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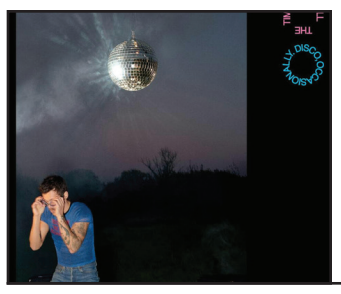

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SOUTHERN NEWS

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Campus welcomes Ken Rahn as police chief

By Brianna Wallen
News Editor



PHOTO | SCSU WEBSITE

Chief Ken Rahn pictured during his tenure as Deputy Chief of the university Police Department.

As students settle back into campus life after spring break, a new chapter in campus safety leadership is already underway.

Chief Ken Rahn officially stepped into his role as the university's new chief of police on March 5, bringing years of experience and a strong connection to the campus he now serves.

"It's a great place to work," Rahn said. "Even though there was a transition, I still love coming to work and being part of the community here."

That sense of connection is rooted in Rahn's leadership. Before arriving at the university, Rahn spent 25 years with the Milford Police Department and retired as deputy chief.

Although Rahn said that transitioning to higher education policing came with many uncertainties, he said it did not take long for him to feel at home.

"From the minute I walked in the doors here, I was welcomed," Rahn said. "There's something special about the community here. It's not just the students, faculty or staff. It's a very positive environment."

Following the retirement of former Chief Makiem Miller, the university enters a new but familiar chapter. Since joining the university Police Department in 2019, Rahn has helped guide daily operations and long-term planning. This includes serving as interim chief from 2022–2024.

"When Chief Dooley retired, I was named interim chief while they went through a search process," Rahn said. "After that, I went back to my position as deputy chief, and now I've been selected for the position as chief."

After changing offices, Rahn is now focused on strengthening both safety measures and the overall campus experience.

Rahn said his approach is rooted in guiding the university in a forward direction based on careful evaluation and steady improvement.

"Anything we have here is fairly new as far as our computer systems or vehicles," Rahn said.

Rahn also revealed that the department is working to discover more ways to improve security around campus.

"Whether it is the addition of more cameras or card swipes on doors, we're really looking at not just the campus itself but each and every building," Rahn said.

Rahn said this proactive approach is also shaped by a broader awareness of national safety concerns.

"Especially in light of tragic events like the shooting at Brown, you always want to take a step back and try to see if there is something we could do better," Rahn said.

Beyond infrastructure and security measures, Rahn also highlighted the importance of building trust within the campus community.

Rahn said that he views the role of campus police as more than enforcement, emphasizing relationships and daily interactions.

"What we do by design is we want to be part of the community," Rahn said. "We understand that people come from different backgrounds and have different experiences with police officers."

That philosophy influences how the department hires and trains officers. This takes full form as officers are encouraged to be visible and approachable across campus.

"When you're face to face and having an interaction and dialogue, that brings trust with people, and it breaks down barriers," Rahn said.

One of the most visible examples of this approach is the department's K-9 program, which has become a familiar and comforting element for many students.

"Bringing in the K-9s was part of that," Rahn said. "We'll walk through campus with the dogs, and people won't even say hi to us. They'll go straight down on one knee and play with the dogs, but then the interaction takes place."

What starts as simply petting one of the dogs often builds into something more meaningful.

"Now, we have students that come here just asking to see the dog if they have a stressful week," Rahn said.

At the heart of Rahn's approach is a focus that goes beyond policies and procedures, centering instead on the everyday experiences of students navigating campus life.

For him, success is measured not just in safety, but in how supported students feel during their time at the university.

As Rahn begins this next chapter, his vision goes beyond policies and procedures.

Instead it is centered on the everyday experiences of students navigating campus life.

Specifically, Rahn wants to ensure that the police department is an organization that students can turn to not just for emergencies but as a steady and helpful part of their college experience.

"We want them to understand that our goal is to support students in their journey through college," Rahn said.

Candidate sparks campus conversation

By Victoria Cruz
News Writer

On March 10, the College Democrats hosted state senate candidate and interdisciplinary studies major Justin Farmer, a junior, to discuss his campaign for the 92nd district seat in New Haven.

Farmer is running for state representative because he believes the issues he works on locally could be more effectively addressed at the state level.

"Most municipalities do not have the same power as the state," Farmer said.

