



Michigan Legislature

Senate and House Appropriations Subcommittees on Higher Education

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Testimony Presented By:

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Good afternoon Senator Schuitmaker, Representative 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 to provide a brief overview of the University of Michigan-Dearborn, share information about student, faculty and staff accomplishments, and talk about how the university fosters collaboration to strengthen economic development and quality of life.

I'll begin by expressing my appreciation for, and support for, Governor Snyder's recommendation to increase higher education funding by \$61.2 million in fiscal year 2017. The Governor's budget demonstrates his continued commitment to higher education and Michigan's students. Restoring funding to 2011 levels will help ensure a UM-Dearborn degree is accessible to students of varying socio-economic backgrounds. The increase will also be put into programs that transform talented students into career-ready graduates who stay to work and live in Michigan.

Before I get into our topic of discussion, I would like to quickly outline a few key details regarding our student population and some of our efforts to provide an affordable high-quality education. You will find this information and other important facts and figures about UM-Dearborn in your folder.

With more than 9,300 students currently enrolled, we continue to experience small but promising growth. This year we welcomed the highest number of "first time in any college" students since 1979. This year, 93 percent of our undergraduate students are Michigan residents, with 56 percent of them having transferred to UM-Dearborn from another university or community college.

UM-Dearborn continues to hold high standards for students wishing to attend. The fall 2015 freshman class had an average GPA of 3.63 and an average ACT of 24.6.

While UM-Dearborn takes pride in the nearly 2,000 degrees conferred in 2014-2015, we tend to gauge our success on how well our students do in obtaining their goals after graduation. One measure of this involves an annual survey of our graduates. Our 2014 student survey results show that 94 percent of our graduates that completed the survey achieved their post-graduation goals, with 80 percent having accepted employment, 12 percent attending graduate school, and 2 percent doing an internship or choosing to delay a

career. The survey, with data from nearly half of our 2014-2015 graduates, showed that of those who responded, 97 percent of those who accepted employment were staying in Michigan to work and live – an outstanding return on investment by the state.

The starting salaries they earn can also measure the success of our efforts. Results from a recent report from the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard show that UM-Dearborn graduates have the 4th highest starting salary among the 15 public universities at \$47,400. This is more than \$13,000 above than the national annual starting salary.

While the success of our students is critically important, so too is ensuring access to an affordable college education. With 77 percent of our students receiving some sort of financial aid and 43 percent of our students being PELL eligible, UM-Dearborn recognizes the financial challenges the majority of our students face.

The university approaches this responsibility seriously by keeping tuition increases to a minimum, achieving annual cost savings and providing financial assistance to our students.

Each year we work hard to keep tuition increases low, carefully balancing the need for an affordable education while providing students with access to the high-quality faculty and facilities they expect from a Michigan degree. Since 2009, on average, the university has been able to reduce its annual expenditures by \$860,000 a year. A detailed report of our cost savings can be found in your folder.

Our efforts are working to relieve some of the financial burden on students. A recent report from *The Project on Student Debt*, an initiative of the Institute for College Access and Success, indicated that UM-Dearborn students graduating in 2014 had the lowest amount of student loan debt of any public university in Michigan. The data shows that UM-Dearborn students' average loan debt is more than \$7,000 below the national average and \$6,000 below the Michigan average.

We are proud of these efforts, and we remain committed to providing a quality education at an affordable cost while providing our region and state with great talent.

I'd now like to address UM-Dearborn's efforts to collaborate with public and private partners to strengthen assets throughout southeast Michigan and beyond.

UM-Dearborn is a metropolitan university committed to improving the quality of life in southeast Michigan. Since our founding in 1959, we have been shaped by a history of interaction with business, community, government and industry. We are dedicated to supplying our region with well-educated and creative thinkers, as well as entrepreneurs and innovators who are prepared to lead.

