AGENDA

University of Connecticut
Board of Trustees

Academic Affairs Committee
Tuesday, October 27, 2026, at 8:30 a.m.
Virtual Meeting

Public Streaming Link (live captioning, upon request): https://its.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 **8:30 a.m.**

1. Public Participation*
   * Individuals who wish to speak during the Public Participation portion, of the Tuesday, October 27, meeting, must sign up no later than 8:30 a.m. on Monday, October 26 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). The Committee may limit the entirety of public comment to a maximum of 30 minutes. 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.

ACTION ITEMS

2. Minutes from the September 22, 2026, Meeting (Attachment 1)
3. Tenure at Hire (Attachment 2)
4. Designation of Emeritus Status (Attachment 3)
5. Sabbatical Leave Recommendations (Attachment 4)
6. Establishment of the Everett R. Emino Endowed Professorship in Floriculture in the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources (Attachment 5)
7. Proposal to Establish the UConn Honors College (Attachment 6)

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

8. University Senate Representative Report
9. Provost's Update
10. Other Business
11. Executive Session (as needed)
12. 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.*

ATTACHMENT 1

DRAFT MINUTES

University of Connecticut
Board of Trustees

Academic Affairs Committee
September 22, 2026
Virtual Meeting

Committee Trustees:	Shari Cantor, Andrea Dennis-LaVigne, Philip Rubin, Richard Vogel, Diane Whitney
University Senate Representative:	Karen Bresciano, Lindsay Cummings
University Staff:	Radenka Maric, Pamir Alpay, Sarah Croucher,Nathan Fuerst, Nicole Gelston, Anthony Rini, Reka Wrynn

Vice-Chair Cantor called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

1. Public Participation

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

2. Minutes from the June 16, 2026, Meeting (Attachment 1)

   On a motion by Trustee Whitney, seconded by Trustee Rubin, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2026, meeting.

3. Tenure at Hire (Attachment 2)

   On a motion by Trustee Rubin, seconded by Trustee Vogel, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend Agenda Item #3 to the full Board for approval.

4. Designation of Emeritus Status (Attachment 3)

5. Sabbatical Leave Recommendations (Attachment 4)

   On a motion by Trustee Whitney, seconded by Trustee Vogel, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend Agenda Items #4 and #5 to the full Board for approval.

6. Reappointment of Professor Brenda Brueggemann to the Aetna Chair of Writing in the Department of English in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (Attachment 5)

7. Appointment of Professor Guozhen Lu to the Stuart and Joan Sidney Professorship in Mathematics in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (Attachment 6)

8. Reappointment of Professor Manisha Sinha to the (Attachment 7)
   James L. and Shirley A. Draper Chair in American History
   in the Department of History in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

9. Appointment of Professor Shalabh Gupta to the (Attachment 8)
   Pratt & Whitney Associate Professorship in Advanced Systems Engineering
   in the College of Engineering

10. Appointment of Professor Hongyi Xu to the (Attachment 9)
    Pratt & Whitney Associate Professorship in Advanced Systems Engineering
    in the College of Engineering

    On a motion by Trustee Rubin, seconded by Trustee Whitney, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend Agenda Items #6-#10 to the full Board for approval.

11. Establishment of The Hartford Insurance Group Professor in Laborer Safety (Attachment 10)

    On a motion by Trustee Whitney, seconded by Trustee Rubin, the Committee voted unanimously to recommend Agenda Item #11 to the full Board for approval.

12. University Senate Representative Report

    Senate Representative Karen Bresciano provided an update on the Scholastic Standards Committee's review of attendance, Advanced Placement credit, temporary grades, and artificial intelligence in teaching and learning. She also noted discussions regarding a Storrs testing center and concerns about academic support staffing and federal student loan policy changes.

13. Presentation from Nathan Fuerst, Vice President for Student Life & Enrollment

    Vice President Nathan Fuerst presented enrollment information for the Fall 2026 semester and an update on the University's Strategic Enrollment Management plan. There was a general discussion on activities supported by this plan to enhance student success and retention.

