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Greenwich resident who defrauded UConn will be imprisoned

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The Wilbur Cross building shines its golden dome over The University of Connecticut. The building offers services for student needs, all housed within one of 47 buildings at UConn on the Natonal Register of Historic Places.
PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Dickson Alorwornu, a resident of Greenwich and Ghanaian citizen, will start a four-year prison sentence next month after defrauding the University of Connecticut out of $46,000, the U.S. Attorney's Office said.

U.S. District Judge Sarala V. Nagala gave Alorwornu's sentence on March 5, according to a U.S. Attorney's Office press release. Alorwornu begins his 48-month prison sentence on April 20 and will be on supervised release for two years after.

The wire fraud charges were in connection with a tuition refund scheme Alorwornu was using to scam UConn and other universities out of money, according to the press release.

An investigation conducted by the FBI and the UConn Police Department provided the evidence used to convict Alorwornu with two counts of wire fraud on Oct. 29, 2024, according to a previous press release from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

When connecting Alorwornu to the fraud at UConn, investigators also found that his email addresses were used to defraud other universities of more than $500,000, according to the press release. Central Connecticut State University, Missouri State University and the University of Nebraska-Omaha were the other targets of his fraud, according to Connecticut Insider.

UConn became a target in Alorwornu's tuition refund scheme through non-degree study applications he submitted in December 2017, according to the press release. Alorwornu filed two applications with stolen identities and then funded them with over $62,000 through American Express cards from three fraud victims.

Non-degree study allows people who haven't been formally accepted into a degree-seeking program at UConn to enroll in classes on a space-available basis, according to UConn's website.

Alorwornu then withdrew from the courses he enrolled in with the stolen identities and asked UConn to refund the money he deposited, which led UConn to transfer $46,000 in bank accounts he controlled, according to the press release.

Connecticut Insider reported that UConn reimbursed one of the fake accounts with $33,000 and the other with $29,000.



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Investigators were able to connect the crime to Alorwornu by comparing his 2018 citizenship application to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security with his email address, payment information and IP address, according to federal court documents.

Investigators specifically linked Google Pay records for the two email addresses Alorwornu used to imposter non-degree seeking students and linked both of them to his name and phone number, according to federal court documents.

The press release said Alorwornu had a criminal history of credit card fraud and identity theft with a conviction in New York dating back to 2017.

University Spokesperson Stephanie Reitz said the fraud inspired UConn to create additional verification measures for non-degree students, which she said is a separate process from undergraduate program applications.

"In addition to the requirements that were previously in place for non-degree participation, UConn added new verification measures, including the requirement to upload a valid, unexpired, government-issued photo identification document," Reitz said.

Other requirements for non-degree students listed on UConn's website include a high school diploma and compliance with UConn's COVID-19 and student code policies.

Alorwornu posted a $50,000 bail and will remain released until he reports to prison on April 20, according to the press release.

FREE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS INSTALLED IN 100 BATHROOMS IN STORRS

by Gwendolyn Leonard
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This spring break the University of Connecticut was busy installing free menstrual products, including pads and tampons, in about 100 bathrooms across the Storrs campus. This is the culmination of a long-term effort by the Student Services, Facilities and Operations, Period@UConn and UConn Student Government.

The receptacles and dispensers were installed for students in collaboration with Citron Hygiene and UConn Facilities and Operations department, according to Cindi Costanzo, associate vice president for student life.

"Facilities and Operations have been a big help and are integral in running the logistical side of this project," Costanzo said.

According to Director of Student Services Jibreel Akbar, an eighth-semester political science and psychology major, most of the work going forward will be done by Citron Hygiene.

"The company installs the machines and stocks the products. The idea is that after UConn pays a one-time fee, they do the restock in a morning run of the bathrooms," Akbar said.

Costanzo said that this is an expansion by the university on Public Act No. 23-160, which states, "each local and regional board of education shall provide free menstrual products... in women's restrooms [and] all-gender restrooms."

Although this act only mandates free menstrual products for K-12 schools, Costanzo said "it would be a good step forward to implement" at UConn.

The bathrooms that are currently being targeted are in high traffic areas, according to Akbar. These areas include the Student Recreation Center, the Student Union and Lawrence D. McHugh Hall.

The products are currently in female and gender-neutral restrooms across campus. Akbar said that it was important to have products in gender-neutral restrooms for transgender students.

The products are currently installed only on the Storrs campus, however, Cintron Hygiene has provided UConn with additional products for regional campuses, according to Costanzo. These products will be available to students at these campuses at Husky Harvest locations, free of charge.

In the future, the program locations may change. According to Costanzo, the university, along with Cintron Hygiene, will collect data on usage to reassess in a year to make sure to target the most high-traffic areas.

Long-term funding has been secured for this project, according to Costanzo, and it will be managed day to day by Facilities and Operations.

"It is always great to intervene early on and find funding to create a program with a good outcome," Costanzo said.





Person holding an open menstrual pad. Students can get free menstrual products in highly trafficked areas on the Storrs campus. PHOTO COURTESY OF PEXELS.COM

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