

Matthew Driscoll

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“Good Evening Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France, and members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Matt Driscoll, I’m a Business Administration student at Eastern Connecticut State University. I’m here today to ask you to support funding for our state universities. As someone who considers himself an average consumer of political news, I understand the predicament that the legislature is in this upcoming season. Funding for college may seem like an unnecessary expense or frivolous spending, but I can assure you that is not the case in Connecticut. The investments the state has made in our universities are paying dividends for all parties involved, and will continue to do so in the future.

This past year has been a particularly unique experience, especially as a junior in college. I have been fortunate to attend Eastern, which through the state’s commitment offers a high-quality education at a low cost. And that’s not just my opinion: Eastern was yet again named the Top Regional Public University in New England by the U.S. News and World Report, despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic. This award was recognized due to the efforts made by our faculty and students, and the potential growth we have in store.

Through keeping in touch with friends at different universities across the country during this time, I noticed that Eastern was unique in their relations with us, the students. While other schools were eerily quiet, Eastern was very active in communicating details about events, potential returns and other important notices. And it wasn’t just their updates and conferences, they listened to the students as well. Through our advocacy and the help of administration, the university senate passed numerous provisions that gave many students the relief and confidence that they needed to get through two tough semesters. Eastern has been there throughout the pandemic for me and my fellow students, and I am very proud of my University.

Many students come to our schools motivated to improve their lives, thus helping the state in the process. I hope that they will have the same opportunities that I have been blessed to have. I have been fortunate to have my health and the opportunity to continue my education. Many have not been so lucky. As we speak, families in your districts and across the state are

making difficult choices about the affordability and feasibility of college. I ask the committee to consider these factors when deciding our funding for next year.

While the past year has been difficult, there is a sense of hope for me personally and in our campus community. Many students are looking forward to new experiences, in-person events and graduations in the future. The positive results of our efforts and good news with vaccines is a reminder that returning to normalcy is coming soon. However, we recognize that it is a team effort, and we need everyone's support. As members of the appropriations committee, you are a part of that team as well. I am grateful that the state has honored its commitment to economic improvement through offering high-quality and affordable education, and hope that future generations of students will continue to get the same opportunities that I have in the past three years. I thank you for the invitation to speak here today and yield my time to the rest of the panel.”