

University Senate Meeting
September 14, 2026
Student Union Ballroom, Room 330/331 (hybrid via MS Teams)

President **Maric** called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

1. Election of Moderator and Secretary

President **Maric** called on Senator **Morrell**, Chair of the Senate Executive Committee, to nominate the Moderator. Senator **Morrell** stated based on the results of the nomination slate voted on by the members of the University Senate during the start of the Fall 2026 Semester, they made a motion to nominate Senator Del Siegle as the Moderator for the 2026-2027 academic year. Senator **Brescancio** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by a voice vote.

President **Maric** then yielded the floor to Senator **Siegle**, Moderator of the Senate. Moderator **Siegle** called for the nomination for the Senate Secretary for the 2026-2027 academic year. Senator **Rittenhouse** nominated Christine North as Secretary of the University Senate for the 2026-2027 academic year and Senator **Brescancio** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by a voice vote.

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."

2. Introduction of Senators

Moderator **Siegle** asked Michelle Everard, University Senate Administrator, read the names of all the Senators and, if they are present that they either stand or acknowledge their presence virtually as their name is read aloud. There is a full searchable membership list on the Senate website which includes the Senator's constituency that they have been elected to represent, what school/college or

department they report through, as well as any Senate Committees for which they've been appointed.

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the May 4, 2026 were approved as distributed by voice vote.

4. Report of the President

Presented on behalf of President Maric

President **Maric** report began with a congratulations to all the new Senators who were elected to the Senate and thanked all the Senators for their service to the University. President **Maric** shared that whenever possible they will be attending the Senate meetings in person as they prefer to be in person, but if that is not an option then they will be online. They then gave a very brief overview of the incoming freshman class being less than the past few years, but the returning junior and senior classes are the largest cohort of students that the University has had and this success is due to you all delivering on the mission of the University.

President **Maric** then went on to discuss the new National Science Foundation (NSF) 10-year grant for \$160 million that was awarded to UConn with Provost Alpay as the P.I., in partnership with Yale, with the match from the State \$121 million. When asked how they feel about this award, President **Maric** says in championship terms this is like Gino's first championship in 1995!

President **Maric** went on to discuss changes at the federal level and shared one element being a Ph.D. degree in four-year, a program already occurring in 30 universities and the desire is for UConn to become one of those universities. If selected, the University pays for the first year of the Ph.D. student, NSF pays for 2 years, and industry pays for the fourth year, giving the student the opportunity to obtain jobs within that industry. Additionally, the Governor is in support of pathways to a faster degree with dual courses being offered across high schools and paid for by the State.

President **Maric** stated that Vice President and CFO Anthony Rini will provide a more detailed update on the budget, but shared that the University received \$35 million from the Governor as one-time funds to help with research and of those funds, \$21 million went to Storrs and \$14 million went to UConn Health. The University also received \$6 million from the OPM Secretary, \$3 million to address the budget shortfall and \$3 million for UConn Health. In addition to this, the State has also

approved \$35 million for startups for top faculty and Provost Alpay is talking with deans and department heads about entrepreneurial faculty startup and top faculty startup.

President **Maric** stated that today was the first of the President's Leadership Forum, an open forum meeting created as a result of information shared from the Senate regarding the need for better communication and open discussion between the leadership and the units. This first meeting yielded 125 leaders consisting of deans, directors, vice presidents, and vice provosts all with an objective to spend more time talking face-to-face about challenging issues and address uncomfortable topics.

President **Maric** then mentioned that the findings from the Segal Group's report have come out and the first two units that are going to be implementing ways to improve efficiencies are Human Resources and Marketing & Communications.

President **Maric** concluded their report by congratulating everyone on the beginning of the Semester and thanked everyone for their service.

Moderator **Siegle** asked if there were any questions.

Senator **Bontly** asked about the Segal Report's findings regarding the morale problem and how the administration plans to address this issue. President **Maric** stated that they have heard that the budget has been a major issue related to the morale and they believe addressing this will work to improve it. President **Maric** stated when they asked Segal what was different about UConn versus other universities they were told it was the level of the cynicism and that is something that needs to be explored and addressed.

Senator **Harmon** asked about the issue of not laying off individuals when they are aware of an individual not being renewed due to a program closure and they asked about this type of incident. President **Maric** stated that this is a decision that is made by the unit and by the deans as part of consolidation, so they would recommend discussing it with them directly.

Senator **Coppola** stated that they are excited about the new grant from NSF and excited about proposal returns coming through more quickly, but they are very concerned that decisions are being made by individuals that are not scientific but rather political appointees. President **Maric** stated that they are aware that academic staff are being contacted for review of proposals, citing that they had been contacted to review proposals for NSF directly. Vice President **DiStefano** agreed

that the scientific peer-review is essential and this is something that is being monitored very carefully as our university and others are proceeding with this process.

