UNIVERSITY SENATE MEETING MINUTES
July 14, 2025

A special meeting of the University Senate was held on
Monday, July 14, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.
Storrs Hall (WW16) (hybrid via WebEx)
Public Access Link: https://www.kaltura.com/tiny/yjtgv

Senator **Morrell** opened the meeting on behalf of SEC Chair Bob Day who was unable to attend and made a motion for Senator MacDougald to serve as Moderator pro-tem for the July 14, 2025 Special Senate Meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously by voice vote.

Senator **MacDougald** took the floor and read the Land Acknowledgement Statement.

1. University Budget

   Moderator **MacDougald** introduced the call for the meeting and highlighted the rules for participating in discussion during a Special Meeting. Moderator **MacDougald** welcomed Senators Michel and McCutcheon to present the topic of call for the Special Meeting.

   Senators **Michel** and **McCutcheon** presented a summary of the budget concerns raised in response to recent announcements of how the university administration plans to respond to recent fiscal challenges regarding the state support of the University, particularly concerned with IDC and tier 4 accounts. Key highlights presented:

   - Concerns regarding the seizure of IDCs without clarity on source of funding for "as needed" budgets for units
   - No long-term measure to address structural financial deficits and concerns over how units will operate effectively
   - Concerns over the little gains that can be achieved by restricting travel from a financial perspective
   - Lack of clarity surrounding plans for rescissions which is causing fear and uncertainty

Moderator **MacDougald** thanked Senators Michel and McCutcheon for their summary and opened the floor to members of the administrative team to present their response. President Radenka **Maric**, Vice President Pamir **Alpay** and Interim Vice President Reka **Wrynn** presented a summary of their response, highlighting that the university faces significant budget challenges due to rising expenditures and federal funding cuts impacting research awards, which are outpacing revenue growth (over the past ten years, 54% revenue growth and 63% expenditures increase). They stated that the five-year financial sustainability plan aims to address the structural deficit through revenue growth and expenditure reductions, citing that deans and department heads will guide decisions in a transparent process. Key highlights presented by the team:

- Emphasis on how the Strategic Plan informs the President's Operational Priorities over the next 3-5 years and that enrollment and UConn's ranking must go up in order to achieve these goals by striving for excellence.
- Emphasis on UConn's efforts to mitigate the current research challenges, sharing that since January 20, 2025 UConn has lost an estimated $100 million in research and other sponsored activity funding and currently projects a reduction of new federal research awards in FY26 and 27. President **Maric** stated the importance of focusing on grants whose research areas are in those that are popular with the federal government, such as AI and quantum.
- Emphasis on reduced state budget support and its impacts, particularly focusing on additional mitigation plans to make up for the shortfall in state funding, such as personnel optimization/reduction planning, pausing non-essential travel or events, reviewing purchased service contracts for savings, using fund balances, and increasing utilization of Foundation funds.
- Summary of strategy to centrally manage utilization of fund balances to reduce risk of additional spend on permanent costs; thousands of accounts will be reviewed and certain accounts will be exempted. This practice will not alleviate the structural deficit. Reka **Wrynn** also clarified that no fund balances have been swept, and if anyone sees a zero balance it is because fund balances do not roll forward until the beginning of September when the fiscal year is officially turned over.

- Next steps are to utilize cost-cutting or revenue generating initiatives to be balanced in FY26 and also work towards closing the estimated FY27 deficit of $50 million.
- Detailed discussions will continue with those units still in deficit to identify appropriate strategies to achieve sustainability; all tools/options will be considered including managed utilization of fund balances and senior leadership will review and approve unit plans.

