



**2021/2022 Annual Report on Retention and Graduation**  
**University Senate**

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**Submitted by:**

**Nathan Fuerst, Vice President**  
**Division of Enrollment Planning & Management**

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## Introduction

The University of Connecticut has a superb reputation as one of the finest universities in the nation and is now a destination for top students in Connecticut and beyond. UConn's growing reputation can be credited, in large part, to positive outcomes for students. In 2021-2022, many student success metrics continued to soar to the very best in the country. This year, UConn reached the highest ever four-year graduation rate, at 76%, which ranks UConn as 7<sup>th</sup> among public universities. And in the same year, we reached the fastest ever average time to degree of 4.1 years, placing UConn as #1 in the US among publics (tied with several other institutions).

As the achievements of UConn students are heralded far and wide, our competitive spirit within UConn's culture drives us toward continual improvement. The course of the pandemic has underscored the need for sharpened focus on any achievement gaps. Moving forward, targeted tactics in the identification of students encountering challenges, and matching these students with support services, may enhance student success.

Early probation and dismissal statistics have called university leaders to action. Black, Hispanic/LatinX and other historically underrepresented groups are being disproportionately impacted, as overall rates of academic probation have jumped between two to four percentage points. From these observations, the office of the Provost and others have initiated a Probation Taskforce to better understand the challenges and formulate initiatives to address these observations.

This year, the standing committees of the Retention & Graduation Taskforce have generated significant substance in the form of analyses of regional campus change students, identification of barriers (and recommendations to address) to student success and ongoing collaboration with Life Transformative Education.

This annual report includes the most recent undergraduate statistics on retention and graduation across UConn's campuses for entering first year students and transfers. Included below is an overview of the activity of the Retention and Graduation Taskforce in the past year, followed by a summary of the university's financial aid program.

## Student Success Rates

### Retention & Graduation Statistics

Driven by a highly qualified entering class, paired with the dedication of countless faculty and staff, the University of Connecticut is considered a leader among public universities for student success rates. The below ratings, assembled by the Office of Budget, Planning & Institutional Research (BPIR), illustrate how we compare to other public universities:

	UConn	Rank
First Year Retention	92%	12
Four Year Graduation	76%	7
Six Year Graduation	83%	25
Average Time to Degree	4.1 years	1*

\*UConn is tied with four top research institutions.

### Storrs First Year Students

The below tables illustrate the past ten years of retention and six year graduation rates of Storrs first year students. The rates broadly illustrate the successes of our students, but also our achievement gaps among minority students. The third table illustrates these gaps by ethnicity, with the most significant gaps among Hispanic/LatinX and African American students, which occur more notably in the sophomore and junior years. International student rates have also emerged as a challenge in comparison to the overall student population. It is evident much work remains.

Storrs Campus				
First Year Class	1 Year Retention	2 Year Retention	3 Year Retention	Graduated in 6 Years
Fall 2020	92			
Fall 2019	93	87		
Fall 2018	94	88	86	
Fall 2017	93	88	86	
Fall 2016	94	88	86	
Fall 2015	92	88	86	83
Fall 2014	92	87	85	83
Fall 2013	93	89	87	85
Fall 2012	94	90	88	85
Fall 2011	93	87	85	83

Storrs Campus - Minority <sup>1</sup> First Year Students				
First Year Class	1 Year Retention (%)	2 Year Retention (%)	3 Year Retention (%)	Graduated in 6 Years (%)
Fall 2020	91			
Fall 2019	93	87		
Fall 2018	92	88	86	
Fall 2017	92	87	85	
Fall 2016	92	85	82	
Fall 2015	91	86	83	80
Fall 2014	90	84	83	78
Fall 2013	93	88	85	82
Fall 2012	91	86	84	79
Fall 2011	91	84	81	77

<sup>1</sup> Minority includes Asian American, African American, Hispanic American, Native American, and beginning with Fall 2010 first year class also includes Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and Two or More Races.

