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Southern News

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Class of 2029 moves into residence halls

By Jay'Mi Vazquez
Managing Editor

The sun beamed over campus as first-year and transfer students arrived with boxes, bins and big dreams for the university's freshman move-in day.

Move-in took place Aug. 23, as families navigated the Residential Quad, gaining assistance from student and faculty volunteers. For many, the day marked the start of an important new journey.

"There's something special about seeing students and families go through this milestone together, and I love being a part of that energy," Interim President Sandra Bulmer said.

Bulmer explained that the experience of move-in day is a shared moment of transition for everyone involved, whether it is the students taking their first steps into independence or the families adjusting to letting go.

As faculty, staff and volunteers worked together to welcome students, the residence halls became the center of attention.

One of the busiest was Farnham Hall, where freshmen typically reside.

Move-in day can be hectic, but Resident Advisers play a key role in easing the process for first-year students.



PHOTO | WILLIAM GAGNÉ

Volunteers helping freshmen and their families move into their dorms in front of Hickerson Hall on Aug. 23.

"We help check in the incoming first-years on our floors and create a welcoming environment for them," RA Brenea Pagan, a senior, said.

Pagan added that RAs focus on keeping things moving while still making students and families feel comfortable throughout the experience.

Beyond move-in itself, Pagan emphasized the importance of residential life to student success. She described how living on campus helps first-years adjust socially and academically.

"Living on campus is best socially because you can foster a community quicker and make connections sooner," Pagan said.

She added that residents also benefit from easier access to resources, study groups and networking opportunities.

While RAs assisted students throughout the day, volunteers were also essential in helping move-in run smoothly.

Peer Mentor Sabrine Yaser, a senior, was among those lending a hand.

"My role is to help students move stuff into their rooms by using bins provided by the university," Yaser said.

Volunteers also fielded common questions, such as where students needed to check in or how they could get their room keys.

Yaser was stationed in West Campus Residence Complex, a dorm typically housing upperclassmen, and noted that her experience was less hectic than those working in freshman-heavy halls like Farnham.

"It's not really a freshman building," Yaser said. "But if you're in Farnham or anywhere else, I feel like it would be more hectic."

For many students, the day was about more than just moving boxes; it was about envisioning the next chapter of their lives.

Elementary education major Corinne Melisky, a freshman moving into Farnham, said she was excited for the opportunities that come with living on campus.

"I think living on campus will just be easier to make friends overall because I'll be in the community, more involved," Melisky said. "And the fact that I won't have to drive 45 minutes every day to commute will be nice."

Music therapy major Kyra Scott, also a freshman in Farnham Hall, shared similar feelings. For her, dorm life offered both social and academic motivation.

"Living on campus, I'll definitely have more of a social life," Scott said. "But probably, it'll force me to kind of study more because I won't be distracted by outside things since I'm living on campus."

Across campus, students in other halls expressed the same optimism. Secondary education major Molly Stead, a freshman moving into Chase Hall, said she looked forward to the convenience of being close to classes and campus resources.

"I'll always be around people," Stead said, "so it'll help getting to know everyone."

Bulmer appointed as interim president

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor

The university welcomes familiar leadership with Sandra Bulmer appointed as interim president. After 26 years of service to the university, Bulmer officially stepped into the role with a wealth of experience and a strong connection to the campus community.

From her time as Dean of the College of Health and Human Services to her years of teaching in the Department of Public Health, Bulmer has built a legacy of dedication that she now brings to the university's highest office.

"I've always been at Southern, my whole academic career," Bulmer said. "So, when they did a national search, I applied for the job and got it. So, I did that job for 11 years, and then I was asked to do this job, and I've already fallen in love with it."

With Bulmer's roots embedded in the institution, she said she is continually drawn back by the university's mission of diversity, academic excellence, access, social justice and service to the public good.

As a first-generation college graduate herself, Bulmer said she sees that mission reflected in the university's culture.

"Southern is that kind of university for the state of Connecticut, like the first-gen atmosphere," Bulmer said.

Bulmer emphasized that the institution's commitment to affordability is eqaully as important as its dedication to academic excellence.

