

**Thursday, April 4, 2013– 12 P.M.**

**Student Union Theatre**

### **State of the University Speech**

**Good afternoon colleagues, students, friends and guests.**

**Thank you for being here today, as we assess and reflect upon the state of our university.**

**It is vital, every now and then, to take stock of where we've been and where we want to go as an institution, in the near term, and far beyond.**

**It all began for us at the end of the 19th century, with the Morrill Act, after a bitter civil war that spared no state and no family. This past fall, we celebrated the 150th anniversary of the Act, the legislation that made us a university. The Morrill Act was signed into law by President Lincoln in 1862, and offered each state 30,000 acres of land, per U.S. congressman. As Senator Justin Morrill put it at the time, "a college in every State, upon a sure and perpetual foundation, accessible to all, but especially to the sons of toil." The sons of toil.**

**Connecticut was the third state to accept the grant, which established a public land-grant university system dedicated to education, research.**

**It is a mission that grew and evolved dramatically over decades, and we became a complex, comprehensive, global university. We help our publics in many ways, but in a broader and more profound manner than we ever have.**

**I hope Senator Morrill would be proud that while we still do indeed serve the "sons of toil," we serve daughters, returning veterans, older learners, international students, American students all ethnicities, and our vibrant community of LGBT students, as well.**

**As we grew as a university, our core focus on teaching, research and service remained constant.**

**Faculty, staff and students know this very well, because it's the life we live.**

**But to many people, all institutions of higher education are seen as being about the same, with the same focus, goals and mission.**

**Of course, that is not the case. But we at research institutions have consistently done a poor job of explaining what it is we do exactly, and what distinguishes us.**

**Most important: We educate, advise, mentor, guide and graduate our students – from bachelor's degrees to PhDs.**

**Well over 7,000 students will earn a UConn degree in a few weeks, and will join the ranks of our more than 200,000 living alumni, many of whom reside right here in the Northeast, and who are so key to our future.**

**But, as we know so well, that is only part of fulfilling our mission. Research is just as essential.**

**Whether in a laboratory, a library or a site on the other side of the world, our faculty produce research and scholarship that contributes to their field and society in innumerable ways.**

**But what does that really mean to someone outside of the academic world?**

**Research conducted by our faculty leads to the cure for disease.**

**Research opens doors to historical revelation, the law, economic empowerment, and a greater understanding of ourselves and our society.**

**Research produces food and clean energy, helps us plan cities, and – in all fields – reveals the complexity of the world. In fact, exposing just how complex things are is what we do best, and what matters most. Finding the joy, intrigue, and wisdom in complexity and ambiguity is what truly separates the educated from the uneducated.**

**Research and creative work bring pleasure – through literature, art, performance – in a world that is harsh and worrisome. If you are having a bad week, go see our talented students in the Connecticut Rep or at a concert, and you will remember why it’s really pretty great to be human.**

**We carry out our mission every day here in Storrs, and in Farmington, Groton, Stamford, West Hartford, Waterbury and Torrington – and of course at our cooperative extension locations across the state.**

**Ideas are generated wherever our students, faculty, researchers and alumni are found.**

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**The essential building block to carrying out the mission of research and innovation is of course our faculty.**

**When I took this position in 2010, it quickly became clear that while UConn’s campuses had grown dramatically, as had our enrollment, the growth of our faculty was anemic by comparison.**

**And it was holding us back.**

**So we embarked on a major initiative to expand our faculty ranks by adding nearly 300 new tenure-track positions over four years, over and above just filling vacancies.**

**This will contribute to a total of 500 new faculty being hired during that period of time.**

**We call this initiative “Faculty 500” even though that has a weirdly NASCAR-type ring to it. My highest priority as president has been, and continues to be, building our faculty.**

**We implement this plan to:**

**.... add new strength to critical disciplines;**

**...meet key teaching needs, bring down class sizes over time, and help students graduate on time;**

**...dramatically enhance and expand our research capability;**

**...and to ensure that UConn is at the forefront of new and emerging disciplines.**

**This effort involves cluster hires across departments, schools, and colleges, and multiple hires within a discipline or department.**

**It allows us to capitalize on opportunities to attract accomplished groups of faculty to UConn and complement major UConn initiatives.**

**And it will enable us to increase the diversity of our faculty so we can come closer to matching the diversity of the students they teach. I am very proud of departments who are**

so successfully pursuing minority faculty for their vacancies. Faculty hire faculty, so I am relying on you to do this critical work for the university.