14. Provost's Report

    Provost Alpay reported an update about the QuantumCT Engine initiative, AI for ImpaCT initiative, and the university's strategic faculty hiring initiative.

15. Other Business

    There was no Other Business.

16. Executive Session

    There was no Executive Session.

17. Adjournment

On a motion by Trustee Whitney, seconded by Trustee Dennis-LaVigne, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn. The Committee adjourned at 9:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Lohrey
Secretary to the Committee

ATTACHMENT 2

University of Connecticut

Tenure at Hire Recommendations

October 28, 2026 Board of Trustees Meeting

Name	**Department**	**School/College**
Effective August 23, 2026		
TENURE AS ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR		
Fabius, Chanee		School of Social Work

ATTACHMENT 3

University of Connecticut Department of Human Resources
Emeritus Retirees
October 28, 2026 Board of Trustees Meeting

NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	SCHOOL/COLLEGE	RETIRED	HIRED
Faculty meeting "automatic" criteria for emeritus status					
Smith, Steven	Professor	Journalism	College of Liberal Arts and Sciences	7/1/2026	8/23/2013

ATTACHMENT 4

University of Connecticut Office of the Provost
Sabbatical Leave Recommendations Requiring Board of Trustees Approval
October 28, 2026, Board of Trustees Meeting

SABBATICAL MODIFICATIONS/POSTPONEMENTS

NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	SCHOOL/COLLEGE	PAY	PERIOD
Leahey, Tricia	Director & U Professor	Allied Health Sciences	Agriculture, Health, Natural Resources	Half Change to Half	AY 2027-2028 AY 2028-2029
Madjar, Nora	Assoc Dean & Assoc Professor	Business	Business	Full Change to Full	Fall 2026 Fall 2029
Wang, Xueju	Assoc Professor	Material Science and Engineering	Engineering	Full Change to Full	Fall 2026 Spring 2027

SABBATICAL LEAVE REQUESTS

NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	SCHOOL/COLLEGE	PAY	PERIOD
Athens, Elizabeth	Assoc Professor	Art & Art History	Fine Arts	Full	Spring 2028
Freidus, Alexandra	Assoc Professor	Educational Leadership	Education	Half	AY 2027-2028
Hintz, Elizabeth	Asst Professor	Communication	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Full	Spring 2028
King'oo, Clare	Department Head & Assoc Prof	English	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Half	AY 2027-2028
Ladha, Hassanaly	Assoc Professor	Lit, Cultures and Languages	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Half	AY 2027-2028
Orozco Mendoza, Elva	Asst Professor	Political Science	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Half	AY 2027-2028
Park, Crystal	Distinguished Professor	Psychological Sciences	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Half	AY 2027-2028
Seligmann, Katerina	Assoc Professor	Lit, Cultures and Languages	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Full	Fall 2027
Semenza, Gregory	Professor	English	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Full	Fall 2027
Skoe, Erika	Professor	Speech, Language and Hearing	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Full	Fall 2027

NAME	TITLE	DEPARTMENT	SCHOOL/COLLEGE	PAY	PERIOD
Song, Dongjin	Assoc Professor	Computing	Engineering	Full	Spring 2027
Talbert, Ryan	Asst Professor	Sociology	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Full	Fall 2027
Williams, Erika	Assoc Professor	English	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Full	Fall 2027
Yazdani, Kaveh	Asst Professor	History	Liberal Arts and Sciences	Full	Fall 2027

ATTACHMENT 5

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Office of the Provost
Pamir Alpay, Ph.D.
Provost and Executive Vice President
for Academic Affairs

October 28, 2026

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

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

RE: Establishment of the Everett R. Emino Endowed Professorship in Floriculture in the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Trustees approve the establishment of the Everett R. Emino Endowed Professorship in Floriculture in the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources.

