

1/30/2018

Testimony for the Forum on Community Colleges

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

You're going to need Amos.

I can't be with you in person today because of having a steroid injection in my spine yesterday to alleviate a pinched nerve. Today is a day of rest and recovery, but I want to tell you about the part of my experience that could affect your consideration of the plans for creating a single community college with decision-making based in Hartford.

Between injections, I asked the young radiation technologist where he had done his training. He was wielding floating x-ray machines that appeared liked a Star Wars weapon system. He was assisting the physiatrist physician, collaborating on positioning and angles to get the precise pictures that would guide the positioning of needles in my spine. We were all fully invested in his work. He told me he was a graduate of Gateway Community College and I breathed a sigh of relief. I knew the demands of the program, the requirements for completion, the expertise and practical experience of graduates.

I'm told that 90% of the population nationwide has back problems; it's closer to 100% when you go over 65. Look around you at the market or mall and you'll see seniors bent over at odd angles, using carts, canes, and cars for mobility. It's inevitable! That's why I say you're going to need Amos.

And we're going to need more Amoses as the population ages. And you'll have to rely on Amoses to have the technical training and skills that will help guide the needles and steroids that will give you relief. The community colleges in our local areas provides those graduates for us by offering highly technical programs that are accessible, affordable and well-equipped with expert faculty, the latest instructional technology and equipment. Amos is an immigrant. He lives in New Haven and enrolled in Gateway to gain the skills he would need to get a meaningful job and a good wage that would support his family and improve our communities.

The title of your committee recognizes the essential connection of Higher Education and Employment Advancement. Amos is the perfect example of what has been accomplished by his hard work and the planning and guidance of this committee. We need many more graduates like Amos to supply the state's workforce with highly skilled knowledge workers that will attract business investment and development to improve the state's economy. The President of Gateway and the leadership of the college worked with the skilled healthcare employers in New Haven to create partnerships that support the development and delivery these sophisticated programs. You need this type of dedicated, student-centered campus based leadership to create partnerships and lead innovation to educate and engage more students in demanding and growing fields.

You need Amos, and you need community college leadership – if not now soon. Trust me.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Anne B. Cox, Retired Assistant Chancellor, Community Colleges

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