

# Annual Report to the University Senate

## Academic Year 2024-2025

### Scholastic Standards Committee

**Committee Charge:** This committee shall prepare legislation within the jurisdiction of the Senate concerning those scholastic matters affecting the University as a whole, and not assigned to the Curricula and Courses Committee, including academic programs, the marking system, scholarship standards, and the like.

#### 2024/2025 Scholastic Standards Committee Members:

- **\*Karen Bresciano, Co-Chair, The Graduate School**
- **\*Jamie Kleinman, Co-Chair, CLAS (Avery Point)**
- \*Dorothea Anagnostopoulos, Neag School of Education
- \*Maureen Armstrong, Dean of Students Office
- \*Kelly Burke, Engineering
- \*David Embrick, CLAS (Hartford)
- \*Holly Fitch, CLAS, Psychological Sciences
- \*Kristen Govoni, CAHNR
- \*Morty Ortega, CAHNR
- \*Jennifer Terni, CLAS
- \*Lawrence Walsh, Office of Admissions
- Erin Ciarimboli, Office of Undergraduate Advising
- Robin Coulter, School of Business
- Sarah Croucher, Provost's Office, Academic Affairs (Ex-Officio Member)
- Jennifer Lease Butts, Honors and Enrichment Program
- Brian Rockwood, Registrar's Office
- Lauren Schlesselman, CETL, Academic Program Assessment and Learning Initiatives
- Christine Wenzel, Center for Students with Disabilities

\*2024-2025 Senate Member

**Summary:** Members of the SSC met a total of eleven times this academic year. We brought four Motions to the Senate for proposed Bylaw changes, all of which were approved. We discussed a total of twelve topics during the course of the year.

#### Specific Topics Addressed:

##### 1. Summer Winter Bylaws

**Background:**

**Juneteenth** (June 19<sup>th</sup>): “Juneteenth, also known as America’s Second Independence Day, commemorates the end of slavery in the United States. It is observed on June 19<sup>th</sup>, the day in 1865 that Union troops arrived in the last slave-owning community in the country to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation issued more than two years earlier. Though Juneteenth has been celebrated by African American communities since the late 1800s, it only became an official federal holiday in 2021, when President Biden made it the first new federal holiday since Martin Luther King Jr. Day in 1983. The Connecticut legislature designated Juneteenth as an official state holiday starting in 2023.

Juneteenth celebrates African American achievement while encouraging continuous self-development and respect for all cultures. Celebrations typically involve guest speakers or lectures to promote education and self-improvement; community elders who recount events in the past; prayer services; barbeques; and parades. More than anything, Juneteenth is about being in a supportive community” (*UConn Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023*).

During the Spring 2023 semester, Juneteenth was acknowledged as a teaching holiday with guidance issued by the Provost encouraging faculty to exercise flexibility for students who wish to observe the holiday and to consider providing recordings of lectures, distributing materials for an asynchronous class session, and considering extensions for students who may be absent in case of any assessments scheduled to be due or to take place on June 19<sup>th</sup>.

During the Fall 2023 Semester, the Senate Executive Committee tasked the Senate Scholastic Standards Committee with looking into establishing Juneteenth as a non-teaching holiday. In consultation with the Registrar’s Office and others, the committee voted in support of this recommendation.

### **Summary of Action:**

The Senate Scholastic Standards Committee presents a motion to the University Senate to establish Juneteenth (June 19<sup>th</sup>) as a non-teaching holiday starting in 2025, by adding the governance of academic dates for both Summer and Winter programs to the By-Laws, Rules & Regulations of the University Senate.

This recommendation comes to the Senate in consultation with the Registrar’s office and with the support of President Maric and Provost D’Alleva.

### **Proposed Bylaw Change:**

#### **Article II, H. Academic Calendar**

##### **Clean Version:**

Each academic year begins at the start of one fall semester and ends prior to the start of the next fall semester. The University Registrar uses the following rules to set the calendar for each academic year. The general class schedule is then published by the Registrar.

