Dear Pitt Student,

As you know, on March 8, 2011, Governor Tom Corbett proposed a budget with the largest cuts to public higher education in history. In the proposed budget, the University of Pittsburgh alone was to receive a cut totaling over $104 million dollars in state funding if this budget passes. During Pitt Day in Harrisburg, numerous Pitt students, faculty, and administrators showed the state legislature and the Governor that the students of the University of Pittsburgh stand with our administration in saying that these cuts to higher education, specifically to Pitt, are disproportionate and unacceptable. These advocacy efforts are definitely making a difference, as many legislators are expressing strong support for dramatically reducing the proposed cut.

There are only a few short weeks left before the budget will be passed. This time is precious and there are still many ways you can help fight against these proposed cuts to Pitt. Writing a letter and making a phone call is still an excellent way to make contact with legislators, but something even greater will be for you to make a visit to the district office of your legislator.

While I was in Harrisburg, the numerous legislators I spoke to said how powerful rallying and letter writing can be, but the most significant impact is always face-to-face interaction. Attached to this e-mail is House and Senate district office contact information. I encourage you to bring a parent and/or a friend when making a visit. Remember, your personal story is most important. Make sure your legislator knows why you chose to attend Pitt and why you believe these cuts will affect your ability to attend the University, as well as the quality of education you will receive.

As a reminder, since Pitt was established as a state-related institution in 1966, the University has continued its commitment to maintain significantly lower tuition rates for in-state students. If this budget goes through, Pitt will lose the ability to continue to maintain that commitment. It is also important to note that, Pitt’s appropriation has been cut six times in the past 10 years, and that less state dollars are invested in Pitt today than 10 years ago. Clearly, the University appropriation has not contributed to the 40% increase in the state budget over the past 10 years.

Remember, as a student you are not only the future of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, but also the future of the United States. Therefore, make sure to remind your legislator why Pitt is the school you chose and how your future may be in jeopardy if you cannot afford to continue your education. To find Talking Points and other information regarding the proposed cuts to Pitt’s appropriation, visit www.progress.pitt.edu. A list of the District Office addresses for House and Senate members is attached, and to find contact information for the Pennsylvania Senate and House of Representatives, as well as for the Governor, visit the University’s Office of Governmental Relations: http://www.govtrel.pitt.edu/advocacynetwork/resources.html.

No one is better positioned than YOU to describe the quality of the programs offered by the University, which is why YOUR personal message is so critical!

Thank you for your continued efforts. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me mss79@pitt.edu, sgb@pitt.edu, or sgb.grc@gmail.com, and please e-mail us a copy of any letters that you send.

Hail to PITT!

Molly Stieber
President, University of Pittsburgh Student Government Board