President Hardin establishes the Centennial Coordination and Planning Group ahead of Quinnipiac's 100th anniversary

By BRYCE INFALD
Contributing Writer

Quinnipiac University President Marie Hardin announced the makeup of the newly formed Centennial Coordination and Planning Group Aug. 28, adding to the school's preparation for the 100th anniversary in 2029.

The committee was formed to allow a select group of Quinnipiac faculty to plan ways to commemorate this university milestone. The committee's co-chairs are Vice President for Marketing and Communications Dan Kim and Vice President for Government and Community Relations and Chief of Staff Bethany Zemba.

"We're setting the goals for what the centennial should accomplish, digging into our own history so we can tell the story accurately and fully," Kim and Zemba wrote in an email to The Chronicle.

Professor of istory and committee member David Valone described the groups of faculty represented in the committee.

"(The committee's) trying to reach out across the university, but it's definitely more focused on the sort of administrative and public relations side of what the centennial is going to mean for the university," Valone said.

This committee will play a significant role in the university's programming for the centennial anniversary.

"So clearly there are going to be events that are going to go on to celebrate the 100 year (anniversary), but there's also fundraising, there's community building, there's other things that are going to happen in coordination with the 100 year anniversary that they're going to try to take advantage of as well," Valone said.

Hardin's announcement included the official centennial logo, which features the phrase "a century of ambition." The co-chairs also stated the significance of the school's history when discussing centennial planning.

"Quinnipiac has a remarkable history, and we hope to plan together and celebrate as a university community," Kim and Zemba wrote.

In addition to Hardin's new committee, the Arnold Bernhard Library and the history department have been collaborating on historical projects to commemorate the special occasion.

"There's a second group which I have been heading up, which is a kind of joint project between the history department and the library," Valone said. "And that is a much more history-focused group. So the university does have a decent amount of archival material related to the history of the university that's been collected over the years and a lot of that has just been in storage… So that committee has been kind of trying to make efforts to make that historical record more accessible."

This group has already started creating exhibits and working towards bringing Quinnipiac's history to the community.



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"While I was there, I helped with exhibits on the women of Quinnipiac and going up later this semester is going to be an exhibit on 100 years of clubs at Quinnipiac University," junior history major Eden Berry said. "And it's just been really great to embrace QU's history that…I don't think we talk about enough. It's 100 years; it's a huge milestone for the school and this place has really had quite an interesting history."

A distinction between these two groups is that the university-wide committee currently only includes faculty, while the historical group has already gotten students involved. This has included Berry's role in developing the library's historical exhibits.

"So last semester I interned with the university's special collections in the library, which tied in pretty nicely with the QU100 History Committee once Professor Valone sent out the email looking for students and alumni and staff members to be a part of this steering committee for Quinnipiac's 100th anniversary," Berry said.

Kim and Zemba stated that as the university committee moves forward, there will be opportunities for more students to get involved.

"And we will be finding ways for schools, student organizations, and the entire Quinnipiac community to bring us their ideas," Kim and Zemba wrote.

In addition to student involvement, Valone discussed the importance of integrating the wider Quinnipiac community in centennial planning.

"I would think getting students involved and excited about the 100th anniversary, obviously getting the faculty and staff interested and involved will be another thing," Valone said. "Rolling in alumni, because alumni have, in some ways, kind of the deepest interest, I think, in the history of the university, just because they lived one era in the history of the university and now they've seen it change and grow and become what it is now."

The formation and announcement of the Centennial Coordination and Planning Group have put discussions in motion as Quinnipiac's centennial anniversary approaches.

TRANSPORTATION from cover

One project currently in development is the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Initiative. This $300 million project, funded by the state and Federal Transit Administration, would improve bus routes in Hamden from the New Haven line running to Dixwell Avenue.

The initiative is "a significant reimagining of what transportation looks like for the greater New Haven area. With the key goal of making our communities number one; safer, number two; more accessible, and number three; more integrated," Ibanez said.

The project includes beautification, construction of round-abouts and installation of EV charging stations along the new bus route. It is anticipated to start in 2028 and finish by 2030.

"Right now they are going through a design phase, and a community engagement phase where they are trying to get feedback," Good said.

Hamden citizens and students are encouraged to participate in public forums, where this project is being discussed. Community feedback is already making an impact in the planning process.

"Coincidentally, most people at these meetings will also say, we need to connect to Quinnipiac University," Good said. "People in the town are definitely interested in making that connection."

While Quinnipiac is not currently involved in the BRT initiative directly, both the university and town are looking forward to working more closely on transportation initiatives in the future.

"We haven't worked with the town on any of those initiatives yet, but there have been some preliminary conversations around connectivity of the campus to economic development areas. To make it easier for students to go shopping and stuff like that," Zemba said.

Beyond transportation, there are preliminary conversations about other ways Quinnipiac and the Commission can strengthen the community. Including creating workshops for students to launch business opportunities in Hamden.

"We are looking to really be innovative and really help people think beyond what are the normal bounds of community and university relationships," Tomczyk said.

The goal is to build a community to support students in Hamden, while at the university and beyond. Zemba added that getting students involved "enriches the fabric of student experience and our connection to the town."

"If students are interested in serving on commissions, Hamden is always looking for representatives," Zemba said.

For the BRT Initiative, Ibanez and Good encourage students to voice their opinions and collaborate as the town moves forward with improvements to transportation.

"If they show that they are going to participate in this project, and show that they are going to be active riders and support it in that way, I'm sure [the state is] going to take a step back and try to evaluate what direction they want to go," Good said.

They look forward to working with students and citizens of Hamden in the future.

"Encourage the student body to come out and participate in these opportunities, because their voices matter," Ibanez said. "Their vision matters. They are a part of Hamden and we would like to continue to shape the future of Hamden to one that includes them. People are listening right now."

Students can attend open public forums or use this link to learn more about the BRT transportation plan: New Haven BRT.

They can also submit comments online as the plan moves forward: 402-34 Move New Haven Bus Rapid Transit Project–Comment Form.



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Quinnipiac University joins the Hamden Economic Development Commission as a way to shed light on the city's potential for robust economic development.