

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Meeting-20260210_124449-Meeting Recording

February 10, 2026, 5:44PM

1h 10m 7s

 **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 0:00

welcome.

I tend to like starting on time and if there's no objections and I'd like to call the meeting to order and welcome everyone to our February 10th, 2026 DEI committee meeting. I just want to remind everyone and you all are pros at this.

Just to try to mute your computers and your phones so don't have too much background noise if possible.

And Melissa, would you please take the attendance?

 **Adiram, Melisa** 0:35

Sure. So trustee George Barrios.

 **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 0:36

8.

 **George Barrios** 0:40

Yep.

 **Adiram, Melisa** 0:42

SD Andy Bessette.

Trustee Charles Bunnell.

 **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 0:50

I'm this way.

 **Adiram, Melisa** 0:50

Trustee Shari Cantor.

 **Shari Cantor** 0:54

Here.



Adiram, Melisa 0:55

Trustee Bryan Pollard.



PB **Pollard, Bryan** 0:58

Here.



Adiram, Melisa 0:58

Trustee Fabio Sacamano.

You have a quorum, Madam Chair.



AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 1:06

Thank you. And and now for our Senate Rep.



Adiram, Melisa 1:13

Trustee. Oh, I'm sorry, said it, Rep Michael Heumann.



Heumann, Micah 1:17

Yeah. Thank you.



AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 1:18

Thank you. Oh, there you are. Welcome, Micah.

OK, then I I do believe we have a quorum, correct?

Yes. OK. OK, that's perfect. Doing great. Then with that, let's do what we normally should do is that ask for any public participation. As of yesterday, 24 hours ago, there was no one that had signed up and I believe that is still the case.



Adiram, Melisa 1:30

Yes, that's correct.



AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 1:47

Thank you. And to be official, we will start with calling for a motion and a second to approve the October 14, 2025 meeting minutes. May I have a motion, please?

PB **Pollard, Bryan** 2:01
So moved public.

SC **Shari Cantor** 2:01
So second canter.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 2:03
Thank you. Thank you. And are there any corrections?
If not, I'd call for a vote. All those in favor, please say aye aye.

PB **Pollard, Bryan** 2:14
Aye.

SC **Shari Cantor** 2:14
I.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 2:16
Are there any abstentions?
OK, with that, then I would like to make a couple of welcomes to the group. And first, I know that Trustee Fabio Sacramono is our medical student and he is really tied up and an important.
Day event at the Health Center, but he did want to express his gratitude and how excited he is to serve on this committee. And secondly, we do have here in person Trustee George Barrios, who we welcome with open arms and really appreciate you and their.
Time and your commitment to this committee, so thank you and welcome.

GB **George Barrios** 3:01
Thank you. Happy to be here.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 3:05
You're going to meet all the players. We have some really dedicated individuals that you'll see on the screen and some on the phone. So if we can just start that with our

VP, Jeffrey Hines.

Welcome.

H **Hines, Jeffrey** 3:22

Welcome and thank you, Madam Chair, and good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to another cold day in Connecticut. Hopefully a fall will come soon. My talking points will be brief this afternoon. There are four main topics that I want to discuss. The first will be around federal updates.

And some of my federal updates will roll into a couple of the other topics that I will discuss. I want to be a little different this time and talk about some of the work that OICR, the Office for Inclusion and Civil Rights is doing at the Health Center regarding upcoming cuts to Medicaid expected.

January.

2027. We have convened a team. Thank you to Kathleen Holgerson and some other folks. We have convened a team of the financial talent at UConn Health in addition to those of us that face members of the community and do work in the community to talk jointly.

About what these cuts might look like, not only to the financial health of the institution, but importantly to the people that we serve. We're actually partnering with the Department of Social Services in some of these works, and we are certainly awaiting some of the federal guidance, for instance, around.

Medicaid eligibility around work requirements and or what they're going to call community engagement or volunteer requirements so that we can deploy a messaging strategy that's consistent throughout the state. But we're going to play a leadership role in that. We're very excited about how we're.

Coming together on the financial side of the house and the community benefit side of the house, my next update will be around the Rapid Response Team. President Marich in January of 2025 asked us to convene a team of subject matter experts.

To look.

look at what the impact of executive orders and other federal communications in the space of diversity, equity, inclusion, what impact that might have on the institution.

Um We put together a very nimble cross-section team that was led by John L. Reynolds and Kathleen Holgerson.

Looking at the people side of the House and the infrastructure side of the House, respectively, just a week ago, President Marich allowed a presentation for us to make

to the scene, excuse me, to the Executive Cabinet around some of the recommendations we had made and just to summarize a.

Few of those recommendations, it would be important for us to continue to message that we comply with the law. We have always complied with the law. We will continue to comply with the law. We need to remain flexible and nimble as we navigate an environment that is uncertain and volatile. We're very excited.