We aim to provide the academic excellence of the University of Michigan in service to metro Detroit. Our campus is dedicated to extending its impact as an effective partner in the continued reinvention of Detroit and the state of Michigan. A great metropolitan region needs a great university committed to its progress. UM-Dearborn achieves metropolitan impact by its commitment to making a Michigan degree accessible to students of varying means, strengthening student-learning experiences through research, internship and co-op opportunities, and aligning curriculum and research with industry and community needs. This commitment is carried out in a culturally diverse setting, reflective of today's work and learning environments.

As a dedicated partner to the region and communities we serve, UM-Dearborn is committed to providing results-oriented support in accomplishing its mission. One way we do this is through deep and meaningful partnerships with local industry. In 2012, we created the Business Engagement Center to facilitate easy relationships between the university and industry.

One collaboration in which the university participates, the Ford-University of Michigan Innovation Alliance, partners Ford researchers with U-M faculty on both campuses to develop technologies that create a competitive advantage.

Take, for example, the Pro Trailer Backup Assist.

How many of you have tried to back up a trailer into your driveway or maybe into a lake?

For many people, this effort can be a challenge.

You may have seen or heard about a new feature on 2016 Ford F-150 pick-up trucks, the Pro Trailer Backup Assist, that allows the truck to maneuver the trailer. With a simple turn of a knob, this feature allows drivers with an attached trailer to indicate how much the truck

should turn the trailer. The technology automatically steers the truck to turn the trailer in the desired direction.

Faculty in UM-Dearborn's College of Engineering and Computer Science partnered with Ford Motor Company to develop the control algorithm by using vehicle and trailer parameters to determine the hitch angle limits where the control system operates effectively while helping prevent the vehicle and trailer from jackknifing. The control system then uses an algorithm to generate the desired steering angle in order to maneuver the trailer into position. This feature not only saves drivers the headaches of maneuvering a trailer, it has also proven profitable for Ford Motor Company as drivers opt to include this feature.

UM-Dearborn's work on this project not only provided Ford with the resulting technology it desired, but offered our faculty and students an opportunity to apply their expertise to product and process improvements related to this technology.

My next example of an impactful industry partnership may not be as visible as the trailer assist feature, but it could prove to be life-changing for many Michigan residents.

Faculty and students in UM-Dearborn's College of Education, Health and Human Services are working to identify hotspots in the state where it is possible to have a positive impact on the health of our citizens. The college is working with an insurance company to examine Medicaid and Medicare data to better understand where patients are seeking care the most. This care could be in the form of a doctor's office, a trip to the emergency room, or hospital admittance. The college evaluates the data to identify the most efficient and thereby cost-effective use of care. In other words, this work helps demonstrate who is coming into an emergency room or who is being admitted to the hospital who does not need to be or whose visit could have been prevented by other, less expensive, health-care alternatives. The analysis of this data helps the college work with the payer and social service agencies to develop programs that help better guide patients seeking care. Hot-spotting and the programs developed from it not only help to reduce health-care costs, but encourage and educate citizens about healthy living practices.

Just as important as our partnerships with industry are the partnerships we have with local municipalities.

Each year since 2007, UM-Dearborn's College of Business has operated an entrepreneurial and economic development-benchmarking program for municipalities in Michigan. eCities is an annual research study that examines community-level factors that influence entrepreneurship, economic development, and job growth. Local communities that participate in the project receive benchmarking reports showing their performance at creating inviting business environments and encouraging entrepreneurial growth. The focus of the project is to learn and share the "best practices" to attract entrepreneurial development and create business growth. Understanding the best practices and utilizing these concepts across Michigan will have a positive impact on the state's economic future.

eCities has grown from 14 to nearly 200 participating municipalities, from across the entire state, with over 300 communities invited to participate each year. As communities continue to demonstrate their interest in the annual project, the university is implementing new ways to benchmark community progress and offer more comprehensive analysis to participating municipalities.

Another way that UM-Dearborn leverages its expertise to strengthen regional assets is by offering non-degree certificate and credential programs that support talent shortages or address educational needs.

