

Academic Affairs UPDATE

May 28, 2026



INSIGHTS

From the Interim Provost

Although campus is quiet, activity continues at a quick pace in the Provost's Office. I recently [interviewed Dr. Solomiya Ivakhiv](#), professor of violin and viola, and two of her violin students, graduate student Yi Charice Tang and undergraduate student Antonio Avilés Figueroa. Dr. Ivakhiv stressed that the commitment and hard work are the foundation of success as a performer, traits that ensure resilience throughout life. Her own accomplishments are stunning, and she recently performed at Carnegie Hall in a program that commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Chornobyl catastrophe while celebrating Ukraine's stellar musical heritage and musicians. Beyond their proficiency as performers, Ivakhiv and her students mentioned how they benefit from everything UConn offers, from academics to being in a dynamic multifaceted community.

I also continued my visits to schools and colleges. I met with faculty and staff in the School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, who are responsible for the consistently high marks their students receive on licensure exams. As in many other conversations across the University, the budget and challenges in higher education were recurring topics. I also attended the Academy of Distinguished Engineers event in the College of Engineering. The Academy recognizes [graduates](#) who have gone on to careers of extraordinary impact, many of whom continue to support the College through continued engagement, such as mentoring, sponsored projects, support for internships, philanthropy, and other efforts. This year, the College also recognized a number of [recent graduates](#) who have already made great strides in their careers.

On May 27, I attended the Yale Innovation Summit with a number of UConn colleagues, where we networked with leaders in innovation and entrepreneurship across Connecticut. I participated in a panel on the quantum ecosystem in Connecticut, which is fueled by research and tech translation activities at UConn and Yale as well as educational initiatives that span the Connecticut State College and University system, K-12 engagement, industry outreach, and undergraduate and graduate programs at colleges and universities across the state.

Hoping your summer is off to a great start,

Pamir Alpay
Interim Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

NEWS



Dr. Steven Lepowsky Reappointed Dean of UConn School of Dental Medicine

Dr. Steven Lepowsky has been reappointed for a second five-year term as Dean of the School of Dental Medicine following a comprehensive review. Since becoming dean, he has guided the School through a period of significant challenge and growth, strengthening academic programs, clinical operations, research activity, community partnerships, and philanthropic support. Under his leadership, the School has continued to achieve strong outcomes in student success, NIH-funded research, clinical care, and service to communities across Connecticut.



Interim Director of CETL Appointed

Desmond McCaffrey has been appointed Interim Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), effective May 29. A longtime member of the UConn community and current Director of UConn Online (eCampus), Desmond brings extensive experience in academic innovation, instructional support, online learning, and faculty engagement. In this interim role, he will help guide CETL's ongoing work supporting teaching and learning across the university while conversations continue about the center's future and impact at UConn.

UPDATES

Letters for Promotion and Tenure: Updated Templates Available

Updated templates for the solicitation of external support letters for tenure and promotion cases are now available. The templates were revised to reflect recent changes to the AAUP collective bargaining agreement and are intended to support consistency and compliance across schools and colleges. The updated materials can be accessed through the [Academic Affairs Governance Document Library](#).

DATES and DEADLINES



Juneteenth Observance

UConn will observe Juneteenth on Friday, June 19. Recognized by the State of Connecticut as an official state holiday since 2023, Juneteenth commemorates the day in 1865 when the last enslaved people in the United States were informed of their freedom.

In accordance with a University Senate resolution, June 19 is a non-teaching day at UConn. Classes will not be held, and no instructional activities should be scheduled. Departments and offices that are able to close in observance of the holiday are encouraged to do so, while certain critical operations may remain open to support student and campus needs.

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