About a couple of cross sector multidisciplinary committees that were stood up, one that assisted those in the research enterprise and we were intimately involved with our partners in the Office of the Vice President for Research and Entrepreneurship in helping.

Principal investigators navigate some language that they had within their grant so that they can continue to do the important work that they're doing. And also again an interprofessional cross-sector committee looking at programs and and some and and some scholarships.

The last thing that I want to emphasize with respect to the Rapid Response Team is that this would be ongoing and continued work and very excited that those two teams continue to do work in those spaces. The third highlight will be very high level. There are a group of stakeholders.

That are getting together to determine how we will support our students, faculty and staff with potential for ICE agents either adjacent or on our campuses and more to follow later on that.

And then finally, I'm going to take a little privilege and put my physician's cap on. And I think it's important to update this committee on some of the work that's happening with the Waterbury acquisition as it relates to community engagement. There are some legal issues that bind us until closing of the property. So there's no details that we are discussing at this time, but we are beginning to have some conversations with our colleagues, not only at Waterbury Hospital, but within the community to really talk.

About what meaningful community engagement will look like. I'm very excited. I was invited to the Waterbury Chamber of Commerce Breakfast tomorrow and and actually tomorrow afternoon. I'm going to give an updated operational review and report to the senior leadership team at UConn Health to talk.

As much as we can right now about a outreach plan that we've identified, a plan for measurement and assessing what community engagement is going to look like. So I will certainly keep this group informed about that work. A special thank you to

Michael Vidal because of his relationship with the UConn Waterbury campus. This will be a link between not only the Greater Waterbury community, UConn Health, the Waterbury campus, um and Waterbury Hospital as we look forward to strengthen community engagement. Madam Chair, that ends my report and I'm happy to take any questions.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 9:10

Thank you. Are there any specific questions? That's a broad overview of what's been happening, a lot of work going on.

I I was wondering and I see, I know that President Merrick is is on this at this meeting as well going back to the research dollars and the research grants and that committee that has been put in place to make sure have the guidance so that we have.

That research dollars continues to come out, come in. From my understanding, it's been successful dollar wise. Is that true VP Hines or President Merrick?

MR **Maric, Radenka** 9:55

Yeah. So last year we we lost \$44 million research dollars from federal government and 12 million we reinstated by changing the language. So we are still in the negative variable of 44 million.

But you know, we got back 12 million and that was you know what Jeff was saying, helping faculty to change their language, align that the language that the federal government proposed and and asking them.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 10:22

Yeah.

MR **Maric, Radenka** 10:31

But we still have the significant losses from National Institute of the Department of Energy and Department of Education.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 10:41

Excellent. Thank you. Appreciate that update. Any other comments, questions for Vice President Hines?

Then I'm not going to let you go until we just kind of recognize the fact that you

were the keynote speaker honoring Martin Luther King. And the feedback that I've received is that it were outstanding comments.

And had a chance to to take a a read them myself since I couldn't. I was out of state when this happened, but very proud of you as a person, very proud of the representation of for the University of Connecticut. So thank you very much and I believe Trustee Pollard was in the audience as well.

PB **Pollard, Bryan** 11:29

Yes, I had the pleasure of being in the audience and it was absolutely amazing. Jeff's comments were were outstanding and very thought provoking, very timely and you know, just just an outstanding representation of our university and. I just can't say enough about it. It was a pleasure. Thank you.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 11:51

And thank you. I mean, again, to honor Martin Luther King, it sounds like you did him justice. So thank you.

H **Hines, Jeffrey** 12:00

Thanks to the two of you for that acknowledgment. I sincerely appreciate it.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 12:05

Of course. OK. Any other comments, I mean or questions then then we will move on and it's our Vice President Nathan Fuerst. He's going to give us an update. We're always asking about numbers and what the outlook looks like in terms of. The admissions and a student point of view, so you have the floor.

 **Fuerst, Nathan** 12:29

Thank you very, very much. Vice-chair Dennis-LaVigne. I'll just pile on real quick to Doctor Hines though, cause I was there. I would just say quickly, not only did he take us to school, but he took us to church calling back to a reference in your your talk. So it was exceptional. So really job well done there. Glad to call you a colleague.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 12:36

Yeah.



Fuerst, Nathan 12:49

So I have a few slides. I'm going to try to move through them relatively quickly, but I think it's important for us to really kind of wrap our heads around where do we stand right now with student diversity. And perhaps the impetus for this was a recent New York Times article about the post Supreme Court.