So far, under this plan, we have hired 76 faculty members in a broad range of disciplines. More than 35 more will begin in the coming months.

We are not hiring just one rank of scholar, but a broad array of people, some of whom are very high profile and well-established in their fields, and others who are just starting their promising careers.

As all of you know very well, this is not a cookie cutter process; each hire or set of hires is thoughtful, well-reasoned and strategic.

And each position requires an individual who is the right fit to our faculty.

Rather than speak of them only in terms of statistics, let me put faces and names to a few.

Suzanne Wilson is chair of the Department of Teacher Education at Michigan State and will begin at UConn this fall.

She was also the first director of the Teacher Assessment Project at Stanford.

At MSU, she founded the Center for the Scholarship of Teaching and has done extensive, nationally-acclaimed research on professional development for teachers, education policy and teacher learning, among other topics.

**Preston Green is a pre-eminent, nationally recognized education law expert who will come to UConn in the fall from Penn State.**

**He will be the Carla Klein Endowed Professor of Urban Education in the Neag School of Education and will also have a joint appointment with the UConn School of Law.**

**Preston is at the forefront of a wide variety of education research and policy issues including school vouchers, charter schools, teacher evaluation systems and school finance litigation.**

**At UConn, he will also contribute to Neag's efforts to research and close the student achievement gap in Connecticut and across the nation.**

**We are thrilled to have him.**

**Ali Bazzi is an expert in advanced power electronics, who comes to the University from Delphi Corporation, where he was a senior power electronics engineer.**

**He specializes in electric drives, and renewable energy integration – the technology used to convert power collected by photovoltaic solar cells and wind turbines into usable power for the commercial electric grid.**

**Though new to UConn, he has already opened an advanced power electronics and electric drives lab at our Center for Clean Energy Engineering on the Depot Campus.**

**Luis van Isschot joined the faculty in September and holds a joint appointment as assistant professor of history and human rights.**

He was previously involved with Peace Brigades International, an organization that sends international volunteers to areas of conflict to accompany and help protect human rights workers, threatened by political violence in nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

In addition to serving as a human rights observer in Colombia, he also traveled to the Great Lakes Region of Africa, doing research in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi.

Lewis Gordon is a distinguished philosopher who will begin at UConn this summer with a joint appointment in philosophy and African American studies.

He comes to UConn from Brown, then Temple University. He held chairs in both institutions, due to his scholarly accomplishments.

He is the founding director of the Institute for the Study of Race and Social Thought and the Center for Afro-Jewish Studies at Temple.

And as I mentioned, an important component of this initiative is cluster hiring, and I want to give an excellent example of that:

The department of Marine Sciences recently made a key cluster hire for their Climate and Human Alteration of Coast Ecosystems – or CHACE – program.

David Lund is Marine Sciences' new CHACE Geochemist and Paleogeochemist.

He comes to us from the University of Michigan and his research involves the integration of geochemical and physical oceanographic methods to study processes that govern climate variability.

