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Jade Barbirati's journey from Hamden to Milan

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Students express concerns for parking and tuition at SGA's annual State of the QUnion

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Quinnipiac University's Student Government Association hosted its annual State of the QUnion panel in the Center for Communications, Computing and Engineering building on Feb. 18.

The panel consisted of Quinnipiac administrators Chief Experience Officer Tom Ellett, Provost Debra Liebowitz, Vice President of Inclusive Excellence John Armendariz and via Zoom, President Marie Hardin.

"I was very excited about getting to be part of it," Hardin said in an interview with The Chronicle. "I've heard so much about it, and I think it is such a cool tradition, because it connects the administration with students. So I absolutely love it, and it met all my expectations."

The State of the QUnion encourages students to express their concerns, suggestions and general queries to administrators and this

year, students had a lot to say.

The conversation began with financial struggles as students shared their personal experiences and addressed the importance of scholarships and creative partnerships. Many also took this opportunity to bring up the importance of on-campus job opportunities and easy access to federal work study opportunities.

"If people who have federal work study don't have a job, see me," Ellett said. "I will work diligently with you individually to see what opportunities exist. Help students one by one. That's what it's about here."

He also encouraged students to stay on top of checking student experience portals like Bobcat Central for job opportunities, as well as using job search platforms, such as Handshake and Indeed.

As the conversation shifted, students took Hardin's dog Tator's presence at the panel as an opportunity to bring up the possibility of

implementing therapy dogs on Quinnipiac's three campuses.

The panel expressed a general concern for the financial burden of bringing an animal handler onto campus and Ellett instead encouraged the idea of working alongside SGA to potentially bring a therapy dog onto campus once a week.

While friendly campus golden retriever George is enough to bring a smile to your face, students are eager to see more furry friends at Quinnipiac.

Throughout the panel, a handful of students also expressed concern for the current parking situation, explaining how the lack of parking spaces is a major struggle for commuter students.

Administrators responded by sharing some of the difficulties they've encountered in implementing new lots on the Mount Carmel Campus, and explaining the process for

acquiring a permit to build new parking lots.

"There is some talk about potentially looking at a space of additional parking. Nominal, maybe 100+ spaces," Ellett said. "But again, that has to go through a process, and that will take time."

With rumblings going around campus of new shuttle stops being built, the panel confirmed that there are no current plans for this addition.

Students are encouraged to utilize the current shuttle system to the best of their ability to minimize parking struggles.

The discussion shifted with inquiries about a new dining option on campus. With rumors of a new "all-you-care-to-eat" swipe system being implemented, students were curious about what the administration plans to do with the space that once housed the campus bookstore.

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