AGENDA

**University of Connecticut
Board of Trustees**

**Student Life Committee
Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at 4:30 p.m.
Special Virtual Meeting**

Public Streaming Link (with live captioning upon request):   https://ait.uconn.edu/bot

(A recording of the meeting will be posted on the Board website,
https://boardoftrustees.uconn.edu/, within seven days of the meeting.)

Call to order at **4:30 p.m.**

1) Public Participation (limited to agenda items)*
   *Individuals who wish to speak during the Public Participation portion of the Tuesday, June 10, meeting, must do so, limited to agenda items, 24 hours in advance of the meeting's start time (i.e., 4:30 p.m., on Monday, June 9) by emailing BoardCommittees@uconn.edu. Speaking requests must include a name, telephone number, topic, and affiliation with the University (i.e., student, employee, member of the public). As an alternative, individuals may submit written comments to the Committee via email (BoardCommittees@uconn.edu), and all comments will be transmitted to the Committee.

2) Minutes from the February 20, 2025, Meeting

3) Standing Updates:
   - Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment
   - Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
   - Dean of Students
   - Student Trustees

4) Test Optional Update
   Nathan Fuerst, Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment
   Morgaen Donaldson, Associate Dean for Research, and Philip E. Austin Endowed
       Professor of Public Policy and Educational Leadership
   Eric Loken, Associate Professor, Educational Psychology

5) University Senate Representative Report

6) Executive Session (as needed)

7) Adjournment

PLEASE NOTE: *If you are an individual with a disability and require accommodations,
please e-mail the Board of Trustees Office at* boardoftrustees@uconn.edu *prior to the meeting.*

GRADUATE STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Fabio Saccomanno, Graduate Trustee

- Student Life Committee 6/10/2025

- UConn Board of Trustees

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SCHOOL OF LAW

- Black Law Students' Association moot court team placed as regional finalists at the Northeast Black Law Students Association. They then competed at the national finals of the Thurgood Marshall Moot Court Competition
  - February 2025

- Mock Trial Society wins first place at Phi Alpha Delta Mock Trial Competition in Arlington, VA
  - March 2025

- Rosario Naranjo-Zarate, now graduated, was named UConn's 2025 Student Employee of the Year at the Student Life Awards Ceremony
  - May 2025

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

- Zach Giguere and James Marks, two rising second-year medical students, have begun their journey across the United States this week as part of the yearly cycling tradition and fundraiser at the School of Medicine called Coast2Coast
  - Supporting the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
  - Beginning in Seattle, WA, ending in Farmington, CT
  - $13,154 raised so far
    - Donate here
    - Merchandise here

UConn's Test-Optional University Admissions Pilot Program: Results from a Three-Year Study

Morgaen L. Donaldson, Eric Loken, Kiah DeVona & Catherina Villafuerte
Neag School of Education
June 10, 2025

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Purpose and Research Questions

Purpose:
   Understand UConn's Test Optional Pilot's relationship with application, enrollment, engagement, and performance data

Research Questions:
1. Did the policy affect incoming students' decision to apply to UConn? Attend UConn?
2. What are the academic outcomes of students who entered UConn after the pilot began?
3. How, if at all, does engagement differ between students who submitted test scores vs. those who did not?

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Mixed Methods

- Interviews: AY 21-22, 22-23, 23-24

- Surveys: AY 22-23, 23-24

- Administrative data analysis: AY 21-22, 22-23, 23-24

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Finding 1

Did the policy affect incoming students' decision to apply to UConn?
Attend UConn?

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Reasons for Applying

- Students reported that the test-optional pilot appealed to them:
  - "I feel like being test-optional is definitely a big factor too because some of the other schools required my SAT score. That was one of the big reasons I might have gotten waitlisted or denied because of it."
- However, two-thirds of participants said other aspects of the university enticed them:
  - "I think if it was not test optional, I still would have applied. I was interested in coming here."