**Kelly Lombardo is a new CHACE Coupled Atmosphere-Ocean Modeler. Kelly is currently a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at Stony Brook.**

**Her research aim is to combine her expertise in observational analyses and numerical modeling, to explore how variations in coastal storms could result from the changing climate.**

**Hannes Baumann is a new CHACE Marine Ecologist and Evolutionary Biologist.**

**He also comes from Stony Brook.**

**His focus is seeking a better understanding of recruitment variability of fish, especially species that are commercially harvested.**

**This is a cross section of our recent hiring under the Faculty 500 initiative, but it is representative of the dynamism of our new faculty.**

**And let me underscore that these faculty are coming to UConn because of our CURRENT faculty. These incredible recruitments – stealing senior faculty from North Carolina, Virginia, Miami, Maryland, Johns Hopkins, Duke – happen because of the excellent faculty we already have.**

**Strengthening and protecting our academic enterprise is something we have devoted much time and attention to over the course of the last two years.**

**However: for all the focus on students and professors, without the scores of great people who make up our staff, this university would grind to a screeching halt.**

**Our staff members are an absolutely essential and highly valued part of who we are as an institution, and we are very proud to recognize their service to the university.**

**When we talk about the importance of our faculty, it is not at the expense of our staff; every student and every faculty member we hire is dependent on our staff to receive the support they need to succeed, from the nurses in our student health center to the excellent professionals in our financial aid and admissions offices.**

**And while I don't want to single out any group, this is actually a very fine moment for this audience to applaud the terrific men and women who work in Facilities and Residential Life, who cleared your snow all night, multiple times this winter, fed our students during blizzards, and make sure this place looks great and actually works. I ask everyone in Facilities and Res Life to stand up and take a bow.**

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**How well do we serve this state, as an economic engine and as a destination for ambitious students?**

**UConn generates hundreds of millions of dollars in business activity for Connecticut, and last year, drew over \$200 million in outside research funding to the state.**

**That is not by chance; since 2006 the number of research proposals made by our faculty has grown by 55%.**

**Thanks to UConn, 270 patents have been issued over the last 14 years;**

**...41 UConn technology startups have been formed since 1985;**

**...and more than one hundred technology licenses and options are currently active.**

**Our Center for Entrepreneurship & Innovation – a partnership between the Schools of Business & Law – has assisted more than 530 companies from a diverse range of industries since 2007.**

**We serve through research and innovation, and we serve students. We are drawing more applicants to our degree programs and producing more graduates than ever before.**

**Going back 10 years ago: In 2002, UConn received 14,677 undergraduate applications.**

**In 2012, we received more than 30,000.**

**In 2002, we conferred fewer than 4,700 degrees.**

**Ten years later, in 2012, we conferred nearly 7,800 – a jump of 65%.**

**And the value of the scholarships and grants that have been awarded to our students has gone from \$71.8 million in 2006, to an estimated \$141 million this year – an increase of 97%.**

**But our service does not end there.**

**We react to help our communities, from food distribution in the wake of mass power outages to our work with poor schools in our needy urban areas. Most recently, in the aftermath of the horrific tragedy at Sandy Hook, we established a scholarship fund to support the college costs of siblings of those killed in the assault...**

**...the dependents of the adults who lost their lives or were wounded...**

**...as well as students currently enrolled at the elementary school, who are accepted to UConn.**

**A few weeks ago, the total amount given to our Sandy Hook fund surpassed one million dollars, showing yet again how we can channel our compassion and generosity to those who suffer.**

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**When each of these factors are combined, if you took a snapshot of the university as we exist today, I would say the state of our university is very strong indeed.**

**But, it is hardly a time to be smug, as we have much to do. It is no time to sit back and just see where the tide takes us. Life is short and we are agents in our own destiny.**

**We will not be the kind of university that is willing to settle for “good enough.”**

**Nearly two decades ago, Connecticut decided that it would be home to a world-class research university that would exist alongside of Michigan and Berkeley.**

**Because a highly successful research university is essential to the health of a state, and because there is one thing Connecticut does not lack and has never lacked:**

**Intellectual capital.**

**Making UConn a top 10 public institution – one goal the Governor has for us – means using the resources we have, to accomplish great things for ourselves, our alumni and our state.**

Thanks not only to our own ambitions, but to the bold and visionary actions of our governor and state legislators, UConn is entering a new chapter in its life, and stands on the cusp of an extraordinary era.

