

UConnPIRG Core Meeting 20-24  
Monday March 23rd, 2020, 7 PM  
WebEx (remote location due to COVID-19 outbreak)

Voting Members: Emily O'Hara (Chair), Jessica Gagnon (Vice Chair), Maya Murarka (Treasurer), Michael Katz (Secretary), Kyleigh Hillerud, Chad Schroeder, Erin McConnell, Colleen Keller, Mary Elizabeth Monticello, Ben Albee, Shafina Chowdhury, Cheyenne Tavares, Rebecca Tripp, Kyle Cyr, Elizabeth Turano, Victor Htut, Natalie Seier, Dylan DeMoura, Julia Ward, Simon Hua, Nia Moore, Nathan Shaw

Guests: Kurt Daigle (UConnPIRG primary advisor), Justin Landry (ConnPIRG campus organizer for Trinity College), Jim Leahy (ConnPIRG lobbyist)

- I. Meeting brought to order at 7:03pm by Emily O'Hara (Chair)
- II. Introductions
- III. General Check-In
- IV. Campaign/Executive Board Updates
  - A. Colleen Keller announces that Hunger & Homelessness will send a community needs assessment to UConn groups and local areas. The campaign will also create a Google Form with information on statewide resources and design social media graphics with pertinent information. Campaign meetings will be on Thursdays at 5 p.m.
  - B. Cheyenne Tavares notes that the delay of Connecticut's state primary to June 2 affords New Voters Project more time to register and educate people. The campaign will create educational materials, finish its voter toolkit and brainstorm for the weeks and semester ahead. Campaign meetings will be on Tuesdays at 5 p.m.
    1. Victor Htut praises volunteers' ability to devise great ideas, which should translate well despite the tough circumstances surrounding the campaign.
  - C. Dylan DeMoura says the virtual lobby day held the week before spring break was successful, but the focus on a coronavirus response obstructs Zero Waste's path to legislative victory this semester.
    1. Jim Leahy (ConnPIRG lobbyist) says the State Capitol building will be closed until at least April 13, and its shutdown will likely be extended in short increments until the legislature is adjourned for the season. There will be consideration of a special session in the fall, which may or may not address legislative initiatives proposed in the spring.
    2. DeMoura says UConn will collaborate with Trinity College and Environment CT on the campaign and reassess its trajectory. A lifestyle workshop originally planned as an on-campus event will be converted to a virtual event with educational materials. Campaign meetings will be on Mondays at 6 p.m.
  - D. Shafina Chowdhury says all of Affordable Textbooks' original plans are on hold until next semester. Currently the campaign is making an open-educational resource informational booklet for students and faculty members, contacting

faculty department heads to support textbook price transparency, researching on its ability to create a system for navigating textbook prices and creating an overall vision. Campaign meetings will be on Fridays at 5:30 p.m.

- E. Ben Albee says 100% Renewable Energy's goals for this semester are still attainable. The professor roundtable can still take place virtually, which may allow for more research opportunities and more professors partaking in the event. The campaign is also considering a virtual Earth Day event on April 22. Campaign meetings, which will be on Fridays at 2:30 p.m., may be combined with research sessions.
- F. O'Hara (Chair) has been handling administrative transitions online today. Also, USG President Priyanka Thakkar signed on to UConnPIRG's student loan cancellation letter. O'Hara (Chair) took over UConnPIRG's Instagram and discussed the organization's procedural changes. She is excited to present about extroversion and introversion during tomorrow's mentorship meeting, and she is setting a chapter timeline/vision for the remainder of the semester. Her office hours are on Wednesdays from 1-3 p.m. and Thursdays from 4-6 p.m.
- G. Jessica Gagnon (Vice Chair) says activist class will continue on Tuesdays at 6 p.m. and Wednesdays at 5 p.m. as planned, with this week's topic of "critical hope in activism" being particularly well-timed. UConnPIRG will hold regional trainings with MassPIRG and NJPIRG. The mentorship program will also continue biweekly on Tuesdays at 7 p.m., with O'Hara (Chair) and Michael Katz (Secretary) presenting tomorrow. Gagnon (Vice Chair)'s office hours are on Wednesdays from 2-5 p.m. and Thursdays from 12-2 p.m.
- H. Maya Murarka (Treasurer) asks those needing to file reimbursements to consult her and use CamScanner. She will work on monthly bills and purchase requests, and she asks to be informed of any cancellations. Her office hours are on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1-3 p.m.
- I. Katz (Secretary) says his typical duties should remain largely unchanged. He is excited to present about effective communication during tomorrow's mentorship meeting, and he will write up his secretary transition document soon. His office hours are on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12-2 p.m.
- J. Gagnon (Vice Chair) provides a legislative committee update. There were 364 legislative contacts from the virtual lobby day, and Gagnon (Vice Chair) has received thank-you messages from legislators who will keep the proposed legislation under consideration upon their return. Rebecca Tripp has reached out to Leahy (ConnPIRG lobbyist) and State Representative Gregg Haddad regarding HB 5013 (a bill providing SNAP benefits), and Haddad will reach out to state universities to distribute a survey in tandem with said bill. Gagnon (Vice Chair) praises the virtual lobby day's success and asks those interested in planning the legislative future of their respective campaigns to reach out to her.
  - 1. Leahy (ConnPIRG lobbyist) proposes the continuation of virtual lobby days as a primer to in-person lobby days.

