

University Senate SPECIAL Meeting
May 20, 2024
Gentry 131 (hybrid via WebEx)

Moderator **Bontly** called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m.

Moderator **Bontly** read the **Land Acknowledgement Statement**:

“The land on which we gather is the territory of the Eastern Pequot, Golden Hill Paugussett, Lenape, Mashantucket Pequot, Mohegan, Nipmuc, and Schaghticoke peoples, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations. We thank them for their strength and resilience in protecting this land and aspire to uphold our responsibilities according to their example.”

1. Resolutions in Response to Student Protests

Moderator **Bontly** recognized the SEC Chair, Laura **Burton** who reviewed purpose of the Special Meeting and stated that only the business at hand may be discussed during the meeting. Senator **McCutcheon** raised a point of order on the discussion structure. Moderator **Bontly** provided an overview of Roberts Rules of Order and stated that all voting and ex-officio Senators are asked to limit their comments and questions to 90 seconds for initial comments. He added that no Senator may speak more than once in a round until all participating members have had an opportunity to participate in the discussion and that he will alternate between in-person and virtual participants during discussion. He added that pursuant to Senate rules, only Senators are allowed to participate in the discussion. If a Senator wishes for a non-Senate member to be heard to share information or expertise essential to the deliberation, they must request permission from the Senate. Lastly, only Senators are eligible to vote during this meeting, either by voice or by electronic votes for record. The Moderator then welcomed Senator **Grande** to the floor to present the topic of the Special Meeting.

Attachment #1

Senator **Grande** shared appreciation for all those who are present both in person and online for taking the time to participate in this meeting. They expressed disappointment in the fact that President Maric was not present and acknowledged the Senate body for seeing the importance of the topic in the calling of a special meeting. Senator **Grande** then spoke to the reason for the Special Meeting being called, particularly the consideration of a resolution that addresses the circumstances

facing the 24 UConn students who were arrested on Tuesday, April 30th and those who continue to support them. Senator **Grande** added that students were also met with police force on Thursday, April 25th, the first day of the encampment and gave details on the subsequent six days of the encampment, citing UConn Police actions, and mixed messages from administrators. Senator **Grande** noted that students were not given an opportunity to discuss their demands with administrators during the encampment. Senator **Grande** then spoke specifically about the morning of April 30th when over fifty police officers from at least seven different precincts and municipalities descended upon the encampment and students were charged with criminal trespassing and disorderly conduct. Senator **Grande** also raised concerns regarding free speech access for faculty, staff and students on the UConn campus. Senator **Grande** then shared images within their presentation of the protest activities over multiple days and during the morning of April 30th. Senator **Grande** stated that they will be proposing an amendment to the original motion which called the meeting. The original motion states:

Motions:

- To urge the President to extend amnesty to all students who were arrested, dropping all criminal charges and also to refrain from pursuing any disciplinary actions or retaliatory measures against any student, staff, or faculty member who participated in the protests, or supported the students.
- To form an ad hoc committee that will: (1) investigate the terms and mechanisms by which the police were authorized to arrest students at the encampment, (2) work to gain clarity around the processes by which police are deployed into university spaces (including meetings of the University Senate) and at what cost; and, (3) develop a 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.
- To affirm UConn's commitment to freedom of speech, freedom of expression, peaceable assembly, and the right to protest.

The motions were seconded by Senator **Harmon**.

Senator **Morrell** asked for unanimous consent to replace this motion with the Amendment Package which was displayed as:

1. To urge the President to ~~extend amnesty to all students who were arrested, dropping all criminal charges and also to~~ **send a letter to the Office of the State's Attorney for the Judicial District of Tolland: 1) stating that the**

- arrests and 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 who participated in the protests, or supported the students.
2. To form an ad hoc committee that will **investigate and report back to the University Senate by the third Senate meeting of the 2024-25 academic year, on:** (1) investigate the terms and mechanisms by which the police were authorized to arrest students at the encampment, (2) ~~work to gain clarity around~~ the processes by which police are deployed into university spaces (including meetings of the University Senate) and at what cost; and, (3) ~~develop~~ 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.
 3. ~~To affirm UConn's commitment to freedom of speech, freedom of expression, peaceable assembly, and the right to protest.~~

Senator **Grande** asked for unanimous consent to strike the initial resolution and substitute it with the text on the screen under the heading of "Amendment Package" and Moderator **Bontly** asked if there were any objections and there was one, so the unanimous consent was not passed.

Senator **Morrell** then made a motion to amend the original motion with the "Amendment Package" motion displayed on the screen and Senator **McCutcheon** seconded the motion. There was no further discussion, so a voice vote was initiated with 1 opposed, 4 abstentions, and all others in favor.

Moderator **Bontly** then moved on to discussion regarding the "Amendment Package" motion. Senator **Villano** raised a friendly amendment to change the language from ad hoc committee to special committee, which was not approved as the language of ad hoc can remain as the meanings are the same.

Senator **Boraey** shared concerns with regards to the timing of this Special meeting, the lack of opportunity for students to speak to the SEC, the lack of the President's presence at this meeting, the lack of support for the students who participated in the protests, and a feeling of political retaliation against them.

Senator **Nyahuma** expresses support for the resolution being brought forward on behalf of the USG and shared a statement emphasizing that support, including mentioning a statement published on April 25, 2024, from the USG calling for the Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility to be reestablished. Senator **Boudah** read a testimony from the U Commune. Senator **Zane** read a testimony from a Jewish graduate student in the Physics Department in support of the UConn encampment. Senator **Weingart** read a statement from Dr. Asif Majid, joint appointee in the Gladstein Family Human Rights Institute and the Department of Dramatic Arts, and one of the two faculty members who lead the development and implementation of the University's Confronting Anti-Muslim Racism Pop-Up Course this academic year. Senator **Kleinman** read a statement provided by a student in support of the resolution. Senator **Campbell** read a statement written by a graduate observer in support of the resolution.

