

April 29, 2026

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Pamir Alpay, Ph.D.
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

RE: Appointment of Professor Alexis L. Boylan, Ph.D. to the Rhoda Shivers Chair in the School of Fine Arts



RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Trustees approve the appointment of Professor Alexis L. Boylan, Ph.D. to the Rhoda Shivers Chair in the School of Fine Arts for the period August 23, 2026, through August 22, 2031.

RESOLUTION:

"Be it resolved that the University of Connecticut Board of Trustees appoint Professor Alexis L. Boylan to the Rhoda Shivers Chair in the School of Fine Arts for the period August 23, 2026, through August 22, 2031."

BACKGROUND:

The Rhoda Shivers Chair was established in September 2021 in recognition of the generosity of Jay S. Shivers, Ph.D., retired UConn professor, and his son and daughter -in-law, Jed Shivers, '81 MBA, and Sandra E. Shivers, Ph.D.

The individual appointed to the Rhoda Shivers Chair in the Art & Art History Department within the University's School of Fine Arts will be a nationally or internationally recognized researcher, scholar, and teacher and will have made significant contributions to the field of nineteenth century art, with demonstrated expertise and the ability to teach courses in impressionism.

The appointment of Professor Alexis L. Boylan follows the unanimous recommendations of Dean Deanna Fitzgerald, the Department Heads of Art & Art History, Dramatic Arts, and Music, and the Associate Dean of the School of Fine Arts.

Professor Boylan earned a B.A. in History from Bryn Mawr College, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Art History from Rutgers University. She joined UConn in 2010, having previously taught at the

University of Tennessee and at Lawrence University in Wisconsin. She holds a joint appointment in the Department of Art and Art History and the Africana Studies Institute, and is also Affiliate Faculty in American Studies, the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program, and the Sustainable Global Cities Initiative. She served as Associate Director and then Director of Academic Affairs of the University of Connecticut Humanities Institute from 2016 to 2023.

Professor Boylan is a highly respected and widely published historian of art and broader visual culture from the eighteenth century to the present day, with particular expertise in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She is the author of *Visual Culture* (MIT Press, 2020), and of *Ashcan Art, Whiteness, and the Unspectacular Man* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017); she is co-author of *Furious Feminisms: Alternate Routes on Mad Max: Fury Road* (University of Minnesota, 2020), and editor of *Thomas Kinkadee, The Artist in the Mall* (Duke University Press, 2011), and of *Ellen Emmet Rand: Gender, Art, and Business* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2020). Her scholarship on American art has focused on artists and art movements that stood alongside and responded to impressionism (even if at times to oppose its influence), and she brings a deep knowledge of both European and American impressionism to her original scholarship and inspiring teaching.

Professor Boylan's analytical approach to art as visual culture brings an innovative and provocative interdisciplinarity to her work. In 2020, she was awarded a prestigious Luce Foundation grant for an exhibition project in collaboration with the American Museum of Natural History in New York: *Seeing Truth: Art, Science, Museums, and Making Knowledge*. The result was three unique stagings of the project, in Storrs, CT, London, UK, and Heidelberg, Germany. This was her second Luce Foundation grant, the first having been awarded to help fund an exhibition and edited collection on Ellen Emmet Rand. During her tenure at the University of Connecticut's Humanities Institute, Professor Boylan was also co-principal investigator on two successful grants funded by the Mellon Foundation, awarded to promote interdisciplinary humanities collaboration.