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UConn assesses regional campuses for improvement plans

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The University of Connecticut presented improvement plans to the four regional campuses in an executive summary given to the Board of Trustees by the Provost's Office last month.

UConn identified what each regional campus' strengths and weaknesses were through data analysis conducted for the university's Strategic Enrollment Management plan, according to UConn Today.

An assessment for non-Storrs campuses comes as some regionals have begun retaining more students and crafting their own identity, according to the summary.

"Historically, regional campuses primarily served as pathways to Storrs," the summary said, pointing to the campuses changing that trend. "Hartford and Stamford have evolved into distinct destinations offering unique academic and geographic strengths."

The same was not said for the Avery Point and Waterbury campuses which "make essential contributions to UConn's mission but face stronger headwinds," according to the summary.

Headwinds undermining the two campuses were specified by the summary identifying key pressures regionals face. Problems included less high-school graduates, financial constraints from lower enrollment, resource gaps for student support and deferred maintenance.

The summary and assessment reiterate UConn's commitment to focus on regional campuses.

"At times, Storrs-based strategies do not fully align with the realities of the regional campuses," the summary said. "Strategic decisions at Storrs should be made in ways that advance the mission of UConn and the sustainability of the regional campuses, ensuring they are partners in shared success rather than instruments for closing budget gaps."

The strengths of the regional campuses, based on the assessment, will be used to see where improvements are made at each campus.

One focus for the future of Avery Point is place-based learning experiences like the Tribal Education Initiative, which links Avery Point with the five federal or state recognized Tribes in Connecticut, according to UConn Today.

Other programs at Avery Point that the summary listed as strengths included the Connecticut Sea Grant and UConn Extension work and the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation. The list of Avery Point's strengths follows feedback UConn received about the Avery Point campus not surviving without investment, according to a previous board of trustees meeting.

"The assessment underscores UConn's commitment to long-term continued operation of the [Avery Point] campus," according to UConn Today.

Academic programs were also listed as a key strength in UConn Waterbury, the other regional campus facing headwinds, according to the summary.

Programs for health sciences are how UConn hopes to strengthen its Waterbury campus due to the regional and statewide demand for work in the field, according to UConn Today. The acquisition of Waterbury Hospital by UConn Health was listed in the summary as a step towards focusing on health sciences.

Location was listed as a predominant reason for how the Hartford and Stamford campuses crafted their own identity without facing as many challenges as the other regionals.

Successful programs at Hartford campus that were listed in the summary as areas of focus included public policy, social work, law, urban engagement and the insurance-tech sector, according to UConn Today.

"Leveraging its downtown location and strong state and community partnerships, UConn Hartford is an anchor institution that attracts students seeking an urban campus experience with UConn quality," the summary said.



The exterior of one of UConn Hartford's buildings. The campus instructs over 1,000 students. FILE PHOTO/THE DAILY CAMPUS

UConn Stamford was also said to have leverage for students seeking an urban experience, but in proximity to New York City. The campus focus included programs for business, finance, artificial intelligence, financial technology and computer science, according to UConn Today.

UConn plans to use marketing campaigns to aid their expansion in successful programs across the different regional campuses. The goal of the campaigns is to raise awareness about the lower cost of the regional campuses and appeal to first generation students who may not know how the price of UConn's regional campuses compares to other public options.

USG runs pilot program for students to pay off parking tickets



Ticket on car for a parking violation. USG is letting students pay off their parking tickets by donating nonperishable goods on April 2.
PHOTO COURTESY OF CREATIVE COMMONS.

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The University of Connecticut's Undergraduate Student Government (USG) is allowing students to pay off their unpaid parking tickets by donating nonperishable goods on April 2 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Innovative Partnership Building parking lot.

USG is collaborating with UConn Parking Services and Dining on the pilot program, which as of now is a one day only event. All donated items will be sent to Husky Harvest, a set of food pantries on campus that are available to any student with a UConn ID.

Every item students donate has a financial equivalent. Pantry items, small snacks and microwave meals are worth $3, small hygiene products such as toothbrushes and soap are worth $5, high-value pantry items such as large snacks, cereal boxes and large hygiene projects, like body wash and shampoo, are worth $7.

Students can bring in unopened and unused goods that add up to the value of their parking ticket, including late fees and tickets on student fee bills.

"It is really up to students in the way that they want this to influence them in their lives, but it can really have a good impact full circle," Venice Montanaro, the student services deputy director and incoming USG president, said.

Jibreel Akbar, the director of student services at USG, said food insecurity and parking tickets are reoccurring issues that students face, so he wanted to address them together.

Akbar began the process last semester by researching similar programs at other universities and reaching out to Parking Services and the food pantries at UConn.

Akbar said it was easier to coordinate than he initially anticipated.

"It was a super easy process where each department was willing to do this and help out students," Akbar said.

Parking Services is one of the few university departments that operate for profit because of parking tickets, Akbar said, and that they were willing to take some of the loss to give back to students through this initiative.

"The food pantry is in great need and in USG we have always been really passionate about advocating for them," Akbar said.

While it is a one-day event this semester, Akbar said USG is hopeful it could be expanded into a reoccurring program, especially during the holidays, where the food pantries are looking for additional donations.

Montanaro said when they announced the event last week, it was met with great support from the student body and other university departments.

"Getting to give back to students and anyone in need is a really big deal," Montanaro said. "The support we have gotten is incredible."

Any questions can be directed to studentservicesdeputy@usg.uconn.edu.

DROP OFF GOODS:

April 2nd from 10am-4pm
at the
Innovative
Partnership
Building parking lot

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