

University Senate Meeting
May 4, 2026
Student Union Ballroom, Room 330/331 (hybrid via WebEx)

Moderator **Siegle** called the meeting to order 4:00 p.m.

Moderator **Siegle** 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. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Senator **Morrell** and seconded by Senator **Kleinman** to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2026 Meeting of the University Senate. The minutes were approved as distributed.

2. Report of the President

Attachment #1

Presented on behalf of President Maric by Interim Provost Pamir Alpay

Interim Provost **Alpay** presented the presentation on behalf of President Maric. Provost **Alpay** started by announcing that Professor Bolnick has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, UConn's first since 2022 and one of eight total, congratulating Professor Bolnick and his team. Provost **Alpay** also gave a fundraising update sharing that the UConn Gives Initiatives has resulted in a record number of donations and associated dollar values, expressing gratitude to those who donated and celebrating this milestone by the UConn Foundation. Provost **Alpay** also gave an update on upcoming commencement ceremonies, encouraging everyone to attend and join in the celebrations. Provost **Alpay** also gave an update on the collective bargaining agreements which are now pending final debate and approval by the full General Assembly, recognizing the work of many involved in this process. Additionally, Provost **Alpay** shared that University Leadership, Government Relations and President Maric have been working hard this past legislative session to advocate for UConn's budget, adding that Reka Wrynn will share a more detailed update later during this meeting. Finally, Provost Alpay finished their report with an update on UConn's commitment to sustainability and some recent work in this area,

including efforts made by the Institute of the Environment and the Energy and Center for Clean Energy Engineering.

Moderator **Siegle** asked if there were any questions. There were no questions.

Moderator **Siegle** thanked Interim Provost **Alpay** for presenting the President's report.

3. Report of the Senate Executive Committee

Presented by Robert Day, Senate Executive Committee Chair

Senator **Day** began their report, sharing that the SEC has recently met with John Armstrong who presented an update regarding the inform.uconn.edu website. Senator **Day** also shared details of their recent report to the Board of Trustees, which focused on the Senate Committee annual reports and celebrating the successful launch of the new Common Curriculum during this academic year. Additionally, Senator **Day** announced that Senator Morrell has been elected to SEC Chair starting on May 15, 2026, adding that a Vice Chair will be elected and announced shortly. Senator **Day** finished their report by acknowledging the work of the SEC and expressing gratitude for all involved in ensuring the Senate runs smoothly and efficiently.

Moderator **Siegle** thanked Senator **Day** for their presentation and asked if there were any questions. Senator **Morrell** thanked Senator Day for their service as SEC Chair for the past year and wished him well in his new role as Interim Dean of the Business School.

4. Consent Agenda Items:

Attachment #2

C & C Report

SEC Consent Agenda Items (SEC Chair Start Date, ABR Taskforce Extension)

Nominating Committee Report (Senate Committee Rosters, AY 26-27)

By voice vote, the consent agenda passed

5. Follow-Up Discussion on Data Set Requested passed by vote on February 2, 2026

Attachment #3

Presented by SEC Chair Bob Day

Senator **Day** began by showing the motion language on the screen, adding that this was voted on in February and data was subsequently received by the SEC via the Provost's Office; this data was shared with the full Senate during the last meeting

(and is available on the Senate website behind a sign-on page) and this is now an opportunity for anyone to discuss any questions that may have regarding the data.

Moderator **Siegle** asked if there were any questions, and Senator **Bush** shared that the ultimate goal of the request was to get information on the effects of the five-year recission plan and that they think the data received provides a good baseline and looks forward to continuing to push on this issue in the up coming year. Senator **Morrell** added that the Senate Budget Committee did not have time to do a full analysis of the data but shared that there seems to have been a shift in terms of the university's hiring in recent years and asked for a comment on this pattern and whether we expect this to continue, particularly with regard to the reduced hiring of tenure track faculty and increases in CIRE faculty. Provost **Alpay** shared that due to the difficult financial situation that the university is facing, we should expect more or less the same staffing levels of tenure track faculty, CIRE faculty and staff.

6. Senate Standing Committee Annual Reports

Attachment #4

Presented by Senate Standing Committee Chairs

The Standing Committee Chairs each made a brief summary report of the work covered by their individual Standing Committee during this past academic year.

