

**MINUTES**  
**UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**MINUTES OF THE STUDENT LIFE COMMITTEE**  
**TELEPHONE MEETING**

**FEBRUARY 16, 2022**

Committee Membership:

Trustee Shari Cantor, Committee Vice-Chair  
Trustee Andrea Dennis-LaVigne  
Trustee Justin Fang  
Trustee Noah Frank  
Trustee Bryan Pollard

University Staff Participants:

Interim President Radenka Maric  
Provost Carl Lejuez  
Michael Gilbert, Vice President for Student Affairs  
Joseph Briody, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Executive Director of Student Activities  
Eleanor Daugherty, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students  
Cathy Downs, Executive Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs  
Rachel Rubin, Executive Secretary to the Board of Trustees  
Nicole Gelston, Chief of Staff and University General Counsel  
Sean Vasington, Director, University Landscape Architect

University Student Participants:

Ben Albee, Treasurer, UConn Praxis  
Natalie Seier, President, UConn Praxis

1. Call to Order:

Vice-Chair Cantor called the meeting of the Student Life Committee to order at 4:30 p.m.

2. Public Participation:

Dr. Stacy Maddern, Assistant Professor In-Residence, Department of Urban and Community Studies spoke on behalf of UConn Praxis and the importance of its presence on campus for students and the UConn community. Praxis is a great resource for students to engage in society.

Mason Holland submitted written testimony on behalf of UConnPraxis.

Jacob Knowlton spoke in support of Praxis and their goals aligning with the student body and disempowering this group would not be good for the students.

3. Approval of Minutes:

On a motion by Trustee Frank seconded by Trustee Pollard, the minutes of the October 27, 2021, Student Life Committee meeting were approved as circulated.

4. Opening and COVID-19 Update:

Eleanor Daugherty reported on UConn's return to campus and the work that has been done with students over the last two years to keep UConn safe. UConn is 90% vaccinated on all campuses and 98% at Storrs. Over 16,000 of our students are boosted. We have always told our students when we open, we want to stay open, and not open and then close. We have over 10,000 residential students on Storrs and Stamford has their residential students back as well. Classes are 90% in person. We continue to take preventative measures of mask wearing. This has been hard for our students but thank you to the students, the Board of Trustees, the President, and the faculty for supporting us. This is a university where students care for one another. Trustee Cantor thanked Eleanor for her leadership and compassion and thanked the students for caring for each other. We are so proud of our students. Trustee Dennis-Lavigne also commented on the incredible job everyone has done.

5. UConn Praxis Update:

Michael Gilbert shared background information and context on UConnPIRG and their decision to disassociate with CONNPIRG in November 2020 and establish Praxis. Questions were raised on funding and placement of the fee on the fee bill, and it was decided it was a matter for the Board of Trustees to deliberate as continuing their status as a Student Trustee Organization as well as future funding and current fund balance. *More information on Praxis can be found on the attached UConnPIRG/Praxis Summary information provided to Committee members.* The future of Praxis needs to be clarified. It is a highly credible organization by staff as well as students and it is viable and an important organization at the University. Joseph Briody welcomed and introduced UConn Praxis President Natalie Seier and UConn Praxis Treasurer Benjamin Albee and recognized their courageous work separating from CONNPIRG. Trustee Cantor thanked Natalie and Benjamin for their leadership and recognized it was not an easy thing to do. The former UConnPIRG fee was a negative check off \$5 per semester for Storrs undergraduate students and the fee has not changed in five years. The fee was also suspended in Spring of 2021.

Michael Gilbert and Joseph Briody described the difference in funding for Tier II and Tier III student organizations. Organizations recognized as Trustee Organizations (Tier III) charge fees and revenue comes from those fees. There are approximately 600 student organizations recognized at UConn. Most of those organizations (Tier II) seek funding from USG through their process each semester.

UConn Praxis Natalie Seier and Treasurer Ben Albee shared details on the decision to separate from CONNPIRG and their due diligence has been done with CONNPIRG and Praxis does not owe anything to CONNPIRG. Praxis is seeking a budget of \$100,000 a semester for their campaigns.

Vice-Chair Cantor thanked Natalie and Ben for attending and talking the Committee through the details of the name change. The Student Life Committee will need to have more conversations before we can make a recommendation to go to the Board of Trustees. Trustee Cantor would like to place Praxis on the agenda for the April meeting to allow for more discussion and review of the summary information packet. Questions that will need to be considered are: Should Praxis continue to be a Tier III organization and is the current fee structure correct as well as discussion on the fund balance.

6. Pedestrian Safety:

Michael Gilbert introduced Sean Vasington to update Committee members on pedestrian safety on campus. Sean outlined the safety infrastructure at UConn and talked about the new roads, sidewalks and roundabouts that provide better safety for pedestrians on campus. He talked about the collaboration of work being done with the Department of Transportation and the Town of Mansfield. Our crosswalks are traffic-controlled devices in the landscape.

7. Other Business:

Trustee Cantor would like to have a discussion on sexual violence and the current event that took place on campus and how we might talk about what the University is doing to address this. The joint Student Life Committee and Diversity Equity and Inclusion committee has been scheduled.

Michael Gilbert asked Provost Lejuez to highlight a new program being launched at the UConn Bookstore intended to enhance affordability of textbooks.

Provost Lejuez outlined the First Day Complete (FDC) program and how it was established. This program will be commitment to a two-year implementation at \$285 per semester fee that will be charged to each full-time undergraduate student's fee bill for the Fall and Spring. Students will have the ability to opt out of the Program and not pay the fee at any time until the close of the Add/Drop period each semester. The UConn Bookstore will have a team to ensure successful launch. There are communication mechanisms ready for release, from flyers, emails, a dedicated website, etc. to assist in socializing the Program to the students, faculty, and staff immediately to guarantee a seamless and successful Fall 2022 implementation.

8. Executive Session:

There was no Executive Session held.

9. Adjournment:

Vice-Chair Cantor motioned, seconded by Trustee Fang, to adjourn the meeting of the Student Life Committee at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully,

Cathy Downs, Executive Assistant, Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs