

UConnPIRG Core Meeting 20-11  
Monday November 4th, 2019, 7 PM  
SU 310

Voting Members: Emily O'Hara (Chair), Jessica Gagnon (Vice Chair), Samuel Donahue (Treasurer), Michael Katz (Secretary), Kyleigh Hillerud, Elizabeth Turano, Dylan DeMoura, Chris Brown, Chad Schroeder, Andrew Mayano, Angelina Vaccarelli, Leah LePage, Shafina Chowdhury, Audrey Soltis, Maya Murarka, Brianna Barbeau, Gino Giansanti, Rebecca Klett, Julia Ward, Cheyenne Tavares, Natalie Seier, Amanda Cicchetti, Venkata Patchigolla, Ben Albee, Peyton Marie De Lorenzo Pease

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. O'Hara (Chair) cites Colleen Keller's absence on account of her presence at a leadership dinner.
  - B. Ben Albee announces that his and Keller's co-authored USG legislation has passed.
- IV. Campaign Updates
  - A. Affordable Textbooks
    1. Shafina Chowdhury notes a focus on faculty canvassing this week, alongside planning a luncheon for professors who signed the campaign's price transparency petition.
  - B. Zero Waste
    1. Kyleigh Hillerud reiterates that the campaign is reaching out to other statewide schools for grassroots collaboration and preparing for its film screening, which will take place on November 19 at 6:30 p.m. in the Student Union Theatre.
  - C. New Voters Project
    1. O'Hara (Chair) notes that tomorrow is Election Day and the campaign will hold its final table of the semester from 12-6 pm, coordinated by Victor Htut. She implores Core to sign up for the table online or via a physical signup sheet, which she distributes.
    2. Gino Giansanti announces that during tonight's phonebanking session, the campaign finished contacting everyone who submitted a pledge to vote on Election Day.
    3. O'Hara (Chair) announces that following today's NSLVE press conference, a press release has been published via social media.
  - D. 100% Renewable Energy
    1. Albee reiterates that Mansfield's net-zero school referendum is up for a vote tomorrow, so at 7 a.m. he will visit classrooms and write on whiteboards for students to vote yes to said referendum. Anyone who is

interested in volunteering can consult Albee. He also announces that the campaign will text-remind everyone who submitted a pledge to vote on Election Day.

2. Venkata Patchigolla notes that the campaign collected pledges from dormstorming sessions last Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, alongside a table last Friday.
3. Amanda Cicchetti laments the turbulence induced by Friday's windy conditions, which necessitated the tabling session's early end.

#### E. Hunger & Homelessness

1. O'Hara (Chair) implores Core to take the campuswide food insecurity survey, which ends on November 6.
2. Jessica Gagnon (Vice Chair) announces that the survey has enough respondents thus far to constitute a representative sample.

### V. Spring 2020 Campaign Proposals

#### A. Overview

1. O'Hara (Chair) describes campaign selection, which determines the new goals and leadership for next semester's campaigns. She reiterates the ten specific campaign selection criteria, which are outlined on a sheet distributed to Core. She asks that Core apply these criteria to the campaigns being presented tonight. She outlines PIRG's desire to change and engage the world, alongside having a mix consisting of a statewide campaign, community service-focused campaign, and local/national campaigns that target various audiences. Every campaign needs to be within PIRG's mission, but not necessarily satisfy all ten specific criteria. O'Hara (Chair) implores Core to think critically and give respectful feedback. Campaign proposals will be displayed on the big screen during presentations.

#### B. Presentations

##### 1. Affordable Textbooks

- a) Chowdhury proposes that she run the campaign in Spring 2020. She cites the problem of exorbitant textbook prices, especially with other university expenses. There cannot be a true long-term solution in a capitalist society with inflation and a progressing economy, but in the short-term we can allow professors to create more accessible educational systems via open-educational resources and textbooks and provide a price transparency system to students purchasing textbooks. Ideally UConn would implement such a system by Fall 2020. The campaign will use a Hero strategy, collaborating with student government and university administrators, increasing visibility via student support, and incorporating grassroots, media-based, coalition-building, and legislative tactics. Chowdhury evaluates the campaign through the lens of six of the ten campaign selection criteria.
- b) O'Hara (Chair) inquires about the ideal campaign size, to which Chowdhury proposes at least ten members.

