



Testimony of the UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-FLINT

Testimony Presented By:

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Before the

Michigan State Senate

Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education

And

Michigan House of Representatives

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Higher Education

Senator Tonya Schuitmaker, Chair

Senator Peter MacGregor, Majority Vice-Chair

Senator Curtis Hertel Jr., Minority Vice-Chair

Representative Michael McCready, Chair

Representative Paul Muxlow, Majority Vice-Chair

Representative Rob VerHeulen

Representative Laura Cox

Representative Sam Singh, Minority Vice-Chair

Representative Jeff Irwin

Representative Jon Hoadley

February 29, 2016

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Schuitmaker, Chairman McCready, and members of the Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on Higher Education.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to provide a brief overview of the University of Michigan-Flint, to offer insights into our importance to mid-Michigan as a regional comprehensive university, to provide some detail about our efforts to boost student retention and degree completion, and to share with you information about UM-Flint's efforts to foster collaboration and strengthen our region, especially in light of the water crisis facing the city of Flint.

First, I would like to express my appreciation and support for the budget proposal put forth by Governor Snyder, which includes a recommended \$61.2 million increase for Michigan's public universities. As reported, if passed by the legislature, this increase will restore in the aggregate funding to 2012 levels. Funding for UM-Flint, based on the metric funding formula, would represent a proposed increase of 5.1%.

This budget proposal continues to recognize the need to make strategic investments in higher education, investments that will allow UM-Flint increased access to Michigan students and help us to provide prepared, well-educated graduates to Michigan's workforce.

I also support the Governor's recommendation for tuition restraint of 4.8%. UM-Flint prioritizes excellence in education, and takes pride in the fact that we do so at an affordable cost to students and their families. According to the FY 2015-16 Tuition and Fee schedule, UM-Flint's cost of \$10,458 (based on 15 credit hours per semester) is the fourth lowest in the state for public universities. Tuition dollars still make up over 80% of our operating resources and fund the scholarships and aid we need to attract the strongest and brightest students to our campus.

Additionally, Governor Snyder included UM-Flint's Murchie Science Building addition as part of the FY 2017 Capital Outlay recommendation. This project enhances our students' learning experiences in vital STEM fields and provides a state-of-the-art facility and specialty research labs for our faculty and students. Investments like this one help to ensure that our university competes as a high-quality educational and research institution, and that our graduates enter the workforce with hands-on experience and job-ready skills. I ask the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to support it as well.

I want to make sure that this committee has a clear sense of the return on these state investments. Investing in education at UM-Flint means investing in Michigan – Michigan students, Michigan residents, Michigan employees, and the Michigan economy. Named as one of the "Best in the Midwest" by *The Princeton Review*, we continue to provide access for Michigan students, in particular, with a high-quality University of Michigan education.

#### Student Success, Retention, and Degree Completion

Of our 8,470 total enrolled students, 88.5% are Michigan residents. And with over 77% of our alumni still calling Michigan home, these students stay to work, live, and support the state after graduation.

Like many of our peer institutions across the state, our student body has changed dramatically over the last few decades. Delivering an excellent, affordable, accessible education looks different than it did two decades ago. To know how to deliver the best education, you must understand what our student body looks like today.

- Just about 20% (19.42%) of our student body are minority students.

- 8.5% are international students, a number up over 8% from last year and over 1200% since 2004.
- 35.85% of all undergraduates are non-traditional students (average age of 26 years or older).
- Nearly 70% of our students currently receive financial aid, and more than 40% qualify for Federal Pell Grants.

Additionally, almost 11% (10.94%) of our students transfer to UM-Flint from area community colleges. We continue to actively work with schools from across the state to develop partnership and articulation agreements that streamline the transfer process and allow for a seamless transition between community college and UM-Flint. This allows students to complete their core requirements locally, confident in our promise that they can transfer and have access to what makes UM-Flint distinct: specialized coursework that links classroom theories to hands-on learning opportunities, state-of-the-art labs, and the ability to engage in research alongside their faculty mentors.

Our students might be juggling family obligations, full- and part-time jobs, or limited support networks, but are as smart and academically competitive as any other. It is our job to make a UM-Flint education work with their life, and support them through graduation.

We continue to expand our academic offerings to both adapt to the way our students learn and provide them with the skills they will need in the real world. We launched the new master's in Applied Communication Program, a new major in Entrepreneurship and Innovation Management, and will launch a new major, a Bachelors of Business Administration, Operations and Supply Chain Management this year.