RESOLUTION:

"Be it resolved that the University of Connecticut Board of Trustees approves the recommendation to establish the Everett R. Emino Endowed Professorship in Floriculture in the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources."

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture within the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources unites scientific discovery and creative design to advance UConn's mission in teaching, research, and extension.

The Everett R. Emino Endowed Professorship in Floriculture will provide financial support for a faculty position in the Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture within the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources. The appointee will be a distinguished scholar in horticulture who demonstrates excellence in student mentoring and teaching greenhouse management and/or greenhouse crop production. The professorship may support salary and fringe benefits as well as related academic activities, including teaching, research in the cultural physiology of greenhouse crops, and graduate student mentoring.

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WEB: academicaffairs.uconn.edu

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Everett R. Emino, Ph.D., is a horticulturist and professor emeritus whose career has included faculty and academic leadership roles. His professional work has focused on horticulture, greenhouse crops, research administration, and floriculture. He also operates Everett's Flower Farm in Nova Scotia, producing seasonal specialty cut flowers.

Dr. Emino served as a faculty member and department head at the University of Connecticut during the 1980s. His pledge will establish a permanent endowment supporting floriculture teaching, research, and graduate student mentorship in the department where he previously served.

Dr. Emino has pledged a commitment totaling an amount consistent with the amount recommended for naming this position under the University's *Named Gift Guidelines*.

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ATTACHMENT 6

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Office of the Provost
Pamir Alpay, Ph.D.
Provost and Executive Vice President
for Academic Affairs

October 28, 2026

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

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

RE: Proposal to Establish the UConn Honors College

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Trustees approve the recommendation to establish the UConn Honors College by transitioning the existing Honors Program to an Honors College.

RESOLUTION:

"Be it resolved that the University of Connecticut Board of Trustees approves the recommendation to establish the UConn Honors College by transitioning the existing Honors Program to an Honors College."

BACKGROUND:

The University of Connecticut's Honors Program has an established record of providing an enriched undergraduate education through advanced coursework, research, and leadership opportunities. Its academic framework emphasizes exploration, creative productivity, and leadership for the common good. The program serves students at Storrs and the regional campuses, has expanded participation among first-generation and historically marginalized students, and produces strong retention and graduation outcomes.

As competition for high-achieving students intensifies, particularly in the Northeast, an Honors College will strengthen UConn's ability to recruit and retain exceptional students. Many peer and aspirant public research universities have established honors colleges as prominent components of their undergraduate education and recruitment strategies. Demand for UConn's Honors Program currently exceeds its capacity, limiting the University's ability to offer admission to additional qualified students.

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The proposed Honors College will build on the existing academic foundation while providing greater institutional visibility and a nationally recognizable identity. It will support expanded academic, research, and leadership opportunities for students and advance the University's strategic priorities related to academic excellence, enrollment, and student success. Establishing an Honors College will also strengthen engagement with alumni and donors and create opportunities for philanthropic support through scholarships, endowed leadership and faculty positions, enrichment opportunities, and naming opportunities.

The proposal identifies approximately $500,000 in additional annual investment to establish a dean position, strengthen staffing, support current enrollment and modest enrollment growth, create an Honors Faculty Fellows Program, and expand course offerings and enrichment opportunities. These investments will build on the structure already in place within the Honors Program and strengthen UConn's competitive position among leading public research universities.

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Proposal to Create an Honors College

Executive Summary

This proposal requests approval to rename the University of Connecticut's **Honors Program** as the **Honors College**. As Connecticut's land grant public research university, UConn must compete nationally for exceptional students who elevate the academic profile of our university, strengthen our student success outcomes, and enhance our reputation and rankings. UConn already delivers many of the defining characteristics of an Honors College through its successful Honors Program. Targeted investments will build on this foundation by establishing a UConn Honors College that will strengthen our competitive position among peer institutions and further our mission of academic excellence. For approximately $500,000 in annual investment, and modest one-time capital improvements to dedicate an existing building, UConn can advance its enrollment strategy, strengthen institutional reputation and rankings, expand philanthropic opportunities, and reinforce its position among the nation's leading public research universities.

