

February 23, 2015

Testimony of Rebecca Wood, Secretary of CSU-AAUP

Senator Bye, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to talk today. My name is Rebecca Wood. I am a member of the Psychological Science Department at Central Connecticut State University and the CSU-AAUP Secretary.

When I think of the governor's proposed budget cuts to the Connecticut State Universities, I think of the cost to our students. For many students who attend the CSUs, the state system is their only opportunity to get a college education. Eighty percent of our students stay in the state, contributing to the economy and providing jobs through businesses that they create. As it is, most of them will graduate with (sometimes crushing) debt due to increased tuition and fees with which they simply can't keep up no matter how many hours they work during college.

The faculty who teach these students are committed to their education and personal growth. Cutting funding to the CSUs means less money for student programs and for full-time faculty members who can connect with and nurture students throughout their time in college. The consolidation of the CSUs, community colleges, and Charter Oak State College was to save dollars that could be fed back to the institutions themselves.

Where are those savings? Where are the programs to help students pay for college? Where is the financial commitment to its students, citizens who benefit its economy in the long run? I think of our students and the quality of education they get now. I wonder what it will be like under the proposed budget, which will undoubtedly require them to spend more time working to pay for college and less time learning material, acquiring skills such as critical thinking and writing, and gaining invaluable insight into their own personal and professional goals.

Rebecca Wood, PhD