1. Each academic year consists of two required semesters; fall and spring.

- a. The end of the semester is defined as the last day of the final exam period. Grades must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar no later than seventy-two hours after the final examination period ends.
  - b. Each fall and spring semester consists of 14 weeks of classes, plus six days of examinations at the end of each semester.
  - c. In each required semester, there are two protected days between the end of classes and the first day of final examinations, called reading days. Reading days protect time to allow students to prepare for the final exam and assessment period. On reading days, instructors are not allowed to require any course-related activity, assessment, or submission of work. Instructors are allowed to use reading days for truly optional activities such as office hours.
  - d. For classes in required semesters, some Mondays may be missed due to recognized public holidays. Wherever possible, instructors should try to ensure that students in Monday classes are not deprived of content available to students in Tuesday – Friday classes. This could include asynchronous content, make-up classes, make-up assignments, or other accommodations.
  - e. Additional non-required terms are scheduled each academic year during summer and winter.
  - f. Classes in required semesters and non-required terms must all adhere to the University Credit Hour Policy, as appropriate, for the credits awarded.
  - g. Most major public holidays are recognized as non-instructional days. On a non-instructional day, classes cannot be scheduled, and instructors should not require the submission of work. When the date of a public holiday falls on a weekend, and a Friday or Monday is recognized as the official public holiday, the recognized date will be a non-instructional day. Only public holidays recognized as non-instructional days in the sections below are protected. Other public holidays can be scheduled into semester or term calendars as instructional or assessment days.
  - h. The recognition of public holidays for the purpose of scheduling semesters and terms is separate to the University Religious Accommodation Policy. The Religious Accommodation Policy sets forth requirements in accordance with relevant laws and regulations regarding religious beliefs.
2. **Fall Semesters** are structured by the Registrar using the following rules:
- a. Classes begin on the Monday before Labor Day.
  - b. Residence Halls must be open no later than the weekend before the start of classes.
  - c. The public holiday of Labor Day is a non-instructional day.
  - d. There is a week of break during the week of Thanksgiving. No classes are held during this week. Thanksgiving is recognized as a public holiday.
  - e. The first Thursday of final examination week is a reading day. No regularly scheduled final examinations or assessments can be scheduled for this day. Instructors must adhere to the protections outlined above.
3. **Spring Semesters** are structured by the Registrar using the following rules:

- a. Spring semester classes begin on the Tuesday after Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
  - b. The public holiday of Martin Luther King Jr. Day is a non-instructional day.
  - c. Residence halls must be open no later than the weekend before the start of classes.
  - d. A one-week spring break will be scheduled after 8 weeks of classes. The first week of classes is counted as the week during which classes commence (the week of Martin Luther King Jr. Day).
  - e. Commencement must be scheduled after the end of the final assessment period.
4. **Non-required Terms** are structured by the Registrar using the following rules:
- a. Classes cannot overlap with Fall and Spring semesters, including the formal assessment periods for those semesters.
  - b. Non-required terms may be of variable length. The length and other calendar parameters will be used by the Registrar to schedule each term. Classes in each term will be scheduled to adhere to the University Credit Hour Policy. The registrar may also schedule other non-required terms to meet the needs of the university, recognizing the same public holidays outlined in this section and following the same general parameters.
  - c. A three-week winter term will be scheduled each year between the fall and spring semesters. This will be scheduled so that it ends before the first day of the Spring semester.
  - d. During winter term the public holidays of Christmas Day and New Year's Day are non-instructional days.
  - e. A May term will be scheduled, which will begin on the first Monday following May commencement.
  - f. Two summer session terms of six weeks will be scheduled. The first will begin after the formal instructional and assessment period of the May term is completed.
  - g. The two summer terms will not overlap with one another, including scheduled days for final assessments. Scheduled instructional and assessment days for any summer term must finish before the start of the fall semester.
  - h. During May and summer terms, the public holidays of Memorial Day, Juneteenth, and Independence Day are non-instructional days.

Motion passed during the February 5, 2025 meeting of the University Senate, by electronic vote: 68 YAY, 0 NAY, 1 ABSTAIN

## **2. Block Transfer Bylaw**

The Omnibus Motion passed as amended by electronic vote: 65 YAY, 3 NAY, 4 ABSTAIN.

## **3. Readmission Bylaw**

### **Background:**

In 2022, a university decision was made to no longer ask applicants for admission/readmission about their previous criminal history. This decision was informed by the understanding that asking

about criminal history can often have a chilling effect on applicants and significantly took into consideration that the Common Application stopped asking about criminal history in 2020.

It was brought to the attention of the Scholastic Standards Committee in the early fall 2024 semester that the By-Laws Rules, and Regulations of the University Senate, as written, do not reflect current practice in the Dean of Students Office regarding undergraduate readmission and the materials to review for assessment of the applications.

### **Summary of Action:**

The Scholastic Standards Committee brings this motion to the Senate to ensure that the language reflects current practice.

This recommendation comes to the Senate in consultation with the various points of admission/readmission within UConn (Undergrad Admission, The Graduate School, and the Dean of Students Office.)