As you know, in January, the Governor and legislative leaders announced a proposal called Next Generation Connecticut.

It is a plan to invest over \$1.5 billion over the next 10 years in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math disciplines at UConn, known as STEM.

Its purpose is to make key investments in facilities, faculty, and students that will give UConn an even greater ability to fuel Connecticut's economy with new technologies. If this legislation passes we can:

- Hire 259 new faculty (of which 200 will be in STEM) over and above our current faculty hiring plan;
- Enroll an additional 6,500 undergraduate students;
- Build STEM facilities to house materials science, biology, engineering, cognitive science, genomics, physics and related disciplines;
- Construct new STEM teaching laboratories;
- Create a premier STEM honors program;
- Upgrade aging infrastructure to accommodate new faculty and students;

- Expand digital media and risk management degree programs;
- And relocate UConn's Greater Hartford Campus from West Hartford to downtown Hartford.

**A word about Hartford:**

**Not only will locating our campus there enhance the academic experience of our faculty and students and better fulfill the urban mission of the campus...**

**...it will add a great deal of new life to our capital city.**

**UConn has many important roles to play in the state, and we strongly believe that is one of them.**

**As we speak, the university is reviewing the submissions of interest we collected last month and evaluating properties.**

**It is important that we take the time needed for due diligence, but we will be able to share some news when we can, most likely early this summer.**

**As this proposal – Next Generation Connecticut – has made its way through the legislative process, some have tried to pit UConn against other colleges and universities, which I find odd.**

**We are not competing with CSU institutions or community colleges. Far from it, we want them succeed and of course welcome their many transfer students.**

**Next Generation Connecticut was tailored to capitalize on UConn's specific, unique assets and abilities as a research institution.**

**Other colleges and universities will also be chosen to fuel the state economy and help in their own ways. I look forward to the appointment of a new president for the Connecticut Board of Regents, so that we can build partnership and help each other to succeed.**

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**BioScience Connecticut, a project I discussed last year, goes incredibly well.**

**Earlier this year, work began on the construction of two new buildings on the campus:**

**First, the new Ambulatory Care Center.**

**When it opens in 2015, it will house a wide array of outpatient medical services, including primary care, specialty services, the Carole and Ray Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center, and more.**

**Also, there is the new Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine.**

**It will open in late 2014 and will house state-of-the-art research facilities for our partners, the world-renowned Jackson Laboratory.**

Until then, JAX is on the ground, working on the Health Center campus and collaborating with UConn researchers.

Completion of the parking structure will make way for the construction of the new hospital tower, starting in May.

In the meantime, a massive renovation project has started in the original research building and plans are being mapped out for new academic space...

...more small business incubators;

...and renovations to the main building including the dental practice and the Pat and Jim Calhoun Cardiology Center.

While all this work is underway, the Health Center is open for business and is introducing new physicians and services, in gastroenterology, geriatrics, surgery and many other areas.

It's also important to note that the programmatic elements of Bioscience Connecticut are moving forward.

Plans are underway to expand the class sizes of the medical and dental schools and to catalyze community-based initiatives including an innovative Health Disparities Institute, under the leadership of Judith Fifield of the Health Center and Salome Raheim, Dean of the School of Social Work.

I look forward to sharing more updates about the many aspects of Bioscience Connecticut in the months and years ahead.