In response to feedback from area companies, the College of Business recently launched a credential program aimed at providing new business skills to professionals with experience working in business or nonprofit organizations, regardless of whether or not they had a business degree. The Advancing Business Skills Workshop Program, initially offered exclusively to members of Automation Alley, was created for mid-level supervisors or managers, or those who had been identified by their organizations as high-potential future leaders. Faculty and university staff developed and presented curriculum for the six workshops that included sessions on Leadership, Project Management, Corporate Social Responsibility, Brand Love and Brand Strategy, Thinking Entrepreneurially Within the Firm, and Social Media Analytics.

The purpose of the program was to fill a need for small to mid-sized businesses that were otherwise unable to provide their employees with the additional training or financial incentives needed to continue or build upon their formal education and job experiences.

The Advancing Business Skills Workshop Program, now open to all interested companies, offers organizations of all sizes the opportunity to provide employee training at a much lower cost with a targeted curriculum based on their needs.

The final example of UM-Dearborn's partnership with industry involves helping young adults make a successful transition into the workforce. The College of Engineering and Computer Science partnered with General Electric and Workforce Opportunity Services to provide 11 highly motivated young adults with a 34-week academic training in Java Development. Students trained with faculty while working part-time at General Electric. Following graduation from the program this past January, each of the 11 graduates received full-time positions at GE's Advanced Manufacturing and Software Technology Center located in Van Buren Township.

In addition to our partnerships that bring faculty expertise to challenges and opportunities in the region, UM-Dearborn has strong connections with nonprofit and community organizations. Our Office of Metropolitan Impact coordinates much of this work.

The Office of Metropolitan Impact is tasked with developing the volume, value and impact of mutually beneficial community partnerships for research, teaching, learning, and service and to enhance the metropolitan vision as a defining dimension of UM-Dearborn.

Last year, the office led UM-Dearborn's successful submission to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching to receive its Community Engagement Classification. This elective classification is an evidence-based documentation of institutional practice to be used in a process of self-assessment and quality improvement. The classification focuses on community engagement between institutions of higher education and their larger communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in the context of partnership and reciprocity. UM-Dearborn is proud to be one of just 361 campuses, of the more than 2,600 four-year institutions throughout the country, to hold this classification.

One of the signature programs offered by the Office of Metropolitan Impact is the community-based research seed grant program. Grants of up to \$5,000 are offered to faculty to support projects that engage in, promote knowledge about, identify best practices

for, and enhance understanding by deepening our understanding of the needs of UM-Dearborn's larger community.

One of these grant programs is the Fort-Rouge Gateway partnership. The partnership is promoting both green infrastructure and placemaking projects in the Lower Rouge River area, with a long-term goal of improving local quality of life. The funds from this grant enable UM-Dearborn faculty and students to employ ethnographic and survey methodology alongside ongoing community engagement campaigns run by the Greening of Detroit and the Sierra Club. The analysis of this research will provide data-driven feedback on the implementation of these projects and their real and perceived impacts.

These seed grants provide our faculty and students with outstanding experiential learning opportunities, while providing real impact in our neighboring communities.

Community collaboration efforts can be found throughout our campus.

The College of Education, Health, and Human Services offers summer internships for students at area public health organizations. This past summer students interned with Authority Health and Healthy Detroit. One student, a junior majoring in health policy studies, did a comparative community health needs assessment of Detroit-area hospitals and analyzed transportation and food needs of the people being served by Wayne County public health offices, local nonprofit organizations and more. Another student, a senior majoring in public health, helped implement Healthy Detroit's Detroit Health Park initiative, worked on the Healthy Detroit Passport application for residents, and worked with community members on transforming a vacant East Indian Village lot into an outdoor neighborhood fitness park.