Proposed Name: UConn Honors College

Submitted by:
Jennifer Lease Butts
Associate Vice Provost for Enrichment Programs, Director of the Honors Program

Amy Gorin
Senior Vice Provost

Background and Context:
UConn faces a narrowing window in which to strengthen its position in the market for exceptional students. Demographic pressure is increasing competition for high-achieving students, particularly in the Northeast. Peer and aspirant institutions are using honors colleges as prominent recruitment, reputation, and fundraising assets. Student demand for UConn Honors already exceeds the program's capacity. Because of investments to dates, the existing Honors Program has matured sufficiently to support a college designation without the cost or risk of building an entirely new enterprise. A modest incremental investment can produce returns across undergraduate enrollment, student success, reputation, rankings, and philanthropy.

UConn has both a compelling reason to act and a strong foundation on which to build. Delaying risks ceding competitive ground at precisely the moment when the University must distinguish the value of a UConn undergraduate education. Creating an Honors

College would give Honors the visibility, organizational standing, and philanthropic identity needed to serve as a university-wide strategic asset. Specifically, An Honors College would:

- strengthen UConn's position in recruiting exceptional students;
- provide a nationally recognizable signal of undergraduate academic excellence;
- align UConn more closely with peer and aspirant public research universities;
- support expanded academic, research, and leadership opportunities for students;
- create a compelling platform for scholarships, endowed faculty positions, programs, facilities, and transformational naming support; and
- establish a visible intellectual home that connects high-achieving students, faculty, alumni, and donors.

Rationale for the Name Change:
1. Attract and Develop Exceptional Students

- **The northeast region's changing demographics make recruitment of high-achieving students increasingly competitive.** An Honors College will help us recruit stronger students, increasing retention and graduation rates, in line with the university strategic plan.

- **Existing demand for UConn Honors exceeds our current capacity.** Due to staffing and class offering limitations, we are currently capped at 550 students at Storrs and 50 students at regional campuses (Stamford, Hartford, and Waterbury) (or 9.2% of student body). There are currently over 100 incoming students at Storrs who have appealed and are eligible for Honors admission, and we do not have capacity for Admissions to extend any more invitations to Honors. Applicants who are Honors eligible but not offered admission often choose to go to our competitors.

- **Establishing an Honors College with increased capacity will enhance our status and visibility and allow us to more successfully recruit the top academic prospects, leading to higher SAT profile, retention rates, and graduation rates**. Of the major public universities in New England, all except UConn and URI have Honors Colleges, and URI is actively exploring this option. UMass Amherst's Commonwealth Honors has a strong campus presence with a dedicated Honors residence facility and the campus entry. Outside of New England, among our top competitors are Rutgers who has doubled the size of their incoming Honors students in the last two years. They now admit about 1,000 students per year with Honors specific scholarships. Penn State is also planning to expand the Schreyer Honors College over the next several years. Given that several of our public AAU peers have established Honors Colleges are part of their undergraduate excellence strategy, remaining competitive requires us to make a comparable investment in our highest achieving students.

