

Good Evening ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of my fellow students at the Connecticut Community Colleges. As the Student Government Association President at Gateway Community College, I am here representing the entire student body, especially those who could not be here this evening. As the SGA president, it is my responsibility to advocate for the needs of the entire student body. Most of the students that attend the Connecticut Community Colleges do so as an alternative to the more expensive schools throughout the state. As you know, the cost of higher education has become so in-exorbitantly high that for many, the dream of higher education would not be accessible if it were not for the Connecticut Community Colleges.

This is one of the many reasons why we students, implore you to keep tuition costs low and fund the services necessary, so that the Community Colleges can keep services consistent with that of those throughout the rest of the state. Gateway Community College is very fortunate to be centralized in New Haven, the gateway to New England. Not only do the students rely on the services that Gateway offers, but area businesses and industries rely on our students to graduate into the area workforce.

During these difficult economical times, many people have chosen to go back to school for retraining. Therefore, it is critical for the Community Colleges to be properly funded as opposed to slashing their budgets. The Community Colleges serve more students than 58,000 students, which is more than any other public system in the state. According to, 'The Connecticut Economy' by Stephen P. Lanza, The share of all public college students attending community colleges in Connecticut has increased from 36% in the late 1980s to 47% today. Not only that but according to the 'White House Summit on Community Colleges', over the next decade, nearly 8 in 10 new jobs will require higher education and workforce training.

Fifty-Two percent of the Community Colleges' operating costs comes directly from student tuition. Students are struggling; struggling to pay for rent, struggling to get their children to daycare, struggling to put meals on the table, struggling to manage transportation to and from school, and struggling to pay for books. The last thing this state needs to do is to increase tuition, forcing students to struggle to pay it, and potentially be forced to quit schools resulting in them giving up on their dream for a better life.

Thank you for your time, for your service, and for taking this into consideration,

Nancy Marie Touba