Moderator **MacDougald** thanked the administrators for their report, and the floor was opened to questions. A question was raised regarding the status of in-residence faculty and whether they have job security and President **Maric** answered that no, faculty who are productive and working hard should not panic, adding that it’s important for faculty to be mindful of productivity and publications particularly considering optics from the state perspective. Concerns were raised by the Literatures, Cultures and Languages (LCL) Department Head that they have been incredibly conscientious and responsible in cutting costs and fear additional cuts in this changing fiscal landscape compared to other units who have been less aggressive in their budget balancing. President **Maric** answered that one size does not fit all and that every school/college will have a customized review; Provost **D’Alleva** emphasized that their office is working very closely with the deans and other leaders to make sure that cuts are being made in a fair way that takes all complicating factors into account. Clarification was asked regarding which accounts may be controlled centrally and which will be left alone, as well as clarification regarding what is considered a “successfully used account” vs not. Reka **Wrynn** responded that the plan is to exempt accounts that are held slecifically by faculty from this process (faculty IDCs, faculty salary savings, faculty startups, etc) and that dean or department level accounts will be reviewed for utilization if a school/college or unit is still in deficit after utilizing all other cost savings strategies. A question was raised regarding as-needed funding for institutes and centers, specifically regarding summer salary for these center/institute leaders who may have to weigh their own salaries against other priorities they are trying to fund. Pamir **Alpay** responded that salary commitments will be honored and that budgets for these centers/institutes will be an ongoing conversation with every center institute director and either the Provost’s Office or the School/College through which they operate. A question was raised regarding Extension program budgeting, as their programs often take on a two-year budget cycle and make significant impacts on under-resourced and marginalized communities around the state. Reka **Wrynn** and Provost **D’Alleva** emphasized that this is a great example as to why all budgets are being considered at local, specialized levels within these greater contexts. A question was raised regarding job security for professional staff and President **Maric** answered that staff are key to the university's mission towards excellence. A question was raised from a faculty member in the School of Fine Arts regarding classes that must be small in size due to the nature of the course and facilities and how that factors into the budget analysis. Provost **D'Alleva** responded that they are looking at opportunities to stage some larger classes and they are also looking into ways in which programs can run additional online classes, citing that in surveys with students, many are seeking to take at least one of their five courses per semester in an online format to better suit their scheduling needs. Another question was raised regarding potential faculty layoffs, specifically CIRE and TT faculty and how these might be handled given the AAUP contract; this person also asked whether any department or program will be eliminated. Provost **D'Alleva** responded that program closures are not being looked at as a pathway to help the budget, but that programs are reviewed periodically for accreditation and to ensure academic excellence in our programming. Later, a clarification was asked and Provost **D'Alleva** said that right now there are no plans to lay off faculty and President Maric added that they will look at Special Payroll contracts that are scheduled to expire in the near future. Regarding faculty positions, Provost **D'Alleva** responded that all new faculty hiring is being looked at on a case-by-case basis so that all positions are meeting critical needs of the university. A question was raised asking to clarify how unrestricted funds will be affected at the PI level. Pamir **Alpay** responded that this question is best answered locally by a dean or department head in terms of what they have planned for in their budgets going forward. A concern was raised regarding hiring freezes during a time of increasing enrollment and the potential impacts on faculty retention. President **Maric** stated that if enrollment is going down for a specific program, then an automatic replacement will not be made for that faculty line, adding that they are looking at the programs that are under pressure with increasing enrollment and collaborating with department heads and deans to address this. A question was raised regarding faculty accounts utilized by faculty who teach in the intersession and direct those funds to a research account whether those funds will be included in the sweep. Reka **Wrynn** clarified that if an account has a faculty member's name on it, that account would not be centrally managed. A concern was raised regarding a department's ability to retain TA's as they use unrestricted funds to pay one third of their total budget for this support, and have been doing so for a decade, so if these funds are swept, they will lose their number of TA's by a third, asking how we navigate this balancing act of preserving excellence in this environment. Pamir **Alpay** stated that this should be a conversation between their department head and the team. A Senator asked if there has been any study or analysis on how these budget measures, especially with respect to IDCs, will impact retention or loss of research active faculty. Pamir Alpay responded that universities across the United States are facing these challenges, and many other universities have implemented similar policies. They added that individual PI accounts are not being touched and will continue to grow with 5% - 10% returns so that faculty can address some of the issue they have with respect to retaining graduate students, with travel, and with keeping infrastructure going. A Senator raised concerns about the ongoing process and communication around the announcement of this new policy, encouraging the administration to remove language like "sweeping funds" from the messaging, asking for reassurances that departments will be consulted and involved in the ongoing process. President **Maric** responded that they do not want to be vague and that they are currently reviewing requests and discussing funds with unit managers, and that the conversation will continue. Provost **D'Alleva** emphasized that deans will engage deeply with department heads to determine the path forward, which is unique for each school, college and department. A Senator who is also a department head asked about how departments are going to access funds when they are needed, and if units will still have the same flexibility that they currently have with IDC funds, citing that they are used frequently to upgrade equipment in their department that is used in courses and they are unable to do so at this time due to budget constraints. Pamir **Alpay** responded that they work with their dean on other revenue sources and review priorities and that unfortunately funds will continue to become more constrained in the next 18 months due to the current environment. A Senator commented that AI will add more complications to an already challenging environment, and we need to stay on top of it so as not to become obsolete. A Senator asked for additional clarification on the budget process moving forward and Reka **Wrynn** shared that they will be redeveloping the budget model in the fall, adding that this will not be a solution for the deficit but will allow the university to have stronger metrics to guide how we allocate resources moving forward. They added that the goal is to build a customized model that fits the university and shows clearly and transparently where revenue belongs and where expenses sit, stating that it will take at least a year to develop and a second year before the new model is fully rolled out.

