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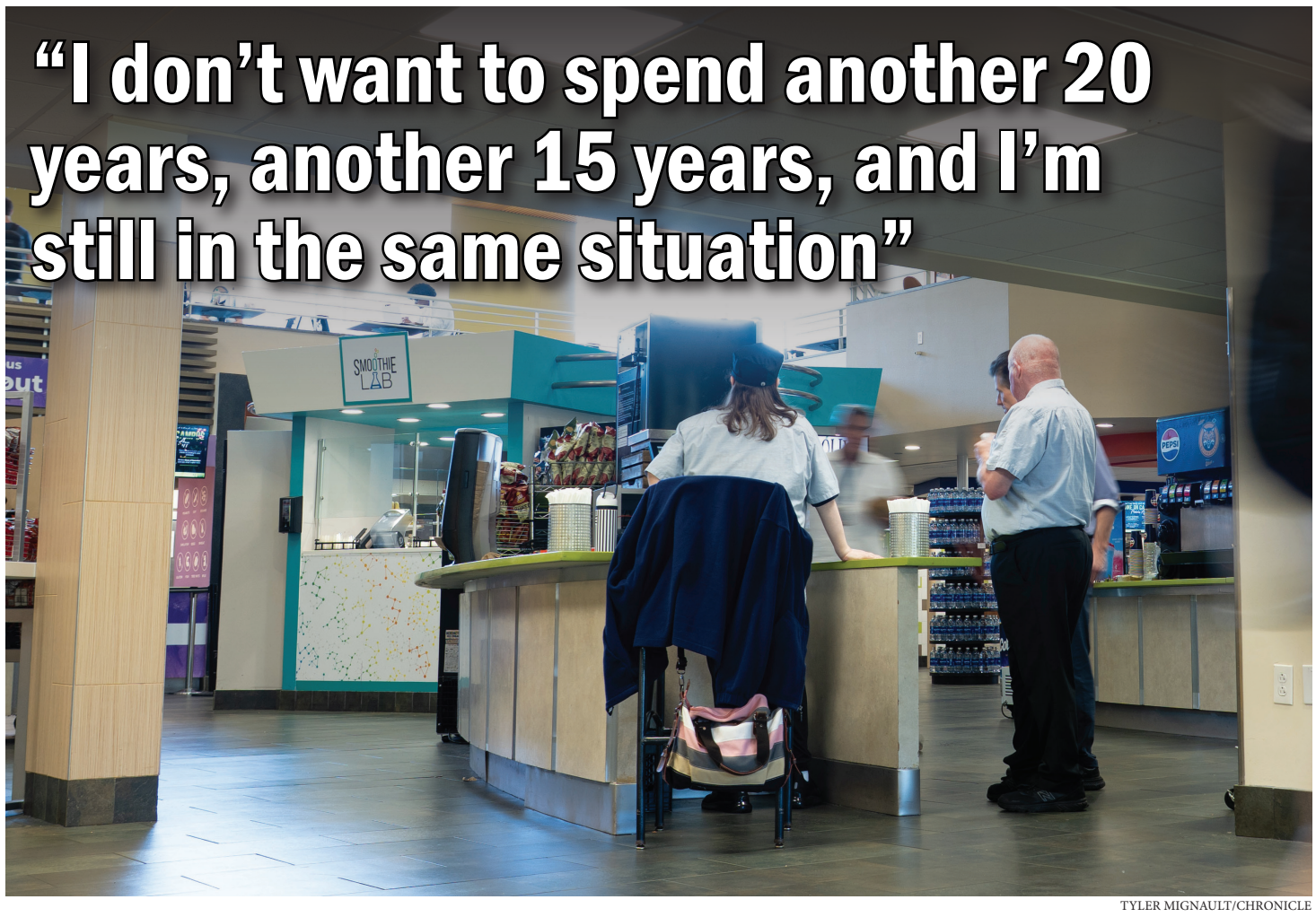

TYLER MIGNAULT/CHRONICLE

“I don’t want to spend another 20 years, another 15 years, and I’m still in the same situation”

Chartwells workers push for fair contracts, facing wage disparities and workplace stress

By AVA HIGHLAND
Managing Editor

In March, the student-led petition “Quinnipiac Students Stand with Our Dining Workers: Support a Fair Contract for USW Members,” called on both Chartwells and Quinnipiac University administration for change. Dining workers at Quinnipiac are now entering contract negotiations, pushing for fair contracts after facing wage disparities, contributing to stress in and out of the workplace.

The last time they had negotiations was in 2022.

