

Danielle: Good Afternoon, we would like to start off by thanking the Chairman and the Committee for allowing us the opportunity to testify before you today. My name is Danielle Parker, I am a senior at Bowling Green State University double majoring in Political Science and History. This past April, I was fortunate enough to be elected as the Undergraduate Student Body Vice President within the Undergraduate Student Government.

Bryant: Hello, my name is Bryant Miesle. I am a senior studying political science and I am currently serving as the Chief Administrator for the Undergraduate Student Government.

Danielle: Throughout our time at Bowling Green State University, we have been able to work alongside fellow students, faculty and staff, administration, members of the community, and even members of our State legislature. As we continuously work in our roles as student leaders on campus, we are repeatedly confronted with issues dealing with funding and the cost of higher education. Both public and private institutions, as well as individuals working at the state level have worked very diligently to combat this rise in cost of higher education. This has been reflected in data showing that Ohio is the national leader in restraining growth of tuition and fees with a -2.5% rate in growth, while other states such as Indiana who has a 22.7% increase or Arizona who struggles with a 102.7% increase. Ohio has worked hard to invest in its students, but the work is not done yet.

Bryant: Georgetown University's Center for Economic Research reports 64% of Ohio jobs in 2020 will require post-secondary education but only 37% of working age Ohioans currently have college credentials and will only reach a 44% rate by 2020. This growing problem must be addressed to ensure Ohio's success. Bowling Green State University has made great strides in providing an excellent education equipping its students with experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. For example, BGSU's Falcon Internship Program and Guarantee provides students a four- year career program that guarantees students the opportunity to participate in an internship and the Ohio Means Internships and Co-ops (OMIC) Grant Program provided 150+ students with co-ops/internships and Ohio positions. Opportunities such as this allow me and my fellow students to become more prepared when entering the workforce.

Danielle: However, the most straightforward solution to the growing workforce talent gap is making higher education more affordable. BGSU is home to over 13,000 undergraduate students from a variety of backgrounds and communities. About 23% of the students who attend are first generation college students which make the university incredibly unique. So many of these students have seen the benefits from the Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG), and as an advocates for the undergraduate student body, we are here today to state our support for additional funding for this program. While BGSU supports all fellow institutions with a common goal of developing more successful students, need based scholarships such as those provided through OCOG allow our University to thrive and provide an above average education to its students.

Bryant: Moreover, as important as scholarship and grant opportunities are, subsidies provided through the State Share of Instruction or SSI are essential. An increase of funding through the SSI to Bowling Green State University and other members of the Inter-University Council would continue to improve higher education in Ohio. Recently, BGSU constructed The Ohio Attorney General Center for the Future of Forensic Sciences. While

this new BCI building is an incredible addition to our campus and an excellent resource for the State, it continues to grow the university vertically. With an increase in SSI funding, we would be able to expand horizontally by reaching out to students who may not have been able to afford post-secondary education without it. Increasing the enrollment and retention of current and future students will be a beginning stage of combating the growing talent gap.

Danielle: Throughout my campaign for Student Body Vice President, I was able to meet and discuss a variety of issues with my fellow students, which was an incredible and eye opening experience. Every day as student leaders, we learn something new and understand we may not have all the answers to better the higher education system. However, this increase in funding toward the Ohio College Opportunity Grant and State Share of Instruction is a solution that will not only benefit our university, but the State of Ohio. Earlier, we spoke about the 23% of our students are first generation college students- I am one of those students. Bowling Green State University has made me the person I am today and has provided me with endless opportunities to excel. I am because BGSU is- and I want to give these experiences and opportunities to anyone who is willing to work for them.

Bryant- Together, Bowling Green State University and the State of Ohio can make significant positive change for current and future college students.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.