

UConnPIRG Core Meeting 20-09
Monday October 21st, 2019, 7 PM
SU 310

Voting Members: Emily O'Hara (Chair), Jessica Gagnon (Vice Chair), Michael Katz (Secretary), Jessica Power, Michael Grover, Elizabeth Turano, Kyleigh Hillerud, Daniella Chuka, Cheyenne Tavares, Chris Brown, Victor Htut, Brian Garzon, Shafina Chowdhury, Leah LePage, Julia Ward, Gino Giansanti, Amanda Cicchetti, Dylan DeMoura, Audrey Soltis, Ben Albee, Chad Schroeder, Colleen Keller, Angelina Vaccarelli, Maya Murarka, Salaah Dean Kanaan, Geva Tinker

Non-Voting Members: Rebecca Klett, Daniel Coleman

Guests: Petra Favorite (UConnPIRG campus organizer), Kurt Daigle (UConnPIRG primary advisor)

- I. Meeting brought to order at 7:01pm by Emily O'Hara (Chair)
- II. Introductions
- III. Ex Officio Senator Update
 - A. Colleen Keller recaps the key takeaways from last week's USG meeting. The Office of External Affairs is collaborating with New Voters Project on GOTV efforts and writing legislation that would enable ex officio senators (including Keller) to vote during USG meetings. Keller announces that Kyleigh Hillerud and Dylan DeMoura have been elected to UConn's university senate. USG is currently working on its bylaws and has discussed its obligations in the aftermath of the recent on-campus racist acts.
- IV. Campaign Updates
 - A. Affordable Textbooks
 1. Shafina Chowdhury announces that there will be a table on the Homer Babbidge Library plaza on October 23 from 10:30 am-1:30 pm to push for textbook price transparency. She distributes a signup sheet.
 - B. Zero Waste
 1. Hillerud announces that the campaign is compiling a list of clubs from other CT-based schools and universities whose members can amass petitions in support of a statewide styrofoam ban and write letters to their local state representatives on behalf of the initiative. Also, DeMoura, Angelina Vaccarelli, and Audrey Soltis are planning a movie screening.
 2. DeMoura announces that the film screening will take place in the Student Union Theatre on November 19. The selected film, *True Cost*, depicts the issue of material waste from an unconventional perspective, being that of the fashion industry. After the film screening, there will be a discussion about waste at UConn.
 3. Hillerud adds that Zero Waste is taking legislative action and scheduling its educational service-learning presentations.
 - C. New Voters Project

1. O'Hara (Chair) discusses October 23's "Why Vote?" event and displays the QR code leading to its online signup form. New Voters Project is also preparing for its upcoming Halloween tables.
2. Victor Htut reiterates that NVP will hold voter registration tables on Fairfield Way on October 28 and 29 (CT's mail-in paper registration deadline), where 300 Insomnia Cookies will be given away to students. Htut asks Core members to sign up for the tables.
3. O'Hara (Chair) distributes a signup sheet for the tables and October 22's flyering event.
4. Daniella Chuka announces that she has contacted a political science professor and UConn's political theory chair to partake in a panel discussion at NVP's upcoming press conference about the latest Ensolve report.

D. 100% Renewable Energy

1. Ben Albee recaps campaign coordinator Parth Patel and Venkata Patchigolla's meeting with the Head of the Office of Sustainability, where they were informed that the office would be unable to assist them regarding on-campus electric busing. On November 5, Mansfield residents will vote upon a proposal to build CT's first net zero school, which would provide environmental and educational benefits. To promote the initiative, there will be a table on October 22 from 5-8 pm at Northwest, alongside a dormstorming session on October 28 from 8-10 pm. Albee distributes a signup sheet.
2. Jessica Gagnon (Vice Chair) provides additional context surrounding the net zero school initiative. Three Mansfield elementary schools are in desperate need of repair, to the point where \$20 million must be spent across the next decade for the sake of their mere operation. In the event that this initiative passes, CT has offered to reimburse 57 percent of Mansfield's \$21 million expense. A net zero school would create an energy surplus, and the initiative aligns with UConnPIRG's environmental campaigns. Furthermore, other towns statewide may become inspired and better-informed by Mansfield's efforts. 15 percent of Mansfield's registered voters must approve the initiative in order for it to be enacted, but this rate will be deceptively difficult to attain in light of recent voter turnout rates (especially those for relatively minor election years like this one). Gagnon (Vice Chair) calls upon Core members to support the initiative.
3. O'Hara (Chair) clarifies that as an independent, nonpartisan campaign, NVP cannot encourage students to vote in favor of or against specific referenda; thus any promotion of the net zero school initiative must occur within a separate context from that of NVP.