Senator **Gokirmak** asked about TA funding being returned and President **Maric** referred them back to the dean of their School/College, as that is where these budgetary decisions are being made. Provost **Alpay** stated that there have not been any specific directions given to any Schools or Colleges to cut any specific line item, such as TA funding.

Senator **Lozano-Robledo** congratulated the administration on the Quantum CT grant and was happy to see the new hires related to the grant, but wanted to know if these new hires would be a burden on the budget in the future. President **Maric** stated that there are one-time funds coming from the Governor for the startups and then there is fundraising that is focused on donors to provide the funds to continue to support the salaries.

Senator **Toussaint** asked about how the resources are being allocated across the campuses, given that all students pay for tuition and various University and campus fees but service facilities, academy opportunities and student resource availability can differ significantly between campuses. President **Maric** stated that this is a question for the deans of the regional campuses, as they provide an annual budget request to the provost, which is reviewed along with the student enrollment and priorities for each campus. Vice President Nathan **Fuerst** stated that there have been different services at different campuses, and this is something that is known and is being looked at to improve the services and student experiences across all the campuses.

Moderator **Siegle** thanked President **Maric** for their presentation.

Moderator **Siegle** took a moment to introduce the Senate's New Parliamentarian, Matthew Syrotiak. Matt has served as the State 4-H Coordinator in the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources for about a year.

5. Report of the Senate Executive Committee

Attachment #1

Presented by Michael Morrell, Senate Executive Committee Chair

Senator **Morrell** began by stating that the Committee has met twice since the beginning of the term. There are several issues they are beginning to focus on early in the academic year, which include: rollout of the new BLUE budget model,

monitoring the environment of the University community in the face of various challenges from the federal government, and scholarship and tuition challenges for undocumented students to name a few. In addition to these items, SEC has completed the self-study on NECHE, and the displayed information is available online for Senators to review and sign-up to join online.

Senator **Morrell** also shared that the SEC is collaborating with the new AI Council and invited Senator **Bergman**, Chair of the AI Council, to give an overview of this Council and their presentation will be available after the meeting.

Senator **Morenus** asked if there were any professional staff members on the AI Council and Senator **Bergman** stated that there are staff on the AI Council, as there is representation from all the unions on campus. Senator **Morenus** asked a follow-up to inquire about how many professional staff are on the Council and Senator **Bergman** said that they didn't know specifically but anticipated sending out information soon both about the AI Council and those types of details would be in that message.

Senator **Toussaint** asked how they are ensuring representation from regional campuses are a part of this conversation and a part of the AI Council, especially from the Stamford campus. Senator **Bergman** said that they don't know that they have a specific undergraduate student from the Stamford campus, but they have spoken with the deans from the regional campuses, and they are working to be sure they are addressing the needs of all campuses.

Senator **Wiemer** asked about AI access for graduate students and Senator **Bergman** stated that the message that is coming out will provide information from UITS which will provide guidance for all levels of users that can be allowed.

Senator **Morrell** continued by stating that the SEC is working on improving communication between the Senate and its committees and the Board of Trustees and its committees by including the Senate representatives to the Board of Trustees as part of our meeting with all the Senate committee chairs to make sure communication happens. However, should you ever have any issues that you want to raise with the SEC, please feel free to share it with any member of the SEC (names are at the bottom of the first page of your agenda).

Moderator **Siegle** thanked Senator **Morrell** and **Bergman** for their presentation.

6. Consent Agenda Items:

Attachment #2

C & C Report

Nominating Committee Report (Senate Committee Rosters AY 2026-2027)

By voice vote, the nominating committee report passed

7. Scholars Day Motion

Attachment #3

Presented by Scholastic Standards Co-Chair Lindsay Cummings and Associate Vice Provost for Enrichment Programs, Director of the Honors Program Jennifer Lease Butts

Moderator **Siegle** stated that the next item on the agenda is a motion that is being presented as a change to the By-laws, Rules & Regulations so this will be presented at this meeting and then will be voted on at the October meeting. Moderator **Siegle** then introduced Senator **Cummings** and Associate Vice Provost Jennifer **Lease Butts**. Assoc. VP **Lease Butts** began with a presentation regarding Article II. F.2 (Scholastic Honors) and Senator **Cummings** reviewed the information that will be presented for the vote at the October meeting.

Moderator **Siegle** asked if there were any questions, for which there were none, and he then thanked Senator **Cummings** and Assoc. VP **Lease Butts** for their presentation.

8. Safety Update

Attachment #4

Presented by representatives from the Office of the Provost, Division of University Safety, & Dean of Students Office

Dean of Students, Fany DeJesús **Hannon**, gave an overview of the presentation that applies to all of the 7 campuses, with an emphasis on building coalitions, and this applies to graduate and undergraduate students. Dean **Hannon** then introduced Deputy Chief **Gilbert** to talk about University safety and the programs that the UConn Police have for us.