Storrs Campus - Retention and Graduation Rates by Race/Ethnicity											
Rates (%)	First Year Class	Asian American	African American	Hispanic American	Native American <sup>2</sup>	Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander <sup>2</sup>	Two or More Races	All Minority <sup>1</sup>	Internat'l	White <sup>3</sup>	Total
<b>Retention</b>											
One Year	Fall 2020	96	90	86	*	*	94	91	88	93	92
Two Year	Fall 2019	90	86	86	*	*	86	87	69	91	87
Three Year	Fall 2018	94	79	82	*	*	93	86	70	89	86
<b>Graduation</b>											
Four Year	Fall 2017	79	61	69	*	*	73	72	68	80	76
Five Year	Fall 2016	82	71	74	*	*	77	76	76	86	82
Six Year	Fall 2015	87	76	73	80	*	80	80	80	85	83

<sup>1</sup> Minority includes Asian American, African American, Hispanic American, Native American, and beginning with Fall 2010 first year class also includes Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and Two or More Races.

<sup>2</sup> Entering first year classes of Native Americans and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islanders have less than 10 students. (\*)

<sup>3</sup> White category includes self-reported white, other, and "refused to indicate".

UConn also observes an achievement gap among our out of state students and international students, in comparison to their in state counterparts. The below table illustrates these differences.

Storrs Campus - Retention and Graduation Rates by Residency					
Rates (%)	First Year Class	In State	Out of State	Internat'l	Total
<b>Retention</b>					
One Year	Fall 2020	92	92	88	92
Two Year	Fall 2019	90	86	69	87
Three Year	Fall 2018	89	85	70	86
<b>Graduation</b>					
Four Year	Fall 2017	78	73	68	76
Five Year	Fall 2016	84	79	76	82
Six Year	Fall 2015	89	75	80	83

The final table illustrates completion rates between students who self-identify on binary gender fields. We observe lower rates for males here, which informs the activity of our R&G committees, who are investigating these states and their interaction with other variables, such as ethnicity and residency.

Storrs Campus - Retention and Graduation Rates by Gender				
Rates (%)	First Year Class	Female	Male	Total
<b>Retention</b>				
One Year	Fall 2020	92	91	92
Two Year	Fall 2019	89	85	87
Three Year	Fall 2018	89	82	86
<b>Graduation</b>				
Four Year	Fall 2017	82	69	76
Five Year	Fall 2016	85	78	82
Six Year	Fall 2015	87	79	83

## Regional First Year Students

Great care is taken in drawing direct comparisons between regional and transfer retention rates versus those at the Storrs campus. These are truly different cohorts, with different educational objectives, pathways, and in many cases, lived experiences than first year students in Storrs. Rather, what is more informative is an identification of where the gaps in achievement exist among our regional campus students.

Total Regional Campuses				
First Year Class	1 Year Retention	2 Year Retention	3 Year Retention	Graduated in 6 Years
Fall 2020	77			
Fall 2019	82	69		
Fall 2018	83	72	66	
Fall 2017	82	72	68	
Fall 2016	84	74	70	
Fall 2015	85	73	68	61
Fall 2014	85	75	70	62
Fall 2013	86	75	70	63
Fall 2012	83	73	68	63
Fall 2011	83	72	67	61

Total Regional Campuses - Minority <sup>1</sup> First Year Students				
First Year Class	1 Year Retention (%)	2 Year Retention (%)	3 Year Retention (%)	Graduated in 6 Years (%)
Fall 2020	75			
Fall 2019	83	67		
Fall 2018	82	72	67	
Fall 2017	83	72	68	
Fall 2016	83	73	68	
Fall 2015	87	75	70	60
Fall 2014	85	75	71	61
Fall 2013	84	72	67	59
Fall 2012	84	74	70	64
Fall 2011	86	75	68	61

<sup>1</sup> Minority includes Asian American, African American, Hispanic American, Native American, and beginning with Fall 2010 first year class also includes Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander and Two or More Races.

