



UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD

Testimony for the Appropriations Committee from Katie Linke, Student from West Hartford

The University of Hartford

February 21, 2012

I am writing to you as a current student at the University of Hartford who is one of the many recipients of the CT Independent Colleges Student Grant. Born and raised in Connecticut, it was important to me to stay in-state for financial reasons and family obligations. It wasn't a big decision to make since Connecticut boasts some of the most widely respected universities and colleges in the country.

I am graduating this May 2012 and I can tell you with absolute sincerity that without the generous CICS and the CT Capitol Scholarship for the past four years I would have an additional \$24,800 added to the already tens of thousands of dollars of debt in loans to my bill. I am more lucky than most to have a large chunk of my tuition paid for from grants and scholarships but during these hard economic times, my family struggles to cope with the debt I have already accrued. I work two-part time jobs on campus and yet I still maintain a GPA of 3.87 because I am so dedicated to my education at the University of Hartford and I take full advantage of what is provided to me.

With a younger sister who just entered her first year of college, my family relies on the grants and federal funding even more than ever. I am fully aware that the state and the rest of the country is feeling this economic slump but making cuts to the CICS program would inhibit bright, young students with financial struggles from seeking higher education at a preferred college or university within the state. I strongly believe that only through education and professional experience can the next generations make a positive future for our beautiful country. The University of Hartford and other institutions around the state provide these opportunities to their students.

If I may be so bold as to offer a counter argument to the proposed cuts to the CICS program. When the market crashed in 2008, everything in the nation took a blow. The housing market took a huge fall and people were laid off of work or put off from having a pay increase. It seems from my viewpoint that the average price of college tuition did not decrease since the economic crisis. On average, the tuition actually increases between 3-4% a year. With a standard four-year college education costing anywhere between \$70,000-\$150,000 total, a family struggling to pay their monthly mortgage could not even comprehend that bill statement. A recent high school graduate has to make the decision to either get in tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of dollars of debt but have a higher education or to simply start working a part-time job and hope to slowly climb the ladder of success. I feel that the price of a college education is disproportional to the financial wealth of the nation. With technology ever growing and thus becoming cheaper, there must be a way to marry education and technology in a way that can provide an affordable learning environment. Creating more online resources such as class lectures and interactive web designs and making credits transfer more fluidly between colleges would absolutely decrease the cost of tuition. However you look at it, college tuition is much too expensive and serious moves should be made to take a look at why it is costing our family and friends so much money to send their children to receive a higher education.

Thank you so much for your time and I hope that a student perspective can provide new insight on this very important matter.