Shifts in enrollment and what we're referring to when we're talking about the Supreme Court is of course a ban on on race conscious admissions. Of course, subsequent to that, there has been a Dear Colleague letter from the Trump administration giving us further restriction and guidance around how we may utilize. Race or ethnicity in scholarships and other things as well. So we can't ignore maybe all the factors involved or in the context of the overall conversation. But just to quickly summarize that article, you can see the bullets on the left. I'm not going to read them all to you, but basically what it shares.

With us in observation from a group that I'm going to show you some additional tables in a minute called Class Action is that the top 50 selective colleges selective with regard to admissions saw significant drops in black student enrollment as well as Latino.

Latin X Hispanic enrollment at their institutions, whereas at the same time flagship universities were seeing growth in those populations of students as well as less selective private universities. And so the concern here being, you know, we know the correlation with attending a highly selective university.

Called an Ivy League university where the average incomes are higher. I think they ponder a little bit about the long lasting effects associated with that as it plays out across different races, ethnicities in our in our society. But that article is out.

Or in the New York Times because I can't help myself. And then in conversations with Trustee Pollard, I went out to their site and and got more information and I'll show that to you in a little bit. One thing I wanted to do was to share with you a snapshot of something you've seen before, but this illustrates the.

Diversity of our students by race and ethnicity, the middle table, that is, in ways that the federal government doesn't necessarily ask us to do. We do it this way because what we understand is that students actually identify across a variety of different categories, and they tell us so as a part of the application process.

And so where you see red bars stacked on top of blue bars, that's showing us where students have identified more than one area of affiliation. And so we do that every

year to really kind of keep our eye on not just kind of this monolithic aspect associated with race and ethnicity, but really understanding the.

Dimensional aspects of our students identities and the backgrounds that they're coming from. So that was our Storrs campus and this was our across our regional campuses. But what the class action site does from the New York Times was to begin to trend line this a little bit.

And what they're trying to do, of course, is draw a correlation. This is their table, not mine. I probably would have done it a little bit differently, a little busier, a little smaller. But you can see that they allow us to pull our UConn numbers. We have seen some declines in our white student enrollments and at the same time.

Some, excuse me, I need to say that differently. We have seen growth in overall white student enrollment and the percentages have gone down. When you get to Hispanic student enrollment, we have seen growth nominally in Hispanic student enrollment.

But the percentages have gone up. The same is true largely for our black students. This is all this is our first year cohort, so important to understand that in effect, it aligns with what they're describing overall in the New York Times article and.

What I wanted to do as a part of their site as well is to compare ourselves against other flagship universities because it allows you to do that and you can see some similarities here, although some of our shifts are more pronounced and for sure we have higher percentages of Hispanic Latinx students as well.

As black students at UConn overall, but we've also seen greater amounts of growth in those student populations according to the the joinclassaction.us website. I also wanted to show you a trend line of what does our numbers from our institutional research office.

Actually show us. And so here is pulled down from our enrollment dashboard that institutional research maintains for us over the last 10 years. What we've seen, of course, the article itself is talking about what's happened really over the last 36 months or so, a little bit more and you can see.

That not only have we seen an increase in the size of the entering class across all the campuses, but a lot of that growth has been on the part of Hispanic Latin X students as well as black students and some small declines on the part. Well, really flat I guess you could say on the part of white.

Students in the cohort, I looked at stores only also and wanted to show that to you as well because it's often time a question. You know, are we just seeing this at one

campus or across all the campuses? Been some really great growth in student diversity based on race and ethnicity of our undergraduate students. At our Storrs campus and I also wanted to look overall, right? So as our undergraduate student enrollment has grown, especially in the last several years, you can see where the growth has been and here you can actually see over the last 10 years.

Some declines on the part of our white students and subsequent growth on the part of Hispanic, Latin X students and really pretty stable, a little bit of growth on the part of black students as well. Not to leave out any other particular identities or backgrounds either, you know, our Asian American students have seen a little bit of growth.

There too. On the whole, this is following what we're seeing with regard to demographic trend shifts in the composition of our high school age population. And so we're following that pattern as that's what we're seeing in the state of Connecticut. It varies a little bit across the country, but not a lot.

So the patterns that we're seeing with regard to the increase in diversity amongst our undergraduate students has been something that's been really great to see. I think we're outpacing other institutions, which is great to see, but it's not something that was entirely unexpected at the same time.

That's all the slides I had for you, um, today, and I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have.

Oh, Vice Chair Denis Levine, you're on mute.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 20:00

Oh, yeah. Thank you for catching that. The one, I think it was in your first slide when we were talking about the underrepresented minority. Could you just define that for the committee? I know I ask you to do this every couple of years, but could you just define that as we're looking at these numbers?

 **Fuerst, Nathan** 20:17

Yeah.

Yeah, absolutely. So for the University of Connecticut, and certainly every institution has the capacity to kind of set their own definition. But for the University of Connecticut, our underrepresented student populations have been defined as black, Hispanic, Latin X, Native American.

