

Resolution to Senate

May 20, 2024

Context:

In the last meeting of the University Senate, a resolution was introduced outside of Robert's Rules of Order and was therefore unable to be discussed during that meeting. The resolution reflected widely shared concerns regarding university actions taken against non-violent student protesters. Specifically, on April 30th, at approximately 7:30am, 24 undergraduate students were arrested and charged with trespassing and disorderly conduct by at least 50 police officers from various towns and jurisdictions in plain view of UConn faculty and staff.

Since that Senate meeting, the following communications have been created and made public: (1) an Open Letter from UConn Faculty to the Administration supporting the students' right to freedom of expression, currently with over 330 signatures; (2) a Solidarity Statement signed by over 1,000 students, faculty, staff, and alumni; (3) a statement issued by faculty members of the Philosophy Department; (4) two statements from Graduate Students (one from Grads in the NEAG School and second from those in the Sociology Department); (5) and a joint statement by the UConn AAUP and UConn Graduate Employee & Postdoc Union (GEU-UAW 6950). All statements, in varying ways, condemn the actions of the UConn administration.

During this additional meeting of the University Senate, we hope to enact a measure of accountability for the Administration's decision to call in police from multiple precincts to arrest students who were peaceably assembled.

WHEREAS:

- There is precedent for the University Senate to act expeditiously in times of extraordinary circumstance (e.g. COVID);
- The arraignments of the arrested students have already begun, with the last one scheduled for May 14th;
- To date, neither the President nor any other University official(s) have met with student organizers to discuss and deliberate their demands;
- The absence of deliberation enables the ongoing circulation of misinformation, which ultimately hinders the faculty's ability to make informed decisions with regard to their own and their students' safety and well-being; and,
- Summer classes begin May 28th.

The University Senate HEREBY resolves:

- To urge the President to send a letter to the Office of the State's Attorney for the Judicial District of Tolland: 1) stating that the arrests and the judicial processes to date have been punishment enough for the students' alleged actions, 2) conveying concern that a lengthy judicial process would constitute undue punishment, and 3) therefore urges the State's Attorney to drop all criminal charges against the students arrested at the encampment; and, to issue a public communication stating that she will refrain from pursuing any disciplinary actions or retaliatory measures against any student, staff, or faculty member solely for participating in the protests, or for supporting the students.

PASSED: 43 YAY; 16 NAY; 3 ABSTAIN

- To form an ad hoc committee that will investigate and report back to the University Senate by the third Senate meeting of the 2024-2025 academic year, on: (1) the terms and mechanisms by which the police were authorized to arrest students at the encampment, (2) the processes by which police are deployed into university spaces (including meetings of the University Senate) and at what cost; and, (3) a potential process for gaining greater transparency around the University's and the UConn Foundation's investments in the interest of faculty governance and feasibility of divestment.

PASSED: 42 YAY; 22 NAY; 0 ABSTAIN

University Senator Signatures:

1. Sherry Zane
2. Essam Boraey
3. Zachary Boudah
4. Vicki Magley
5. Bryan Greene
6. Eleanor Ouimet
7. Andrew Bush
8. Oksan Bayulgen
9. Peter Spinelli
10. Mary Ann Roshni Amalaradjou
11. Martha Cutter

12. Justin Rogowski
13. Suzanne Wilson
14. Eduardo Urios-Aparisi
15. Edward Weingart
16. Jonathan Heiden
17. Karen Bresciano
18. Scott Campbell
19. Rachel O'Neill
20. Fiona Vernal
21. Alison Villano
22. Nathan Trumbull
23. Diego Valente
24. Jamie Caruso
25. Kamara Nyahuma
26. Jamie Kleinman
27. Micah Heumann
28. Michael Morrell
29. Sandy Grande
30. Joanne Conover