Senator **McCutcheon** thanked the administrators for taking the time to engage with the University Senate and presented a motion, highlighted in the Special

Meeting Call. Moderator **MacDougald** stated that the resolution does not require a second as it was included in the call for the special meeting; Senator **McCutcheon** proposed an amendment to the resolution; the amendment was seconded by Senator **Harmon**.

> The full amended motion states (*amended language in red*): "We call for the university leadership to reconsider their fiscal plan with respect to 4 ledger fund balances and instead engage formally with the senate in a constructive, transparent, and long-term fiscal strategy that does not jeopardize the mission of the University's research enterprise. We would like to have a proposed mechanism of this engagement by August 1, 2025, so that it can be ratified by the Senate in its first meeting of the year."

The floor was opened to questions and discussion ensued, with an ask for additional clarification on the reference to the "plan" in the resolution. Senator **Fernandes** proposed an amendment to the amendment not to limit strictly to research. The amendment to the amendment was seconded by Senator **Burr**.

> The amendment to the amended motion states (amended language in purple): "We call for the university leadership to reconsider their fiscal plan with respect to 4 ledger fund balances and instead engage formally with the senate in a constructive, transparent, and long-term fiscal strategy that does not jeopardize the mission of the University.~~'s research enterprise.~~

Moderator **MacDougald** asked for any questions regarding this amendment to the amended motion. The amendment to the amended motion passed unanimously via voice vote.

Senator **Reed** asked whether the amended motion should also include 2-ledger funding in the first sentence and discussion ensued. Senator **Bayulgen** proposed an amendment to the amended resolution to clarify this point. The motion was seconded.

> The amendment to the amended motion states (amended language in purple):"We call for the university leadership to reconsider their fiscal planning process with respect to 4 ledger fund balances and instead engage formally with the senate in a constructive, transparent, and long-term fiscal strategy that does not jeopardize the mission of the University.

Moderator **MacDougald** asked for any questions regarding this amendment to the amended motion. The amendment to the amended motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Moderator **MacDougald** asked for any further questions or discussion of the amended motion as written. There were none. The motion to amend passed unanimously by voice vote. Moderator **MacDougald** asked for any final questions or discussed on the resolution. There were none. Subsequently, the full amended resolution passed unanimously by voice vote.

2. Adjournment

   Senator **Morrell** made a motion to adjourn the meeting; the motion was seconded by Senator **McCutcheon**.

   The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Everard
University Senate Administrator