Student populations. Oh, and Hawaiian Pacific Islander as well. So they're underrepresented because they make up a smaller share when benchmarks against student populations that we should be seeing in terms of our enrollment.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 20:43

OK.

Excellent. I appreciate that. And I know the the slides, I didn't see that they were labeled what was the all of our campuses together versus stores, but I'm sure that these are kind of like.

You're in the process of kind of finalizing those slides or?

 **Fuerst, Nathan** 21:18

Oh no, there is a label. I can pull it back up.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 21:20

Oh, I missed it. No, it's OK as long as it's there, 'cause you know.

 **Fuerst, Nathan** 21:24

It's there. We'll and we'll distribute these, of course, to the board.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 21:28

Okay, thank you. And then we have some deadlines coming in in terms of acceptances. Can you just kind of run us through those dates and in terms of student, you know? Mm-hmm. Okay.

 **Fuerst, Nathan** 21:37

Yeah, really great, really great. So our admissions committee is convening right now and and looking at the really good work of our admissions readers who have taken their time to review nearly 60,000 applications for admissions. We're seeing some some really good quality in that applicant pool. We'll work to finalize those.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 21:42

Mhm.

 **Fuerst, Nathan** 21:57

Decisions for a March 1 release date for the Storrs campus applicants as well as any of the regional campus applicants that we have to date. So March 1 is the release date there. Just keep in mind for our regional campuses, the application deadline is May 1 and so students continue to apply and apply on time to the regional campus. campuses and really we we allow students to apply late, you know, for extenuating circumstances and other things. So we continue to have additional students apply.

 **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 22:27

And early admissions in terms of our in terms of looking at a diverse site student body, any kind of thoughts to that or?

 **Fuerst, Nathan** 22:36

It's a little bit early to report out yet exactly how that's playing out. We did have a very similar early decision applicant pool to what we had last year, almost identical in size and are really just trying to work to ensure that we're we're attracting the best and the brightest students to the University of Connecticut.

 **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 22:38

OK.

Excellent. OK. I know it kind of went off a little bit, but I figured it all ties in. So any other thoughts, questions from the committee?

Then we will say thank you very much for the report and look forward to the next update. Thank you. Then I she was on my screen. Hopefully she she's back. Angela Rola, are you, are you there?

 **Fuerst, Nathan** 23:11

Thank you.

 **Rola, Angela** 23:20

I'm here. I'm probably on page 2.

 **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 23:22

OK.

Yeah, I see. I can. I don't see your face, but that's OK. We can hear you well.



Rola, Angela 23:30

Oh, can anybody else see me? I can see me.



Pollard, Bryan 23:33

I can see you.



Andrea Dennis-LaVigne 23:33

Oh, oops. You're a little circ. There you are. Now I can see you. I don't know what happened. Just like that. OK, then you. Thank you very much. You have the floor.



Rola, Angela 23:34

Oh.



Hines, Jeffrey 23:35

Yeah, we got you.



Rola, Angela 23:45

Yeah.

Thank you. Thank you, Trustee Dennis Levine, for the opportunity to update this committee on the work of the Cultural Centers and Program offices. I am Angela Rolla and I serve as the Senior Director for Inclusion and Cultural Engagement. In the Division of Student Life and Enrollment, overseeing the Cultural Centers and Program offices. This role was created by Doctor Starke during our time in the Provost office under Student Success and was made permanent when we transitioned to Student Life and Enrollment under Nathan Fuerst.

It has been an honor to serve in this capacity. The Storrs campus is home to five cultural centers, the African American, Asian American, Puerto Rican, Latin American, Rainbow and Women's Centers, and two program offices, Native American cultural programs.

And Middle Eastern cultural programs. All seven spaces are located in the Student Union on the 1st and 4th floors. I want to note that the directors had the opportunity to meet with Trustee Dennis Levine in November.

And Trustee Paul Pollard last week. During both sessions, we shared updates on our programs and services, highlighted students accomplishments and concerns, and

introduced new initiatives currently underway.

Trustees also toured all seven spaces and experienced firsthand the uniqueness and vibrancy of each, while also having the chance to speak with students and staff. Our work is holistic and centers on three pillars, education, advocacy and fostering.

A sense of belonging. Our professional staff bring deep expertise across multiple functional areas to support students as well as staff and faculty. We contribute to the recruitment, retention and graduation of our students.

And all of the centers and program offices offer mentoring programs that help first year students transition into college life. In addition to serving our core communities, our programs support first generation international.

Undocumented DACA and expecting and parenting students. We also engage with middle and high school visitors during campus tours, UConn bound days and admitted students open houses.

Since the fall semester, I launched what I call the Directors Roadshows to introduce or reintroduce the critical work of the centers and program offices. We have presented to numerous units within the Student Life and Enrollment Division.