"People shouldn't have to settle for a lesser educational experience just because they can't afford the private school prices," Bulmer said. "Each program stands up right against Quinnipiac and Sacred Heart Fairfield. We're right there exceeding them in many regards."

Along with the university's identity, Bulmer said that her passion for working with students motivates her

"I authentically love working with students, and that really drives me. It feeds my soul to be able to spend time experiencing what students are going through and thinking about ways that we can do better to meet their needs," Bulmer said.

As Bulmer steps into her new role, she wants students to see her leadership style reflected in the way she engages with the community.

"I hope that the way I am in my role on this campus will demonstrate that authentic love that I have for the student experience and wanting to do the right things by our students," Bulmer said.

Bulmer also said that she wants students to know that behind her title as president, she is someone they can approach, connect with and talk to openly.

"I hope that students will feel comfortable coming up and talking to me," Bulmer said. "I will try to be in spaces where I can get to know students so they do not need to feel all formal when they talk to me."



PHOTO | BRIANNA WALLEN

Interim President Sandra Bulmer in front of her office on the second floor of Engleman Hall on Aug. 29.

During her journey at the university, many students interacted with Bulmer and were taken under her wing.

Nursing and public health major Mia White, a junior, has been Bulmer's advisee since her second semester.

White said Bulmer played a key role in guiding her journey toward becoming a nurse.

"She made a really good academic plan for the spring semester for me and is the reason I'm a double major now," White said.

As Bulmer takes on representing over 9,300 students, she said the most important thing she can do is "be present, listen, try to learn."

Bulmer noted that leadership means creating space for students to share their perspectives and ensuring those voices shape the university's direction.

"I want students to always feel that they can speak up, that they have a voice on this campus, that they can speak to any of the leadership and share their concerns," Bulmer said. "And it's my job to make sure we're responsive."

As the semester begins, Bulmer said her focus is on building connections and continuing the university's legacy of growth and opportunity.

"I'm excited about meeting the needs of the students and the employees and advocating for this wonderful place and leaving it better than when I arrived," Bulmer said.

Alumni Association celebrates 100 years

By Solé Scott
Editor-in-Chief

The Alumni Association has officially turned 100 years old, and there will be a celebration on Oct. 3, to commemorate this accomplishment.

Gregory Bernard, who graduated from the university in 2004, became Director of Alumni Relations in 2019.

"As a Southern alumnus, I wanted to bring my experiences at other institutions back to my alma mater, transforming and modernizing our alumni relations department and further diversifying our Alumni Association," Bernard said.

The first graduating class was in 1896, and today, the university boasts over 90,000 living alumni and counting.

"The alumni network strengthens SCSU by serving as mentors, ambassadors and advocates for our students and programs," Bernard said.

The association also help current students from beyond campus.

"Alumni give back through scholarships and volunteer leadership that expand opportunities for current students while elevating the university's reputation," Bernard said.

The Alumni Association's notable accomplishments include giving out $1.8 million last year to students in need and $1.5 million in 2023.

Marketing major Anna Vilenski, a senior, will be graduating this December.

Vilenski said that he is interested in getting to know about the Alumni Association.

"I'm looking forward to graduating this December and becoming an alumni," Vilenski said. "I haven't heard much about the Alumni Association, so before joining, I'd like to learn more about what it is they do and what the roles are."

Bernard shared some ways current undergraduate students can get acquainted with the alumni network.

"We provide opportunities through networking events, where students can build relationships with alumni in their fields of interest," Bernard said. "By attending events, students gain valuable insight into professional pathways while also starting to feel a sense of pride and belonging in the alumni community."

The special events for the anniversary will be the Alumni Awards Celebration in the Adanti Student Center on Oct. 3.

In spring, there will be a networking event. The Alumni Family Day, which is a cookout mixed with field day, is also expected to happen in April 2026.

"I am proud of the rich history of the Alumni Association," Bernard said. "Being at the helm of alumni engagement while it celebrates its centennial is pretty special, and my hope is that 100 years from now, the institution and organization are still going strong."