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# SOUTHERN NEWS

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## Lena Dunham hosts slumber party at Lyman

**By Brianna Wallen**  
News Editor

The John Lyman Center became the host of a teenage sleepover as Lena Dunham, a writer and director, took the stage on Saturday, May 1, for an evening of storytelling, conversation and shared reflection.

Attendees arrived in pajamas and settled into the theater like it was a shared bedroom while Dunham hopped into bed and dove into her latest book, “Famesick: A Memoir.”

“The whole vibe of this event is that I wanted to sort of recreate where I’ve spent the majority in the last 12 years, which is in my bedroom,” Dunham said. “So, I thought we could invite you in.”

The event, FAMESICK: An Evening of Stories and Togetherness, marked Dunham’s return to the stage in celebration of her first book in over a decade.

The work revisits her early fame with the hit TV series, “Girls,” while also tracing her experiences with chronic illness, including endometriosis and Ehlers-Danlos syndrome.

To set the stage as a slumber party, Dunham introduced Naomi Fry, staff writer at The New Yorker and co-host of the magazine’s podcast,



Lena Dunham, a writer and director, and Naomi Fry, staff writer at The New Yorker speaking at FAMESICK: An Evening of Stories and Togetherness in the John Lyman Center on Friday, May 1.

PHOTO | WADE BARILLARO

Critics at Large, who served as both a moderator and companion.

Dunham began by taking attendees back to where she first picked up the pen to write her latest memoir: fresh out of rehab.

“I started the book when I had just gotten out of rehab. And for anyone who’s been, it is wild. It’s like summer camp for deeply traumatized adults,” Dunham said.

“You come back, and you’re like, I have so many stories, and if I share them, you’re not going to want to be friends with me anymore.”

Dunham said she found herself resorting to writing her experience out on paper.

“And so, I thought to slam out a book about getting sober, and off we go,” Dunham said. “But then the book really became my companion

for about eight years, and there’s thousands of pages that no one will or should ever see.”

Dunham said that writing out her trauma and challenges became a cathartic outlet.

“What was interesting was that actually writing the stuff that we considered traumatic was sort of a joy. There’s something about writing the scene again. It’s almost like watching a horror movie

for the second time, and you know what’s going to happen,” Dunham said.

Dunham also embraced her own shame by admitting that writing the memoir often came with a visible physical reaction.

“I felt a lot of shame. My husband actually said — I would write a lot at night — and he would look over, and in the glow of the computer see my face contorted into this horrible expression,”

Dunham said. She then shifted into a reflective conversation by encouraging the audience to extend grace toward their past selves.

“I think many people’s entire 20s are a story about shame, and there is something extremely, dare I say, healing about going back and having some empathy for that version of yourself,” Dunham said.

Dunham continued weaving through stories of love, addiction and life after fame while adding hints of blunt honesty and sarcasm that kept attendees in the slumber party spirit.

Dunham also invited audience members onstage to play reimagined versions of classic sleepover staples, including “rose, bud, thorn” and a spin on “kiss, marry, kill.”

Before closing the event, Dunham held a Q&A session where she answered recorded voice memos from the audience before leading a meditation session.

Audience members were able to slow down and sit with themselves for a minute. The tone of the evening matched the end of a sleepover, when guests are not ready to leave yet.

“Just go live your sweet one and only life,” Dunham said.

## Town Hall meeting confronts growing deficit and budget

**By Victoria Cruz**  
News Writer

On Friday, May 1, the university administration team hosted a campus-wide Town Hall led by Interim President Sandra Bulmer. The university addressed mounting budget concerns from faculty, staff and students.

The university budget was in a deficit this fiscal year, forcing the university to use its reserve budget. The deficit is projected to increase next year; strategies to combat the issue were proposed during the meeting.

“We’re broke, and one way to increase our revenue would be to raise your tuition. But you know from your students that’s not really feasible for them,” Bulmer said.

The projected spending on campus for the 2025–26 academic year was \$246 million, with revenues suggested at \$221 million. This indicates that the university has spent significantly more than it was able to make back.

To offset the deficit, the university used \$10.9 million of their own reserve budget and \$8.2 million from the Connecticut State College and Universities.

The worst-case scenario budget for the fiscal 2027 year estimates spending of about \$250 million with a revenue of \$224 million.

This includes a deficit of approximately \$26 million and no anticipated coverage from the CSCU

system office. Bulmer stated that the deficit comes from rising costs, low recruitment and contracts with third party companies like Sodexo.

The highest cost is expected to be the upcoming faculty raises, estimated at around \$6 million.

“Unapologetically, you’re all expected to get a raise. That’s good for all of us,” Bulmer said.

In the worst-case scenario, the reserve budget would reach a low of \$17.8 million.