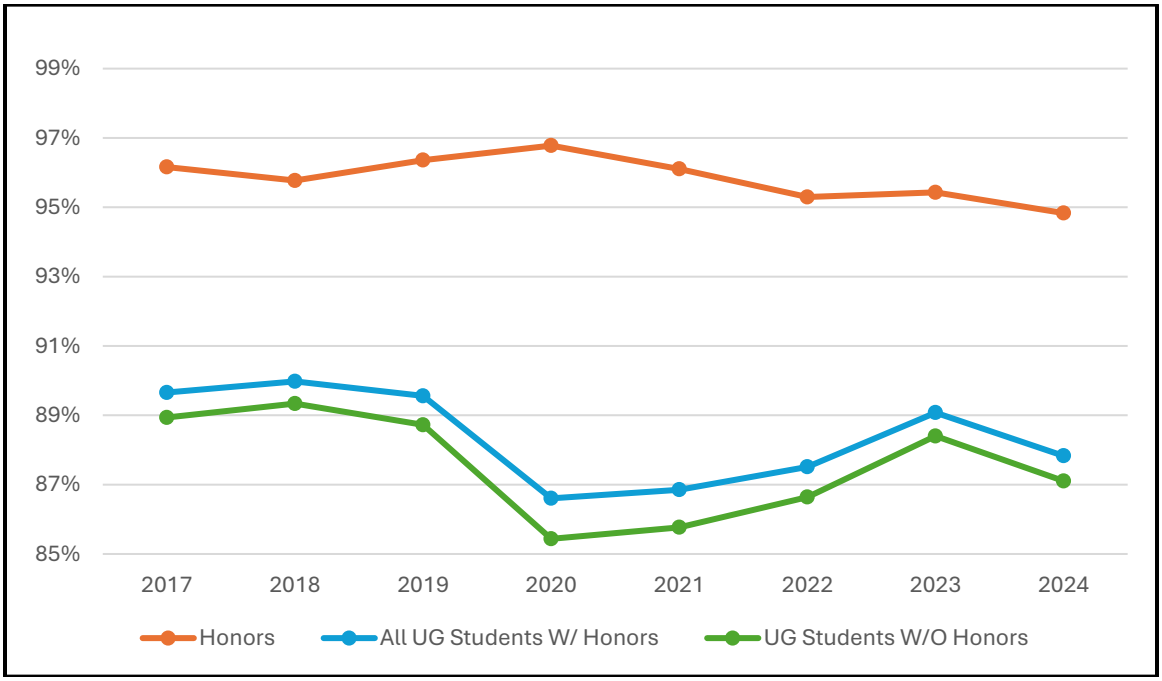
2. *Advance UConn's Academic Excellence and Reputation*

- **UConn Honors sets the gold standard for honors education nationwide.** The Honors Program is built around the pioneering evidence-based theoretical framework of honors education developed by UConn Prof. Emeritus Joseph Renzulli. The corresponding program requirements, implemented over the past 13 years under the leadership of Dr. Jennifer Lease Butts, focus on exploration, creative productivity, and leadership for the common good. This academic structure reflects best practices for honors education and it works: UConn honors students have better outcomes than the student population at large. Elevating the Honors Program to an Honors College reflects UConn's commitment to excellence in scholarship and student success.

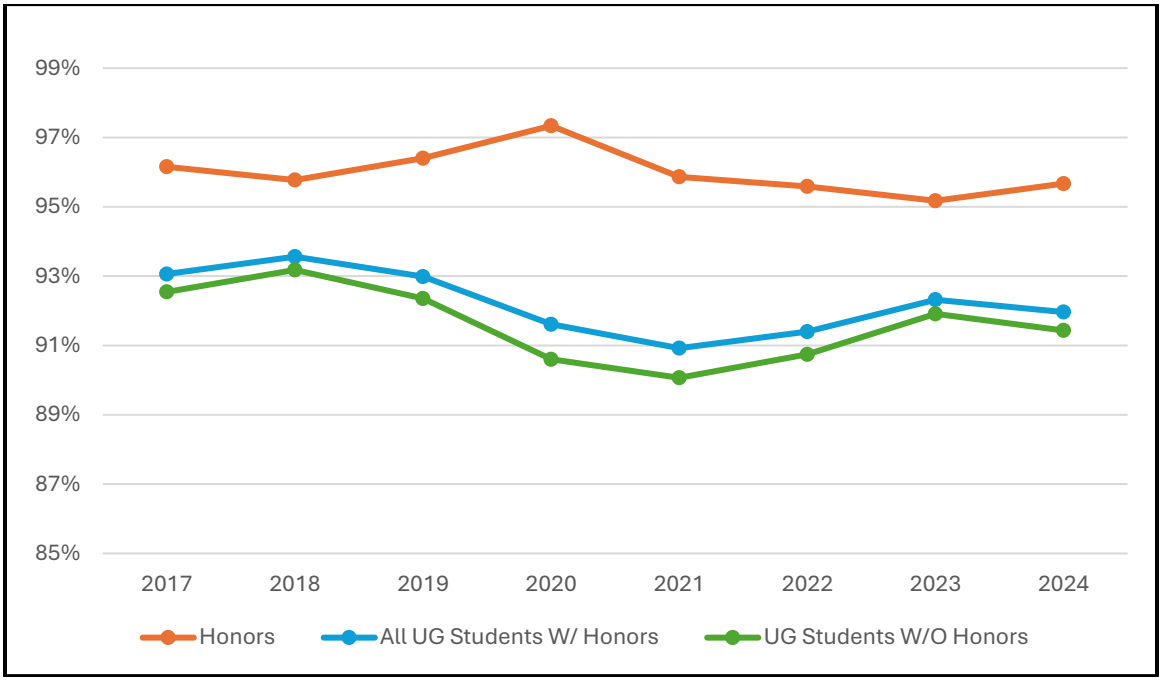
- **UConn Honors is accessible to first-generation and historically marginalized students.** UConn Honors has expanded access to the regional campuses and made the program more accessible, increasing the number of first-generation and historically marginalized students participating and succeeding in Honors.