Anthony Carter, a grill cook at Cafe Q, serves as Union President for United Steelworkers at Quinnipiac, helping to lead the dining staff through these negotiations.

When compared to nearby schools, Chartwells employees at Quinnipiac face a significant wage disparity, with employees at Quinnipiac being paid about $10 less per hour than those at Trinity College, according to Carter.

For example, the fixed pay rate for full and part-time grill cooks at Quinnipiac is $18.75 per hour, according to the Chartwells Higher Ed Indeed job listing. At Trinity, an on-call grill cook position has a pay range listed at $27.35 per hour to $27.85 per hour, per Indeed.

For more comparison, Quinnipiac’s most recent enrollment data reported 6,610 undergraduate students in fall 2025, whereas Trinity reported 2,204 undergraduate students in 2024.

Similarly, a part-time grill cook at Eastern Connecticut State University — which reported 3,368 undergraduates in fall 2025 — has a listed fixed pay rate of $25.15 per hour.

“For Chartwells, a billion-dollar global corporation, to value its employees at $10 less than what you value employees doing the same work, it’s blasphemy, for a lack of better words,” Carter said.

Carter noted that wage disparities combined with high costs of living and inflation make a decent living hard to be achievable without a second job.

“It’s been times where I’ve had to pick up a second job in order to make ends meet and whatnot,” Carter said. “I feel like if we were compensated compared to everyone else in our field it would definitely alleviate a lot of stress inside the workplace and outside the workplace.”

The effects of these wage disparities are felt throughout the Chartwells staff at Quinnipiac, making it harder to maintain employees.

“If we have reliable workers, then it would take away a lot of the stress of just being seasoned workers filling the gaps for the unreliable workers,” Carter said. “And what I mean by reliable is it’s a lot of turnover. It’s hard to keep consistent workers in there just because of the wage.”

But wage disparities are not the only thing that takes a toll on dining workers at Quinnipiac.

“We’re a very important part to the Quinnipiac ecosystem, and I feel like we just kind of get left to the side,” Carter said.

Carter has worked as a Chartwells employee at Quinnipiac University for 20 years as of Sept. 6, 2026, and his ties to the school go beyond his day-to-day work — with his wife having attended the university for her undergraduate education, as well as several other family members and friends.

Over the years, Carter has also built connections with students and works to provide a positive dining experience.

“I know people now that have graduated 10, 15 years ago that I still talk to this day, and they have families, and they have kids,” Carter said.

And one of those most recent connections was the aforementioned petitioner.

“He just kind of saw that I was kind of going through some stuff mentally,” Carter said. “I wasn’t my happy-go-lucky, how you doing, self, and I just kind of gave him a rundown of basically what we’ve been going through and what’s going on, and he was inclined to start the petition.”

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Hamden EDC looking for student support on transportation initiatives

By MADELYN DURKEE
Staff Writer

Last fall Quinnipiac University joined the town of Hamden Economic Development Commission (EDC) Alliance in an effort to strengthen relations with the town and provide more opportunities for students. Now, the commission is looking for student support for upcoming transportation initiatives.

The EDC serves as an advisory to the Hamden Economic Development department. The Commission is entirely made up of volunteers who advocate for the economy in Hamden and strive for impactful community connection.

The alliance aims to “highlight the town of Hamden as an opportunity for robust economic development; convince businesses that this is a place worth investing in,” Commissioner Romeo Ibanez said.

Quinnipiac Professor of Entrepreneurship & Strategy David Tomczyk spoke with Ibanez, a Quinnipiac alum, last fall about entrepreneurship on Quinnipiac’s Mount Carmel Campus which helped facilitate the university joining the alliance.

“During the course of the conversation, we realized, there’s a lot more than just one-off projects for entrepreneurship students,” Tomczyk said. “This is something that can be campus-wide. And, so, the challenge is coordinating the whole campus to do something.”

Ibanez and Commission Chair Ken Good have both participated in events on campus, including the annual pitch competition.

“This approach is instead of saying ‘oh, what can we do with this one department,’ it’s rather how do we benefit Quinnipiac as a whole? How do we benefit Quinnipiac as individual pieces? How do we benefit Hamden as a whole? And how do we benefit Hamden as individual pieces?” Tomczyk said.

Ibanez added that the board is invested in “highlighting unique assets that our community has, that make Hamden special. I can think of no better one than Quinnipiac University.”

Bethany Zemba, vice president of government and community relations and chief of staff for President Marie Hardin, has been instrumental in supporting the alliance.

In her role as the primary connection between the university and commission, she presents Quinnipiac’s priorities to the town in order to “find areas of overlap and potential,” she said.

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