

Madam Chair, and members of the committee, it is my profound honor to be before you today to share my experiences in the post-secondary enrollment options program.

Minds are like beings of their own. Their food, their sustenance, is education and their life's ambition— learning. Great minds will become disillusioned if they are not provided with continuous intellectual stimulation. My mind is not alone amongst Ohio's students. We have, here in the great state of Ohio, some of the best and brightest minds in the whole world, and they are starving for challenge.

Thus far the post-secondary program has provided the necessary challenges my mind and soul have needed to thrive. I am now a third year post-secondary student at Ohio University's Eastern Campus. Through my post-secondary experience my mind has grown, my dreams have taken shape, and my soul has gained wings. I now know who I am as a person, and I no longer pretend to be someone I'm not. I am no longer ashamed of being the "smart kid."

The decision to enroll in the post-secondary enrollment options program was entirely my own, and I have never regretted that decision. The educational opportunities have been amazing! My professors have all been doctorates with the exception of three, and I have never been in a class with more than forty students. I have, however, always been the youngest student in any given class, but that never been an issue partly because I have never noticed that I was younger. Most professors will say that they enjoy teaching post-secondary students because they are often at the top the class. There are benefits to being the top student in a university. I have had the opportunity to serve as a chemistry lab assistant and teaching assistant along with two other students, both of whom were post-secondary. I am currently the biology lab assistant and the only math tutor qualified to tutor Calculus and above.

Many people's first concern is that I gave up my childhood. I didn't give up my childhood; I just had a different type of childhood than most. My baby rattle was a Doppler probe, and I attended my first medical meeting when I was two weeks old. I had very little need for toys when I could play with medical machines and do really cool stuff like carotid ultrasounds on myself and what I called a "cat-scan" on my cat. As you can see a lot of my success can be attributed to my parents and the way I was brought up. They

never inhibited me from asking questions. They never told me I was too young, or that I wasn't ready. They just said, "Go for it, TIGER!" and I have.

Post-secondary has not inhibited me from taking part in extra-curricular activities in or out of high school. I have continued to take part in vocational agriculture, representing my FFA chapter and the State of Ohio at nationals three times since I enrolled in post-secondary. As a junior I even managed to find some time to run track, which I wasn't very good at. Throughout my three years in post-secondary I have competed on the national eventing circuit, driven to weekly riding lessons two hours away from home, had multiple jobs, and maintained a 3.9 GPA. It is through the post-secondary program that I have had the opportunity to serve as an intern to our own Senator Joy Padgett. Post-secondary has given me the freedom to pursue my own interests, but as you all know with freedom must come responsibility. The freedom of the post-secondary program has taught me the discipline necessary to succeed in a world where there is not always someone standing over my shoulder making sure I get things done.

Throughout my educational journey there have been many times when I have left one institution for another. I entered the public school system upon the closing of my Catholic school, which had provided me with the foundation to succeed. When I chose to leave my public high school at the end of my freshman year I left nothing behind, but a few close friends who later followed and a few excellent teachers whom I still visit. You might say, that for me, the high school experience had nothing to offer. The most difficult move of all looms in my immediate future. In a few weeks I will be leaving my cherished post-secondary institution, which to me is like a home, and my beloved professors which have become an extended family.

When I walked into class at the beginning of this quarter I almost cried because I knew that I would never again have a class with Dr. John Prather, my favorite professor, my role model, and my friend. I have worked really hard this quarter because I knew that I would be leaving another of my beloved professors, Dr. Mark Waters, without a lab assistant and the campus without a math tutor. Leaving a place and people that have become a part of you is hard, but I will take them with me as I continue on my search for the stimulation and the challenges which my mind needs to soar to increasingly greater heights.

Next quarter I will be transferring to Athens because there are no longer any courses available for me at the Eastern campus. If all goes according to plan I will be taking my MCAT this August and completing my B.S. degree in Mathematics at Ohio University next spring. I hope to attend Medical school at The Ohio State University, practice here in Columbus, and perhaps one day serve our state with the grace and dignity exemplified in the fine legislators seated before me.

Post-secondary is not for everyone, but on the other hand neither is high school. The challenges that my high school offered did not provide the same degree of intellectual growth that was available for me at the college level. Post-secondary is the best thing that could have happened to me. I cannot imagine what my life would be like without this amazing experience. I offer my sincere thanks and deepest gratitude to the State of Ohio for making this program available.

Thank you.

I would be pleased to entertain any questions that you might have.