

DRAFT MINUTES

University of Connecticut Board of Trustees

Student Life Committee April 23, 2026 Virtual Meeting

Committee Trustees: Bryan Pollard, Shari Cantor, Andrea Dennis-LaVigne,
Sean Dunn, Diane Whitney

Other Trustees: Daniel Toscano

University Staff: Liza Boritz, Nathan Fuerst, Nicole Gelston, James Lowe,
Shannon Walsh

Vice-Chair Pollard called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

1. Public Participation

No members of the public signed up to address the Committee.

2. Minutes from the February 19, 2026, Meeting

On a motion by Trustee Whitney, seconded by Trustee Dunn, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2026, Meeting.

3. Standing Updates:

- Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment
- Student Trustees

Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment Fuerst shared that the university is closely monitoring enrollment activity ahead of the May 1 commitment deadline and is seeing encouraging interest in new Hartford housing. He provided updates on financial aid processing delays related to FAFSA changes, noting limited impact on students, and shared progress on hiring an Associate Vice President for Enrollment. He also highlighted ongoing efforts to support student well-being and mental health, including expanded systems and prevention initiatives, as well as discussions related to student fees and funding.

Undergraduate Student Trustee Dunn shared an overview of the student experience since the last meeting, highlighting strong student engagement through major events and research initiatives, continued attention to student well-being, school pride driven by athletic success, ongoing student leadership transitions, and anticipation surrounding upcoming Commencement ceremonies.

4. Campus Climate Update:
Fany DeJesús Hannon, Ed.D., Dean of Students

Vice President for Student Life and Enrollment Fuerst shared on behalf of Dean of Students Hannon that the Campus Climate Committee continues to meet regularly, with an expanded scope to address issues affecting students, faculty, and staff. He noted the recent Student Memorial Service, recognizing its importance for the campus community in coming together to reflect and honor students, as well as ongoing efforts to strengthen student support systems, including identifying gaps in mental health and well-being resources. He also highlighted continued collaboration with local communities to address off-campus student behavior, spring programming designed to provide safe and engaging student activities, and ongoing management of student demonstrations in alignment with university policies.

5. Sense of Belonging and Student Outcomes:
Liza Boritz, Director of Planning, Assessment, and Evaluation

Director Boritz presented on the role of student belonging as a key indicator of student success, persistence, and well-being. Drawing on institutional data and national research, she highlighted the relationship between students' sense of connection, inclusion, and mattering and their engagement, academic outcomes, and retention. The presentation emphasized the importance of measuring belonging to inform equity-minded, data-driven decision-making aimed at improving student success.

6. University Senate Representative Report

There was no University Senate Representative Report.

7. Other Business

There was no Other Business.

8. Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

9. Adjournment

On a motion by Trustee Whitney, seconded by Trustee Dennis-LaVigne, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brianna Zecchini
Secretary to the Committee