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[UCONN_OFFICIAL_ANNOUNCEMENTS-L] Welcome Back!

President Susan Herbst <president@uconn.edu>
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Dear Colleagues and Students,

To all those returning to campus today: Welcome back!

I hope you had a happy and restful break.

As it does every year, this semester begins with our annual [Martin Luther King Jr. Day Observance](#). This event will be held this evening at 4 p.m. in the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Marc Lamont Hill – professor, political commentator, award-winning journalist, and contributor to CNN. Dr. Hill is a Distinguished Professor of African American Studies at Morehouse College. The theme of this year's program is *Be the Change, Reach the Dream: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*. I urge you to consider attending if you are able and look forward to seeing you there.

Supporting Our Students

In a campus-wide message last semester, I mentioned that the university would be posting additional information for the UConn community regarding our undocumented students. The message – and the additional information linked to below – was prompted by potential changes in public policy at the federal level that may impact members of our community, specifically those who are undocumented.

[This information can be found here, in a "Q & A" format.](#)

As we said this past fall, UConn actively works to support all of our students. We have been and will be unwavering in that commitment. We hope this information is useful to you.

Commitment to Sustainability

Another important UConn value is our commitment to sustainability, especially when it comes to understanding and addressing the social, economic, environmental, and public health issues surrounding climate change.

Colleges and universities can drive a prosperous, clean technology future through education, research, outreach, and our own low-carbon operations and innovations. We can lead by example. In November, The Chronicle of Higher Education ranked UConn as the [#3 overall sustainable campus](#) among 249 colleges and universities rated between 2013 and 2016. For the fifth and sixth consecutive years, respectively, UConn earned a top 10 ranking in both the Sierra Club "Cool Schools" and GreenMetric World University ratings.

On Dec. 9, I joined presidents from more than 220 colleges and universities in [signing a letter](#) urging the president-elect and Congress to support the United Nations' Paris Climate Agreement, ongoing climate research, and investment in a low-carbon economy. But it is not enough to merely advocate for change – we should also be the change we want to see.

With that in mind, I am also announcing UConn's new [2020 Vision Plan for Campus Sustainability & Climate Leadership](#). This is a strategic plan with goals and precise measurements for success across a wide range of operational and academic engagement activities. In achieving these goals, UConn will not only reduce its carbon footprint by more than 20 percent since 2007, despite our growth, but will also save approximately \$3.5 million a year compared with today's energy, fuel, and waste disposal costs. With this new roadmap to 2020 in hand, UConn looks forward to continued progress and an even more sustainable future.

Dialogue and Democracy

[“What's At Stake: The Post-Election State of U.S. Rights and Responsibilities”](#) is a newly developed dialogue being hosted by CLAS, Student Affairs, the School of Law, and UConn faculty. This important forum will challenge and engage our community on topics focusing on American media and its intersection with race and culture as well as U.S. politics, law, and citizenship. I encourage members of the UConn community to attend this important and relevant conversation.

HuskyTHON

Each year, UConn students organize HuskyTHON, an 18-hour dance marathon fundraiser held in the Field House to benefit Connecticut Children's Medical Center. Last year, our students raised more than \$716,000 through this event. In recognition of this success, Connecticut Children's named their newest addition to the hospital “The HuskyTHON Center of Procedural Excellence.”

This year, HuskyTHON will begin at 6 p.m. on Saturday, February 18 and run through the following day. February 18 is also the last day to register for the event.

To register for HuskyTHON, you can visit the HuskyTHON website: <http://www.huskython.org/>. If you have questions, feel free to email recruitment@huskython.org.

HuskyTHON is a great example of the countless ways our students devote themselves to great causes and contribute to our state. I urge you to participate – and have fun!

State Budget

As has been the case for several years, Connecticut state government is continuing to struggle with substantial budget deficits. Because of this, the state is forced to reduce funding for every state agency, including Connecticut's colleges and universities.

UConn receives approximately 28 percent of its total annual operating budget from the state, through an appropriation determined by the General Assembly and the governor. As we have said, vigorously supporting UConn is an investment

in Connecticut's future. A strong, healthy public research university attracts great students and faculty, and is essential for the state's economy and culture over the long term.

We must protect the major investments already made in UConn, so that we can do our job for Connecticut and its people. There will be opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to help in that effort in the coming months.

We are frequently – and rightly – asked what UConn does to support the state's economic development efforts. The answer is that UConn does a great deal for Connecticut's economy, [as this document illustrates](#). And we can do more.

Once again, welcome back and I wish each of you all the best for a fun and rewarding spring semester!

Sincerely,

Susan Herbst