

April 21, 2010

To: Senate Higher Education Committee

RE: Interim Hearing April 26, 2010

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation for the opportunity to offer my testimony before the SHEC at the interim hearing on restructuring financial aid programs to promote student success.

I am a first-generation college student with a Bachelor's degree from McMurry University. I am currently pursuing a Master's in Business Administration at Texas Woman's University which I expect to complete in August of 2010. My undergraduate career would not have been made possible without the assistance of financial aid funding considering my low-income background. I am fortunate to have had the qualifications to receive a scholarship from McMurry University for four years; however, the additional funds were certainly necessary to help leverage the costs of attending a private university. As a graduate student, funding has been much more limited which presents a challenge for me as a single working parent; however, I do remain eligible for loan funding which has assisted me in furthering my education in order to attain my career goals.

My role as a professional has allowed me to observe other experiences involving the students that I now serve. As the Assistant Director of GO Programs at Texas Woman's University, I serve as a resource for low income, first-generation college students and high school students who are in transition from high school to college. The cost of attending college is an ongoing concern for many of the students that are considering attending college but are not sure that they can afford it. There is of course the ongoing issue of lack of information on cost and on financial aid. My testimony will include experiences that I have encountered with high school students who receive limited information and guidance on financial aid as well as the amount of funding that is allocated to institutions versus the number of students who actually receive it. I will also address the complexity of the application process for college students in their initial years and how this affects when they are awarded and how much funding they receive.

It is my pleasure to assist the committee with a cause that is so important and determinant of the opportunities to receive a college education for students like myself as well as many others. I would like to thank the committee once again for allowing me the opportunity of giving this testimony.

Respectfully,

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