

**Testimony for Charter Oak State College –
By Dawn Politz
Appropriations Committee – Public Hearing
February 28, 2011**

Good evening Senator Harp, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Dawn Politz and I reside in Burlington, CT. I am honored to be here today to speak about the importance of Charter Oak State College to the State of CT.

I'd like to open by providing a brief history of what led me to Charter Oak State College. I completed my Associate degree at Tunxis Community College in 1994 and then transferred those credits to Charter Oak. I enrolled in the BS degree program at Charter Oak in 2006 through the partnership program with Aetna. Early on in my degree pursuit I decided to include the Project Management certificate courses in my degree plan. Working at Aetna, a major Health Insurance company located here in Hartford, I added courses that led to a certificate in Health Care Administration which was a recently created program at Charter Oak. I am very proud to say that I have maintained a 3.88 GPA and am looking forward to completing my BS degree with honors and graduating in June.

The benefits of being a part of the degree program at Charter Oak are numerous. I am currently reaping the rewards of my educational experience including additional responsibilities that were given to me at work because of my increased self-awareness, increased confidence, and skills learned. Charter Oak State College allows for more autonomy than what is found in a traditional classroom which enables students to provide better insight and more interaction through on line discussions.

I am a wife, mother, and work full-time and Charter Oak allows me the flexibility to do the course work required when it fits my schedule while adhering to the due dates imposed by the professor. By no means are the courses easier or less interactive than a traditional learning environment. If anything, self-motivation and self-discipline skills are utilized and enhanced because of the at home school environment. Charter Oak does not take their students for granted. I myself was involved in the upgrading of the schools Blackboard learning environment by providing hands-on feedback to the technical team. This experience proved to me that we Charter Oak students are not just numbers in a computer system but intelligent minds that have voices to be heard.

The state of Connecticut, as with any other state in the country, is made up of people with diverse backgrounds including race, religion, gender, and culture. We as individuals are unique and so we have differing ways in which we view education and how it is obtained. Some have clear visions of the future and choose to attend college straight out of high school. There are those like myself who did not know at the time or have any clear indications of what college could mean and the opportunities that could present themselves because of having a degree. Charter Oak does allow for those with clearer visions later on in life to be able to continue or pursue a degree that wasn't possible, foreseeable, or feasible at the time of high school graduation.

Because of the ongoing budget issues that the state faces, the investment you make in Charter Oak will pay off in workers being better educated, companies being able to provide superior support to customers, and allow better work life balance for Connecticut residents. I understand there are hard decisions that need to be made in order to balance the budget. However, it should not be at the sacrifice of those who want to better themselves and be better citizens.

As a proud student of Charter Oak State College and future graduate, I implore you to continue providing financial support for Charter Oak State College as it is and will continue to be an integral part of Connecticut's educational system.

Thank you.