Farmer first ran for public office almost 10 years ago and has served on the Hamden Town Council for six years.

Farmer explained that many local issues hit a wall because state representatives are not advocating strongly enough for the concerns that matter most to their community. He hopes to change that if elected.

"Most cultural and social-level change happens at state level, and it is up to state to make that happen," Farmer said.

Currently serving as a local official in New Haven, Farmer said that a position in the state legislature would give him the authority to address issues affecting residents.

"Now, I will have authority to speak on these issues," Farmer said.

The state position would give Farmer the opportunity to pursue policy changes without being restricted by jurisdictional limitations that exist at the municipal level.

One of the main issues Farmer spoke to students about was the increasing cost of housing and education. He pointed to Gov. Ned Lamont's proposed budget, which includes cuts to higher education funding, directly impacting students.

When asked how he would address affordability in the 92nd district, Farmer suggested that higher-income residents in Connecticut could play a role in funding solutions.

Identifying himself as a socialist candidate, Farmer said he wants to rethink how the state approaches economic policy.

"I want to throw a lot of ideas at the law and see what will stick because we know it all won't," Farmer said.

Farmer addressed his opponent, Eli Sabin, who recently visited the university.

Farmer is now one of two young, progressive challengers attempting to replace incumbent Pat Dillon.

Concerns were raised about whether their campaigns will split voters in a time where unity is a necessary strategy. Farmer said that the main issue in the upcoming election is this competitive mindset.

"If I split the vote, it is because the Democratic party can't motivate people," Farmer said.

He emphasized that there is room for both candidates in Connecticut politics and said that the conversation around elections needs to change.

"There is space for both of us. We have to start thinking not about winning and losing, but about how we are changing the culture of voting. Candidates who challenge issues are the most important," Farmer said.

Farmer said that the conversation around vote-splitting does more harm than good when trying to enact real change and encourage political engagement.

"If we win, great. We are still going to keep doing the work. It's about people getting excited. We all win when people get excited about politics," Farmer said.

Farmer said he plans to remain within the Democratic party despite ideological differences.

"Democrats do not consider me a Democrat; I am a socialist," Farmer said. "But there is a spectrum of ideology within the party."

Despite the uncertainty of the race, Farmer said he views the campaign as an opportunity to shift political conversations.

"Even if I don't win, if all I contribute is moving the conversation, then that is a win. If people aren't ready, they aren't ready. People are now closer to being ready to have these conversations," Farmer said.



PHOTO | WILLIAM GAGNÉ

State senate candidate and interdisciplinary studies major Justin Farmer, a junior, speaking to attendees and political science major Anthony Fiore, a junior and the treasurer of College Democrats, on March 10.

Political science major Cynthia Sanchez, a junior and the president of College Democrats, said the event was part of the club's efforts to expose students to different candidates and encourage civic engagement.

"I think the day went very well. We were able to show two sides of the ballot, which is amazing," Sanchez said. "Hopefully, we can have Pat Dillon in, and we hope to set up a community forum with all three candidates."

Sanchez added that the club hopes to serve as a bridge between students and the surrounding community.

"We want members to know that this club is worth your time, and that you can get so much out of it. We want to be the bridge for people to contribute to the community," Sanchez said.

Political science major Carlos Agüero Echevarría, a junior and secretary of College Democrats, said that he is inspired by Farmer's candidacy.

"It's great to see another young, ambitious candidate, but I feel like Justin Farmer feels unprecedented with his authenticity, with his age, ambition and advocacy, which is extremely needed in the democratic party," Echevarría said.

DiNino's PEP Talk

By Victoria Cruz
News Writer

On March 9, Hello Connecticut Host Renée DiNino discussed media, advocacy and leadership with students during her PEP Talk.

Hosted by the School of Business, DiNino led her discussion by sharing insights from her decades-long career in broadcasting and community advocacy.

"When I started, it was male-dominated. It was a different time. And I always knew what I wanted to do with my voice, but I did not know how to get there," DiNino said.

She spoke candidly about entering an industry where there were no blueprints for women like her.

Early in her career, DiNino said she often experienced objectification and struggled to be taken seriously in a visual media industry that placed a heavy emphasis on appearance.

Despite those challenges, she remained committed to finding and developing her voice.

"I will never belittle myself or my dreams or my goals again," DiNino said.

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