However, it is mandated that \$22 million sit in reserves to pay for 30 days’ worth of expenses.

Additionally, only 26% of the operating budget is state appropriated; in the past, it has been as high as 44%.

“The state is taking a pass on funding the cost of our public institutions. And that burden, you feel it, and we see it with our students every day,” Bulmer said.

Each department was asked to audit their operating budgets to better understand how money is being spent.

“We didn’t know how we were spending our money,” Bulmer said.

After this reflection, Bulmer asked faculty members to consider cutting unnecessary spending within their departments as excess funds are returned to the reserve funds.

“I was kind of disconnected from

the fact that if I hadn’t spent money, it would have gone back into our reserves and helped our overall university, and that’s where we have to start working together,” Bulmer said.

After this note, Bulmer recognized that faculty members may be hesitant to trust the administration after leadership transitions.

“I don’t think people are feeling like they want to trust if they give something up,” Bulmer said.

The last topic of discussion was Bulmer’s status, as she revealed that the search for the next president is set to begin in the fall semester.

“Right now, I don’t have any information, but I will let you know when I know,” Bulmer said.

Interim leadership positions have been halted as a result of in-system office delays with the chancellor’s vacancy.

While Bulmer asked departments to cut spending and donate additional funds to the reserves, there is hope that fair appropriation from the state will offset the budget.

“As a system, we are investing in reestablishing our credibility,” Bulmer said.

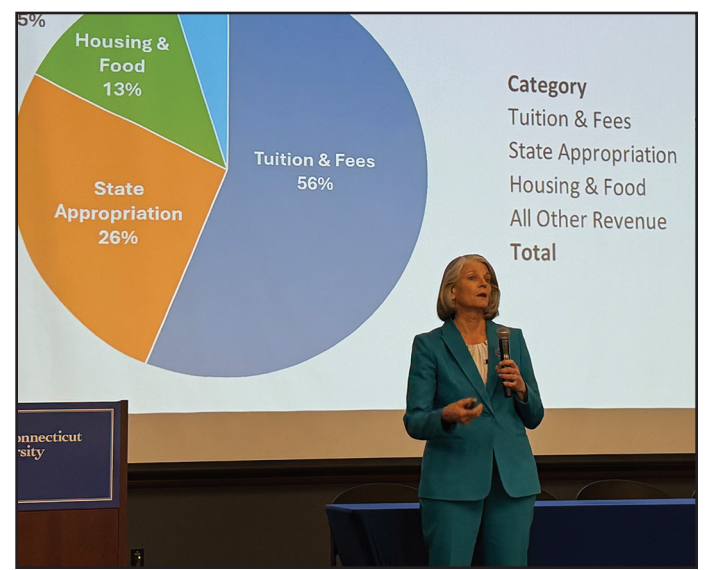
Bulmer stressed how leadership transitions have impacted the university.

“It’s really disappointing. It’s a huge distraction. And for people that want to

weaponize this moment, it’s just serving it up on a platter. If you didn’t want to fund higher ed, we just served you a big excuse,” Bulmer said.

Political science major William Moroz, a senior and president of the Student Government Association, commented on the deficit after the meeting.

“The budget deficit seems to be more of an issue this year than it has in past years because we are taking money out of our reserves, and it’s concerning. The university needs to make more money and get more students,” Moroz said.



Interim President Sandra Bulmer leading the Town Hall meeting in the Adanti Student Center Ballroom on Friday, May 1.

PHOTO | VICTORIA CRUZ

### SOUTHERN NEWS

Basketball legends unite for fundraiser



The 2025 annual fundraiser for the basketball legends was held on Friday, May 1, at the John Lyman Center. The event featured a variety of activities, including a raffle and a silent auction. The proceeds from the event will be used to support the university's basketball program.

### SOUTHERN NEWS

Annual Clergy Report released for 2025



The report on campus security and safety for the year 2025 was released on Friday, May 1. The report provides a comprehensive overview of the university's security efforts, including the implementation of new safety protocols and the deployment of additional security personnel.

### ICE raids fuel fear in students



The recent ICE raids on campus have caused significant fear and anxiety among students. Many students are worried about their immigration status and the potential consequences of being targeted by ICE. The university has expressed its support for its students and is working to provide resources and assistance.

### I Stand With Immigrants event promotes inclusion



The “I Stand With Immigrants” event was held on Friday, May 1, to promote inclusion and support for immigrants on campus. The event featured a variety of activities, including a panel discussion and a Q&A session with immigration experts.

The staff of the Southern News has received recognition for its coverage by the national Society of Professional Journalists. Two editions of the weekly newspaper were reviewed which resulted in the staff receiving the Finalist Award for the Corbin Gwaltney Award for Best All-Around Newspaper at schools under 10,000 enrollment. The award was for undergraduate newspapers from Maine to Philadelphia.