E. Hunger & Homelessness

1. Keller reiterates that Hunger & Homelessness is planning its upcoming awareness week. Carla Cedeño has contacted Student Health Services for the purpose of creating a page on UConnPIRG's website that provides

pertinent information regarding resource access. Keller remarks upon last week's Give-a-Meal event's apparent success. She addresses today's campuswide email from the Dean of Students concerning a food insecurity survey, which will be available from October 23-November 6. Keller asks Core members to complete the survey, noting that it could lead to the creation of an on-campus food pantry. The campaign will table, poster, and flyer to promote the survey.

- F. Brief Announcement
 - 1. Hillerud announces that with 14 boxes of long-sleeved t-shirts in the office (SU 214), there will be a table in the Student Union on October 24 from 11 am-3 pm, where students who agree to follow UConnPIRG on social media will receive a free shirt in return. She distributes a signup sheet.
- V. Open Space for Discussion on Recent Racist Acts
 - A. O'Hara (Chair) provides context on the recent racist acts at UConn. UConnPIRG's executive board signed a formal condemnation of racism and agreed to create an open forum for discussion during tonight's Core meeting. O'Hara (Chair) announces that UConn's NAACP will hold a town hall at 8 pm in Schenker 151. She opens up the meeting for discussion.
 - B. Gagnon (Vice Chair) notes that UConnPIRG will continue sharing related social media content from UConn's NAACP and UConn Collaborative Organizing.
 - C. Jessica Power asks Gagnon (Vice Chair) for more specific details pertaining to the incidents.
 - 1. Gagnon (Vice Chair) provides said details. She emphasizes UConnPIRG's responsibility as a student advocacy organization to stand up against these stigmatizing actions. She notes that Keller has additional information.
 - D. Soltis asks how UConnPIRG can ensure the implicated students' expulsion.
 - 1. O'Hara (Chair) acknowledges that while UConnPIRG lacks that level of influence, its members can hold UConn administrators accountable by attending meetings and sending emails.
 - 2. Gagnon (Vice Chair) expresses an urge to not let the issue die.
 - E. Keller recounts the USG Task Force Against Hate Speech's meeting from October 20. Plans include creating petitions with UConn's NAACP (the language of which was supposed to be released today), passing USG legislation, improving mental health services for victims (e.g. the purported lack of a black therapist among UConn's CMHS staff creates tension during appointments), and holding an event to provide resources for students.
 - F. Hillerud calls upon Core members to support UConn's NAACP and UCO. Citing UConn president Thomas Katsouleas's email that inadequately addressed the incidents, she notes the importance of holding administrators accountable.
 - G. Albee reiterates Hillerud's sentiments surrounding Katsouleas's email. He also calls upon Core members to emphasize the fact that these incidents - many of which go unreported - are disturbingly routine.
 - H. O'Hara (Chair) concludes the discussion by encouraging Core members to reach out to UConn's NAACP and UCO and to visit UConnPIRG's office (SU 214) to engage in further discussion.