We also remain committed to opportunities for Michigan students to pursue a graduate degree to add expertise and further their ability to excel on the job, with over 35 programs including online and hybrid options. UM-Flint experienced our 10th year of growth in Graduate Programs, up 182 percent in the last decade to more than 1,600 students this fall. Students in our graduate programs are often working full-time, and as a regional comprehensive campus we provide a local option that fits with their schedule and busy life while still delivering a high-quality, marketable education.

Our enrollment numbers dipped a bit from 8,574 in 2014 to 8,470 in 2015, a drop of just over 1% (1.21%). While we expect to see a further drop in enrollment numbers, with concern over the Flint water crisis steering potential applicants to other institutions we are working hard with our admitted students to address their concerns about Flint.

We do expect a bounce back in our enrollment numbers over the next few years with our efforts to expand our academic offerings, renovate and add space on campus, and increase scholarship and financial aid for both merit- and need-based awards. Our current capital campaign seeks to raise \$40 million, half of which (\$20 million) is committed to increasing scholarship support for our students. We also designated over \$1.8 million of our own resources to support scholarships in 2015-16. All of this, combined with our already low tuition costs, puts UM-Flint in a great position to attract the region's best and brightest students.

It is not enough, however, to simply attract and admit the best students to our university. Student completion continues to be a primary focus of our attention. My commitment to increasing student success is about high expectations and effective support, about policies and practices that enhance learning, about providing a coherent curriculum and pathways for progress to degrees in ways that increase retention and completion.

It includes providing support for faculty research and recruiting students with expectations of their achievement and success.

Our first year retention rate for full time, first time freshman was 72.10% for the 2014 cohort, up .37% from the fall 2013 cohort retention rate.

Our faculty and staff have engaged in an aggressive strategic enrollment management planning process aimed at improving our recruitment and retention rates. We have been implementing and planning at the same time. Of note is the decision to hire a cabinet-level position focused specifically on enrollment management.

One of our strongest efforts around student retention is aimed at one of our populations with the least support. MPowering My Success supports, mentors, and funds students who have aged out of foster care. Sadly, nationwide statistics show that only 3% of foster youth will earn a bachelor's degree, compared to 24% of the general population. And Genesee County has one of largest populations of foster youth in the state.

The MPowering program provides a vulnerable population with the comprehensive wrap-around support services necessary to successfully transition to college and persist to degree completion. The program has successfully assisted 75.7% of the students that enrolled towards ongoing academic success. If this blend of service and support works for this population, we can make it work for all of our students.

I am also proud to say that the University of Michigan-Flint was recently designated a "Gold Level" school by the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency for the services and support we offer to veterans on campus, and we annually rank among the best colleges for veterans among regional universities according to *U.S. News and World Report*.

We have a strong tradition of being a veteran-friendly campus thanks to programs like Veterans Serving Veterans, a unique nursing program in our School of Health Professions and Studies aimed at bringing more military veterans into the nursing profession. This program creates an accelerated career ladder option that builds on veterans' prior military training and helps them to meet requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. It not only serves our veterans, streamlining the process and making the transition from veteran to student easier, but it helps address the health care provider shortfall in the region as well.

The University of Michigan-Flint represents a huge piece of the city's economic engine. With approximately 10,000 faculty, staff, and students, our economic impact on Genesee County in FY 2015 was \$71.4 million.

#### Fostering Collaborations

As the anchor educational institution in Flint, equally important to our efforts to support the area economy is access to a university education. We are dedicated to supplying our region with well-educated, creative thinkers ready to enter the workforce, entrepreneurs and innovators ready to build new businesses, and graduates who are vested and engaged members of the community with a real stake in the future of Flint. We are committed to fostering collaboration between our campus and our community.

UM-Flint's School of Management is one of the region's best, nationally ranked by *U.S. News and World Report*, *Business Week*, *The Princeton Review*, and *CEO Magazine*. It's also one of only 755 schools worldwide to receive accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the longest standing, most recognized form of specialized, professional accreditation business programs can earn.

The school is also home to the Hagerman Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, whose mission it is to advance a culture of entrepreneurship in the UM-Flint community. The center supports local entrepreneurship by engaging UM-Flint students and faculty in business creation and business growth in the Flint region through internships, business plan competitions, and real-world experience.

