

Holly M. Palmer

Charter Oak State College

Members of the Appropriations Committee; my name is Holly Palmer and I am a student at Charter Oak State College. Thank you for the opportunity to address you. I started college at the University of Minnesota in 1989, but stopped because I decided to go to trade school and study broadcasting, my passion. Once I completed that program I went back to school at the U while I started my career in radio. Unfortunately, as sometimes happens, life got in the way of my completing a degree.

It always bothered me that I was not able to complete my degree and when my son was getting ready to graduate from High School here in CT, I decided to do something about it. We had been touring local campuses looking for a school for him so I was already familiar with the local state college and university system. When I looked at my options, I decided to enroll at Charter Oak State College.

There were many factors that contributed to my decision. First, Charter Oak is a part of the state college and university system, which was very important to me. It gives my degree a legitimacy that a purely on-line school doesn't necessarily have. In short, the State of CT is standing behind my education. Also, if I want to transfer to a brick and mortar school within the system, my credits will transfer with me. Second, Charter Oak is supported by my tax dollars and that keeps tuition low for in state residents. As an older student largely paying for school myself, tuition is very important to me. Anything you can do to continue keeping tuition affordable for in state students is greatly appreciated as I pay not only for my school, but for my son's school as well. Finally, a purely on-line school is what I was looking for because on-line

learning had the flexibility I needed, and Charter Oak specialized in providing quality on-line learning. That is important to me because I want the highest quality education I could afford and all those things brought me to Charter Oak.

I have enjoyed my time at Charter Oak. I have been active in the student association. The professors are wonderful to work with and I have gotten a lot out of my classes. I can already see the difference in my ability to manage employees and run my department at the office. My advisor and everyone in the office have been very helpful when I had questions, especially the financial aid department. I will be graduating this spring with my Associate's degree and I look forward to going on to complete my Bachelor's degree next from Charter Oak.

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To sum up, I choose Charter Oak because the tuition is affordable, it's a high quality education which is a part of the state college and university system, and on-line learning gives me the flexibility to make school work with my career. Please help us support Dr. Gray's proposed vision for the State Universities; Community Colleges and Charter Oak State College which will allow us to continue having great education options available to all of Connecticut's students.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to address this committee.