

To members of the committee,

My name is Zak Leavy and I come to testify before you in opposition to the budget cuts for the CSU system. I am a senior at Eastern Connecticut State University, and the cuts to the system will not only affect me but the students coming in the following years and the institution itself. Cuts in funding to the CSU system could lead to less full-time faculty at Eastern, which will inevitably lead to bigger classes.

A huge advantage Eastern has is its small class sizes and the availability to develop academic relationships with the professors. When I first got out of high school, I attended a large university which had classes of more than 150 students. I was told on the first day that if I had questions about the class or assignments, I would need to see a TA rather than the professor. While there is nothing wrong with large class sizes, as an 18 year old that's away from home for the first time it presents an intimidating atmosphere and portrays a distance between the students and the professors. At Eastern, these issues don't exist. My classes are usually 25 students and have never been above 40. The full-time faculty is always available to see and go over any questions about assignments and academic opportunities. They have provided valuable insight into the academic and professional world and ensured that I have always understood subject matter, been able to excel in my classes, and opened doors to the career world. Through the full-time faculty and services at Eastern, I have been able to get two internships that have prepared me for the work world after I graduate.

In closing, I would urge the members of the appropriations committee to examine the implications that could arise with a funding cut to the CSU system. I can't speak to the entire CSU system; my experience being only at Eastern. However, if Eastern is any example of the quality education that is available across the entire CSU system, then it is with great importance that funding not be decreased. At Eastern we live in the shadows of UCONN, and while we may not bring in massive sport revenue to the state, the students being produced are well prepared to enter the workforce in Connecticut and be contributing Connecticut tax payers.