

"Good evening, Senator Harp, Representative Walker, Sen. Maynard, Rep. Willis, and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today."

I am speaking now to express my *very serious* concern about Governor Malloy's proposal to cut funding for higher education and at the same time put greater emphasis on and reallocate resources for teaching. While on the surface, this proposal may sound both practical and admirable. However, upon closer inspection, there are many good reasons here to stand by the adage "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."

I'd like to start by saying that I am not entirely certain that Governor Malloy's proposal to reorganize and consolidate the numerous administrative offices in higher education is bad. I honestly don't know the answer to that and I'm sure other faculty members can speak to this issue better. However, I do know that there are many good reasons to question the virtue of his proposals to link funding to performance measures such as preparation for the job market, retention rates, and graduation rates.

Regarding the first, education should not be perceived as something we do solely for business and employment purposes. In producing educated and responsible citizens, it is imperative not only to provide our students with a broad background in various disciplines but also to introduce them to the importance and techniques of critical thinking. This does not mean they will necessarily use all this knowledge and training in the workplace. However, it *does* mean that we can more reliably count on them to make well-reasoned decisions regarding our community's as well as our nation's welfare. In other words, simply because an academic program does not provide especially marketable skills for employment does not also mean it has nothing valuable to offer students. I shudder to think what our future might look like if we fail to teach our students that there is more to life than simply earning a living. What quality of life will such an outlook ultimately bring about?

Second, high scores on achievements tests that presumably measure learning outcomes *as well as* determine what schools, programs, and/or teachers will be rewarded with funding is equivalent to instituting "No Child Left Behind" in the colleges and universities. I imagine this would be okay if such programs actually worked. However, there is no evidence to date that it does. Moreover, there is evidence that such pressures on educators result in "teaching to the test" so that students learn NOT to think outside the box but instead only what someone else has determined is the "correct" answer. Is this really what we want in a college education?

Measuring education through such standards as high retention and graduation rates are bound to have similar consequences. In the past (and I truly hope this is not still going on!), many schools in the lower levels employed the concept of "social passing". This meant that students were passed from grade to grade regardless of the quality of their work. I am sure this technique improved both retention and graduation rates. It did not, however, improve the quality of education. As teachers—including college faculty--begin to feel less secure in their positions because their promotion, tenure and job security in general rely increasingly on such measures, I strongly suspect the lowest grade assigned to students will increasingly be a "B". And this grade will not mean their work is of "B" quality.

Overall, if we are truly interested in increasing the quality of education provided by colleges and universities, we really need to face reality. We need to acknowledge that in order to educate our students better, we need MORE resources—NOT just a redistribution of them. In other words, we need MORE as well as MORE QUALIFIED FULL-TIME teachers who are able to devote MORE time to teaching classes with FEWER students. To do otherwise is simply to lie to ourselves and others through persuasive paperwork and impressive classroom and graduation head-counts that mean nothing.

Thank you for your time!

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