Avery Point Campus				
First Year Class	1 Year Retention	2 Year Retention	3 Year Retention	Graduated in 6 Years
Fall 2020	76			
Fall 2019	81	62		
Fall 2018	86	72	65	
Fall 2017	78	67	63	
Fall 2016	86	74	68	
Fall 2015	84	67	60	56
Fall 2014	86	73	69	64
Fall 2013	87	73	64	61
Fall 2012	79	66	61	58
Fall 2011	81	67	63	58

Hartford Campus				
First Year Class	1 Year Retention	2 Year Retention	3 Year Retention	Graduated in 6 Years
Fall 2020	78			
Fall 2019	85	76		
Fall 2018	83	75	72	
Fall 2017	84	77	73	
Fall 2016	82	73	70	
Fall 2015	85	77	74	65
Fall 2014	84	73	67	59
Fall 2013	87	77	73	66
Fall 2012	85	76	72	65
Fall 2011	86	73	69	63

Stamford Campus				
First Year Class	1 Year Retention	2 Year Retention	3 Year Retention	Graduated in 6 Years
Fall 2020	77			
Fall 2019	82	67		
Fall 2018	81	71	65	
Fall 2017	80	69	65	
Fall 2016	84	76	73	
Fall 2015	85	72	67	58
Fall 2014	85	76	74	65
Fall 2013	87	74	71	64
Fall 2012	82	75	71	67
Fall 2011	86	77	70	64

Waterbury Campus				
First Year Class	1 Year Retention	2 Year Retention	3 Year Retention	Graduated in 6 Years
Fall 2020	78			
Fall 2019	78	61		
Fall 2018	81	68	59	
Fall 2017	84	72	67	
Fall 2016	85	73	65	
Fall 2015	86	76	72	65
Fall 2014	88	78	76	65
Fall 2013	85	76	69	64
Fall 2012	85	74	68	64
Fall 2011	81	69	66	60

The overall slippage in retention and graduation rates for the Fall 2020 cohort is notable. The most apparent dip in attainment occurs in the sophomore year.

### *Transfer Students*

Transfer student completion rates are calculated differently. Uniform standards for calculating transfer student success rates are not well established. The methodology for doing so is utilized by both UConn and the Board of Regents institutions and captures effective cohorts in the context of grade level. For example, a transfer student who is of first year class standing cannot be expected to graduate from UConn in two years, for an effective completion rate of three years. The transfer calculations account for a number of variables that place time to degree in context of total number of years from beginning of each student's education to completion.

#### **All Transfers**

Cohort	Enrolled Count	Average Credits Accepted	Graduation Rate		
			4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Fall 2013	948	43.6	54.5%	74.9%	76.8%
Fall 2014	970	43.7	54.5%	72.7%	76.2%
Fall 2015	1,067	45.6	53.0%	76.2%	78.9%
Fall 2016	1,054	46.0	54.1%	73.5%	77.4%
Fall 2017	1,126	45.6	50.9%	69.4%	72.6%
Fall 2018	988	45.6	51.2%	61.9%	
Fall 2019	967	44.5	18.0%		

#### **CT Community College Transfers**

Cohort	Enrolled Count	Average Credits Accepted	Graduation Rate		
			4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Fall 2013	299	53.3	38.5%	65.6%	69.6%
Fall 2014	302	54.6	39.7%	62.6%	69.2%
Fall 2015	377	56.7	39.3%	70.3%	75.3%
Fall 2016	378	56.5	43.7%	68.5%	74.6%
Fall 2017	394	55.9	36.0%	61.7%	67.8%
Fall 2018	324	54.5	42.0%	61.4%	
Fall 2019	304	55.8	26.0%		