The Homer Babbage Library staff and academic departments. This semester we are focusing on leadership teams within the schools and colleges as well as the regional campuses. These presentations have strengthened campus understanding of our work.

Renewed collaborations and sparked new partnerships. The Cultural Center directors are also actively engaging with our regional campuses, meeting with students, including those planning to complete their programs in stores.

To help ensure a smooth and supportive transition to the main campus. Additionally, our professional staff serve on numerous university committees and provide a wide range of training for student organizations, campus departments, and community groups.

This service and outreach further strengthen our campus partnerships and ensure that equity centered practices are embedded across the institution.

Our work is also shaped by global events that directly affect our students and communities. Most recently, the unfolding conflict and widespread civil unrest in Iran have deeply impacted students with personal, familial and cultural ties to the region. These events have created fear, uncertainty, and trauma among students who are worried about their loved ones, financial hardships back home, and the broader instability affecting their communities. In response, our centers, particularly the

Middle Eastern Cultural Program.

Office, along with international students and scholar services, Student Health and Wellness, and the Graduate School, have increased support, created spaces for dialogue and community care, and are planning educational opportunities to help the broader UConn community.

Community understand the cultural dimensions of international conflict. This is a powerful reminder that global incidents do not remain out there. They arrive on our campus in very real ways, shaping the needs of our students.

And the services we provide.

National immigration enforcement policies have also intensified anxiety among undocumented and mixed status students. With federal protections for college campuses as sensitive areas now rescinded, students have reported heightened fear and stress due to the possibility of ICE.

activity near or on campus. Our centers continue to provide support, resources and community spaces to help students feel safer and supported during this uncertain climate.

But let me highlight some of the good things that we also are doing. Last Wednesday, we opened Black History Month by celebrating the 100th anniversary of the first Black History Week in the United States, with influencer Lanae Vinay as the keynote speaker.

Later this month, the AACC will host its annual Black Excellence Summit with students from all our campuses participating. Today, we have 160 students signed up. March is Women's Herstory Month.

Nowruz, the Persian New Year, is scheduled for March 14th, and the annual Eid celebration marking the end of Ramadan will take place on March 25th. On April 9th, the Rainbow Center will host its annual drag show. Asian American Heritage Month is also.

Celebrated in April with Asia Night as one of its signature events, and the Native American Cultural Programs is planning its annual powwow for April as well. Perlac will host Latin Fest, celebrating and recognizing Latin music and culture.

And rounding out the spring semester will be our senior recognition events. So yes, we are very busy. So let me just share some data points with you. The Center and the program offices have 14 professional staff, 9 graduate assistants and 100.

And twenty-nine undergraduate student staff. We could not function unless we had all of those students working in our space, considering that we are open Monday

through Thursday to either 8:00 or 9:00 in the evening.

Collectively, our mentoring programs include 170 mentors, mentoring 245 mentees.

To date, all of our centers and program offices have held 151 programs.

That it does not include offices and student organizations that have reserved space in our centers and program offices, but these are unique programs to each of the cultural centers and program offices.

Space usage numbers are not collected by all centers, but to give you some idea of the traffic in the center, the African American Cultural Center during the fall had 4334 check insurance.

With 998 of those being unique. So we are working on that and the hopes that all of the centers will collect that data because it shows that students are accessing and using our services and attending our events, but more importantly coming into our.

Spaces to be in community and as Trustee Dennis Levine and Trustee Pollard can attest to, the diversity in all of our centers and program spaces is is incredible.

Students are finding their way to our spaces.

And just the data that Nathan has provided for us. We are very, very fortunate to have not only a diverse group of students on this campus, but a global group of students on this campus, an opportunity for all of us to be global citizens.

In a much better and broader way, data is also being collected at our event attendance and I can provide that information if you would like that. But it is quite impressive and incredible the amount of students, faculty and staff and even community members who attend.

Our events with that, I will stop and ask if you have any questions. I could go on and on and on. As you can see, I'm very proud of the work that the cultural centers and program offices are doing. We are busy, as I tell Nathan, while admissions keeps admitting students, we.

Keep on making sure that they're being serviced and we're providing the programs that meet their needs. So thank you.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 33:54

Thank you very much. It was an excellent, excellent presentation. If there's any comments, questions.

PB **Pollard, Bryan** 34:04

I would just like to echo what Trustee Dennis Levine just said. That was an

outstanding presentation full of information and and data. I know a lot of us like like data and so that was that was great to have that. I will say that I spent the the majority of last Wednesday.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 34:04

I'll probably.

PB **Pollard, Bryan** 34:23

Touring the the cultural centers, as Doctor Ola mentioned, and I was struck by so many things that you know, the utilization of the spaces, the professionalism of the staff, the just the vibe.

