Testimony

Hello members of the Appropriations Committee: Thank you for taking the time to listen to a very concerned student. My name is Shakeela Edwards and I am a student at Naugatuck Valley Community College. Although it is my first year as a college student, I have known and loved that campus since the summer of 2006 when I enrolled in the ConnCAP program. In five years, many great programs, services and activities have been added to the college to enhance student performance and overall success rate. Some of these services include the Academic Center for Excellence, where students come and receive tutoring in several subjects, all free to current students. The Advising and Counseling Center also supports students and helps us plan map out our success. Budget cuts will greatly impact the growing success of these programs and negatively impact students attending Naugatuck Valley Community College.

While in high school, funding from the college made it possible for me to receive the Presidential Scholarship from Naugatuck Valley Community College. I was a part of the Dual Enrollment Partnerships program which allowed me to take college courses while still in high school. This ultimately helped me graduate high school on time and also prepared me to be the best college student I could be. With all of these great services being offered by the college, I was well prepared for college and have maintained a 4.0 GPA my first semester. If NVCC's funding is cut, other students will not have the same opportunity I had. NVCC is an affordable place for higher education and for many students it is the only answer when a University is just too expensive. If the budget is cut, students' tuitions may increase which will only result in fewer students being able to finish their education. Thank you for taking the time to listen to me and I hope you consider my testimony when deciding on any budget cuts to Connecticut Community Colleges.

I am asking the legislature not to approve a reduced budget for the Community Colleges. It is important for my future and the future of many other students to have access to an affordable education that will help us get jobs and contribute back to our communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today, I would be happy to answer any questions.