

UConnPIRG Core Meeting Minutes 18-08
Monday October 2, 2017, 7 PM
SU 325

Voting Members: Emily O'Hara (Secretary), Walter Dodson (Vice Chair), Alex Pawlak (Treasurer), Casey Lambert (Chair), Antonio Cajigas, Vincent Cajigas, Kelly Flanagan, Ian Beattie, Kharl Reynado, Justin Kaiser, Bob Hannan, Noah O'Connor, Sam Donahue, Michael Katz, Kyleigh Hillerud, Jordan Ricker, Andrew Frosti, Matthew Talley, Chad Schroeder, Emmett O'Donnell, Matthew Byanyima, Sam Bedard, Aaron Golab, Jiayi Chen, Alex Ercolani, Nate Aroian, Brooke Chao, Dylan DeMoura, Faizaan Siddiqui

Non-voting Members: Liam Connelly, Isabel Umland

Guests: Arielle Mizrahi (Campus Organizer), Sasha Richardson (Advisor), Jim Leahy (Contract Lobbyist)

Meeting called to order at 6:59 PM by Chair Casey Lambert

I. Introductions

II. Save UConn Overview—Walter Dodson

- a. This week UConnPIRG is a part of the One UConn Coalition, working to fight against cuts to higher education. Jim Leahy is attending the meeting to speak about what is happening in the statehouse regarding funding cuts to UConn
- b. Legislature Update—Jim Leahy
 - i. The budget will pass eventually, right now it's a matter of when the budget will pass. UConn is important to the government, and the budget was going to be cut by \$100 million, but the most recent budget proposed cut UConn by \$309 million. This sets the edges on the budget; some assumptions in the budget cannot happen (ex: making professors teach another class. These repercussions could potentially drive faculty from UConn to work at other universities). Some articles cite UConn's cost/funding increases as being greater than the rate of inflation, but UConn has also risen in rank in the nation to 18th. There's been a coalition of alumni and faculty formed at UConn, and they're looking for students' help to voice concerns about facing cuts to the UConn budget. This moves the voice of the debate from two figureheads (President Herbst and Len Fasano) to the students. Funding is necessary for UConn graduates to stay in Connecticut, thus helping Connecticut. The work being done is important. There's an override vote on the governor's veto being held tomorrow, but it is unlikely to pass based on the previous vote. They're hoping the cut is closer to \$100 million, instead of the \$200 million or \$300 million.
 1. Nate: If the [\$200-300 million] cuts are not from UConn, where do they come from?
 - a. Jim Leahy: If the only solution is from UConn's cuts, the problems with the budget are still in existence. Some budget assumptions are not accurate, nor in the immediate future. The state constitution guarantees education, which could draw a lawsuit. UConn putting out quality graduates, continuing to be a top public university is a no-brainer. Moderating different budgets is key.

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2. Walter Dodson: Can you explain why messaging is important for this specifically?
 - a. Jim Leahy: ConnPIRG is in a tough place because this can be perceived as a partisan issue. The arguments need to be positive and based in the fact that UConn is the primary economic driver in the state of Connecticut, among other benefits. If we get caught up in the politics piece, we play their game. We need to stay true to our roots, encourage students of all persuasion to fight for UConn. ConnPIRG utilizes grassroots politics. It's important to stay nonpartisan.
- III. One UConn Sign-Ups—Walter Dodson
 - a. This entire week is based around students calling their senators and representatives to oppose these budget cuts. Chad Schroeder is coordinating tabling in dining halls. Emily is scheduling 50+ class announcements, which we need people to do. We're doing coalition building with USG. On the PIRG website, under the main slides, there's a widget that says "One UConn Coalition." This is not a UConnPIRG campaign, it is for Save UConn. This has the information on the campaign. The Google volunteer form below it provides sign-up information.
 - i. Immediately following Core, there will be a propmaking for the rest of the week.
 - ii. Campaign break-out for students to sign up for One UConn volunteer
- IV. Business—Casey Lambert
 - a. By-law discussion has been pushed back to next week
 - b. Announcement: Anyone in a campaign who wants to start thinking about ordering anything, please submit that request.
- V. Campaign Updates
 - a. Ban Styrofoam—Justin Kaiser
 - i. Currently in the midst of creating props for tables. Added a new tactic to campaign: Research. Research is important to stress the impact of Styrofoam while gauging public opinion.
 - b. Announcement—Matt Talley
 - i. LTE writing session on Friday at 2 PM in SU 214. Information about how to write a good LTE in order to express support for particular campaigns.
 - c. Save the Bees—Emily O'Hara
 - i. Save the Bees is in the process of scheduling/organizing events. There will be a BFFA Rap training on Thursday at 6:30 PM in SU 214.
 - d. Democracy—Noah O'Connor
 - i. Next week: tables to get petitions put out
 - ii. Showing support for not cutting the citizens election program
 - e. 100% Renewable Energy—Walter Dodson
 - i. 100% Renewable film screening will happen on November 8th in the Student Union theater. Cosponsored by Geography and Geoscience. The

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panel is getting filled out as well. In 1K in 1 Week: 1,000 petitions in 2 days.

- f. Hunger and Homelessness—Casey Lambert
 - i. Had a call with other H&H resources around the state. Had a conference call from Aidan Brown from the Hurricane Relief Network who is working with PIRG/H&H.
 - g. Textbooks—Kharl Reynado
 - i. Working with UCTV to make a short film about Open Education. October has Open Access week, working with the library to do Open Access Month. Planning for a Halloween table, having a giant textbook that people can stand under. Space in the library will be available for an Open Education Gallery with another big textbook, and there will be a documentary about how accessing resources online can end up being financially difficult for students (October 25th).
- VI. Announcement
- a. Casey Lambert: Campaign working to ban plastic bags in Mansfield reached out to us, they're doing grassroots work and are looking for help.

Meeting adjourned at 7:53 by Chair Casey Lambert