**Guaranteed Admission Program (GAP) Transfers**

Cohort	Enrolled Count	Average Credits Accepted	Graduation Rate		
			4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Fall 2013	29	61.5	37.9%	62.1%	69.0%
Fall 2014	26	61.0	50.0%	65.4%	73.1%
Fall 2015	40	61.9	55.0%	85.0%	85.0%
Fall 2016	58	62.9	55.2%	81.0%	87.9%
Fall 2017	48	62.1	45.8%	66.7%	68.8%
Fall 2018	68	62.1	70.6%	89.7%	
Fall 2019	55	63.3	58.2%		

Note: For newer cohorts such as Fall 2019, caution should be taken in using these graduation rates since students transferring in lower amounts of credits have not been at the University long enough to graduate in four years.

*Storrs Transfers Only*

As we observe with first year students, completion rates for Storrs transfer students are also higher than those across all campuses. The below tables illustrate those transfer students who begin at the Storrs campus. Regional only transfer tables are not presented, as cohort sizes are often very small, and therefore not statistically relevant.

**All Transfers**

Cohort	Enrolled Count	Average Credits Accepted	Graduation Rate		
			4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Fall 2013	743	42.9	57.1%	78.6%	80.6%
Fall 2014	779	43.9	57.5%	76.3%	80.0%
Fall 2015	835	46.5	54.3%	78.7%	81.2%
Fall 2016	849	46.7	56.9%	76.2%	80.4%
Fall 2017	865	45.7	55.7%	73.8%	77.0%
Fall 2018	780	46.8	56.2%	66.8%	
Fall 2019	748	45.8	20.1%		

### CT Community College Transfers

Cohort	Enrolled Count	Average Credits Accepted	Graduation Rate		
			4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Fall 2013	200	55.5	39.5%	68.0%	73.0%
Fall 2014	206	56.9	39.3%	64.1%	71.8%
Fall 2015	262	58.8	36.6%	70.2%	75.6%
Fall 2016	261	59.8	46.7%	70.9%	78.9%
Fall 2017	262	58.2	37.8%	63.4%	69.8%
Fall 2018	217	58.2	47.0%	67.7%	
Fall 2019	212	58.1	28.8%		

### Guaranteed Admission Program (GAP) Transfers

Cohort	Enrolled Count	Average Credits Accepted	Graduation Rate		
			4 Year	5 Year	6 Year
Fall 2013	25	62.0	44.0%	60.0%	68.0%
Fall 2014	22	61.4	50.0%	63.6%	68.2%
Fall 2015	36	61.5	52.8%	83.3%	83.3%
Fall 2016	49	63.0	59.2%	79.6%	87.8%
Fall 2017	41	62.2	53.7%	65.9%	68.3%
Fall 2018	59	62.2	71.2%	89.8%	
Fall 2019	43	65.2	53.5%		

Note: For newer cohorts such as Fall 2019, caution should be taken in using these graduation rates since students transferring in lower amounts of credits have not been at the University long enough to graduate in four years.

Rates for transfers, while not as high as Storrs first year students, continue to outpace the national averages of entering first year students, an accomplishment worth acclaim. Nationally, according to the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), students who begin at a four year public university, graduate with a bachelors degree at a six year rate of 69% (Fall 2015 cohort), UConn's transfer students graduate at a rate of approximately 80%. NSC data illustrates that students who begin at a community college graduate with a bachelors degree at a six year rate of 42%, where UConn's rate for CTCC transfers across all campuses is 76%.

Source: *Completing College: National & State Report (Signature Report No. 20, February 2022)*. Herndon, VA: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center.

## Taskforce Committee Reports

In 2019, the Retention and Graduation Taskforce developed a strategic plan. Key among the recommendations of the plan was to restructure the taskforce to be more inclusive of key stakeholders, while also being conducive to thoughtful analysis and progress to improving student success rates. To this end, an Executive Committee was established, and three standing R&G Taskforce Committees were initiated and authored a charge. The 2021-2022 committee membership, annual activities, and recommendations from each committee are included below.