## 2. Zero Waste

- a) Dylan DeMoura proposes that he run the campaign in Spring 2020. He recounts this semester's focus upon a statewide polystyrene ban, with material waste posing significant problems within our capitalistic economy. Next semester will involve a legislative focus, particularly upon bills that propose statewide bans on food takeout containers and school lunch trays. Said bills have bipartisan support and mass appeal to constituents. The campaign will have a variety of tactics - mainly centered around grassroots and legislative initiatives, but also involving educational events, grasstops initiatives, media coverage, visibility, and coalition-building. The campaign fits all relevant criteria.
- b) Hillerud wonders if the campaign will have a UConn-related focus, to which DeMoura responds that it will not.
- c) O'Hara (Chair) asks if DeMoura is proposing Zero Waste as UConnPIRG's Spring 2020 lead campaign, to which he responds that he is. (She asks the same question to Chowdhury, who says that she is proposing Affordable Textbooks as UConnPIRG's Spring 2020 lead campaign.)
- d) Patchigolla asks DeMoura to clarify whether the campaign will focus upon statewide or citywide legislation, to which DeMoura responds that the campaign's legislative push will begin in Mansfield before branching out to the rest of the state.

## 3. New Voters Project

- a) Cheyenne Tavares proposes that she and Htut - who is currently attending the same dinner as Keller - run the campaign in Spring 2020. Tavares expresses the urgency of building momentum as we head into a major election year and encourage students to vote. Campuswide institutionalization of automatic voter registration would be the ultimate long-term goal, but in the short-term the campaign will seek involvement with UConn's Office of Orientation Services and the Week of Welcome. Big events (e.g. Mardi Gras in February) will be opportune for recruitment. Besides registering students, educational events and visibility tactics will be key. The campaign will create a voter toolkit to provide students with all the necessary information to vote in elections. Tavares also hopes to strengthen GOTV collaboration and work moreso with UConn's cultural centers.
- b) O'Hara (Chair) asks if Tavares and Htut are proposing New Voters Project as UConnPIRG's Spring 2020 lead campaign, to which she responds that they are.
- c) Samuel Donahue (Treasurer) inquires about Tavares and Htut's division of labor as co-coordinators. Tavares claims that she will focus upon visibility and creative tasks, while Htut will fulfill more tactical duties.

- d) O'Hara (Chair) inquires about the ideal campaign size, to which Tavares proposes 20-30 volunteers.
4. Hunger & Homelessness
- a) Gagnon (Vice Chair) proposes that Keller run the campaign in Spring 2020. She summarizes key points of Keller's proposal, emphasizing the issue of hunger and homelessness that many - especially college students with food insecurity - face. The campaign will continue its work with USG and formulate a plan based around the results of the campuswide food insecurity survey. The campaign will also continue working with its current partners and providing community service opportunities. Hunger & Homelessness is not being proposed as UConnPIRG's Spring 2020 lead campaign.
5. 100% Renewable Energy
- a) Patchigolla proposes that he run the campaign in Spring 2020. He laments the unpleasant side effects of the Earth's rising temperatures and greenhouse gas emissions, which are induced by an overdependence on fossil fuels. While we are perfectly capable of transitioning beyond fossil fuels, legislative decisionmakers are attracted to the short-term, cheaper option of maintaining their usage. Patchigolla hopes to create meaningful relationships with local legislators and UConn professors and administrators so that global energy becomes the focus of legislative plans and UConn becomes a 100% renewable campus by 2050. Given that students frustratingly lack access to information, education and research will be major components of Patchigolla's campaign. Ideally USG, *The Daily Campus*, and social media platforms would provide a strong outreach effort weekly. Patchigolla is not proposing 100% Renewable Energy as UConnPIRG's Spring 2020 lead campaign.
  - b) Albee proposes that he run the campaign in Spring 2020. He cites the problem of climate change and the solution of preventing it and implementing renewable energy. Like Patchigolla, Albee plans to conduct research to determine the best course of action. The campaign will have three interacting components: research, relations, and events. In terms of strategy, the campaign initially will implement Hearts-and-Minds - for people do not necessarily want systemic change immediately - before transitioning into a Pressure and consequently a Hero campaign. The main goal is to create a semester-by-semester plan for the campaign's future, maintaining a list of questions to be answered and considering how the answers tie into the long-term plan to establish 100% renewable energy at UConn. Ideally the campaign would have six or seven interns and volunteers. Albee is not proposing 100% Renewable Energy as UConnPIRG's Spring 2020 lead campaign.