Senator **Fitch** raised concerns regarding the language in item #1 of the resolution, stating that the way it is written implies blanket forgiveness. She stated there is some credible evidence that some of the students were engaged in antisemitism and hate speech, so would not want this resolution to prevent addressing those concerns if proven to be true. Senator **Fitch** then made a motion to strike the third line of item #1 and Senator **McCutcheon** seconded. Moderator **Bontly** asked for any discussion on the proposed amendment to the motion.

Senator **Day** then made a motion to amend the amendment to edit the language, rather than striking it completely, and Senator **Morrell** seconded the motion. Senator **Fitch** stated that they would withdraw their original amendment of striking the language in support of the language proposed in the amended amendment. It cannot be withdrawn within Robert's Rules. Senator **MacDougald** asked for clarification of the language on the amended amendment. There was no further discussion.

The amended motion language:

1. To urge the President to extend amnesty to all students who were arrested, dropping all criminal charges and also to send a letter to the Office of the State's Attorney for the Judicial District of Tolland: 1) stating that the arrests and 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.

The amendment to the language of the motion passed by voice vote with 2 opposed, 3 abstentions, and all others in favor. Moderator **Bontley** next asked for a voice vote to accept the language as amended. With no further discussion, a voice vote was initiated with 1 abstention, no opposed, and all others in favor.

Senator **Bush** read a statement from a student comparing UConn's response to the encampment to the response at Wesleyan University.

Senator **Dineen** made a motion to divide the question, separating points 1 and 2 of the Amendment Package into two separate motions and Senator **McCutcheon** seconded. Moderator **Bontly** asked for a voice vote and a Senator requested a rising vote, which resulted in 46 in favor and 11 opposed, with the abstentions not sufficient to affect the vote, so the motion carried.

Moderator **Bontly** then asked that the Senate focus on Motion 1 for any subsequent discussion.

Senator **Armstrong** raised concerns about the Senate getting involved when students are arrested, considering this type of discussion has not happened regarding any other students under arrest. Senator **Armstrong** then read an interview from the Daily Campus of one of the students who was arrested at the encampment. Senator **Cutter** read a statement in their role as the Chair of the University Senate JEDI Committee – Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – and urged the University to clarify how and where students can find policies on the website, specifically policies regarding student protests and when these policies are changed.

Senator **Cutter** then called the question on Motion 1 and it was seconded by Senator **Morrell**. The motion to call the question on Motion 1 carried with 53 yea, 9 nay, and 1 abstention.

Moderator **Bontly** next called for the vote on Motion 1, as amended. Motion 1 carried with 43 yea, 16 nay, and 3 abstentions.

Moderator **Bontly** then turned to Motion 2 and asked for any further discussion regarding this motion.

Senator **McCutcheon** raised a point of personal privilege regarding the behavior of attendees in the room and asked the Moderator to please maintain decorum of the meeting. They also expressed frustration regarding a lack of action, in motions or meetings, from the Senate on multiple other significant issues. Regarding this particular motion, Senator **McCutcheon** shared that they think we need to be careful with the term “divestment” because divestment can mean many different things for different people, in particular the faculty who get resources and funding from organizations such as the Department of Defense for research and projects that are related to supporting civilian purposes, such as decarbonization. Senator **Elliott** agreed with Senator McCutcheon, stating that this motion is fraught with peril and is going to take the University down a pathway that we don’t need to explore, is inappropriate, and is just creating work for the community that is not valuable. Moderator **Bontly** asked that attendees in the room please maintain decorum. Senator **Harmon** spoke in support of the motion, citing aspirations of UConn Forever. They suggest over the summer that the University dedicate itself to something positive. Senator **Grande** stated that this motion is to form a committee that will report back to the Senate, and that the report could indeed be that divestment is not feasible.

Senator **Grande** made a motion to call the question. The motion to call the question was seconded by Senator **Burton**. The motion to call the question carried with 48 yea, 15 nay, and no abstentions.

Moderator **Bontly** called for the vote on the amended Motion 2 to take place. The vote on Motion 2 carried with 42 yea, 22 nay, and zero abstentions.

Senator **Boudah** stated on the topic of the motions that were just entertained and the voting process, they wanted to thank the members of the Senate Executive Committee and the Senate Office who put together and ran the meeting.

2. Adjournment

Senator **Morrell** made a motion to adjourn.

Senator **Dineen** seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:49 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine S. North
Secretary of the University Senate, 2021-2024

SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Laura Burton, Chair
Maureen Armstrong
Essam Boraey
Bob Day
Kate Fuller
Sidratul Muntaha
Del Siegle

Pam Bedore
Marisa Chrysochoou
Jennifer Dineen
Joe MacDougald
Morty Ortega
Peter Spinelli

**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 extend amnesty to all students who were arrested, dropping all criminal charges and also to refrain from pursuing any disciplinary actions or retaliatory measures against any student, staff, or faculty member who participated in the protests, or supported the students.
- To form an ad hoc committee that will: (1) investigate the terms and mechanisms by which the police were authorized to arrest students at the encampment, (2) work to gain clarity around the processes by which police are deployed into university spaces (including meetings of the University Senate) and at what cost; and, (3) develop a 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.
- To affirm UConn's commitment to freedom of speech, freedom of expression, peaceable assembly, and the right to protest.

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