

Chairman Kline and Congressman Hanna, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak with you concerning the Utica School of Commerce and the innovative education we are offering students to meet this ever-changing workforce.

My name is Phil Williams, President of the Utica School of Commerce, a two-year proprietary college, founded by my great-grandfather nearly 115 years ago.

We, at USC, are proud of our history and the accomplishments that we have made, but are equally proud to be a part of today's workforce education, and are geared up for the future. USC is a member of the New York Association of Proprietary Colleges ("APC"), which represents 27 degree-granting institutions on 41 campuses throughout New York State. The APC member colleges currently enroll more than 50,000 students in more than 350 educational programs leading to associate, bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees in traditional and emerging fields.

APC represents one of the four sectors of higher education in New York; SUNY, CUNY, the independent colleges, and us. We, in New York, are fortunate to have a higher education system that is highly regulated by the Board of Regents through the New York State Education Department.

Our programs at USC are designed to be practical in nature appealing to the career-orientated student. Not only do we have associate degree programs which can be completed in as few as eighteen months, but we have credit-bearing certificate programs, for quick retraining which can be completed in as few as seven months. We stress individualized attention with an average class size of ten students, and we serve Congressman Hanna's district with campuses not only in Utica, but with branches in Canastota and Oneonta. Students may take classes during the day, the evening, or online. However, at USC, no program can be completed with more than 50% of classes online, because we believe this blend promotes the greatest likelihood of success for students at the associates degree level or below.

We are small with fewer than 500 students at our three campuses. We work with our students to ensure their success with the ultimate goal of placement or promotion. Our current placement rate, as measured from respondents, is 92% for the class of 2010. Quite good, considering the economy. Factoring in non respondents, our placement rate is 78%. Again, quite good when compared to other sectors. Actual statistics are attached with this testimony.

USC has always been a leader in the workforce development area. Today we are a part of a consortium of colleges providing cybersecurity training to residents of Oneida, Herkimer, Madison, Chenango, and Otsego counties through a federal grant administered by the local Workforce Investment Board. We changed our Medical Office Assistant certificate program to specifically meet the requests of our local WIB, and are a part of a five-college consortium providing a variety of health care training programs to 2,500 individuals through 2012.

Working with local insurance companies and agencies in the area, we have developed an approved Insurance Associate Certificate program, as well as a degree option under the Business Administration program...Risk Management and Claim Services. Both of these programs

resulted from discussions with the insurance industry on how to improve the quality of the local workforce.

In response to the needs of local insurance agencies, our Division of Corporate and Workforce Development has created and received approval for 24 continuing education courses in Property and Casualty Insurance, as well as the Life Insurance markets.

Likewise, through flexible scheduling, we have provided insurance licensing training programs to a number of companies in central New York, including MetLife, Utica National Insurance Group and New York Central Mutual Insurance Company.

In order to meet a strong local, state and national need for licensed Public Adjusters, USC, working in conjunction with several Public Adjuster firms, developed a 40 hour, non-credit, NYS Insurance Department approved, pre-licensing training program.

Working with a major manufacturer of fiber optic supplies, materials and equipment, USC staff developed an "employee directed" evaluation system. This is now being used by over 200 employees each year.

In cooperation with the Cooperstown Chamber of Commerce, USC has developed a five part, leadership and management training program, offered bi-monthly in Cooperstown.

Yes, USC is an active and vibrant part of the workforce community, providing excellent coursework in a variety of venues.

As an employer, although we do not like our employees to leave, we are proud to be a fine training ground for successful advancement. Our current Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs took, what I call an eight year leave of absence, to become Vice President of Academic Affairs at North Country Community College. The current Vice President of Academics at Schenectady Community College came from USC, as does HCCC's Chief Fiscal Officer. MVCC and HCCC have also benefited from USC. Likewise, we have many employees from other colleges.

Again, thank you for holding this hearing and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.