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How Students Decided Whether to Submit Scores

- Students submitted their scores because they thought their scores:
  - exceeded the range of typically accepted scores
  - would improve their probability of acceptance
- Students withheld their scores because:
  - The scores did not fall within the typically accepted range
  - They believed their tests failed to accurately reflect their academic ability
  - They disagreed with the SAT and ACT

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Students Considered Their Context and Acted Rationally

- Their SAT/ACT score in the context of UConn mean scores
  - *"It was higher than the average score of applicants at UConn."*
  - Weighed the relative strength of their score vs. other aspects of their application
  - *"They were not a good reflection of the type of student I am. I am not a good test taker but throughout high school got a 4.0 GPA yet didn't do as well on the SATs."*
- Drew on their networks to make sense of the application process and submitting scores
  - *"My counselor said I should."*
- Consulted social media
  - e.g., *"it was mostly Google,"* also Niche, Instagram, Reddit, YouTube, Score, and CollegeVine

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Applications and Mean SAT Scores Increased Since 2020

	Total Applications	SAT Scores (N)	Median Reported SAT
2020	36,630	29,310	1240
2021	39,152	10,826	1320
2022	43,200	11,911	1340
2023	49,033	12,535	1350
2024	58,430	13,132	1370
2025	62,638	14,722	1370

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8

Percentage Applicants Opting Out of Test Score Submission by School & Year

	2022	2023	2024
School of Nursing	78	81	86
College of Agriculture	70	76	78
School of Business	71	73	76
School of Fine Arts	69	72	75
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences	62	65	68
College of Engineering	47	51	55

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Application Patterns

Opting Out

- Rates increased over time
  - 2021, 2022 - **65%**; 2023 - **68%**; 2024 - **71%**; **2025 - 70%**
  - Subgroups opting out (2024)
    - 75% women, 65% men
    - 48% Asian applicants
    - 64% White applicants
    - 82% Black applicants
    - 79% Hispanic applicants
- Total applicants increased: 36,450 in 2020 (pre-policy change) to 58,430 in 2024
- 2025 - 74% women, 63% men opted out

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Admissions Patterns

- Overall admission rates 2020 to 2024: 74-76%
- Rates higher in TC than in TO (2021: 80% vs 70%; 2022: 78% vs 71%; 2023: 78% vs. 72%), but less so recently (2024: 78% vs. 76%)
- TO applicants less likely to gain admission than TC applicants
  - except for Black/African American applicants and Hispanic applicants (2024 only)
  - Interpretation is complicated by the smaller fraction submitting scores – but the trend holds across programs.

Enrollment Patterns

- Probability of enrolling after admission declined from 25% (2020) to 15% (2024)

- Yield across 3 years relatively stable
  - slightly higher yield for TO vs TC: 15% (test optional) and 13% (test considered)

Finding 2

What are the academic outcomes of students who entered UConn under the test optional pilot?

Academic Outcome Patterns

- For 2021-2023 entering cohorts, TC median GPA @ 0.4 higher than TO GPA after freshman year;   TO about 0.3 higher after sophomore year

- TC students enter with more credits (AP, ECE etc.); TC students accumulate credits at a rate of 2-3 more per year (as measured by median change).

- After freshman year, TC versus TO "good academic standing" is about 93% to 86%; small differences in academic probation status

- **Important context for comparing TO and TC academic outcomes**: *more TC students are in the top holistic categories compared with TO students. When an adjustment is made for the holistic admissions score – these differences are reduced (but not eliminated, completely)*

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Finding 3

How, if at all, does engagement differ between students who submitted test scores vs. those who did not?

Engagement Patterns

- TC and TO students reported a comparable sense of belonging after first semester and after four semesters – about 80% for both groups

- TO students somewhat more likely to consider transferring (13% vs. 9%)

- Retention rates higher among TC vs. TO – but very similar when also grouped by holistic rating

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Major Takeaways

- Test optional approach holds appeal for both TO and TC applicants
- TC applicants are more likely to gain admission in most cases
- TC students perform better once on campus but this difference shrinks when adjusted for evaluation rating
- The test optional pilot is a single UConn policy, but it appears to be operating differently across subgroups – gender, race/ethnicity - and across programs
- UConn's applications have risen more than 70% since 2020, but number of test scores is about 50% of what it was before the policy