If I can use that word at my advanced age, but just the vibe that I got from the students who are who are there. But something that really struck me was the diversity within the centers, right? So it wasn't just that, say, at the African American Cultural Center, everyone was.

Of African descent it it was there was just a mixture of of people all over. Not that you can tell by this by, you know, the psych test, but people appeared to be of different backgrounds.

And I just thought that was the one of the beauties of of our centers and the diversity that we are working so hard to promote and sustain. And I just want to thank Angela Rola for her.

Extraordinary leadership in in difficult times and you're stepping up to the plate and really making a difference in the lives of the students and of the university overall. So thank you.

 **Rola, Angela** 35:50

Thank you very much. And as you know, Trustee Pollard, we have an incredible staff in the cultural centers and the program offices who really take their work seriously, but find joy in what they're doing. And so that's very apparent and that's On to our students.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 36:13

Thank you. Thank you for the comments. Are there any other questions? And if I could wrap it up with Doctor Rolla and and again encourage others to visit, especially on the trustees here on on this on this committee.

It is. It is eye-opening as what the cultural centers mean. My last visit, and I've been several times, but my visit was around Thanksgiving and it was meaningful to see the different cultural centers and different students from all backgrounds as Trustee Pollock.

Said they were, they were putting together a trustee, I mean a trustee, a Thanksgiving meal, you know, prior to getting ready to go home and it the the joy that you that was represented, the pride was.

Was just incredible. And going back to what you're saying about the student staffing, they they knew what their jobs were and they take took them. They take their jobs seriously. So to have these, I mean, I was a student worker as well.

With my financial aid package, I was over working with the sheep and the goats over on the other side of 195, but they were so happy to be there and to watch them interact with each other. And finally, you are the mother hen.

I I want to say that the way you've just kind of nursed your cult, the cultural leaders and the way that you interact with them, we are so fortunate. And I know Kathleen Holkerson having been the the voice of the Women's Center for so many years.

We're very fortunate to have you and just wanted to take this time at this public meeting to say so. Thank you very much.



Rola, Angela 38:07

Thank you. Thank you. I do also want to acknowledge that for a short time, Michael Vidal also served in the capacity in the Puerto Rican Latin American Cultural Center and Fany Hannon Hannan as well. And so it takes a village to do this work and it's a great village to have. So thank you so much for having Me here and and to the trustees, if you would love to come and spend some time with us, I would love to invite you to do that. So expect an invitation.



Andrea Dennis-LaVigne 38:39

Expect it, of course, and she means it. And Speaking of trustees, I know that Trustee Bunnell joined us as well. So welcome to the to the meeting.



Chuck Bunnell 38:50

I look forward to that invitation.



Andrea Dennis-LaVigne 38:52

See. OK, so no other comments, questions. It is a love fest because this is we believe in our centers. Great. Then I'm going to ask, Speaking of a former center leader, Fany Hannon.

Doctor Fany Hannon, would you please join us? Now you're not. I don't see your picture either. I just see HP on my screen, but I guess eventually you'll show up. Everyone else can probably see her, right?



Rola, Angela 39:15

Oh.



Hannon, Fany D 39:19

When I started this, everyone, thank you so much. I mean Trustee Dennis Levin, I'm going to join, I mean in the love, I mean for our wonderful Angela Rola. So I'm very grateful for Doctor Stark to create that position, but very grateful for our VP 1st to make it permanent. So we all can benefit for that. So thank you so very much.

Very much as we continue supporting our students. So I'm ***** de Jesus Hanon. I'm the Dean of Students at the at the university. And I I want to start giving you an update about the unfortunate passing of three of our lovely Huskies. And I know I'm gonna. I need to share this this news.

With everyone. So the semester started and we lost three of our students. Two students were an undergraduate and one of our students was a graduate student. It is my understanding that our trustees wanted to just get an idea as to what we do during this this very difficult times. So when when?

We lost.

One of our our students. So what we do is a critical incident response team that we call a CERT. It's led by our Associate Dean of Students, Maureen Armstrong, and we really take the time to bring everyone who needs to have involved student activities on campus housing.

Our Police Department is a comprise of many different offices and our main goal when we lost, I mean our students is to support them, to support their classmates, their roommates, but also their families. And I'm going to say this because it's very important that I named this also to honor the.

Privacy. Oftentimes we get requests. You know, it's a human nature to be curious to alert our university community. But our priority is to honor the memory of our students and respect the privacy of their families. We don't do anything unless the

family will be in.

An agreement to do, I mean what we can to support them in this difficult times. So I just wanted, I mean to name that in the space so our trustees are aware of the work that we do. Most importantly, every April and April 22nd of this year, we are going to be honoring those that we have lost.