- c) O'Hara (Chair) provides context surrounding the statewide lead campaign, which will be up for a vote next week and does not affect chapterwide lead campaign viability.
  - d) Albee clarifies that he and Patchigolla will work together regardless of whose proposal is approved.
    - (1) Patchigolla affirms Albee's statement, noting that they have similar goals, but that his are centered around legislative action while Albee's are centered around campus relations.
6. Approval of Campaign Proposals
- a) O'Hara (Chair) motions to approve UConnPIRG's Spring 2020 campaign proposals for Affordable Textbooks, Zero Waste, New Voters Project, and Hunger & Homelessness by unanimous consent.
  - b) Hillerud seconds.
  - c) Motion passes unanimously.
7. Continuation of 100% Renewable Energy Discussion & Vote
- a) Gagnon (Vice Chair) inquires about Albee and Patchigolla's respective campaign roles in the event that they are not chosen as campaign coordinator. Albee says that he would be a tactical coordinator, and Patchigolla says that he would remain as the campus relations coordinator.
  - b) Chowdhury ponders the possibility of Albee and Patchigolla co-coordinating the campaign. Gagnon (Vice Chair) notes that UConnPIRG typically encourages one coordinator per campaign, citing the rarity of successful partnerships (e.g. Affordable Textbooks's Erin McConnell and Deevena Annavarjula) within the role. Whereas Htut and Tavares have clear, distinct expectations of one another, Albee and Patchigolla have similar goals.  
*Albee and Patchigolla exit the room.*
  - c) Core conducts closed-room discussion and a closed pen-and-paper vote to determine whose proposal will be approved.  
*Albee and Patchigolla re-enter the room.*
  - d) Core approves Albee's 100% Renewable Energy campaign proposal for Spring 2020.

VI. Business

A. Approval of 10/28/19 Minutes

- 1. O'Hara (Chair) motions to approve the 10/28/19 minutes.
- 2. Gagnon (Vice Chair) seconds.
- 3. Motion passes unanimously.

B. Reimbursement for Emily O'Hara and Cheyenne Tavares at SLSV Coalition Summit

- 1. O'Hara (Chair) announces that she and Tavares will travel to and from the airport for the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition summit in Washington, D.C. She expresses a need to reimburse these expenses and potentially to compensate some meals.

*O'Hara (Chair) and Tavares exit the room.*

2. Gagnon (Vice Chair) motions to approve up to \$400 (\$200 each) to reimburse O'Hara (Chair) and Tavares's food and travel expenses for the SLSV Coalition summit.
3. DeMoura seconds.
4. Motion passes unanimously (*O'Hara (Chair) and Tavares recuse themselves*).

*O'Hara (Chair) and Tavares re-enter the room.*

C. Catering for Affordable Textbooks Faculty Luncheon

1. Chowdhury reiterates that Affordable Textbooks is holding a luncheon for professors who signed the campaign's price transparency petition. It will serve as a form of respect and an educational opportunity. Chowdhury asks for catering for this event.
2. Gagnon (Vice Chair) hopes to have twenty people at the luncheon and provide \$26.50 in value to each (\$23 for food and \$3.50 for high-quality, reusable eating utensils).
3. O'Hara (Chair) motions to approve up to \$700 for catering for the Affordable Textbooks faculty luncheon.
4. Donahue (Treasurer) seconds.
5. Motion passes unanimously.

D. Glue Sticks

1. Elizabeth Turano proposes the purchase of a 30-pack of glue sticks for \$21.
2. Gagnon (Vice Chair) clarifies that the glue sticks are necessary for propmaking - a key visibility tactic.
3. O'Hara (Chair) motions to approve up to \$30 for a 30-pack of glue sticks.
4. Donahue (Treasurer) seconds.
5. Motion passes unanimously.

E. Scanner

1. Turano expresses a need for a new scanner to scan the voter registration forms that NVP collects from students.
2. Donahue (Treasurer) cites his duty to scan UConnPIRG's financial documents.
3. O'Hara (Chair) motions to approve up to \$120 for a new scanner.
4. Chris Brown seconds.
5. Motion passes unanimously.

VII. Weekly Warning

- A. Turano inquires about her missing blue ink, capped pen.
  1. Peyton Marie De Lorenzo Pease finds the pen under her seat and hands it back to Turano.

VIII. Announcements

- A. O'Hara (Chair) reiterates that Core should volunteer for and visit NVP's Election Day table tomorrow.
- B. O'Hara (Chair) reiterates that Core should complete the campuswide food insecurity survey by November 6.

1. Gagnon (Vice Chair) notes that immediately following tonight's Core meeting, Abhishek Gupta is coordinating a poster session for this initiative.
- C. O'Hara (Chair) reiterates that those interested in running for UConnPIRG treasurer for Spring 2020 must send their name and netID to Michael Katz (Secretary) at [uconnpirgstudents@gmail.com](mailto:uconnpirgstudents@gmail.com) by 8:30 p.m. tonight.

Meeting adjourned at 8:19pm

Minutes submitted by Michael Katz (Secretary)