

To all the people who has been supporting me,

We all come to the university with the same purpose, but none of us have the same background. Each person is different and each one of us has a story. I, like many people, came to the university with a plan to finance it and receive the education I cannot have in my country. Unfortunately, life is full of unpredictable turns that make us lose balance. It was never in my plan to be in debt for \$20,000, although my tuition per semester is around \$17,000. At first, I thought I could do it alone, that without asking for help, things would work out. Unfortunately, it did not matter what action I would take in order to resolve this situation, I always found myself with a barrier because I am an international student and our situation is always different. At some point I came to think that the place where I made my second home, Oklahoma and my family that is OU, no longer belonged to me. The truth is OU has given me so much in these three and a half years that I was not, nor am I willing to give up so easily. It does not matter what they say, nor WHO says it.

As you all know the news of a visa status changing and the possible deportation of some students at OU went public when the OU Daily posted it for the first time on Wednesday afternoon. So many people were concerned and moved by this article that they started to do something about it. An external person from OU contacted the bursar office and offered to donate \$5,000 on my behalf which allowed me to enroll with the promise that we will come up with the rest of the money by March. This person, what I would like to call my army and I are trying to get the rest of the money.

When I was trying to find a solution I never asked for money or forgiveness of the debt from OU. All I asked it was for more time because we depend on a visa. As the article from the OU Daily clearly quotes me in the last paragraph.

Thankfully the love and support from all the people who surround me made me believe that we can make it. I would like to publicly thank the person who donated the first payment of my debt. Thanks to you it is possible what a few days ago seemed impossible. Thank you so much to Matt Hamilton, Jane Irungu, Rebecca Cruise, Mery Beth Polk and Mukarram Lillard for always having the doors of their offices open to talk and find a solution. To my capstone professor, who is a role model to me. To all the professors of my college who have been a great support. To the people in my work who always remind me that I am valuable and that I matter. To all the media that were interested in this story and shared it. I want to thank each and every one of the people who support me in all the possible ways. You all encourage me to continue my fight, you reassure to me that crying is not weakness and that screaming is talking from the soul. Thank you also for reminding me that I am human, that my emotions count, that I can express them no matter where I am from. Thank you for reminding me that I do belong at OU. Perhaps a thank you does not reward every act, word, or show of affection you are giving me. I want you to know that I am eternally grateful to each one of you.

Sincerely,

The international student who will graduate in May.

