

Mohammed Konneh

Norwalk Community College Student

Good evening and thank you for allowing me to testify this evening on behalf of the students at Norwalk Community College. I am Mohammed Konneh and I am a first generation refugee college student. I am originally from Sub-Saharan West Africa, Liberia. My family and I migrated from a refugee camp because of the civil war and moved to several places. We started in the Guinea refugee camp, the Ivory Coast refugee camp, and then the Ghana refugee camp, and then finally we came to the United States.

At Norwalk Community College I am taking classes part-time for an accounting certificate, and I will be finishing it in May of 2022. I wanted to refresh my accounting skills so that I can continue for my master's degree in Accounting and become a certified public accountant. I currently have a Bachelor's degree in International Business, with an accounting minor, from Fairfield University. While I was earning my Bachelor's degree, I was also playing at a Division 1 Soccer program which was very time consuming and did not allow me the time to do internships during my academic journey.

I chose Norwalk Community College for my Accounting certificate because the Accounting program is one of the best values, a great program, mentorships, career placement opportunities and --- it is affordable.

In July of 2020, I was offered and accepted a full-time position with my current company. I now work for ICON International in the finance department. I switched from taking day classes to night classes. In addition, I am the treasurer for the Accounting Club on campus. I also was recently accepted into Connecticut's professional group for accounting. I am also very fortunate to have been invited to join the Uplift program at NCC. This program is designed to empower, inform, and encourage men of color to reach their highest academic potential. As an Uplift student, I will receive ongoing services

which include, dedicated advisors, mentors, and a variety of workshops. I am thrilled to be a part of this because I know Uplift will support me now and in my future.

I really enjoy the other students in my accounting club --- even though we have not met in person yet! The faculty and staff have been so helpful. This school is a valuable resource for someone like me, returning to school, to help build my skills in accounting --- and move me up in the workforce. I ask that all of you consider funding Norwalk and the rest of the community colleges in a way that supports these schools, and the students like me that are already in the workforce.

Thank you.