### Retention & Graduation Executive Committee Membership

Michael Bradford	Vice Provost for Faculty, Staff and Student Development
Daniel Burkey	Professor in Residence, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education and Diversity
Sarah Croucher	Director of Academic Policy & Faculty Affairs, Office of the Provost
Nathan Fuerst, Chair	Vice President for Enrollment Planning & Management
Michael Gilbert	Vice President for Student Affairs
Lauren Jorgensen	Director of Institutional Research
Mona Lucas	Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Policies & Strategic Initiatives
Tadarrayl Starke	Associate Vice Provost, Institute for Student Success
Frank Tuitt	Vice President & Chief Diversity Officer
Dan Weiner	Vice President for Global Affairs

#### *Executive Committee - Summary of Activity:*

The Executive Committee generally steers the activity of the three committees, using an approach of development and approval of research questions, pursuit of evidence, and the issuance of findings and recommendations. The executive committee has received the recommendations of the three committees and will determine which shall be advanced for implementation or further research and consideration.

### Research Committee

Submitted by: Lauren Jorgensen

#### *Charge:*

The R&G Research Committee is tasked with ongoing pursuit of evidence in support of UConn's R&G initiatives. This includes examination of latest student success results at UConn, best practices at peer institutions, and emerging trends. The committee should monitor very carefully populations where achievement gaps exist, and track UConn's progress to bridging these gaps over time.

#### *Membership:*

Terrence Abney	Assistant Director of Residence Education
Peter Diplock	Associate Vice Provost, CETL
Morgaen Donaldson	Associate Dean for Research, Neag School of Education
Jeff Gagnon	Enrollment Analyst & Fiscal Officer, Enrollment Planning & Management
Vern Granger	Director of Undergraduate Admissions
Kathleen Holgerson	Director of Women's Center
Lauren Jorgensen, Chair	Director of Institutional Research

Eric Loken	Associate Professor, Neag School of Education
Tamara O'Day Stevens	Director of Academic Affairs, Stamford Campus
Lauren Schlesselman	Executive Director, Learning Initiatives & Program Assessment, CETL
Tadarrayl Starke	Associate Vice Provost, Institute for Student Success
Dan Sokol	Data Warehouse Administrator, Institutional Research
Patricia Szarek	Associate Director for Enrollment Management, Honors Program

*Research - Summary of Activity:*

Research Question: What are the differences in student performance and student perceptions for the students who transfer to Storrs Campus from a Regional Campus, compared to students who entered at the Storrs Campus?

Two analyses in process, Spring 2022:

- 1) Analysis of regional campus transfers to Storrs compared to transfers from Connecticut community colleges and 4-year public colleges. Analysis includes graduation and retention rates by entry campus, gender, ethnicity, received Pell Grant, STEM majors.

**Preliminary Findings:**

- a. STEM majors from regional campuses graduate at lower rates than STEM major transfer students from 2 and 4-year colleges
  - b. Regional campus and 4-year college transfers graduate at a higher rate than 2-year college transfers
  - c. Next Steps: Look at additional variables that may affect outcomes; use those results to compare with Storrs students
- 2) Analysis of end of term GPA tracking across several semesters of transfers to Storrs from a regional campus.

Variables to consider in further analyses: Undergraduate transfer GPA, grades/performance, DFW rates, class standing at time of transfer to Storrs/number of credits transferred, participation in Cultural Centers (data will be in Nexus,) Learning Communities, activities on campus such as use of recreation center (track card swipes,) academic probation and dismissal, financial need, student debt.

Analyze Student Perceptions: Undergraduate SERU Survey Spring 2021 and Spring 2022 results, and 60-Second Profile review of responses for questions such as feeling of belonging, network of emotional support.

*Research - Draft Recommendations relating to research question:*

Develop onboarding program for new regional campus students at Storrs Campus; social gathering for new transfer students to Storrs; First-Year Experience course for transfers; require advisors to reach out to transfer students upon arrival to Storrs; preparation of regional campus students in Biology/Science courses, including access to tutors.

