WALT’S OBSERVATIONS

The most frequent question I have been asked over the past two years is quite straightforward: “How has the recession affected the University?” The answer is simple: it has made it much harder for our students and their families to afford the cost of a University of Hartford education.

Our students need more and more financial aid, and we have reached the limit of what our University budget can meet. Over the past two years, our financial aid budget has increased by approximately $6 million, so that we are now awarding a total of $55 million in University-funded financial aid every year. We can do no more.

Yet almost every week a student approaches me with a compelling individual story: her mother or father has lost a job, a parent is ill, or the family has lost their house due to a foreclosure on the mortgage. Sometimes we can help a bit; more frequently, we cannot. Quite honestly, it breaks my heart to say no.

As many of you know, most of our students receive some form of financial aid; in addition, most hold part-time jobs, either on campus or off, to make ends meet. On the opposite page, you will meet Ariana Tarpinian, one of my favorite current students, last year’s student regent, and a wonderful human being. Ariana has worked at several jobs to allow her to complete her University education; at the same time, she is a superb student and an outstanding student leader. She typifies what many of our students do to afford the quality education we offer.

From our founding, the University of Hartford has stood for providing an outstanding education to students from every socioeconomic background regardless of ability to pay. Generations of alumni can attest to this commitment. Many of you give back, donating large sums and small, to allow deserving students to benefit as you have from the generosity of others.

Now we—and our students—need that help even more. We hope to begin a targeted fundraising effort very soon that will enable us to provide even more financial aid to deserving students. We must continue to meet our historic commitment: it defines us as a university.

I hope to announce that campaign soon. In the meantime, if you would like to contribute, you can contact me (horky@hartford.edu), go to hartford.edu/giving to donate online, or use the postage-paid envelope at the back of this magazine to support the scholarship fund or the Anchor Fund. A large portion of the Anchor Fund goes directly to financial aid.

The need is great and thank you for your help.

Walter Harrison

PRESIDENT