The College of Business offers the Nonprofit Opportunity Challenge. The challenge engages students and members in the nonprofit community to think creatively and provide viable solutions to issues that nonprofits experience. While at the challenge, students tackled the issues – such as distribution logistics, revenue generations, and branding – with guidance from the nonprofit community members.

Offering internship opportunities and programs like the Challenge not only provide increased capacity for nonprofit organizations, but also allow our students to receive real-world experience that you cannot learn in a classroom.

UM-Dearborn is also dedicated to providing impactful programs to the region's K-12 students. Programs provide educational opportunities and ensure students are academically prepared when they reach college.

Two programs that help prepare students for college and high-demand careers in STEM industries recently received additional funding from the Ford Fund because of their initial success.

One is the Math Circle, which is part of a national movement to provide a supportive, playful environment for youth interested in the subject. This program, operated by faculty in the College of Arts, Sciences, and Letters, is open to any high school student interested in mathematics. Each of the past two years, the program has hosted close to 150 area students from schools located throughout southeast Michigan. The funding received from the Ford Fund will allow the university to expand this program by hosting off-campus math circles at local high schools, with a goal of increasing participation for those not able to travel to campus.

The other program is STEMstart, which begins at the age where Math Circle leaves off. This program builds on Math Circle skills and allows students interested in math and engineering, but whose college placement exams indicate they are not ready for pre-calculus, to deepen their knowledge. Eight admitted to-be freshmen who didn't place in pre-calculus, took part in the pilot program last summer. By the end of the six-week program, seven students passed the placement test, including one student that placed into calculus. All of these students currently are enrolled at UM-Dearborn and have monthly meetings with Academic Affairs advisers to check their progress. The funding received from the Ford Fund will allow the university to expand admission to this program to 50 students.

STEMstart is one example of the College of Engineering and Computer Science's commitment to providing educational opportunities for youth. Programs like the annual Engineering/Computer Science Experience high school competition, coding weekends for

Scouts and hands-on Maker Faire exhibits attract students from across the state. And in 2013, the college launched the Office of Extended Learning and Outreach to further partner with school districts and community organizations in order to increase student interest in STEM.

Finally, UM-Dearborn continues to make one of its most unique assets, our 300-acre Environmental Study Area, available to students, school groups, and the public. Faculty and staff at the university's Environmental Interpretive Center provide programs that promote environmental sustainability through community education and scientific research. This past year, the center provided more than 300 K-12 educational programs to nearly 12,000 students throughout the region. While many schools in the region face financial realities that limit educational field trips, the university is able to host school children free of charge and offer students an opportunity they might otherwise not be able to experience.

The above are just a few examples of how the university fosters collaboration to strengthen regional assets. I could speak for days as to how UM-Dearborn impacts industry, local communities and residents of southeast Michigan. I hope these examples and data about the university help showcase the impact the UM-Dearborn community has on the state.

Before I end my testimony and address any questions you may have, I want to discuss an urgent need at UM-Dearborn. The university is in dire need of the state's support in replacing our Engineering Laboratory Building.

Built in 1959, the college's Engineering Laboratory Building is obsolete in design, and has outlived its ability to handle sustained enrollment growth and the infrastructure to adequately serve as the primary teaching and research laboratory facility. Chief among our concerns is the limited space to accommodate enrollment growth. The college has grown from 1,500 students in 2010 to nearly 2,800 this fall semester.

UM-Dearborn submitted this project in 2014 as our Capital Outlay request and it remains the most urgent need on our campus. We were very pleased to be recommended for planning approval in the Governor's fiscal year 2016 recommendations. I strongly urge you to consider a capital outlay bill this year. I share this concern with you today because this building directly impacts the future of not only the College of Engineering and Computer Science but also the university as we aim to build upon the good work shared with you

today. A new Engineering Laboratory Building is critical to meeting the state's talent needs and the needs of industry.

In closing, I would like to say we are proud of our students, our efforts to make a college degree affordable and obtainable to students of varying means, and the partnership we have established with the state of Michigan.

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