The work of the center is perfectly encapsulated by Ground Floor Market, a sandwich shop in downtown Flint owned by the Hagerman's SkyPoint Ventures. This partnership with UM-Flint provided two UM-Flint students with internships during which they were challenged to start this business on their own. Our students not only gained the hands-on experience of starting a business from the "ground floor," but also contributed to the economic development the city of Flint.

The University of Michigan is a proud member of Business Leaders for Michigan. As you know, this organization is dedicated to making Michigan a "top ten" state for jobs, personal income, and a healthy economy. We believe UM-Flint to be a major asset in the efforts to improve the economy of Flint and the surrounding region.

We have the region's only early childhood daycare center accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for infants to age twelve, right on campus. The center also serves as a lab school for students run by our School of Education and Human Services. It has a waiting list of 300 and more waiting to add their name.

We are partnering with the Superintendent of Flint Community Schools, state officials, and others to expand early childhood services in Flint, creating a visible, viable resource in the city for our youngest citizens. It is critical that Flint public schools are supported to increase capacity lost over the past several years.

This type of community engagement isn't new to UM-Flint, nor is this an isolated example. I believe strongly that what happens to us, happens to Flint, and what happens in Flint affects the University.

That is why the water crisis facing the city of Flint is so important. We have demonstrated over 60 years of success and stability in the city, despite decades of change, and maintain a reputation as a trusted partner. In this time of crisis, the University has both the opportunity and the obligation to be of service. Our faculty, staff, and students are already involved in the water crisis in many ways.

- Our campus hosted the first large-scale community filter distribution in October 2015, giving out 3,000 filters free of charge to residents in a single day.
- Public Health and Health Sciences is providing a course on the Flint water crisis free of charge to the community.
- UM-Flint's Nursing Department engaged with the Genesee County Health Department and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to assist in collecting blood samples of Flint school children to establish a baseline. Our Nursing department is committed to continuing until 100% of the at-risk children are screened.
- University Outreach and computer science students and faculty are developing a mobile app to help residents find services such as water bottle recycling, water and water filter distribution, and volunteer opportunities.
- The Communications Department in the College of Arts and Sciences will be working with students on a crisis management communication plan in collaboration with local, county, and state officials.

- UM-Flint has been host to both community organizations and to Governor Snyder's Flint Water Interagency Coordinating Committee as they work to combat this public health emergency.
- University of Michigan President, Dr. Mark Schlissel, has committed \$100,000 in seed funding to fund research projects of benefit to the community.

Just last week, UM-Flint's GIS mapping center completed a research project for the City of Flint Mayor's office that used city records to identify and map all known locations of lead pipes in the city of Flint. Under the direction of Dr. Marty Kaufman, chair of the Earth and Resource Science Department in our College of Arts and Sciences, the research analyzed the City of Flint's hand-written records, paper maps, and scanned images to create a complete digital database of all the information available about lead service pipes used in Flint.

This research is an important step toward restoring safe water for our community and contributes to the body of research informing this effort. It is one example of UM-Flint's commitment to helping our community work toward short- and long-term solutions – not just for one particular public health emergency, but as permanent committed partners.

After all, UM-Flint was born out of the drive and vision of city leaders and the determination of the citizens of this community, including Charles Stewart Mott. For 60 years, we have been an anchor institution and trusted partner in the city of Flint. And we have the capacity to grow in this regard.

Our current capital campaign will provide some of the funding required to update or build new space for our students, faculty, and staff. As with the Murchie Science Building addition, these projects will enhance our students' learning experiences and provide state-of-the-art facilities for our faculty and students.

We are also set to take possession and ownership of the Riverfront Residence Hall & Banquet Center next month thanks to the generous donation from the C.S. Mott Foundation and Uptown Reinvestment Corporation. Not only does this building have the capacity to house more than 500 students, but the building contains the largest conference center in Genesee County and is already home to our School of Management.

Also next month, we expect to close on our purchase on one of the FirstMerit/Huntington Bank Buildings in downtown Flint. This purchase marks the first addition of academic and administrative space since 2002 when the William S. White Building opened on campus.

Together, these buildings add 500,000 square feet to our campus – increasing our campus footprint by more than 25 percent and providing much needed relief to the space limitations the campus has lived with for some time.

In closing, I would like to say how proud I am of our students, my faculty and staff, and our efforts to strengthen our community.

I thank you for the opportunity to address the committee this afternoon and I welcome any questions you may have.