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SUBJECT MATTER: Governor's Proposed FY 2022-2023 Budget for Higher Education Agencies

*H.B. No. 6439 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

My name is Charla Beauvais and I'm a graduating Senior in the Anthropology/Sociology program at Western Connecticut State University. I am an involved student; I am very focused on my classes but I'm also very active in a number of student groups. Among other challenges, there are three major challenges that affected me directly while I've been a student. I have experienced food insecurity, housing insecurity, and I have had to work long hours to pay for my education, which takes away from the time I need to devote to studies. Despite these challenges I am here nonetheless, and at times it's not been easy. But I feel strongly that the mentorship I received at WCSU has made it possible for me to continue and to graduate this spring.

I found professors who worked with me, supported me, and wanted me to do well. And that means, I am beginning to feel like I can succeed. A committed professor helped me when I struggled with housing and felt I couldn't continue on as a student. My professors cared enough to help me get back on my feet again, and find peace of mind. They believed in me. But I know that the BOR wants to make changes that mean that the faculty that helped me will be stretched too thin in the future and won't be able to mentor and help students the way they want to. If you cut funding that means we won't have sufficient faculty members, including adjunct faculty members, in our department to help prepare me and other students for graduate school and a career. When I have support from faculty, I can do things, not only for myself as a student, but for the institution. For example, when I discovered the permaculture garden here at the school, it became the place where I loved contributing to the university community and to the community at large. I have a lot of good experiences here at western and a lot of grit, which has made all the difference. Right now, one of my major commitments is my senior thesis, in which I am looking at food insecurity and the African American experience. I am writing a thesis that connects urban farming in Port-au-Prince Haiti and in Brooklyn, New York. The opportunity to do this research, with the help and guidance of professors who are supported by the BOR, helps me make a future for myself. Thank you for your time.