### **Proposed Bylaw Change:**

#### **Article II, B. 12 Academic Advising and Registration, Readmission**

##### **12. Readmission**

A student seeking readmission to the University must apply through the Dean of Students Office. Readmission is not guaranteed. Criteria used in determining readmission include, but are not limited to, academic progress and university discipline history. ~~and criminal history.~~

All applications for readmission must be evaluated through the Dean of Students Office who will convene a readmission board including the deans' designees. The standards for academic evaluation can be found at the website of each school/college, the Dean of Students Office, and the Regional Campus Student Services Offices. The attention of such students is called to the following University Regulations:

1. A student who wishes to apply toward a degree credits earned more than eight years before graduation must obtain permission from the dean of the school or college concerned and the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs.
2. All readmitted students (except those who are on an official leave of absence returning to their previous school or college) must satisfy the academic requirements of the school or college to which readmitted as stated in the catalog effective at the time of readmission, unless a subsequent catalog is elected.
3. Undergraduate students who have been separated from the university for at least eight consecutive semesters may seek academic renewal at the time of their application for readmission. Through academic renewal, a student may remove up to 16 credits of coursework with a grade of C- or lower from their GPA calculation after rematriculating at UConn. These courses must have been taken previously at the University of Connecticut. The registered grade, earned credits, and grade points for these courses shall remain on the transcript but will no longer calculate into the GPA. Students shall not receive credit toward

their degree for courses placed on academic renewal. Academic renewal can be used only once and is limited to those completing their first bachelor's degree at UConn.

Motion passed during the April 7, 2025 meeting of the University Senate, by electronic vote: 54 YAY, 1 NAY, 1 ABSTAIN

#### **4. Class Attendance Bylaw**

##### **Background & Summary of Action:**

The Senate Scholastic Standards Committee presents a motion to the University Senate to revise the By-Laws, Rules & Regulations of the University Senate, Article II, E. 9 Class Attendance. Prior language was unclear and had the potential to confuse guidance provided by the Office of the Provost regarding class material for University closures. It was also written before the widespread availability of synchronous and asynchronous modes of instruction by all faculty.

This revision clarifies how instructors are to manage class sessions affected by University closings. They support the principle of assuming that at least some students will have issues accessing synchronous content during periods of closure. Revised bylaw language ensures that students are protected from rapid pivots to online content. Updated language provides flexibility to allow optional synchronous instruction during a closure, but only with equivalent asynchronous content.

Specifically, the updates do the following:

- Instructors must provide sufficient time after the University reopens to schedule and complete work. *SSC intentionally chose “sufficient time” rather than a pre-determined time (e.g., 72 hours) as this is a by-law; specific times will be determined by instructors for specific closures and guidance may be provided by the Provost.*
- Instructors must provide clear communication about missed work and assessments, including notification of rescheduled assessments, due dates, and penalties for late submissions. *SSC advocates for transparency of information to students.*
- During a University closure, instructors must not require students to attend synchronous class sessions or to submit assessments, but they may provide asynchronous online instruction. *SSC clarifies that instructors are not permitted to require students to be present for synchronous online class sessions or submit assessments during a University closure, but that instructors can post asynchronous online instruction.*
- Instructors may reschedule class sessions on emergency make-up dates authorized by the Registrar. Any rescheduled sessions should avoid conflicts including, but not limited to, religious observances and other previously scheduled University obligations. *Consistent with the original by-law, SSC acknowledges that instructors may provide online instruction, utilize the make-up days authorized by the Registrar, and should avoid conflicts (as previously specified).*
- Annually, the Provost provides guidance on academic issues related to closures. *SSC recognizes the role of the Provost in University closure.*

##### **Current Bylaw Language:**

##### **Article II, E. 9 Class Attendance**

In the event that the University is closed due to inclement weather or other emergency on a regularly scheduled class day, instructors are expected to make reasonable attempts to complete all stated course learning objectives by the last day of classes. Approaches that an instructor may use to ensure the completion of all stated course learning objectives include, but are not limited to:

- a. Scheduling class make up on the “Emergency Closing Make Up Date(s)” designated by the Registrar’s Office in the University Calendar.
- b. Scheduling class make up at other times
- c. Extending class times
- d. Using educational technology and other not in-person alternatives.

In all situations in which stated course objectives would be completed outside of the regularly scheduled class time, it is essential that instructors should be sensitive to students’ inability to attend these alternative class times due to unavoidable conflicts such as, but not limited to, religious observances and other previously scheduled University obligations. Reasonable accommodation should be offered to students with such conflicts.

**Proposed Bylaw Change (*replacing the above*):**

**In the event of University cancellations or closures that impact the class schedule** (e.g., inclement weather), the instructor is expected to make reasonable arrangements for students to make up missed work and assessments. In making these arrangements, instructors must:

- a. Provide sufficient time after the University reopens **or classes resume** to schedule and complete missed work and assessments.
- b. Provide clear communication about missed work and assessments, including notification of rescheduled assessments, due dates, and penalties for late submissions.

During a period of **University changes to class schedule**, instructors must not require students to attend synchronous class sessions or to submit assessments.