*Research – Other Activities in 2021/2022:*

Interactive R&G Dashboards in Power BI

- By Campus, School/College, and various demographics
- Access can be provided with login by UConn email address <https://oire.uconn.edu/data/>

## “Current Status of Regional Campus Transfers”

Selected items from Nexus 60-Second Profile taken in Spring 2022 (See [Appendix B](#) for more information).

Population: Spring 2022 Storrs Degree-Seeking Undergraduates, originally entered as first-year student at a regional campus, now at Storrs Campus, also includes Storrs entrants, 60% response rate to 60-Second Profile.

### Summary of Results:

- 75% of students from a regional campus either agree or strongly agree that they feel they belong at UConn compared to 83% of students who entered originally at Storrs Campus.
- 70% of students from a regional campus either agree or strongly agree that they have a strong network of emotional support on campus, compared to 81% of students who entered originally at Storrs Campus.
- 43% of students originally from a regional campus agree or strongly agree that they are feeling overwhelmed about financing their education compared to 34% of students who entered originally at Storrs Campus.
- Stamford and Avery Point students are less comfortable approaching faculty with about 74% responding agree or strongly agree compared to the other locations at 80%.
- Between 20-25% of students responding from any entry campus responded that they are undecided, agree, or strongly agree that they are considering transferring out of UConn.
- Most students responding agree and strongly agree feel that they will be successful this semester, with Storrs entrants at 85%, and the regional campus students on average 78%. However, about 18% of regional campus entrants were undecided on their success at the time of their response.

### Student Engagement Committee

Submitted by: Dr. Sarah Croucher

#### *Charge:*

The R&G Student Engagement committee is focused on student success and engagement, including closing achievement gaps. Part of its focus will cover one of the university’s top priorities, which is to scale life-transformative education to all undergraduate students. As such it will engage with the life-transformative education taskforce to look for synergistic opportunities and initiatives in university-wide R&G efforts in both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs.

#### *Membership:*

Joe Briody	Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs & Executive Director of Student Activities
Erin Ciarimboli	Director, Academic Advising & Pre-Professional Advising
Sarah Croucher, Chair	Director of Academic Policy & Faculty Affairs
Eleanor Daugherty	Associate Vice President for Student Affairs & Dean of Students
Erica Granoff	Director of Student Services, UConn Stamford
Fany Hannon	Director of Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center
Leo Lachut	Director of Academic Achievement Center
Katherine Martin	Assistant Campus Director & Director of Student Services, UConn Hartford
Willena Price	Director of H. Fred Simons African American Cultural Center
Jeff Winston	Director, Nexus Student Success Platform, CETL

### *Student Engagement - Summary of Activity:*

The Student Engagement Committee worked to find effective ways to bridge between LTE and the R&G Taskforce. This year's work has centered on exploring data related to the structure of advising at UConn, and whether this has any observable outcomes related to student success. Our research question focused on whether characteristics of advising (*e.g.*, advisee load, staff or faculty) had any systemic impact on student outcomes. Results of this analysis will feed back directly to the LTE advising working group.

To analyze this topic, complex data is required that tracks students over multiple years. Outcomes could include a range of measures such as retention and graduation rates, GPAs, responses to particular questions on the undergraduate SERU survey, or reported post-graduation outcomes in the First Destinations survey. Our working hypothesis is that the structure of advising at UConn is so varied that isolating advising as an observable characteristic that impacts student outcomes will be difficult. However, analysis of this type, where we attempt to understand the structure of advising in relation to outcomes, will still move us forward in discussions of how the structure of advising at UConn may be improved going forward. Building a dataset that will allow us to look at student advising over a period of time has been complex, and we are continuing to work on our analysis.

### *Student Engagement - Recommendations:*

Given the complexity of this project, we will be continuing to work on data analysis for the next several weeks. This will be reported back to the LTE advising working group in May 2022 and the R&G Taskforce over the summer.