Across, I mean all of our campuses and that is an opportunity when we invite the families, their friends, their classmates, their professors and we will make sure that our trustees also have this date and the event that you if your schedule allow you allow you to join us, I think it will be important. I mean if you have the time to.

To to come and see, it's very difficult time. It really takes a lot of from us, from from our team, not only at the Dean of Students office, but across, I mean all of the offices involved when we lost one of our beloved Huskies. So I just wanted, I mean to provide that update for each and one of you.

I wanted to share areas of concern that our students keep bringing forward, specifically in the Dean of Students office. What we are seeing is that one of the main areas is academic services and support. So our assistant Deans and our assistant directors in care and concern, that's what they do to help and support our students when it comes to.

The academic support. We also see many of our students leaving the university from a rate of recent. We provide the support at the Dean of Students Office, helping them to understand what the process is and also helping our students to find other paths when they're ready to come back coming to the university.

Off campus housing, it keeps being another area of concern for across for all our students from different social identities. We keep growing, right? And therefore off campus housing has become a major need across all of our campuses, especially those that have housing.

As well, you know personal and family issues and certainly we do our best to be the the bridge between our faculty and our students to help them understand what are the different, you know, stressors that our students are facing and I'm forever grateful to be in partnership with them.

The Provost Office and the vice pros for student success as we keep doing this work and certainly I think Angela alluded this in her remarks, immigration and as well anything surrounded. I mean policies and immigration keeps to being a number one stressor not only for our students but certainly for our staff and faculty across.

All of our campuses. So it's important for this committee to know that as a university

we keep, I mean doing our best. We are being working behind the scenes to provide guidance to our community and to our campuses in the event. If ICE comes to campuses, what can we do and you know.

And follow through. So we have been working on it and more on that will you know will be shared with Vice President 1st and as well Vice President Hines and I'm sure that they will share that information with our trustees. So I'm going to end there with my report and I'm open to questions and comments.

Or reactions in the chat.

 **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 44:39

Thank you very much, Dean Hannon. I I'm sure this committee would really appreciate, you know, the prompt updates in in terms of.

You know, ICE and any changes that may occur on our campus, we do empathize and do understand the stresses for, I think for for all students, you know, even dealing with some things in my family, it's not just, I think, individuals that could be affected.

As it is that it's their friends, it's their classmates. So I do see, would you agree that this is also another stress that we're adding to our student body, but if we could just keep us in the loop and and keep us notified, we would greatly appreciate that.

 **Hannon, Fany D** 45:31

Yes, absolutely. Thank you, Trustee Dennis Levin. I it's we see it, it's it affects everyone, you know, anything that is affecting our students and and at the same time I want to share this with each one of you today. As the Dean of students, I see every single one of them, meaning that some of our students are very affected for what is happening and.

 **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 45:37

Yeah.

 **Hannon, Fany D** 45:51

Immigration. So mother of our Huskies, they're really worried about it. They want to make sure that we win the championships, the basketball championships. And so I always bring this because each one of our students is always in a very different, you know, realm. But I I I wanted to, you know, remind each and one of us that we're here

to support and meet what our students where they are.

Bad Bunny was at the Super Bowl. So many of our students across all of the social identities and ethnic identities, they are thrilled that Bad Bunny was the perform at the Super Bowl.

 **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 46:24

Yeah, that that was fun. That was fun. And and just I I want to just when we were talking about visiting at Thanksgiving at touring the cultural centers, I saw the signs that talked about your open houses, your your open house hours and it was very prominent and to make sure that the students.

Knew that they could sign up and and have with you, which I'm sure it's been going on, but I've never seen it so evident. So thank you for doing that.

 **Hannon, Fany D** 46:55

Thank you. Yeah, that was Maureen Astrom before my time that that partnership, I mean with the drop-in hours from the Dean of Students Office and the Cultural Centers and Cultural Programs. Thank you.

 **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 47:02

Well, I'll, yeah, I'll stop talking. Is there anyone else that wants to comment?

Fantastic job. Thank you so much for your report then.

Then we're up for our report from our University Senate Rep, which is Doctor Micah Heumann. You're up. Nice to see you.

 **Heumann, Micah** 47:23

Thank you so much. Thank you. It's good to see you all. I'll try and keep it short because I know we still have a few other people talking, I believe. So we've only had one time to meet this semester with the Senate DJ Committee, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, Accessibility. We actually had Maureen Armstrong from the Dean of Students come talk to us last time.

And tell us all the wonderful things. So I won't repeat all of them except to just know that you know numbers are definitely up in the Dean of Students office with the students coming to see them. And so the needs continue to rise, which means you know with I think so many of our centers and agencies and programs departments is is you know staffing, right, which I know Nathan first always talks about with keeping

students here, right. The importance of not just.