**The Health Center will also open medical and dental offices across the street in the Storrs Center development, which will serve this community and continue to contribute to the vitality of the Mansfield's downtown area.**

**Also in Storrs: There has been talk of and hope for a Technology Park to be located here on this campus for many years.**

**Thanks to the leadership of Senate President Donald Williams and Rep. Gregg Haddad, and with the support of Governor Malloy, this is fast becoming a reality.**

**In December, we unveiled our master plan for the UConn Tech Park. Its purpose is to draw innovative companies and researchers from around the globe to Storrs, to partner with our faculty and students with a particular focus on additive manufacturing, nanotechnology, genomics, and digital innovation.**

**An initial facility of 125,000 square feet, the Innovation Partnership Building, is expected to be completed in 2015.**

**It will focus on advanced manufacturing, and will provide space populated with the latest equipment and technology, for entrepreneurs, existing key state industries, and inventive startups.**

**The result of this important partnership will be more companies, greater job growth and retention, and bringing new materials and products into the marketplace.**

**The long term vision is to design about 900,000 square feet of building space divided into three "nodes" of several buildings each, connected by footpaths and by the extension of North Hillside Road to Route 44, which will create a new entrance to campus.**

**It is another excellent example of ways in which UConn will make even greater contributions to job growth in Connecticut.**

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**While we talk a great deal about STEM, due to the sheer size of investment needed to progress in those areas, we simultaneously invest in the social sciences and the humanities.**

**As our faculty hiring plan is already demonstrating, we will not pit the sciences and engineering against other disciplines. That is never done at a proper college or university.**

**My thanks to so many faculty in CLAS, Fine Arts and other areas who are doing a tremendous job recruiting humanists and social scientists to UConn. For example, we have provided multiple job openings for the Philosophy department and they were more than up to the task of hiring excellent new philosophers to join us. There will be more to come, as we strengthen fields far beyond STEM.**

**And of course, at the end of the day, these fields are actually more important than anything that happens in a lab. If we do not have strongly held values and ethics, and we cannot bring innovation to those in need through public policy, all the science and engineering in the world will mean nothing to society at all.**

**The philosopher Martha Nussbaum put it recently, as only she can:**

**“Democracies have great rational and imaginative powers. They also are prone to some serious flaws in reasoning, to parochialism, haste, sloppiness, and selfishness.**

**Education based mainly on profitability in the global market magnifies these deficiencies, producing a greedy obtuseness and a technically trained docility that threaten the very life of democracy itself, and that certainly impede the creation of a decent world culture.....**

**If we do not insist on the crucial importance of the humanities and the arts, they will drop away, because they don't make money. They only do what is much more precious than that: make a world that is worth living in, people who are able to see other human beings as equals, and nations that are able to overcome fear and suspicion in favor of sympathetic and reasoned debate."**

**Let me switch gears now and talk about communication. UConn is an institution that has under-communicated, to itself and to the outside world, for a very long time. And it hurts us. We need to broadcast who we are or we will waste away, as other very sophisticated and successful institutions dominate the public discourse and search for knowledge.**

**As a scholar and faculty member myself, I can tell you that when you talk about marketing and branding a university, I still get slightly queasy – a reflexive reaction.**

**We're not a breakfast cereal and we're not a detergent.**

**But: we still need to communicate what we do, why we do it, and how we do it. Branding actually matters a great deal.**

**As an institution with a global reach, we must compete on an international level for virtually everything: students, faculty, staff, grants, awards, donations – you name it.**

**And when we compete, we need to present ourselves at our very best, because how key audiences perceive our academic strength and overall reputation influences the choices they make.**

**Our image also plays an important role in reinforcing and building alumni pride and trust in their alma mater. It makes our legislators and communities proud as well.**

**The bottom line is that our reputation needs to accurately reflect our attributes, and this is especially challenging for an institution that has made dramatic strides within a relatively short period of time.**

**Perception so often lags behind reality.**

**We must determine the strategic actions needed to align our image with who and what we truly are.**

**Exactly how we go about this takes a number of different forms.**

**The simplest and most obvious is our visual identity; the name we are known for.**

**As an institution, for years we have made use of UConn as institutional nickname of sorts.**

**But while we see it as shorthand, it appears that throughout the nation – due to our athletic success no doubt – most everyone refers to the university as UConn.**

**That's not a bad thing at all. Think UCLA or Penn or Georgia Tech or Cal or MIT, nicknames all – and proud ones.**

**Recognizing there is great value and recognition in this unique identifier, going forward, we are adopting UConn as one primary visual word mark for the entire institution.**

