

# Senate Student Welfare Committee

## Minutes

October 31, 2024

Charge: This committee shall review the conditions that contribute to the academic success, personal development, physical and mental well-being of students, and available forms of financial aid. It may seek the opinion of the Senate on such matters and make recommendations.

### 2024/2025 Student Welfare Committee Members

**\*Leo Lachut, ISS, Co-Chair, Academic Achievement Center**

**\*Tina McCarthy, Co-Chair, Student Health and Wellness**

\*Alexis Boylan, SFA

\*Andy Bush, CLAS

\*Kate Fuller, UConn Libraries

\*Erica Granoff, Student Services (Stamford Campus)

\*Nathanael Okpych, Social Work (Hartford)

\*Jennifer Pascal, Engineering

\*Tracy Rittenhouse, CAHNR

\*Sarah Scheidel, Enrichment Programs

\*Mike Shor, CLAS

\*Fiona Vernal, CLAS, History

Bryanna Anderson, Center for Students with Disabilities

Cynthia Costanzo, Interim Vice President for Student Life (Ex-Officio Member)

Kimberly Duby, Dean of Students Office

Arthur Galinat, International Student & Scholar Services

Katherine McCarthy, One Stop Student Services Office

Suzanne Peters, Financial Aid

Megan Petsa, The Graduate School

Peter Tribuzio, Student Services, Waterbury Campus

\*Senate Member 2024/2025

**Welcome :** two new undergraduate student members introduced and welcomed

**Approve Minutes** - September meeting: minutes approved unanimously

## Old Business

Call for agenda items

### Standing items:

- Regional Concerns
- DEIJ Concerns

### New items:

- Tina McCarthy raised the question of AI (Artificial Intelligence) and implications of its use in higher education as something to keep an eye on. Tracy Rittenhouse added that the Workshop series hosted by CETL has been a great resource on this topic during this semester.

## New Business

Guest – Sue Peters Director, Student Financial Aid Services:

- Sue Peters shared her screen and presented a comparison of the Fall 2022 – Fall 2024 enrollment information for undergraduate degree-seeking students as of Day 10 (after add/drop has ended; Fall 2024 data is preliminary). This data included an analysis of the % of students filling out the FAFSA, vs the % that are Pell grant eligible.

### Office of Student Financial Aid Services

October 31, 2024

	Avery Point			Hartford			Stamford		
	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024*	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024*	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024*
Fall Day 10 Enrollment	480	464	449	1,500	1,473	1,523	2,246	2,177	2,409
% that filed	81.0%	80.6%	80.2%	85.4%	85.6%	84.5%	79.1%	81.4%	81.7%
% Pell Eligible	36.3%	39.0%	39.0%	47.0%	47.7%	48.3%	51.1%	53.7%	55.6%

  

	Waterbury			Storrs			Total		
	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024*	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024*	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024*
Fall Day 10 Enrollment	751	746	721	18,768	19,147	19,742	23,745	24,007	24,844
% that filed	83.1%	87.8%	89.0%	68.9%	72.7%	73.7%	71.6%	74.9%	75.7%
% Pell Eligible	52.1%	54.6%	57.1%	24.3%	26.3%	28.5%	29.3%	31.2%	33.3%

Data as of fall day 10.

\*Fall 2024 enrollment is preliminary

Degree Seeking Undergraduate Students

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- Sue Peters explained that shifts in Pell eligibility between 2023 and 2024 were impacted by changes in the government's metric for determining eligibility.

- Sue Peters explained issues with the FAFSA which took place last year and impacted all students interacting with the system (new and continuing). She added that the process is still not smooth and that we can expect to see a continuance issues moving into next year. The 2025-2026 FAFSA is scheduled to be going live on December 1, 2024 and the Dept of Education is running Beta testing groups of the new system. UConn is part of Beta Test 3 and the Office of Financial Aid, in collaboration with the One Stop Office, are working to identify students who would like to fill out a FAFSA to be a part of this Beta Test process. Students who have signed up to participate in this, should be given a 6-day window and a unique URL to participate starting next week. The Office of Financial Aid will not know the names of the students participating in this Beta Test.
- Leo Lachut thanked Sue Peters for their presentation and opened the floor to questions. Kimberly Duby shared that she has heard from students that they feel they are receiving less financial aid and asked if that concern is rooted in reality or not. Sue Peters answered that the change in metrics actually made it so that many students would have received more financial aid, not less, but that family income changes can also play a role in the calculation. Leo Lachut raised concerns about potential tuition increases and how that might impact students with financial aid needs. Sue Peters stated that need-based aid has gone up every year, alongside tuition increases; however, she could not state if those increases have kept pace enough with the tuition costs. Discussion also ensued around helping students understand their financial responsibility to the university, particularly those who have high financial need and may be taken on the burden of higher loan amounts. Sue Peters added that the Office of Financial Aid will be sending letters to all students who fill out the FAFSA highlighting their financial commitment in coming to UConn, taking their loans into account. Arthur Galinat asked whether other students – graduate students, international students, etc- will receive this communication. Sue Peters answered that this communication is only sent to students who fill out the FAFSA. Leo Lachut also shared that he has had students approach him in the past saying that they received more money than they expected, and Sue Peters confirmed that there are COVID funds that must be used by December 31 of each year and that their office will assign any additional funding to students with high financial need when they become available. Leo Lachut and Tina McCarthy thanked Sue Peters for their presentation and asked if Sue would present again at a future meeting, especially considering the Early Decision process that is beginning and will be done before the FAFSA is open to application.

## Updates, Last year and moving forward

- First Gen Week Updates and Information: Leo Lachut shared that about 30% of students at Storrs and 50% of students at regional campuses identify as “first gen,” and that National First-Generation Recognition Day is November 8<sup>th</sup> each year and was celebrated by several offices on campus. There will be a week-long series of events, and all committee members are encouraged to participate and tell their colleagues about this series. <https://firstgen.uconn.edu>
- Student member input :
  - Jabreel Akbar shared that they have an interest in student wellbeing and mental health

## Next Meeting:

- Maureen Armstrong and Kristina Stevens will join to present on university communications during sensitive situations (i.e. in the case of the death of a student)

The meeting was adjourned at 2:59 p.m.