infrastructure with that?

A. We did – and *Next Generation Connecticut* is the next step in a vision for the future that has its roots in those earlier initiatives.

The UConn 2000 and 21st Century UConn initiatives enabled us to focus the unprecedented state investments from 1995 through today on numerous classroom facilities, general utilities, information technology, residence halls, and infrastructure.

Additionally, the University constructed science facilities, including the new Chemistry, Physics/Biology, Information Technology Engineering, Pharmacy/Biology, Marine Sciences and Agriculture Biotechnology buildings.

Additionally, we renovated a number of current facilities for Life Sciences, Biobehavioral Science, Education, and Nursing. We have major projects under way such as our new Engineering and Psychology buildings, and the renovation of our Agricultural research facilities.

We believe we have been excellent stewards of the funding we received. The money that we received was an outstanding way to enhance our campus, and this next initiative enables us to move to the next level of excellence.

While these university-wide investments have allowed us to increase STEM enrollment by 115 percent, UConn must do more to produce many more STEM graduates to meet workforce shortages and drive discoveries that will fuel Connecticut's long-term economic growth. That is why funding for new infrastructure is aimed specifically at the STEM fields and will allow us to support and accommodate major increases in our STEM students and faculty.

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Q. How has UConn shown a return on past investments?

A. UConn's rise during the past 16 years has been astounding, the result of strategic state investments that were wisely used on facilities and infrastructure. Some of the returns on that investment include:

- * An increase in research awards by 122 percent
- * An increase in undergraduate enrollment by 52 percent
- * The ability to recruit increasingly talented freshmen classes. This year's freshmen are the most high-achieving in recent history based on SAT scores and, overall, incoming students' SAT scores increased by 113 points in the last 16 years.

- * Undergraduate enrollment in STEM disciplines increased by 115 percent.
- * Undergraduate degree conferrals grew by about 75 percent and graduate/professional degrees grew by 40 percent.

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Q. Is this why UConn is seeking new water sources?

A. The university and the town of Mansfield are looking at our mutual water needs over the next 50 years as both continue to grow and proposals currently being discussed would allow for the use of an additional 2 million gallons per day. Additional faculty and staff could clearly be accommodated under this plan.

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Q. There are a lot of crowded two-lane roads leading into Storrs. Won't this cause traffic issues on Route 195, Route 44 and other local roads?

A. The University will review potential effects and update its existing plans with the state's regulatory agency for traffic, incorporating the anticipated growth. The UConn Tech Park also includes plans to extend North Hillside Road to Route 44, providing another entry and exit point to the central campus and helping ease traffic on nearby residential roads.

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Q. How will you avoid the kind of code problems that UConn 2000 experienced about 10 years ago?

A. In the years since those incidents, UConn has revamped the way it reviews code compliance and other factors in construction. It received guidance from code experts, the State Fire Marshal, and the state's building inspectors to develop corrective plans for the affected properties.

That information also was used to develop a comprehensive program to ensure that all newly constructed facilities are properly inspected for fire and building code compliance prior to occupancy.

The University's Office of Fire Marshal and Building Inspector became operational and was fully staffed by July 2005. This office is responsible for administering a clearly defined permitting, inspection and final occupancy program based on reviewing plans prior to construction, and on comprehensive inspections of all new construction and major renovation projects at all campuses of the University.