**It will appear on signage, letterhead, banners, web pages, and more.**

**Of course we are still very much the University of Connecticut.**

**We will be keeping our traditional oak leaf and the university seal in place.**

**But we will also capitalize on our fame as UConn, and the attraction people have to that shortened name. In the weeks ahead, our communications staff will support those of you who work with websites and publications.**

**And on April 18, the Division of Athletics will be rolling out some other exciting changes to our visual identity: a new husky.**

**Before more worry is expended on this, let me assure you: Our mascot is still the Husky, as it has always been since a mascot was created – though he has taken many different forms over the years, some better than others.**

**We start with the 1950s *[images shown]***

**My personal favorite: the 1960s.**

**The 1970s**

**The 80s and 90s.**

**And today's, which was created in 2000.**

**For his next iteration, we have improved upon these based on what a real husky looks like.**

**I can assure you that contrary to speculation, he will be not appear to be mean, snarling or capable of frightening small children.**

**Instead, he will be rendered as the sleek, beautiful animal a real husky truly is.**

**More on the 18<sup>th</sup>.**

**Updates to marks, logos and mascots are common, and done with tradition in mind, not in spite of it.**

**Our new husky was designed for us, on their dime, by the artistic team at Nike after much study and testing with our athletes and coaches.**

**Also, the images associated with our visual identity will be phased in over time rather than all at once.**

**So those concerned about costs should know that all the various places the husky or our other logos appear – walls, courts, business cards, signs and letterhead and so on – would have to be repainted, replaced and reordered anyway in the normal course of business over a period of years.**

**The only difference now is that new images will replace older ones when this occurs.**

**So we look forward to the 18th.**

**This afternoon, I have focused on all that is positive and all the opportunities we have ahead of us – because as an institution, that must be our mindset.**

**But that does not mean we don't face our share of challenges.**

**Like every state agency, and like many public universities across the nation, our state appropriation has fallen for a period of years.**

**You will not hear us whine or complain about it, particularly when we consider the incredible investments Connecticut has made in UConn.**

**But we must manage these cuts, as we have been.**

**And as they always are, the reductions we must make will be painful and will force us to sacrifice things that are important to us and to the university.**

**I do not believe that an era of permanent reductions awaits us, but for the moment it is the reality we will continue to face as best we can.**

**There is no shortage of logistical questions ahead of us as well:**

**We must plan very carefully for accommodating new faculty and new students over the next decade and decide, simply, where we're going to put all of them.**

**I have made no secret of the fact that our endowment is not what it should be, especially when we consider that UConn, like many universities, will need to rely even more on the generosity of donors and private giving in the future.**

**The fact is that until a few years ago, it was not a strong priority for the university. That has changed and much more progress is needed.**

**We are in the midst of a search for the next president of the UConn Foundation and his or her charge will be to build on the good work that has been done so far and significantly grow our endowment to drive it closer to our goal of \$1 billion.**

**We also face challenges when it comes to Athletics, as conference re-alignment continues. It won't be settled for a very long time, so have patience. But at the end of the day, our conference matters less than our student-athletes and our fans. Our students need to do well in the classroom, and win games. But, and maybe I'm one of the last university presidents to believe this deeply, I just really want them to have fun and be good people. I count my blessings daily for our amazing coaches – Geno, Kevin Ollie, Ray Reid, Jim Penders, Paul Pasquoloni – they are such great ambassadors for UConn.**

**As UConn has demonstrated repeatedly, we will face each of these difficulties head on, and work together to manage what lies ahead.**

**We have no other choice, and let's all try to keep our senses of humor and our humility while we do.**

**I am confident that years from now, when Bruce Stave writes his next big history of this university, it is very likely that this moment will be seen as among the most exciting and critical moments in the life of the University of Connecticut.**

**I thank you all for coming today, and for doing all you do for this community, and also for your support as we forge ahead on behalf of this great university.**