- **UConn Honors produces excellent student outcomes.** An investment in Honors would benefit the entire university's student success metrics and help us in our rankings. UConn Honors graduation rates (defined as students who complete Honors requirements and receive Honors degrees) are almost double the average for Honors Colleges/Programs with a thesis requirement.

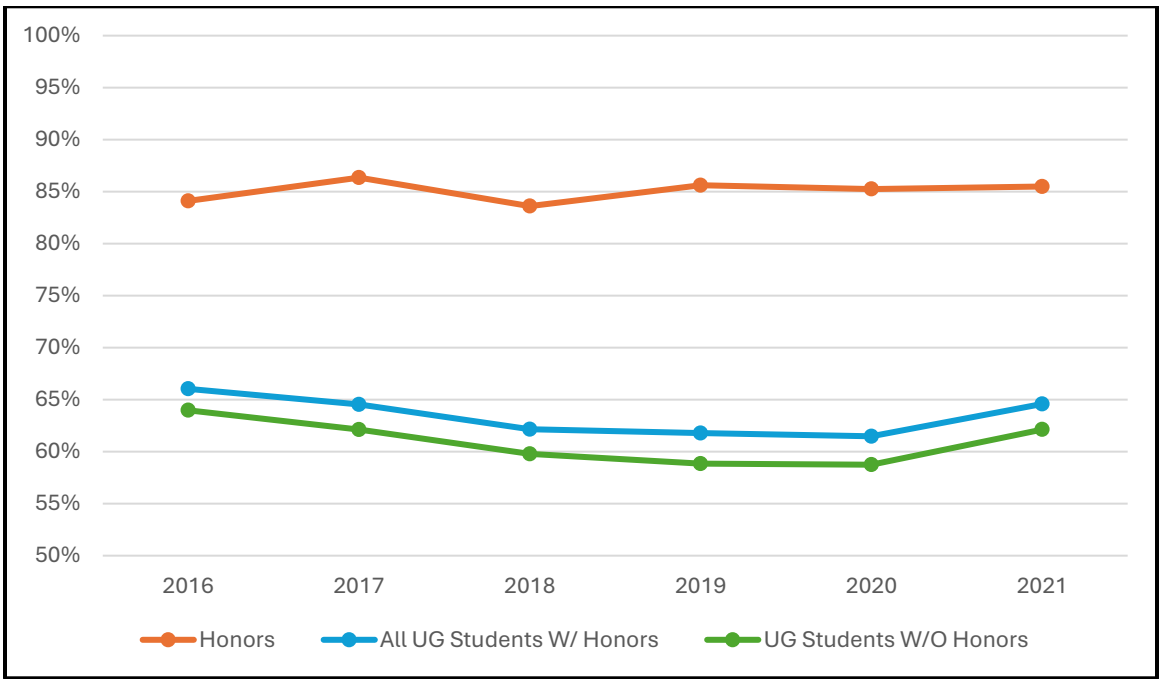
Retention Rates – All Campuses



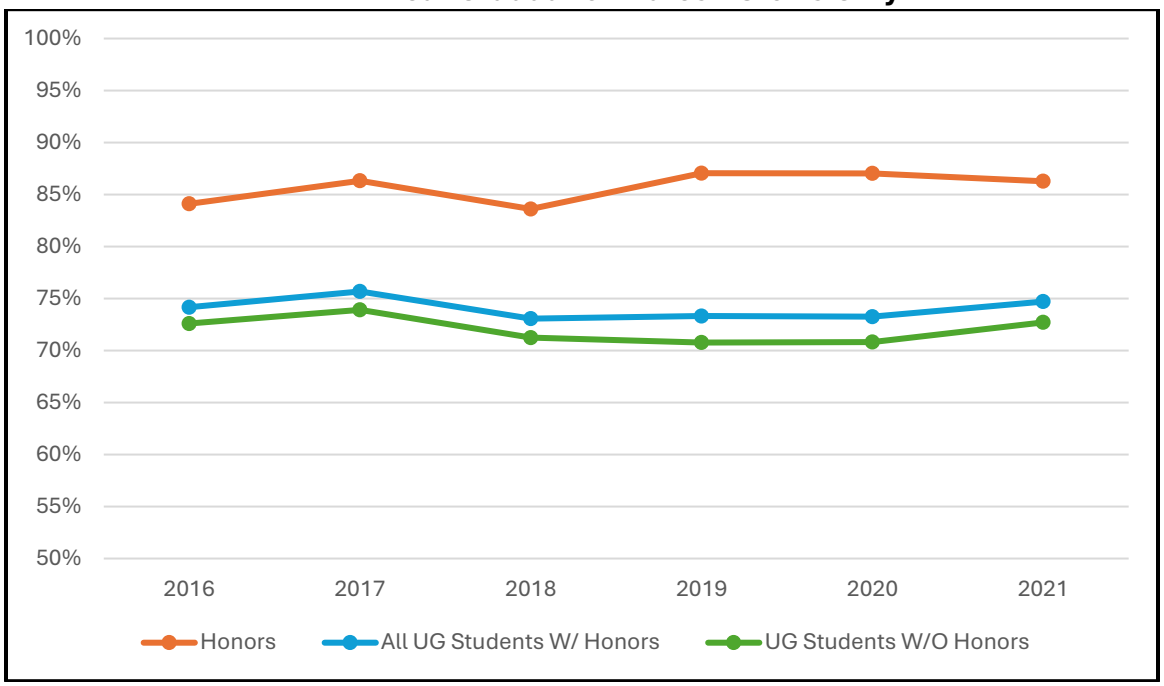
Retention Rates – Storrs Only



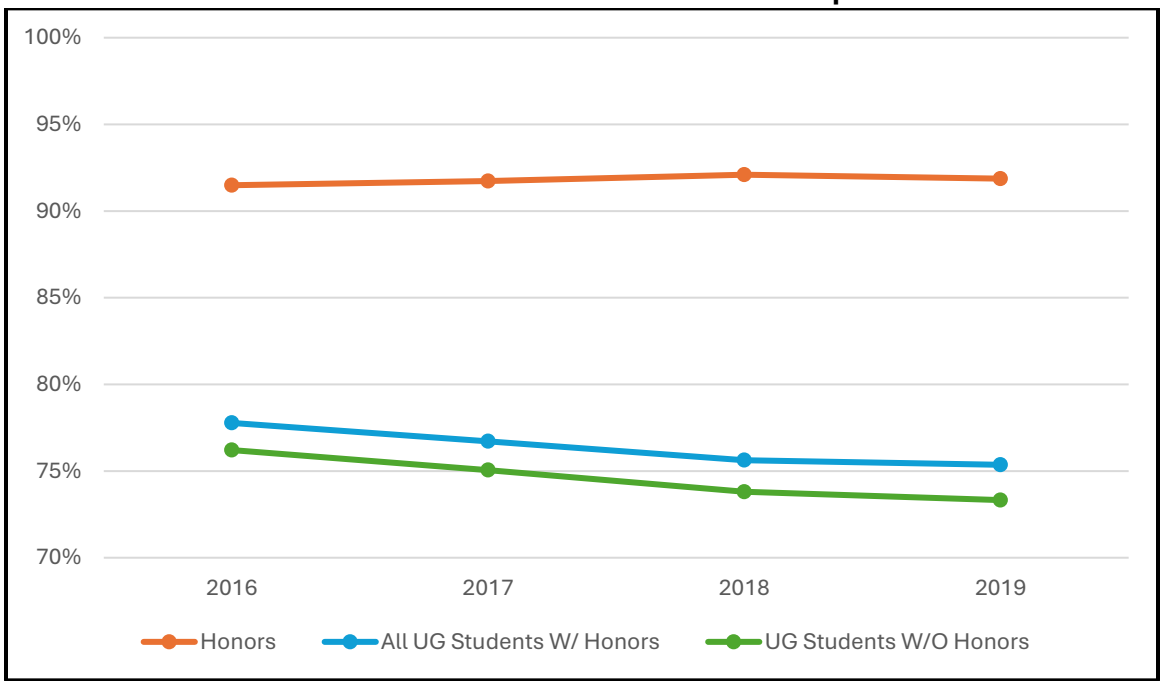
4-Year Graduation Rates – All Campuses



4-Year Graduation Rates – Storrs Only



6-Year Graduation Rates – All Campuses



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- **UConn Honors propels graduates into successful post-graduation paths.**
    - Attendance at **Graduate Schools** such as: *Brown, Carnegie Mellon, Columbia, Cornell, Duke, Emory, Harvard, NYU, Princeton, Purdue, Tufts, UConn, Michigan, and Yale*
