

March 31st, 2021

TO: Senate Education Committee

FROM: Olivia Cheche, Student Leader at UNLV

SUBJECT: SB 287 Support Testimony (Hearing March 31, 2021)

Good afternoon to Chair Denis and the committee!

My name is Olivia Cheche, and I am a student leader at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I strongly urge your support of SB287 because at the end of the day, it will help students like me. SB287 will reaffirm that UNLV, DRI, and UNR are the land grant institutions of the state, which will open up the doors for UNLV to have more access to federal funding and resources. This will also be crucial for expanding jobs and economic development, which is especially necessary now as southern Nevada has been hit hard by the COVID-19 recession. Our university can be central in the efforts to diversify the Las Vegas economy, but we will need more support to make this possible.

In my three years at UNLV, I have seen some of the most incredible research accomplishments, but also some of the toughest research challenges for our faculty and students. I have seen UNLV physicists make a breakthrough in the long sought-after quest for a room-temperature superconductor that will play a major role in the future of energy efficiency, but I have also seen Engineering students have to fight for a second building as they work on projects in the back room of a 99 Cents Only store across the street. Time and time again, UNLV students and faculty have defied the odds and done great things for our broader community with limited resources. In fact, we recently achieved Carnegie R1 status, even though some - including a former regent - doubted that it would be possible. While I am proud that we have defied many odds, it shouldn't be like this in the first place. SB287 would also support UNLV in maintaining its Carnegie R1 status.

I have so much love for my school and feel unequivocally grateful for everything it has given me. However, I recognize that there is more work to be done for our students. Your support of SB287, which would reaffirm UNLV, DRI, and UNR as the land grant institutions in our state, will be a crucial step increasing the value of our education. I look forward to seeing what the future holds and thank you so much for your time!