Representative Walker, Senator Osten, Representative Lavielle, Senator Formica, and members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Sage Maier and I’m a student at Tunxis Community College. As the current Student Government President at Tunxis and Chair of the Student Advisory Committee, I have heard concerns from students across the state in fear of what the newly projected budget will bring to higher education. The threat of raising tuition has been the most consistent of concerns. With tuition increases, students within our CSCU system will suffer and Connecticut will be at risk of losing students and an educated workforce as a whole.

Governor Lamont has recently stated that Connecticut is going on a “debt diet.” While someone is on a diet, they often cut the things that they somehow feel are bad for them. In our case, Higher Education is not a piece that should be cut; in fact, our college education is one of the biggest accomplishments that we will embark on throughout our lives. Students and our education are the nutrients of our state. We are the future and we will help to build Connecticut.

As a student that comes from a single-parent family, I know what it’s like to struggle. I was fortunate enough to have a mother who put herself through school to raise my sister and me. She always encouraged a better future through a great education. We found that great education here in Connecticut. However, this came with a cost, one that put my family through such struggles that we had to limit grocery shopping and heating our home.

I sit before you today as the voice for thousands of struggling students with similar stories as mine. I ask that you assist in advocating for us to help keep tuition down.

I’d like to thank you for allowing students like me the ability to explore, to prosper, and to thrive in our community colleges. My work with the Tunxis food pantry, the clubs on campus, and the Student Government I have seen the power of people in bringing a community together.

Without you we could not succeed in our education or in achieving our goals. Recognize that passionate students dream of the day they will earn their college degree. Please help those of us who work tirelessly to get to this point.

Thank you for your time and consideration.