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Student Nurse
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I am a senior in the CT Community Colleges Nursing Program at Naugatuck Valley Community College. In two short years, I have gone from grossing \$24,000 a year with no college education to the potential to earn \$65,000 per year when I graduate. As you can see, this is the difference between poverty and middle class. I received a Pell Grant, state grants and NVCC grants to pay for my education expenses. My net income after taxes and insurance is approximately \$18,000. Paying annual tuition and fees of \$4000 a year out of my \$18,000 net income would leave me with \$14,000 a year to support myself. This is nearly impossible. The nursing program is a full time program of study, and although a very few work full time; it is not recommended as it is almost impossible to work while enrolled in this program. I speak for many of my classmates when I say my success in this rigorous nursing program would not have been possible without all the financial help I received.

In the CT CCNP, students earn their Associate Degree in Nursing. We are eligible to sit for our boards. We are Registered Nurses when we complete the program. We will be caring for you, your parents, siblings and children during your greatest time of need, illness. We first learn the theory and next we attend lab sessions to practice our skills. There is staff in the lab to ensure that we are performing the procedure correctly, maintaining sterile technique, preventing infection and above all practicing how to keep our patients safe. We do this work in the lab and once proficient, we are validated on procedures before going into the hospital to do it on actual patients. In the nursing lab, we reuse IV tubing, needles, and foley catheters sets amongst countless other items. In the "real world" these are one time use items. There was a time during freshman year when I was practicing inserting a foley catheter and it was so worn, that when I inflated the balloon tip, it just popped. Adequate supplies in the lab are essential to practice procedures that will eventually be performed on patients.

As student nurses, we work under our nursing faculty, clinical instructors. We train two days per week in a clinical setting, the hospital. We give meds and learn complex treatments under their direct supervision and the license of our Registered Nurse faculty. They often have 6-8 students per clinical group. As senior students, we have two patient assignments. Our faculty is responsible for all of our patients. This means that our faculty has a patient assignment of 12-16 patients.

This brings me to the current budget cuts proposed. While it is hoped that schools will "demonstrate the creativity, the intelligence and the resolve to live within their block grants without raising tuition." I'm here to say that my school and the nursing program that has helped me out of poverty, has already demonstrated "creativity and intelligence" to live within their budget. While our school's student population continues to grow while the number of faculty remains the same, our president reorganized student resources to make additional tutoring