## V. Timeline

- A. O'Hara (Chair) provides a general timeline for the remainder of the semester. This week UConnPIRG's updated governing documents will be distributed to all

Core members. On March 30 there will be executive board elections, along with a discussion of and vote on said governing documents. On April 6 there will be state board elections and a discussion of UConnPIRG and its history. Campaign plans will also be due at this time. On April 13 Core will discuss and vote on the campaign plans, and later make a recommendation for the statewide lead campaign. On April 20 there will be an evaluation of the chapter, utilizing the tripod (visibility, campus relations and leadership development) and vision boards. The semester's final Core meeting will be on April 27.

VI. Action: #PledgeToStayHome

- A. Kyleigh Hillerud says she and Justin Landry (ConnPIRG campus organizer for Trinity College) were on a call with Student PIRGs national political director Dan Xie to discuss nationwide chapter plans. There will be national campaign calls, along with three social media campaigns focused on the coronavirus response. Last week's infamous media coverage of people disregarding social distancing guidelines has inspired the social media action #PledgeToStayHome. Hillerud asks Core to tweet this tagline, and to visit the Student PIRGs Facebook page to display a custom icon around their profile pictures. The Student PIRGs and Public Interest Network are also distributing Admiral Brett Giroir's petition, saying everyone who needs a test should get a test. PIRG's national textbook advocates are calling upon Congress to freeze student loan payments.

VII. Distribution of Governing Documents

- A. O'Hara (Chair) distributes UConnPIRG's updated constitution and bylaws, asking Core to review them and visit office hours with any questions. The organizational mission statement has been updated to reflect changing values and initiatives. Proposed amendments include financial compensation for executive board members and an interim clause addressing the replacement of any said board member. Amendments must be introduced a week before being voted on and approved by a  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority.
1. Hillerud asks about the necessity of conducting line-by-line overviews of the governing documents during Core. Kurt Daigle (UConnPIRG primary advisor) says the constitution can be approved or disapproved as a whole, so long as UConnPIRG follows standard operating procedure of distributing it a week in advance and having only those who have attended at least one prior Core meeting vote on it.

VIII. Business

A. Website Plugin

1. Hillerud has begun updating UConnPIRG's website. In order to maintain a professional, up-to-date design she requires plugins capable of displaying social media platforms. The annual cost of a WordPress plugin for one website is \$49.
2. Daigle (UConnPIRG primary advisor) says new purchase requests are not currently being accepted, but certain exceptions may apply.
3. O'Hara (Chair) motions to approve up to \$100 for the purchase of a UConnPIRG website plugin.
4. Chowdhury seconds.

5. Elizabeth Turano asks why other social media platforms cannot be displayed now, citing the Twitter page's presence on the website. Hillerud clarifies that the proposed plugin is necessary to display Instagram and was released just a couple of months ago.
6. Motion passes unanimously.

IX. Announcements

- A. O'Hara (Chair) displays a signup link for planning meetings, which will begin this week.
- B. O'Hara (Chair) reminds Core to review the governing documents for next week, and to attend activist class and mentorship meetings.
- C. O'Hara (Chair) encourages Core members to take time for themselves as necessary.
- D. Hillerud reminds Core to complete its social media action items. She announces that campaign coordinators will send WebEx links for their meetings, and that office hours will be posted on and accessible via the UConnPIRG website.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm

Minutes submitted by Michael Katz (Secretary)