VI. Campaign Selection Criteria

A. Overview

1. O'Hara (Chair) leads a discussion among Core members about campaign selection, awarding candy for active participation. She outlines the need for a mix of campaigns that can address many different public interests as opposed to predominantly focusing upon one type of initiative. She mentions that typically the chapter will run a statewide lead campaign, a service-oriented campaign, and some local/national campaigns. She clarifies that each campaign should align with UConnPIRG's mission, serve a practical purpose, and benefit campus/community relations and UConnPIRG's image. Furthermore, each campaign should have a problem, solution, goal, strategy, tactics, program team support, and evaluation. More explicitly, the following questions should be addressed upon considering the merits of a campaign's operation:
 - a) Does PIRG have a history/track record on this?
 - b) Is it within PIRG's mission?
 - c) Is the issue profound?
 - d) Can we make a difference?
 - e) Will we be able to recruit people?
 - f) Can we raise money to run this?
 - g) Does it position us to take on more (i.e. enable greater accessibility)?
 - h) Are there a variety of tactics?
 - i) Is it hot?
 - j) Is it locally relevant?

B. Review of Zero Waste campaign

1. O'Hara (Chair) distributes copies of Hillerud's Fall 2019 Zero Waste campaign proposal.
2. For contextual purposes, Hillerud notes that she wrote the proposal before CT enacted its statewide plastic bag ban.
3. O'Hara (Chair) asks that Core members review the campaign proposal and evaluate Zero Waste's strengths and weaknesses in relation to satisfying the aforementioned campaign selection criteria.
 - a) Keller credits Zero Waste's ability to make a tangible difference, as seen with the plastic bag ban.
 - b) Geva Tinker compliments the campaign's appeal to student interests.
 - c) Gagnon (Vice Chair) praises the campaign's well-thought-out proposal and broad tactics.

C. Call for Campaign Proposals

1. O'Hara (Chair) calls upon those who are interested in running a campaign next semester to submit their preliminary campaign proposals by November 4. She cites the authors of previous campaign proposals as a valuable reference point.

2. Hillerud reiterates O'Hara (Chair)'s point about consulting the authors of previous campaign proposals, and Gagnon (Vice Chair) adds that current campaign coordinators can provide resources.

VII. Business

A. Approval of 10/14/19 Minutes

1. O'Hara (Chair) motions to approve the 10/14/19 minutes.
2. Hillerud seconds.
3. Motion passes unanimously (*O'Hara (Chair), Elizabeth Turano, and Chad Schroeder abstain*).

B. Catering for final ALP meeting

1. Gagnon (Vice Chair) discusses how initially she had had catering approved for all Activist Leadership Program cohort meetings, but to no avail. She expresses a desire to provide catering for the semester's final meeting - which would take place during dinnertime for many - as a thank-you to mentors and mentees and an indicator of the event's significance (UConn Dean of Students Eleanor JB Daugherty has expressed interest in attending and speaking). Accounting for 35 people - herself, Daugherty, and the 33 who are signed up for ALP meetings - Gagnon (Vice Chair) determines that a total of \$857.50 would be necessary and asks for up to \$1,000 (although to avoid overspending, she will ask people about their plans to attend prior to the meeting).
2. O'Hara (Chair) motions to approve up to \$1,000 for catering for Fall 2019's final ALP meeting.
3. Chris Brown seconds.
4. Motion passes unanimously.

C. Disbursement of funds for H&H

1. O'Hara (Chair) explains that at the end of each fiscal year, Hunger & Homelessness's fundraising funds must be disbursed. However, this has not been done for FY19. Funds will be disbursed to Willimantic's No Freeze Shelter and Covenant Soup Kitchen.
2. O'Hara (Chair) motions to approve the disbursement of \$1,101.31 in H&H's FY19 fundraising funds between Willimantic's No Freeze Shelter and Covenant Soup Kitchen.
3. Keller seconds.
4. Motion passes unanimously.

D. Tier III formal

1. Gagnon (Vice Chair) announces that she and Hillerud attended a planning meeting regarding this semester's upcoming Tier III formal. The event - which likely will take place on December 1 - will be a networking opportunity for executive board/cabinet members and campaign coordinators to strengthen their relationships with other Tier III organizations. Such a collaboration will also provide UConnPIRG representatives the opportunity to reflect upon their organization's operation. Each organization has been asked to contribute up to \$1,000 for food/location fees, but Gagnon (Vice Chair) asks for up to \$1,200.