    - Attendance at **Professional Schools** (Law, Medical, Dental, and Veterinary) such as: *Albert Einstein, Boston College, Boston University, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, UConn, University of Maryland, UNC-Chapel Hill, and Yale*
    - **Employment/Service** at top companies/organizations such as: *Aetna, Audubon Society, Cigna, Deloitte & Touche, GE, IBM, Nestle, Peace Corps, Pfizer, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Sikorsky, The Hartford, The White House, Travelers, United Technologies, and Yale*

- **UConn Honors students constitute the majority of recipients for prestigious national fellowships and scholarships.** Nearly 73% of UConn undergraduate National Scholarship Recipients are in the Honors Program.

3. Expand Philanthropic Opportunity and Institutional Visibility

- **Establishing a UConn Honors College will attract philanthropic opportunities**, appealing broadly to alumni and other donors who value academic excellence, who want to support exceptional students, and who want to elevate the reputation of the university. An Honors College will also create **naming opportunities** in terms of the college itself, endowed scholarships, an endowed Dean position, and endowed faculty chairs.

- **Dedicating a building to its mission** will increase the institutional visibility and commitment to a UConn Honors College and create an additional opportunity for naming.

Required Institutional Investment

The Honors Program has built the main structure for an Honors College through existing funding. Over the past ten years, the overall funding for Honors has been cut approximately 13% due to budgetary exegesis. Simultaneously, the number of Honors students has increased by about 17% during this period. A modest budgetary investment of ~$500,000 per year would create a dean position, right-size the current Honors staffing, support the current student enrollment and modest increases in enrollment, create an Honors Faculty Fellows Program, and provide the courses and enrichment opportunities that are a signature part of Honors Colleges.