Bringing them in, but keeping them here. So just seeing that all the people that are working here are just seem to be doing, you know, 1 1/2 to two times their role in the work, but specifically the Cultural Centers, Dean of Students offices, seen that a lot. So but yeah, it's great to talk with Maureen, all they're doing. She did talk about the drop in hours again at the cultural.

Centers, that partnership is so fantastic and I want to give another shout out to the cultural centers because I've done drop in hours there with before my previous position. I've been to each of the centers, use their spaces on a regular basis and I think as Trustee Pollard said right that you go in there and you see you just see so many different types of students.

In there and all the centers, and it's amazing how many students are realizing they can access those centers and use them for programming or just to stop coming and do homework or just to get away from the noise. So it's really great to see. Coming up, we do have some things we'll be talking about in the Senate. We're going to have Vice Provost Goran come in. We're gonna talk about.

Religious, some religious holiday kind of sticking points with Reading Day and finals in the semester because they take place on Saturday, which is the Sabbath specifically if you're looking for Orthodox Jewish individuals. So we're going to talk about that coming up. We're also going to be looking to talk about accessibility. It's come to my attention that if you do need to use the disability parking in area one, you actually have to pay up for those services, right? So I we've even heard someone that was 20 years ago was pregnant and you know, had to pay that area one fee to use those.

Those parking spots, but those are the only parking spots that are close. And so want to look at some of the accessibility issues that we have on this, this campus as well. And then a couple other pieces I I do, you know, want to say that you know constantly hearing about the morale right as these contract negotiations continue on both for.

AUP and UCP specifically, just a lot of morale issues among staff and faculty that I'm hearing in the Senate and beyond. And it's what's incredible to me is how so many people are feeling so defeated, yet they're still showing up to work with the students. And and and really compartmentalizing that in in an amazing way, right. That I wouldn't fault them if they weren't. But you know, we have amazing people. I think everyone on here knows that working at this university. So but I do want to point

that out because I know as we're all going into these spaces, it's great to see this trustee showing up to events and I know that you know.

So being able to talk with you one-on-one is a really fantastic opportunity, both for students and staff and faculty. Also, the last couple of things I want to just give a shout out to the OICR monthly meetings. Jonelle, who runs those, she just puts on amazing events. I found them so beneficial and rewarding to attend.

And the fact that they're hybrid, which makes it so challenging and I hear people say they just can't do hybrid. Yet Jonelle makes it seem so easy and so rewarding. So I really want to give a big shout out to you, Jonelle, cuz again, I've been getting something out of them every time and when I'm like feeling down like I don't want to go, I go there and I like.

Leave feeling like I either learned something or grew in my own self, which is just a great feeling. So I really you set the bar for how to run a meeting and they're fantastic journal. I really mean that. So thank you for that. So I think that's it. I've given all my shout outs, but I appreciate everyone and I appreciate it. It's just nice to see this group of people here dedicated.

To this work and um, so thank you if there's any questions.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 51:38

Yes, if there's any questions, any comments, excellent report really. And and I think again as I mentioned earlier in the meeting, we have you know a couple of new trustees that have joined this committee and if this was my first meeting, I would have learned a lot. So hopefully Trustee Barrios.

Those who feel that way and know that these people are just a phone call away and welcoming you to to to learn more. And they're great. And then and this work has been going on for decades and some of us were here fighting the fight and will continue to do that. But this is just been.

Wonderful. Any other comments for Doctor Human?

OK. Then I think we don't have any other business. We have no executive session that is planned. So I think what I just want to kind of kind of summarize that some of the things that were had been said about going back to the cultural centers that seems to have been.

A dominant topic and and it is we talked about you've talked about programming many people did in support and just again want to commend the transition as we use our regional campuses and some of them have you know increased applications

but that transition when you talk to the students at those.

Regional campuses, you know, and they want to go to stores, but there's anxiety about making that move. So what you're doing and supporting those students, I highly commend because again, it is all about retention, bringing these students in and retaining our students from the regional campuses as well as the ones that start off in stores.

Also just education. We're we're all about education here at UConn and those those cultural centers are an area to educate as well. So there's no other added business. I again thank you all for being here.

It's a very efficient meeting and I wish you the best. So may I have a motion in a second to adjourn?

PB **Pollard, Bryan** 53:52

So moved, Pollard.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 53:54

Thank you. Second.

CB **Chuck Bunnell** 53:56

Second, Bonell.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 53:57

Thank you, Trustee Brunell. All in favor, please say aye. Aye.

PB **Pollard, Bryan** 54:02

Bye.

CB **Chuck Bunnell** 54:03

Oh.

AD **Andrea Dennis-LaVigne** 54:04

And we'll say goodbye. Take good care. Bye bye.

PB **Pollard, Bryan** 54:07

OK, take care everyone.

- **Board of Trustees** stopped transcription