

**UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF THE STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE  
TELEPHONE MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 2, 2021**

In Attendance:

Trustee Shari Cantor  
Trustee Andrea Dennis-LaVigne  
Trustee Justin Fang  
Trustee Bryan Pollard  
Trustee Daniel Toscano  
Trustee Ethan Werstler  
Jaci Van Heest, University Senate Representative

Others in Attendance:

Joseph Briody, Interim Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Director of Student Activities  
Eleanor Daugherty, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students  
Cathy Downs, Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs  
Michael Gilbert, Vice President for Student Affairs  
President Thomas Katsouleas  
Rachel Rubin, Executive Secretary to the Board of Trustees

1. Call to Order:

Trustee Cantor called the meeting of the Student Life Committee to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. Public Participation:

No public participation noted.

3. Approval of Minutes:

On a motion by Trustee Cantor, the minutes of the October 28, 2020 Student Life Committee meeting were approved as circulated.

4. COVID-19 Update and Discussion:

Michael Gilbert reported we welcomed students back to Campus and move-in was uneventful as students are now aware of what is expected. The process was very smooth and effective. In-person classes started today after a two week quarantine. Students are beginning to enjoy facilities again. Michael asked Eleanor Daugherty to give a more thorough update on COVID-19. She reported UConn did a wonderful job doing the impossible keeping campus open through the Fall Semester and reopening for the Spring Semester. We owe a vote of confidence to our very caring student body who wants to be on campus. We re-evaluated during the break and made some changes for pre-entry testing for our students. We also increased our quarantine and isolation capacity so we can continue to operate safely. We are prepared to stay the course over Student Life Committee

the spring semester. Trustee Cantor congratulated and thanked the staff and students for the success of the fall semester and for the reopening of spring semester.

5. Student Activities Programming Work for Spring Semester/Spirit Rock Painting Policy:

Michael Gilbert asked Joseph Briody to update the Committee on the programming work for the spring semester and the updates on the Spirit Rock Painting Policy.

Joe talked about the Engagement 21 Workgroup tasked to share, learn about, and promote virtual and in-person engagement opportunities for all students at all campuses in a collaborative way. This group was made up of students and staff from offices and organizations across campus and met bi-weekly to discuss engagement gap, university guidelines, virtual programming, cross/promotional strategies, collaborative opportunities and promotional strategies.

In the fall semester, U-Kindness web site <https://kindness.studentaffairs.uconn.edu/> was created as a site for centralized information and resources for all students. On this site, students can find information on making connections, staying healthy, staying active, staying calm, COVID updates, UConn Promise, and voting/civic engagement (fall 2020). Some of the Engagement 21 notable initiatives include an outdoor skating rink, Jonathan's Challenge, Community Connectors, Late Night, and One Ton Sundae. For a full list of initiatives, visit the U-Kindness web site.

Joe outlined the Spirit Rock Painting Policy and the group of students that worked with him to make changes after the hateful incident that took place last September. The policy was not rewritten, but tweaked with clearer, stronger language. This new policy is active now and is available on-line and will be shared with each student as part of training with student organizations.

6. Mental Health Initiative Updates and Discussion:

Eleanor shared the link for the Task Force on Mental Health Wellness Report (<https://projectwellness.uconn.edu/final-report/>) and outlined the recommendations of the Task Force. Mental Health and Wellness must be a University expressed priority that is articulated at the highest level and held accountable to strategic planning goals throughout the University. The recommendations have been embraced by the University, and we are beginning to move forward with implementation. Student Health and Wellness – Mental Health (SHaW-MH) has hired a new Director and Associate Director.

Eleanor outlined the work she is doing with staff to offer a “do over” for our freshmen and seniors this year. She also described the Monthly Wellness Workshops taking place for staff across campus crossing disciplines to work together and discuss common topics: CARE Team Referrals, Academic Affairs and Filling the Engagement Gap.

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7. Other Business:

Trustee Werstler has been in contact with student advocates in the Cultural Centers, USG and student organizations and they are all very energetic about the issues discussed today. He reiterated we need to be more proactive to mental health on our campus.

Trustee Fang has been in contact with Graduate students and TAs this semester and they have reiterated the difficulty of on-line teaching and captivating student's attention.

Trustee Werstler highlighted the work being done from faculty and staff for food insecurity on campus, including regional campuses. Trustee Cantor suggested we add this topic to our next meeting agenda.

8. Executive Session (as needed):

There was no Executive Session held.

9. Adjournment:

On a motion by Trustee Cantor, the meeting of the Student Life Committee was adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

Respectfully,

Cathy Downs  
Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs