December 11, 2019

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees
FROM: John A. Elliott
Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
RE: Appointment of Dr. Laurent Michel to the Synchrony Financial Chair for Cybersecurity in the School of Engineering

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Trustees approve the appointment of Dr. Laurent Michel to the Synchrony Financial Chair for Cybersecurity in the School of Engineering.

BACKGROUND:

The Synchrony Financial Chair for Cybersecurity was established by Synchrony Financial in 2016 with a commitment to the University of Connecticut Foundation to support an endowed chair in cybersecurity to advance education and research in emerging security fields. The Board of Trustees authorized the naming of the Chair on March 29, 2017.

Dr. Laurent Michel is a Professor of Computer Science and Engineering at UConn, and is an internationally recognized expert in the area of cybersecurity. Dr. Michel is an elected member of the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering. He has served his professional field as the President for the International Association for Constraint Programming (2015-2018). At UConn, Dr. Michel currently serves as the Director of the Synchrony Financial Center of Excellence in Cybersecurity, as co-Director of the Comcast Center of Excellence for Security Innovation, and as co-Director of the Connecticut Cybersecurity Center. Dr. Michel’s work has been continually funded by federal and state agencies and by industry, including Comcast, Alstom Grid, ISO New England and others. His work in automation, resource allocation, configuration and side-channel attacks are directly pertinent to many industries, including financial, transportation, health care, and manufacturing. Dr. Michel is a leader of outreach and community engagement, organizing activities such as the CyberSEED competition for young, aspiring computer scientists held at UConn. He remains engaged with the State of Connecticut as a founding member of the Voting Technology Research Center, which allowed the State to become a leader in election security. Dr. Michel is an outstanding educator, and recently contributed to the efforts to establish the Altschuler Cybersecurity Lab that will serve the entire population of the Computer Science & Engineering department starting in AY20-21.