



Testimony before the House Higher Education Committee
House Bill 98

Chairman Young, Ranking Member Miller, and members, of the House Higher Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 98. I am Dr. Stephanie Sutton, Vice President of Enrollment Management at Stark State College. Prior to serving as Vice President at Stark State, I served as the Director of Financial Aid at Lorain County Community College. I am here today on behalf of Dr. Para Jones, President of Stark State College, who was unable to be here today as she is attending the Governor's Executive Workforce Board meeting.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to speak and provide clarity regarding the testimony given last week on HB 98 by Mary Winch Korff, regarding the problem that Brock Young encountered in leveraging Free Fall Tuition funding from Stark State College and scholarship funding from the Salem Alumni Association Scholarship. We work to ensure that the two funding sources can work together to help students succeed at Stark State College and minimize student loan debt.

Stark State College's program for recent High School graduates is a last dollar award. At SSC, this means that all federal, state and institutional grants, awards and scholarships will be applied to the student's tuition first. Unlike how it may have been described to the committee last week, outside scholarships like the Salem Alumni Association Scholarship do not affect or impact our Stark State College's Free Fall Tuition Awards. In fact, during the same year as Brock's scholarship award, another student was able to receive both our award and the Salem Alumni Association scholarship award for Fall 2022.

Stark State College provides details on how we define our last dollar award and other information on our Free Fall Tuition for High School Seniors on our website at www.starkstate.edu/freetuition/. Once on the page, click on Process and details (PDF) on the lower right-hand margin.

After listening to the committee testimony last week, I followed up with Brock and learned that he indeed was able to receive funding from both scholarship sources. Unfortunately, it appears that Brock was provided incorrect information when he initially presented his Salem Alumni Association Scholarship to us. However, we do want to make sure the Committee knows Stark State and the Salem Alumni Association did work with Brock at the time to ensure he was able to leverage both funding sources to remain debt free. In fact, I am pleased to say he is still enrolled at Stark State College for Spring 2023 and is registered for the upcoming Summer and Fall terms in our Electrical Engineering Technician program.

We are truly appreciative and thank the Salem Alumni Association for their support of Stark State College students and the opportunity for students to braid these two unique funding sources together to help them succeed while reducing student loan debt.

Stark State works regularly with the Salem Alumni Association and other private organizations to provide the best access to quality and affordable higher education for students, consistent with the

way that HB 98 is written. Additionally, President Jones followed up directly with Ms. Winch Korff last week detailing the above and reiterating the college's commitment to work with the Salem Alumni Association and other scholarship entities to ensure students can maximize these benefits that they have earned. Stark State, like the community colleges in Ohio, fully understand the important role that braided funds have in helping students both attend and succeed with us.

Thank you for allowing me the time to clarify this situation and to share with you Stark State College's commitment to student access and success and doing all that we can to help students complete college with little or no debt.

I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have for me.