Deputy Chief Justin **Gilbert**, from the UConn Police, continued the presentation and shared information regarding the Division of University Safety and all the areas that are included across the 7 University campuses. Deputy Chief **Gilbert** also shared information about the LiveSafe app and encouraged everyone to download and use it at all the campuses. Deputy Chief **Gilbert** then shared information about different types of trainings that are available, as well as means for providing alerts and programs such as 'Park, Walk and Talk' and Community Outreach Programs.

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

Director Kymberley **Hendricks**, Office of Student Care and Concern, gave an overview of what the office does and how they provide support to the students, as well as the structure of the student care team. Director **Hendricks** then shared the information about how individuals can submit referrals to their office and what happens when a referral is submitted. Director **Hendricks** then turned the meeting over to Director **Armstrong**.

Director John **Armstrong** began by discussing an incident that took place in October of 2019 that brought the community together to discuss some language that was used outside of a residence hall. In the Spring of 2020, before the pandemic hit, it became apparent through small group discussions with faculty, staff and students that a majority of individuals did not know where, how or when to report incidents on campus of this nature. After multiple challenges and iterations of the previous online reporting system, the new 'report.uconn.edu' system is now live and available to be used by anyone on all of the campuses. Director **Armstrong** indicated that this system was a year in the making and creating it involved ITS, specifically Brian Dunnigan from ITS, Alexa Biron and Julia Bartucca from Communications, and Cyndi Costanzo from Student Life and Enrollment. Director **Armstrong** then turned the meeting over to Senior Vice Provost **Gorin**.

Senior Vice Provost Amy **Gorin** concluded the presentation by reviewing the coordinated guidance that is available from the Division of Academic Affairs regarding Faculty Trolling Support and that information is provided within the slides.

Moderator **Siegle** asked if there were any questions.

Senator **Cummings** asked about the LiveSafe app and the need to have the location setting on within their device and how this is being discussed with students as they are very sensitive regarding their privacy. Deputy Chief **Gilberts** stated that the data is not recorded or held within the app and the location is only used if an individual were to contact 911 requesting assistance.

Senator **Ginsberg** is currently in their Stamford office, and they are aware of ICE Agents roaming the streets of Stamford regularly and they have students who are coming to them scared to come to class due to this situation, so they are looking for guidance from Safety Personnel. Deputy Chief **Gilbert** stated that there is guidance from general counsel to call the UConn Police if anyone is coming into your personal space. Vice President **Hines** also asked that these individuals should be referred to OICR as well.

Senator **Gokirmak** stated that they provided support a student who was assaulted by another student, but they didn't receive much assistance after they reported the assault. They were in no condition to come to campus for their classes, especially given that the student who attacked them were still on campus and they didn't feel safe. The Senator was concerned that had they not been in contact with this student there would not have been any support to assist them to complete. Dean of Students **Hannon** apologized for what happened to this student and will follow up separately to better understand the situation, even though it happened some time in the past. They then shared some of the resources that are in place to provide support for students in situations such as this and would ask that in the future their office be contacted.

Moderator **Siegle** thanked all those who presented and answered questions from the Senators.

9. Budget Update

Attachment #5

Presented by Anthony Rini, Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer

VP **Rini** provided an abbreviated version of the Budget presentation that was presented to the Board of Trustees, which reviewed the final balances for FY26 and projected budget for FY27, which has a projected deficit of \$29.2 million. The presentation also reviewed several mitigation strategies that the university will continue to employ to reduce that amount.

Senator **Harmon** asked about the 5-year recission plan that is now being replaced with the new BLUE Plan and VP **Rini** stated that for FY27, we are moving forward with non-academic recissions to some of the central units like finance and facilities and some plan reductions to their base budgets. On the non-academic side, the goal is not to do permanent recissions of the units, but to guide them towards the BLUE model in FY27.

Senator **Wiemer** asked about the evidence that there can't be an inflationary raise on tuition. VP **Rini** stated that this is still in discussion, as there is a difference between sticker price versus net price and how we balance these with increases such as dining fees is a challenging issue that is being reviewed. There is a survey that is being done by the students right now that is being evaluated as well. VP Nathan **Fuerst** confirmed that there is an annual price sensitivity study that is being conducted and he will leave it at that for now.

Senator **Zweifach** asked about the BLUE model and when we will hear about it. VP **Rini** said that Town Halls are planned for October, so information will be coming out ahead of those meetings.

Moderator **Siegle** thanked VP **Rini** for their presentation.

10. New Business

No new business

11. Adjournment

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

Senator **Bresciano** seconded.

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine S. North
Secretary of the University Senate, 2021-2026

SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Michael Morrell, Chair
Alexis Boylan
Karen Bresciano
Erin Ciarimboli
Sandy Grande, Vice Chair

Jamie Kleinman
Laurent Michel
Sarira Motaref
Tracy Rittenhouse
Del Siegle

Muhammad Faheem Hassan,
GSS Treasurer
Haritha Subramanian, GSS
Vice President
Venice Montanaro, Interim
Member, USG Storrs President