

PRI Hearing March 11, 2014

Akanksha Singh

Good afternoon members of the Program Review and Investigations Committee. My name is Akanksha Singh and I am currently a second-year honors student at the University of Connecticut. My major is finance, I have a minor in Spanish and I am currently pursuing another minor in management information systems. I am honored to have the opportunity to speak in front of you today in regards to why I chose UConn and the incredible experiences I have had at the university thus far.

I would like to explain my choice to attend UConn with a short story. The story starts during my junior year of high school, when I started to visit college campuses and think about which schools I wanted to apply to. At this time, if anyone had asked me, I would have said that I did not want to go to UConn at all. Just like today, I used to work extremely hard at that time to get the highest grades possible and I was at the top of my class and I simply thought that I deserved a better education than I could receive at UConn. Over the following two years, I did a lot of research and I visited many schools. Although it was my dream to go to a well-renowned business school such as the University of Pennsylvania or New York University, when I compared the price tag of such schools to the quality of their academics versus that of UConn, I seriously reconsidered my thought process. In the end, I narrowed my choice of colleges down to two prospects: UConn and NYU. After many days and nights of thinking and discussions with my family, friends, teachers, and counselors, I came to the conclusion that the ratio of the quality of UConn's academics to the price I would have to pay was much more attractive compared to NYU. I knew that UConn had a great business school with incredible faculty and staff who had valuable real-life experiences to teach to students like me. While there were a few advantages that a school like NYU would have been able to offer me, I did not think it was worth paying more than twice the amount that I would pay to go to UConn.

Now that I am almost halfway through my undergraduate education, I can truthfully say that my reasoning back in high school was absolutely correct and if I had the chance to make the decision again, I would definitely still choose UConn. This is due to many reasons, not only the classes I have taken but also the fact that I am part of the honors program and my involvement in the cultural centers, business-related organizations, and the jobs I have held on campus.

UConn is undeniably a very large school and at first, I was a little worried that I would get lost among the thousands of students and not be able to find my niche at school. However, I could not have been more wrong. I have discovered so many ways to make the big campus feel smaller and carve out my own place. The first smaller community that I became part of, and perhaps the one that has had the largest impact on me, was the honors program. Living in Buckley, the first-year honors residence hall, was one of the best experiences of my life. That is where I formed my closest friendships, had many first-time college experiences, and created memories that will last a lifetime. Additionally, it was a blessing to enroll in honors classes during my first couple of semesters because those classes were always a lot smaller than others and it helped me get accustomed to college by being able to easily communicate with my professors and classmates in the more intimate environment provided by honors classes.

Another community I joined immediately upon coming to UConn is the Asian American Cultural Center, also known as AsACC. Several of the organizations and groups I am involved with on campus are housed under AsACC. These include the Asiantation Mentoring Program, the Indian Students Association, and Husky Bhangra. Husky Bhangra is an Indian dance team on campus that I have had the privilege to be a part of since my first semester. It is one of the most enjoyable things for me at school because I met some of my best friends through the team and it provides me with a way to express myself and have fun while leaving the pressures and stress of life behind when I need to. Also, along with the Indian Students Association, it allows me to stay connected to my culture, which is something I thought I might struggle with at college when I am away from my family. It is another part of what makes UConn such a great school.

In conclusion, I would like to briefly reiterate a few of the reasons why I chose to attend the University of Connecticut rather than any other school and why I enjoy being here. UConn's academic programs, reputation, faculty and staff all combine to provide a very high quality of education. This is enhanced by a price tag that will not put students in debt for decades to come. After enrolling at UConn, I found a place for myself at the school through the honors program, my involvement in the Asian American Cultural Center, and other business-related academic organizations. Overall, at UConn I am able to get a valuable education and immerse myself in co-curricular activities that allow me to gain cultural and academic awareness. That is a package that is hard to beat.