Daily **Life**

Connections Made at "Hot Cocoa With CPD, K9 Jazmine & ASC Advisors" Event

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University of Connecticut students were invited to come in from the cold and warm up with Officer Jazmine at "Hot Cocoa with CPD, K9 Jazmine & ASC Advisors" on Wednesday, Jan. 28.

Presented by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Campus Connections Program, the free event took place from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. in front of their offices in the Rowe Center for Undergraduate Education.

Matt Donofrio, an academic advisor at the CLAS Academic Services Center, was one of the organizers of the event. In his role, he works with transfer students and students coming from UConn regional campuses to help with their transition to Storrs.

"I help them try to build a community here," Donofrio said.

Donofrio called his office "the central hub" of academic advising for the CLAS. His office holds several responsibilities, including scheduling, viewing progress toward a degree and assisting students on academic notice (formerly academic probation).

"We meet with them, help them get back on a plan for success," Donofrio said.

The office holds different events to help expose students to different resources on campus. Today's event was specifically designed to help introduce new students to the UConn police department, Donofrio said.

UConn Police Sgt. Justin Cheney represented the department at the event, along with police K9 Officer Jazmine.

"I have found that over my career, it's been much, much easier to be able to connect with students and learn a little bit more about their lives and what they're going through in ways that we can be better at doing our jobs to serve them," Cheney said.

Cheney also said that police presence at events like this helps to make the officers more approachable.

"It's important that students are able to connect with us and talk with us when things are going well," Cheney said. He went on to add that it makes the department more accessible in times that students are in need of help.

Cheney also said that Officer Jazmine helps to add to that accessibility.

"I definitely think having a dog allows me, as a police officer, to be much more approachable," said Cheney. "People feel more comfortable coming up and talking. Jazmine, being so fun and as welcoming, definitely does a lot to make it easier for people to come and see a dog."

Donofrio agreed, saying that Jazmine's presence helped attract more attendees.

Donofrio also said that with students in class, turnout to events can be low. He is looking for more ways to continue to try and make connections outside of events.

"I've been trying to reinvent the wheel, but a lot of it is now personal outreach," said Donofrio. "Just me sending an email. Not like an email chain, but just an individual email to a student and saying, 'Hey, how's it going? How's your semester been? If there's anything you need, please reach out to me.'"

More information about the CLAS Academic Services Center and their programs can be found on their website in the offices located at Rowe 130.



CARTOON BY ESHITHA RAO, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS



A UConn student pets K9 Jazmine while holding hot cocoa. This event allowed students to form connections with police officers for future reference.
PHOTO BY PARKER MEYERS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS



UConn students fill up cups with hot chocolate. This was an event hosted by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to connect students with their local police department.

PHOTO BY PARKER MEYERS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS