

Lana Amer
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Good morning Chairman Perales, Ranking Member Ramos, and Members of the Finance Committee on Higher Education and thank you for this opportunity to address you all today about the impact of state funding on research at Ohio's public universities. My name is Lana Amer, I am from Beavercreek, Ohio, and I am a senior at Miami University. I am a Biomedical Engineering student, minoring in molecular biology with the objective to become a dentist in the Air Force. I have been extensively involved in undergraduate research during my four years at Miami, and quality opportunities like that would not be possible without the state's support.

As a senior, it is an honor to be telling you about my experience as an undergraduate at Miami University because it has shaped me to be the individual I am today. When I started college three years ago, my goal was to try to truly experience everything college had to offer. With this goal in mind, I sought out opportunities with Miami's over 400 student-led organizations associated with business, engineering, pre-health, and politics. One program I wish to discuss is the Government Relations Network. This program truly opened my eyes to the way policy-making works from a state to national level, which is very important as a citizen. Often individuals, especially in science fields, do not particularly pay attention to the inner workings of governing, which is unfortunate since government plays a critical role in many aspects of science and business. I have been fortunate enough to be presently attending my third Alternative Spring Break Advocacy Conference, as well as an Inaugural Conference last January. These conferences have provided me with amazing networking opportunities with local and national government officials and organizations; as well as improved my communication and leadership skills with relating my work as a scientist and researcher to individuals who do not have my scientific background. My first time attending one of these conferences, I was a sophomore research student presenting my Physics research that I was conducting with Dr. Paul Urayama. I became involved with Dr. Urayama's lab through Miami's First Year Research Experience Program (FYRE). This program emphasized the importance of involving first year students in research early on, and coached us on the techniques toward creating

research posters, presenting scientific data, and developing relationships with faculty mentors. Our innovative research project worked to find an inexpensive and safe method to detect cancer cells, prior to the actual mutation or tumor formation using Ultraviolet lasers. Due to my hands-on and robust involvement with this project, I am a published co-author, which is often a graduate student's dream, and I did this before the end of my second year at Miami. From there, I continued to strive for more opportunities and pursued research in several other departments including in the Chemical, Paper, and Biomedical Engineering Department where my next project was focused on creating platforms to regenerate bone growth for wounded warriors. With the Air Force Institution of Technology, we collaborated to find clean methods to clean polluted water sources. Finally, I partnered with the Kinesiology and Health Department to identify methods to increase the number of dental visits for lower-income and underprivileged children. Through my culmination of research experiences in a variety of fields, I have presented my research at eight different conferences.

Putting everything in perspective, if I could do it all over again, I would choose to remain a Miami University Redhawk. I did not realize this until my third year here, but I honestly treasure every moment, experience, and opportunity I have had here. As an engineering student, I have spoken to important political figures, collaborated with local companies to plan balls and concerts for over three thousand attendees, published peer-reviewed scientific articles in multiple departments, raised over one-thousand five hundred dollars for a local summer camp, created a mutated protein from scratch in a lab, mentored other students as a Resident Assistant, and graduated on the Dean's list three times all in four years.

These experiences would not be possible without the funding provided by the General Assembly and Miami's commitment to a quality education, I'm happy to say I will be attending the number one dental school in the nation after graduation and hope to continue to do research on oral health and improving methods for dentists to diagnose and treat their patients.

Thank you very much for your time, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