Upon completion of all Standing Committee Reports, Moderator **Siegle** asked if there were any questions for any of the Standing Committee Chairs. There were no questions.

Moderator **Siegle** thanked the Standing Committee Chairs for their presentations of the Senate Standing Committee Annual Reports.

7. Budget Update

Attachment #5

Presented by Associate Vice President for Budget & Planning Reka Wrynn

Associate Vice President **Wrynn** began their presentation by thanking members of the Senate for being engaged in the budget process and recognizing Anthony Rini, the new CFO & Vice President for Budget & Planning. Associate Vice President **Wrynn** shared that FY 2026 is projected to end with a small surplus of \$0.5 million, which is a great achievement after starting the year with a \$37.9 million deficit. Associate Vice President **Wrynn** also shared some of the mitigation strategies employed to achieve this. Looking forward to FY 2027, Associate Vice President **Wrynn** shared that the university is currently facing a shortfall of \$57.7 million; they added that if we remove strategic initiatives and legislatively directed initiatives off of the total, we will start FY 2027 with an approximately \$38 million shortfall. Looking

forward, Associate Vice President **Wrynn** shared that the university will need to continue enacting as many mitigation strategies as possible to reduce spending and increase revenues to balance the budget and the rescission plan is still in effect. Associate Vice President **Wrynn** ended their presentation by sharing the good news that the university has received \$119.1 million additional funds to the UConn 2000 Program to be spent on specific capital projects.

Moderator **Siegle** thanked Associate Vice President **Wrynn** for their presentation and asked if there were any questions. Senator **Bresciano** asked a question regarding the “student success software” listed on the strategic initiatives slide and Vice President **Wrynn** confirmed that the university asked for \$5 million to support the purchase of student success software to help with retention and graduation efforts as part of the SEM planning, adding that Vice President Fuerst will be sharing more details about this during the following presentation. \$800,000 of this request was allocated to FY 2027 for year one. Senator **Jockusch** shared concerns regarding hiring holds and asked about the percentage of positions not refilled broken down by union (AAUP, UCPEA) and administrative. Vice President **Wrynn** responded that they do not have full data on this particularly because some units did not ask to refill positions as a means to balance their budgets so the budget office would not be privy to the fact that they were holding a position; they do, however, have a record of which positions were not approved to be moved forward for refill if the request was made. Senator **Morrell** stated that they do not agree with asking the state to pay for all the raises because they have never done that. Senator **Morrell** asked why projected tuition amounts are down between FY 2026 Q2 and Q3 and Associate Vice President **Wrynn** responded that the difference, though slight, is due to a higher spring melt than anticipated. Senator **Morrell** followed up with a second question asking to clarify the breakdown between salary and benefits and if benefit costs (fringe benefits) have risen faster than salary costs. Associate Vice President **Wrynn** responded that the state negotiates fringe benefits and while there are no increases for FY 2026, the preliminary numbers for FY 2027 will likely go up. Senator **Morrell** also asked a clarifying question regarding the five-year rescission plan and whether the university is anticipating a deficit for next year to which Associate Vice President **Wrynn** responded with the figures and an affirmative response regarding a projected deficit.

Moderator **Siegle** called for any new business, for which there was none.

8. Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) Plan Update

Attachment #6

Presented by Nathan Fuerst, Vice President for Student Life & Enrollment, Phil Hunt, Chief of Staff to the President, & Liza Boritz, Director of Planning and Assessment

Vice President **Fuerst** presented a series of slides which reviewed the SEM Plan summary, and goals (1) improve undergraduate retention (2) improve undergraduate student graduation (3) support enrollment growth (4) ensure satisfaction and post-graduate outcomes for graduates and undergraduates (5) determine baseline for graduate student success outcomes (6) determine criteria for graduate student enrollment capacities. The presentation also reviewed various tactics that the team will utilize to reach these goals. Liza **Boritz** also reviewed further details of where the team stands in the planning process and the role of various SEM Action Teams focused on specific projects.

