

**University Senate Executive Committee  
To the University Senate  
February 5, 2024**

**Resolution in support of convening a university-wide task force to address issues relating to learning accommodations delivery from a faculty-facing perspective.**

**Context:**

In recent years, and in part due to shifts during the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty have reported a sharp increase in accommodations requests received from the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD). Many of these requests are also more complex in nature than before the pandemic (i.e. a large increase in requests for online access to in-person lecture content). It has been increasingly challenging for faculty to ensure they are responding to these requests in a way that is productive for the student, aligns to the course's curricular requirements, and is manageable for the faculty member.

In response to these concerns, the Senate Scholastic Standards Committee recommended to the Senate Executive Committee during the Spring semester in 2023 to address these issues on a University Senate level. The Senate Executive Committee recommended that the Future of Learning Committee take up this issue, but they were unable to do so before the group was formally discharged in September of 2023. The issue was raised again with the Senate Executive Committee during the Fall 2023 semester, and the group met with the Director of the CSD to address these concerns. As a result of multiple conversations, the Senate Executive Committee has determined that **this is a university-wide issue and requires university-wide resources to support a solution.**

At the same time, awareness around neurodiversity and different modes of learning is increasing around campus, with ongoing conversations about support for neurodiversity among UConn students, faculty, neurodiverse populations, and the academic community at-large. There is a substantial overlap between these perspectives, given that many requested accommodations are related to the needs and learning styles of neurodiverse students. Moreover, research shows that course redesign and instructor awareness of neurodiverse learning (aka "Universal Design for Learning") can reduce the need for individualized accommodations, thus decreasing the burden on students, faculty and CSD.

**Motion to Recommend:**

- Development of a dedicated working group structured similarly to the very successful Academic Integrity committee, specifically to consider these issues and offer solutions that best support student and faculty success in the classroom.
- A mission statement including consolidation of resources made available to faculty, e.g., information on best practices to support students with documented disabilities (e.g., the CLAS FAQ for meeting CSD accommodations, CETL and interpreter resources, etc.)

**Specific Charge and Scope of Work:**

The purpose of the Taskforce is to analyze CSD and faculty data with respect to the nature and frequency of accommodations, obtain input from faculty and students on challenges and effective

strategies around accommodations, and evaluate faculty training and support in adopting Universal Design for Learning and inclusive teaching approaches that might reduce the need for accommodations.

Once identified, the task force should make recommendations on how the university can respond and fill these gaps, bearing in mind the statutory Federal requirements when responding to accommodations requests. **An update on the work of this task force's work should be shared with the University Senate Executive committee by the end of the spring 2024 semester and the final report should be presented to the University Senate in fall of 2024,** along with any other units relevant to the report.

YES 62, NO 2, ABSTAIN 1