



Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee
February 23, 2017
Testimony by
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Co-Chairs, Ranking Member, and Members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony regarding **SB 570, An Act Concerning Loan Information Provided to Students by Institutions of Higher Education.**

This bill would require institutions of higher education to notify and inform students about student loan debt and its consequences. We are pleased to inform the committee that UConn currently has a number of voluntary sessions and easily accessible materials for students through the Division of Enrollment Management's Office of Student Financial Aid Services. Given the depth and breadth of information and materials the University offers in this arena, we do not believe this bill is necessary.

The following is a summary of what is already in place and can be found at:
<http://financialaid.uconn.edu/literacy/> .

First Year Experience (FYE) – The University has established a Financial Literacy Committee which offers financial literacy courses through FYE as an option for instruction called, *Your Money Matters: Life Elements*. As part of the course, students make financial decisions for a fictional character, Dakota – who is a senior graduating from UConn. Learning objectives include (but are not limited to) the value (and ease) of creating a monthly budget, the importance of saving, the difference between credit cards and debit cards, student loan repayment, and why it's important to minimize debt.

The activity involves separating students into small teams who will then create a budget for Dakota by either rolling dice or choosing budget item figures through team discussion. Each team ends with a different positive or negative budget balance for Dakota, based on the choices made. After the class has finished creating the budget, the facilitator initiates class discussion around all key financial literacy concepts.

Financial Literacy Workshop – This is held annually during April (Financial Literacy Month) in the Student Union for the Storrs campus and central locations at our regional campuses. The event typically involves a presentation similar to the First Year Experience course.

Cash Course – This interactive tool is offered to students to help them learn about managing their money. <http://www.cashcourse.org/>.

In addition to the courses offered, the website offers many financial aid tools to assist students in determining loan impacts including loan calculators and interactive financial aid worksheets. Financial Aid Services staff are also available to students on a one on one basis.

As we mentioned, given the work we are already doing to educate students on financial literacy and student loan debt and its long term consequences, we don't think SB 570 is necessary.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued support of the University of Connecticut.