

## UConn Senate Enrollment Committee

October 5, 2023

Agenda/Notes

1. Q&A – Enrollment report ([slides from Senate meeting](#))
  - a. **Catherine Little** referred group to the slides and summarized the current situation regarding students on waitlists for on-campus housing. She also expressed concerns regarding the impact of new campus housing on potential enrollment increases, and subsequent impacts on faculty and staff. **Nathan Fuerst** weighed in on the reasoning behind current prioritization of continuing students vs transfer students for on-campus housing and said that moving forward this may be shifted so that transfer students receive greater priority, particularly due to the new development of off-campus housing that will be best suited for continuing students' needs. He also stated that the enrollment strategy will be tactical to avoid any spikes that might negatively impact faculty or staff capacity. He also touched on concerns on regional campuses regarding limited housing guarantees, specifically citing Stamford, and how it may be negatively impacting enrollment there and elsewhere. Nathan said he anticipates that on-campus housing capacity is projected to increase by 600 beds within the next year, which should bring available beds back to levels that were experienced before the demolition of the Mansfield Apartments several years ago. He also stated that these new beds should bring residence hall capacity closer to design capacity, hopefully allowing for lounges that have been converted to student rooms to be converted back to common space so that students in residence halls can avail of these spaces to socialize. He also said that there were 169 students left on the waitlist for housing for Fall 2023 and that many of these students were supported in finding other housing options by John Armstrong and his office. Catherine Little thanked Nathan Fuerst for his report and opened the floor to questions.
    - i. **Bryan Huey** expressed concerns about how these housing shifts might impact the local town, as he is a local resident. **Nathan Fuerst** stated that there is a long-term goal of making on-campus housing improvements not only in space but also in design so that UConn's residential options not only match competing universities, but exceeds them in quality and offering. These changes are dependent on financing and is a discussion topic with the Board of Trustees. He expressed an interest in holistic improvement that would allow for more fluidity of transfer of students from regionals to Storrs and from Storrs to regional campuses. He also said that there have been five approved development projects of off-campus housing around Storrs, which would add more than 2,000 beds to the local community. Miranda Davis added that she is on a few town committees and stated that the town's interest is in students moving to apartment-style student housing off-campus rather than living in residential homes so that there are more low-income housing options for residents. She added that some developments have been held up by conservation concerns

and said that all approved projects may not actually break ground, which is typical of these types of projects.

- ii. **Mansour Ndiaye** raised a question about graduate student housing, particularly ensuring they understand their options, and are receiving appropriate support. **Nathan Fuerst** said that the university is currently housing approximately 120 graduate students on campus and would like this to be expanded to 150 in future years (ideally at Northwood Apartments).
- iii. **Miranda Davis** made a comment about parking concerns and **Nathan Fuerst** stated he is not aware of any plans to increase Storrs parking capacity at this time.

2. Supreme Court decision implications ([slides from Senate meeting](#))

- a. **Catherine Little** asked **Nathan Fuerst** to share an update on this report, shared during Monday's Senate meeting, particularly asking what kind of guidance is coming in light of the Supreme Court ruling. Nathan Fuerst went into detail about the work of the "Admitting Authorities" Group and the action they have taken to ensure the university is implementing the correct strategy to navigate these changes. Specifically, he cited efforts to train and inform anyone involved in admissions on how to view a student's holistic application, including personal experiences, in their consideration of each application as a way to bear diversity and inclusion in mind during the admissions process. This training and advising has been a top priority for admissions of all levels of the university. He stated that application reviewers can no longer see a student's race/ethnicity selection while reviewing applications, but that they have been instructed to pay attention to a student's lived experiences and other aspects of the application to be considered in a holistic approach focused on inclusion. He also shared that the university will also focus on targeted marketing efforts to ensure that students from diverse backgrounds know that UConn is a welcoming space for them, encouraging them to apply regardless of their race, ethnicity or background. **Vern Granger** shared that he and Jeffrey Hines, Chief Diversity Officer of UConn Health, will be hosting a town hall (virtual) on this topic on October 24<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. and encouraged members of this group to attend. He highlighted that one of the main concerns is that there could be a decline in the number of diverse students who apply to the university if they have concerns about UConn being an inclusive space. To combat this, he reiterated Nathan's point about how the university needs to be out front demonstrating that the university will continue to include diversity and inclusion as a priority in its mission, and that this decision does not take away from UConn's commitment to being a diverse and inclusive university. **Catherine Little** thanked Nathan and Vern for their report and opened the floor to questions.
- b. **Natalie Munro** asked if they see any practical changes that need to take place immediately in terms of the admissions process as a result of this decision. **Vern Granger** reiterated that one of the immediate changes has been the suppression of the application question to self-identify their race/ethnicity as a part of the application and said that application reviewers can no longer see the answers to those questions when reviewing applications. He said that reviewers are instructed to review a student's application holistically, adding consideration to a student's lived experiences.

- c. Catherine Little asked about graduate student admission impacts and Nathan said that yes, this decision impacts admissions across all degree levels. Conversation ensued about the decrease of applications from students of color in California after their state supreme court decision, showing that students may prefer to apply to HBCU's in light of this decision if they have concerns about a university's interest in maintaining a diverse community as a result of this Supreme Court decision.
3. Test optional update
  - a. **Vern Granger** gave a high-level update on the Year 1 Report. He summarized that the university entered into a test optional pilot due to equity reasons and COVID-19 impacts on students' access to testing. Partnered with Neag on the pilot and the study is led by Morgaen Donaldson, Eric Loken, and some graduate and PhD students. Research began in 2021 with a focus on understanding and analyzing the students who opt into the pilot and their first-year performance. The SAT is not a direct predictor of student success and the goal of this pilot is to ensure that the university continues to bring in students who are going to be successful at the university, while no longer relying on standardized test scores as an evaluative measure for reasons of equity, access and inclusion. He also stated that the first analysis for the pilot coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic and so data for the first year is skewed by pandemic impacts. This led to the pilot program to be extended from 3-5 years to ensure integrity of the data collected as a part of the study. Thus far, the data suggests that this change has not had a negative impact on student GPA, overall admittance rates, or rates of students on academic probation. **Nathan Fuerst** stated that he will share the final results of the report with this committee once finalized.
    - i. **Pilot Year Statistics (% of groups which opted out of submitting test scores):**
      1. Female Applicants: 71%
      2. Male Applicants: 59%
      3. Asian Applicants: 47%
      4. White Applicants: 67%
      5. Black Applicants: 82%
      6. LatinX Applicants: 75%
4. BPIR dashboard request
  - a. Not discussed due to meeting time constraints.
5. Other
6. **Catherine Little** thanked the group for their attention and shared that the next meeting will take place on December 4<sup>th</sup>. The committee was adjourned at 10:02 a.m.

Attending:

- Catherine Little (Chair)
- Jamie Caruso
- Miranda L. Davis
- Nathan Fuerst
- Jen Morenus

- Natalie Munro
- Very Granger
- Bryan Huey
- Mansour Ndiaye
- Nathaniel Trumbull

Potential Upcoming Topics: not discussed due to meeting time constraints.

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