Instructors may reschedule class sessions and assessments on emergency make-up dates authorized by the Registrar. Any rescheduled sessions should avoid conflicts including, but not limited to, religious observances and other previously scheduled University obligations.

Annually, the Provost provides guidance on academic issues related to **cancellations or closures that impact the class schedule**.

Motion passed during the April 7, 2025 meeting of the University Senate, by electronic vote: 65 YAY, 0 NAY, 0 ABSTAIN

## **5. Policy Change Exam Support for Non-Dominant English Speakers**

We examined a request from the University Writing Center that came through the SEC to offer extended time on examinations to non-dominant English speakers. We reviewed the proposal and discussed the merits and feasibility of this policy change. It was decided that no changes were to

be made at this time and encouraged individuals and units to access existing university resources that support non-dominant English Speakers.

## **6. Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence**

We discussed a concern brought to our attention by a college associate dean regarding the policies and process for handling accusations of academic misconduct based on utilizing AI/GLM for assignments. We discussed the lack of university-wide policy on the use of AI/GLM for issues related to academic misconduct as well as for pedagogical best practices. Members of the SSC raised a concern related to the lack of formation of an Office of Academic Integrity based on changes to the Bylaws that had been approved in Fall 2022. The SSC submitted a letter in February 2025 to the SEC that specified these concerns and asked that these be shared with the Provosts Office.

The Scholastic Standards Committee is writing to request action and follow through on the policy on [Academic Integrity](#) passed by the Senate in Fall 2022. Academic integrity impacts all members of the university community, faculty, staff, and students. There have been long-standing concerns related to the culture around this issue at UConn, and more recently prompting the formation of the Academic Integrity Taskforce in 2021 that worked to create the bylaw change that was approved over two years ago.

We believe that The Office of Academic Integrity needs to be located within the Division of Academic Affairs with oversight from the Provost's office as opposed to being located within Community Standards. There is a significant aspect of faculty compliance to the procedures and the policy, and we need this office to be positioned within Academic Affairs for the appropriate chain of command.

There are far-reaching implications to the work of this office, well beyond violations of community standards. It is our feeling that the primary focus of this office should be on education and professional development related to academic integrity and with this in place, there would be less of a need for investigations related to compliance.

This was a major concern in 2021 when this committee was first formed and has been an active discussion within the university since at least 2007. Since that time, this has become a crisis with the widespread availability of programs like OpenAI and other Generative Language Models. While instructors can look to offices like CETL to determine how to utilize AI for pedagogical purposes, we need to have guidance from the Provost's Office on concerns related to policy and academic integrity issues.

We request an update related to the staffing of this position. We have identified three immediate needs based on feedback from our faculty and students; (1) a website that clearly communicates policy, best practices, and provides information on processes, (2)

education and training related to these practices and policies, and (3) leadership from the Provost's office on establishing a culture of academic integrity for the university.

### **7. Class Engagement/Attendance**

SSC Member Jennifer Terni proposed a discussion related to policies and best practices for classroom engagement and attendance. The attendance policy of the university was discussed and it is noted that while UConn is not an 'attendance taking institution' as it related to financial aid designations, instructors may take attendance, but they cannot use student attendance alone as part of a student's course grade except when relevant to the pedagogy (for example in a music performance course). Best practices were discussed on strategies to increase student attendance and engagement. It was decided that no changes were to be made at this time and instructors are encouraged to reach out to CETL for support and guidance on strategies for engagement.

### **8. Bunched Finals**

This topic was carried over from the 2023-2024 academic year from a request from USG to change the current policy to define bunched finals as "3 final exams within a 24-hour period" as opposed to the current policy which is "3 final exams in one calendar day". Unfortunately, due to scheduling issues, no student representatives were able to attend SSC meetings this year and this topic was tabled until such time as they are present for the discussion.

### **9. Lab Transfer Credit**

SSC Member Lawrence Walsh proposed an evaluation of the policy around transfer credit for laboratory courses. At this time, UConn does not accept transfer credit for laboratory courses that are taught in an online modality. Due to many of the changes around teaching practices and modalities over the last few years, the need to evaluate this policy was noted. Members of the SSC were in favor of revising this policy, similar to the policy on transfer credit for second language courses taught in an online modality. Due to other topics taking priority during this year, this discussion was tabled.

### **10. Honors Board of Associate Directors Review/Approval**

SSC Member Jennier Lease Butts summarized the purpose of this group and the background. She made a motion for the committee to vote to approve its membership. Motion passed with one abstention.

### **11. Pass/Fail Policy Review**

SSC Member Erin Ciarimboli (Director of Undergraduate Advising) shared an email received in her office requesting an evaluation of the Pass/Fail policy as it applies to students on Academic Notice. SSC members discussed the policy and it was decided that no changes were to be made at this time.