2. O'Hara (Chair) motions to approve up to \$1,200 for Tier III formal food/location fees.
 3. Hillerud seconds.
 4. Motion passes unanimously.
- E. Zero Waste film screening/giveaway table
1. DeMoura lists several items of need for Zero Waste's upcoming film screening and environmentally sustainable product giveaway table. These include:
 - a) 15 packs of bamboo toothbrushes (120 toothbrushes total) - \$150 without tax
 - b) 10 packs of stainless steel straws (160 straws total) - \$100 without tax
 - c) 4 orders of hexagon mini glass jars (96 jars total) - \$80 without tax
The estimated total up to this point is \$350.38 with \$20.38 tax included.
 - d) Price Chopper lip scrub items - up to \$10 each for honey and coconut oil and up to \$5 for brown sugar
 - e) Up to \$150 to reserve the Student Union Theatre for Zero Waste's film screening
 2. O'Hara (Chair) motions to approve up to \$1,000 for the purchase of Zero Waste's film screening reservation and giveaway supplies.
 3. Htut seconds.
 4. Discussion
 - a) Turano inquires about the proposed up-to amount's justification given the total valuations.
 - (1) O'Hara (Chair) affirms that the proposed up-to amount warrants adjustment.
 5. O'Hara (Chair) motions to approve up to \$600 for the purchase of Zero Waste's film screening reservation and giveaway supplies.
 6. Htut seconds.
 7. Motion passes unanimously.
- F. Statement of Position regarding The One New School
1. Albee announces that he and Keller are coauthoring USG legislation in support of Mansfield's net zero school initiative. He expresses a desire to attain UConnPIRG's endorsement.
 2. O'Hara (Chair) reiterates the need to separate the promotion of this initiative from the promotion of anything NVP-related.
 3. O'Hara (Chair) motions to endorse and support USG's statement of position regarding The One New School.
 4. Hillerud seconds.
 5. Motion passes unanimously (*Albee, Keller, and O'Hara (Chair) abstain*).

VIII. Announcements

- A. Turano issues her weekly warning to those who do not put away clipboards in the designated space.
- B. O'Hara (Chair) reiterates that UConn's NAACP is holding a town hall tonight.

- C. Hillerud reiterates that there will be a t-shirt giveaway table on October 24, asking that Core members “like” the Facebook event pages for this table and Affordable Textbooks’s Open Access Week-themed drinking tumbler giveaway table on October 23.
- D. Schroeder announces that up to 20 organizational members will visit the Storrs Adventure Park on October 26. Attendees will hear about the facility’s changes in land conservation practices on account of climate change and partake in outdoor climbing. The event and transportation are free to students. Attendees will leave UConn at 1:10 pm and arrive back by roughly 5:20 pm. Following tonight’s Core meeting, Michael Katz (Secretary) will send a chapterwide email containing a signup form.
- E. O’Hara (Chair) announces that - in light of incumbent Samuel Donahue (Treasurer)’s impending resignation at semester’s end - there will be a special election for UConnPIRG chapter treasurer during December 2’s Core meeting. Anyone interested in the position must submit their name and netID to Katz (Secretary) via email at uconnpirgstudents@gmail.com by November 12, at which point background checks will be conducted.
 - 1. Gagnon (Vice Chair) clarifies that Donahue (Treasurer) is resigning because he will graduate at semester’s end, and that one’s submission of their name and netID does not necessarily imply a hard commitment to running for the role. She suggests that any interested parties consult Donahue (Treasurer) for more information about what his role entails.
- F. Hillerud announces that there will also be a special election to fill two impending state board vacancies, which will be discussed further during next week’s Core meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:06pm

Minutes submitted by Michael Katz (Secretary)