

SPECIAL TELEPHONE MEETING

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT BOARD OF TRUSTEES HONORS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

AGENDA

Meeting held by Telephone

May 6, 2021

Public Call In Number:
(415) 655-0002 US Toll
Access Code: 629 930 823

*(A recording of the meeting will be posted on the Board website
<https://boardoftrustees.uconn.edu/> within seven days of the meeting.)*

Call to order at **3:00 p.m.**

1. Public Participation (limited to agenda items)*

* If members of the public wish to address the Committee during the Public Participation portion of the meeting, limited to agenda items, you must submit a request in writing 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting (by 2:30 p.m.) to the following email address: BoardCommittees@uconn.edu. Please indicate your name, telephone number, and topic to be discussed. Per the University By-Laws, the Board may limit public comment. As an alternative, you may also submit your comments via email which will be shared with the Board.

2. Minutes of the Special Meeting of November 20, 2019

3. University Medal Recommendation

4. Executive Session anticipated

5. Adjournment

DRAFT

Dear Honors and Awards Committee,

I write to nominate Scott Brohinsky for the University Medal in recognition of his tremendous contributions to the University of Connecticut as Director of Governmental Relations and Communications during his 21-year career at UConn. Scott's tenure had a lasting and transformative effect on the University and directly impacted its meteoric rise in the national rankings. He played a key role in securing more than \$2.5 billion in capital funding for UConn, obtained groundbreaking statutory changes which dramatically improved how UConn could do business, and led successful communications and rebranding efforts.

When Scott arrived at the University in 1990, UConn was a very different place. Adequate capital funding and the flexibility and autonomy needed to run a modern University were absent. UConn's buildings and campuses were dilapidated and run down following decades of heavy use and neglect. Almost as troubling were a myriad of Connecticut laws made it impossible to operate effectively as a University. While there were many proud Huskies at the time – and many proud alums who attended UConn prior to the mid-1990s, UConn only attracted approximately 10,000 applicants annually. In surveys of prospective students who were offered admission but declined it, the most common factor they listed as the reason for their decline was the poor state of the University's campuses.

At that time, state funding for critical capital improvements and basic campus maintenance was sporadic and limited. Capital decisions were made annually at the state level, leaving the University with no ability to do any long-term facility planning. Hiring faculty and staff was extremely difficult as two different state agencies in Hartford had to give approval – a process that often took months – before UConn could hire a faculty or staff member making it almost impossible to do basic things like hire adjuncts and faculty to meet classroom needs every semester. It is unknown how many high-quality faculty and staff took jobs elsewhere while Connecticut's process dragged on for lengthy periods of time. A third state agency was responsible for all construction and renovation projects on our campuses, and if there was a public works emergency, the state often had to send help from Hartford which often delayed resolution by hours, days or weeks. Instead of the budget flexibility the University enjoys today with its state block grant appropriation, UConn had a line-item budget which allowed the General Assembly to set financial priorities making it impossible to manage our resources in a way that allowed UConn to be responsive to student, academic and research needs. The purchase of all goods and services had to be handled by state officials in Hartford.

Legislative efforts to change all of this languished in the General Assembly until Scott came on board. In short order, he began to make a difference. By 1993, he had secured passage of legislation allowing the University to do its own hiring and purchasing, and a block grant appropriation was instituted. In 1995, UCONN 2000 was adopted giving UConn a \$1 billion in capital funding over a 10-year period and the authority to manage its own construction and renovation projects. In 2002, 21st Century UConn was passed which established another \$1.5 billion, ten-year capital program.

Scott's portfolio of responsibilities grew steadily over the years and he would become responsible not only for Governmental Relations but most key university external relations functions, including University Communications. Under Scott's leadership, as the University grew more sophisticated and confident, so did its communications operations.

Scott's efforts provided the fundamental building blocks that enabled UConn's ascension to the top tier of public universities. With more than 37,000 applicants in 2020, the University now attracts high-achieving high school graduates from Connecticut and across the nation. Its campuses have been totally transformed and the University is able to operate like its peer institutions.

Scott's contributions to the University are so profound and meaningful that I urge you to give him every possible consideration for the University Medal. His accomplishments speak for themselves and I can think of no one more deserving.

Thank you for your consideration, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Thomas Ritter

DRAFT

SPECIAL MEETING

**UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HONORS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

University of Connecticut
President's Office Conference Room
Albert Gurdon Gulley Hall
352 Mansfield Road
Storrs, Connecticut

November 20, 2019

The Committee meeting was called to order at 12:01 p.m. by President Katsouleas.

The following Committee members were in attendance: President Katsouleas, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Elliott, Professor Janine Caira, Professor Mohamed Hussein, and Mr. Noah Frank.

Trustee Andrea Dennis-LaVigne, Trustee Philip Rubin, and Executive Vice President for Health Affairs Agwunobi participated by telephone.

The following Committee members were not in attendance: Chairman Toscano, Professor JC Beall, and Mr. Matthew Kearney.

Also in attendance was UConn Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer Roberts.

1. Discussion of Honorary Degree guidelines.

The Committee considered nominations for honorary degree.

2. Minutes of the special meeting of April 30, 2018.

On a motion by Dr. Agwunobi, seconded by Professor Hussein, the Committee voted to approve the minutes of the special meeting of April 30, 2018.

(Professor Caira and Mr. Frank abstained from voting on the minutes.)

3. Executive Session anticipated.

No Executive Session was held.

4. Adjournment

There being no further business appearing, the Committee meeting adjourned at 1:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Rachel S. Rubin
Executive Secretary to the Board

University Medal Criteria for Selection

1. The nominee's life and achievements should serve as examples of the University's aspirations for its students.
2. The nominee should be at the height of his/her career. When accomplishments are recent, their activities must be worthy of the highest commendation.
3. The nominee should be a person who contributed significantly to the cultural, scientific, and/or social development of the State, nation, or world. One should be able to document the national or international impact of their contributions.
4. The nominee should be a person whose activities have had a significant influence on the University. One should be able to document the impact of their contributions and service to the University.
5. A University Medal cannot be awarded to an active member of the University faculty, administration, or staff, nor to an appointed or elected official of Connecticut State government. (*Note: This does not apply to federal officials, such as members of Congress.*) Persons in these categories are eligible for nomination after retirement or resignation generally three years from their positions in the University or state government. Members of the Board of Trustees are eligible for a University Medal upon retirement from the University.