Dear Senators,

Greeting,

My name is Ziling, and I am a Chinese international student from the University of Iowa. I am one of the senators of the University of Iowa Student Government. As a student who major in nursing and minor in art, I believe that the University of Iowa gives me many opportunities to explore my career, meet good people, and get involve in a multicultural environment.

Before I became a student in the UI, I received other colleges’ offer. However, I finally chose the UI, because it had reasonable tuition and better nursing program. My parents from China always support my education, and they work very hard so that they can pay off my tuition. In my country, age discrimination is prevalent, my father, who believes that education is very important, is closing to retire age, and he has tough time to keep a job due to the age discrimination. Also, the currency ratio between Chinese Yuan and American Dollar increases, my parents sold their house, so both my brother and I can go to college. To support myself and help my parents out, I work 20 hours during the weekend to pay off my rent and life expenses. I don’t have a car, I either walk 20 minutes or take the free bus to work.

International students must have enough financial support so they can study in America, they pay over 13,000$ each semester, including tuition, insurance, life expenses, and textbook. Most of the international students come from eastern Asian countries such as China, Japan, and Korea, they face many challenges especially cultural shock, language barrier, and psychological adjustments from stress. These students are far away from home, lack of support from their family. For example, according to a survey done by College Daily(http://www.collegedaily.cn), which is a Chinese international student website, 53% of the Chinese international students used to have thought to commit suicide, over 7000 Chinese international students participate in this research. The University of Iowa provides services such as International Student and Scholar Services, University Counseling Service, and Campus Inclusion Team, help international students build confidence and get involve on campus. My grandpa passed away in China two months ago, due to 10,000 miles away from home and the expensive flight ticket, I missed his funeral and couldn’t be with my family. I had a very hard time and reached out for helped. I went to the University Counseling Service and talked to staff from the Internal Student Office, and I got support from my friends in the UI. Without the help from school services, I won’t get over from my grandpa’s death. I am not the only students who went through incidents like this, I believe there are more students like me and need more help from the campus.

American students also face challenges such as mental health, stress from school, food affordability, and rent. According to USA daily, over 42,000 American commit suicide each year, and many of them are college students (Sabatke, 2016). Some students can’t continue education because of excessive cost tuition, stress, mental health etc. We have homeless students who can’t pay for rent or food. Fortunately, we have Food Pantry on campus, which provide students and employees safe and affordable food.

Without the financial support from the government, the University of Iowa won’t have done many amazing jobs to take care of students from all over the world. Without the support from the college services, I won’t become who I am today, a student leader, a survivor, and an advocator who care about other students. The UI makes me a better person.

# References

Sabatke, S. (2016, January 30th). *Mental health on college campuses: A look at the numbers*. Retrieved from USA Today College: http://college.usatoday.com/2016/01/30/mental-health-by-the-numbers/