Vice President **Fuerst** took a pause to answer questions regarding the SEM Plan Update presentation. Moderator Siegle opened the floor to questions and Senator **Kleinman** asked whether there is a current version of the working plan that could be shared with the Senate and Vice President **Fuerst** said that their team will work to make something available online. Senator **Jockusch** shared that faculty at regional campuses are on the front lines of some of these goals, particularly goals 1 and 2, and shared concerns about the lack of central support (citing the Biology Tutoring Center, Hartford and Campus Change Program) for these grassroots initiatives. Vice President **Fuerst** encouraged faculty involved in initiatives that support these SEM goals to contact himself and Liza Boritz so they can learn more and potentially integrate these programs into the plan. Senator **Cutter** asked if there is a plan to try to give full financial aid to students, particularly those who are BIPOC and 1st generation. Senator **Cutter** also shared concerns about course availability for students so that they are able to graduate on time coupled with the lack of recent faculty hiring and to what extent this plan takes these factors into account. Vice President **Fuerst** responded that their office is doing the best they can to stretch financial aid while also maintaining the viability of that financial aid budget, and regarding course availability, the university has high graduation rates and some of the highest time to degree of any public university flagship university in the country, so while this is something they are watching, it is not a major concern at this time. Senator **McKeon** asked for clarifying regarding the approval of a grant for year one of the implementation of a new student success system, which was in Associate Vice President Wrynn's report. Chief of Staff Phil **Hunt** responded that though money has been set aside, no official decision has been made, adding that the tool they are looking for will need to be more than just an advising platform and will need to include some comprehensive and predictive analytics. Senator Skudlarek asked to ensure that their office be consulted regarding accessibility for any new system that may be considered. Senator **Cummings** asked what the SEM plan has in terms of building cultures of support for students and to ensure that there is follow-up when a faculty member raises a red flag that they see concerning behavior in a student in

their interactions with them. Liza **Boritz** responded that there are multiple tactics outlined in the full document that identify opportunities for increased connection and collaboration between faculty, staff and all campuses to ensure that we are better communication and the student success platform would be one of those tools. Senator **Fernandes** shared concerns about the number of systems currently being used at UConn, which was a finding of the Segal report, and whether this new student software would add to that. Senator **Fernandes** also asked how we are ensuring all these strategic plans and initiatives are working together and don't conflict or contradict each other (citing SEM, BTI, Segal, the ITS security assessment, etc). Chief of Staff **Hunt** responded that this is the collective responsibility of the senior leadership team, and they collaborate closely to ensure broader initiatives are moving forward with alignment. Liza **Boritz** added that some systems will likely be sunset with the adoption of a successful platform. Senator **Michel** asked how we are adapting to bring students back to the table to engage with faculty as students have drastically changed over these past few years. Liza **Boritz** responded that there are regular surveys and opportunities to ask students directly what they need, nothing that they can do better in sharing the results of these surveys and sharing responses to that feedback.

Vice President **Fuerst** shared a presentation slide which summarized a response on behalf of their office to the Learning Accommodations Taskforce Report. The slide reviewed each recommendation from the report and Student Life & Enrollment's individual responses, adding that work is constantly developing. Moderator **Siegle** reopened the floor to questions. Senator **Cummings** asked about the large case volumes facing staff in CSD and asked if hiring more staff in this area is a part of the SEM plan. Vice President **Fuerst** responded that they are working with leaders in this area to put together a report consisting of benchmarks against other universities and looking at what our needs are now and in the future. Senator **Morrell** asked about how we make trade off decisions to ensure students are fully supported at UConn while making financial cuts. Vice President **Fuerst** responded that there will always be more opportunities for investment that resources available to support them and so their office is always intentional about what to focus on and what to pull back on. Chief of Staff **Hunt** added that senior leadership are always looking at ways to generate more revenue to support important initiatives.

Moderator **Siegle** thanked Vice President **Fuerst**, Director Liza **Boritz** and Chief of Staff **Phil Hunt** for their presentation.

9. New Business

No new business

10. Adjournment

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

Senator **Vadas** seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michelle Everard
University Senate Administrator

SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Robert Day, Chair
Alexis Boylan
Karen Bresciano
Erin Ciarimboli
Jennifer Dineen

Sandy Grande
Michael Morrell
Sarira Motaref
Morty Ortega
Del Siegle

Sandi Roy, GSS President
Leo Gold, GSS Vice President
Rosalind Tavarez, ASG Waterbury
Andy Zhang, USG Storrs