My name is Trisha Bogar and I am a first generation college student and a senior at Connecticut College. When my parents divorced when I was 8 years old my mom always told my sister and me to dream big and the rest would work itself out. The rest, in most cases, was money. When I began looking at colleges in high school, my guidance counselor told me to look at what the school offered not the price, well easier said than done. As we all know Connecticut College's tuition is no small pocket change and without the help of such grants as the CICS among others I would not have had the opportunity to attend Conn. For many of us, grants are the make it or break it point for attending our colleges. Look around legislators at all the students here today. If you vote in favor of the budget cut to the CICS grant, imagine how many opportunities would hit their break point and stop dead in their tracks.

My family and I are grateful that for the past four years I have been a recipient of the CICS grant which has allowed me to pursue my passions in Hispanic and Latin American studies, Secondary Education, Teaching English as a Foreign Language, as well as public policy and community action. The experiences that I have gained while at Conn have transformed and improved my life. As May and graduation slowly near, I reflect back on how I was able to come so far. Without the financial aid and support from Connecticut grants, I would not be currently applying for a job teaching English in Santiago Chile, where I spent 8 months abroad, nor would I be here today wearing a centennial class t-shirt from Connecticut College. I'm not sure where I would be. Either way I encourage you to rethink the budget decision as you listen to the many ways that this grant and others have transformed my life and the lives of all of the students present today as we give voice to ourselves and those who are not present. Thank you.