## Undergraduate Enrollment & Fiscal Services Committee

**Submitted by: Mona Lucas**

### *Charge:*

Considering the entire student life cycle, this committee of the R&G Taskforce shall identify barriers to student success via the key enrollment transactions. The committee will also explore methods of identifying students who may benefit from existing 'completion grant' funds, and further evaluate the effectiveness of completion grants and related strategies as they relate to actual graduation outcomes, in particular for populations that are identified areas of focus for bridging achievement gaps.

### *Membership:*

Maureen Armstrong	Associate Dean of Students & Director of Dean of Students Office
Kimberly Bornstein	Admissions Officer, UConn Stamford
Gregory Bouquot	University Registrar
Jim Hill	Executive Director, ACES and Director, Bachelor of General Studies Program
Jennifer Lease Butts	Associate Vice Provost for Enrichment Programs, Director of the Honors Program
Mona Lucas, Chair	Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Policies & Strategic Initiatives
Dan Mercier	Director of Academic Services, UConn Avery Point
Suzanne Peters	Director of Student Financial Aid Services
Maria A. Sedotti	Director of Orientation Services
Margaret (Peggy) Selleck	Director of Cash Management and University Bursar
Ellen Tripp	Director of Student-Athlete Success Program
Susana Ulloa	Director of College Access Programs, Center for Academic Programs

## *Undergraduate Enrollment & Fiscal Services - Summary of Activity:*

The Committee met monthly during the academic year and started their work by first converting the charge into two research questions. The next step for the year was to establish evidence gathering approaches to respond to the research questions. After establishing evidence gathering approaches, the Committee initiated the approach and summarized its findings. The Committee wrapped up its work for the year by developing recommendations.

### Research Question #1:

Are there unknown barriers to the overall enrollment progression process that negatively impact retention and graduation of undergraduate students?

### Evidence Gathering Approach A:

Informally survey (via email and telephone calls) UConn colleagues from offices that provide services or mentorship to undergraduate students to ask for additional barriers (e.g., share our list and ask if they are aware of other circumstances/barriers to the registration and ultimately graduation processes).

Dean of Students	University Advising Council	Institute for Student Success
Cultural Centers	Office for Diversity & Inclusion	Regional Campuses
Office of the Bursar	Student Financial Aid Services	Office of the Registrar
Orientation Services	Student Athlete-Success Program	

### Known Barriers & Circumstances:

1. Students with a significant number of earned credits but no graduation application on file.
2. For financially disadvantaged students, aid packages rarely meet full need and options to fill the gap are somewhat limited or undesirable e.g., departmental scholarships, outside/private scholarships, private loans, etc.
3. Students who owe a prior fee bill balance of \$300 or more.

### Findings Highlights:

Additional barriers shared by colleagues across the university are as follows:

1. Household responsibilities and work commitments students hold outside of their experiences at the university (e.g., work to support family; elder care, sibling care, or childcare; etc.).
2. Lack of a financial plan or resources to finance a UConn education.
3. Financial Aid Verification Process may involve multiple steps (e.g., If there are errors on the FAFSA that are identified after income documentation is reviewed, sometimes additional documentation is required).

### Evidence Gathering Approach B:

Identify small groups of undergraduate students to invite to a Focus Group discussion (e.g., identify a few questions to ask the students. Let the students know they can share first-hand experiences, as well as experiences friends may have shared (e.g., literature review, peer benchmarking, etc.).

### Findings Highlights:

1. Students are responsible for navigating and understanding university systems, deadlines, and consequences for missed protocols. Often students lack a fully comprehensive overview of their individual responsibilities. However, they are accountable for knowing how the system works, deadlines, and consequences for failure to follow protocols even if they do not have all the information they need in a way that they understand how to act on that information.
2. Although email is the university's preferred mode of communication, it is not what students view as their preferred way to learn. Some undergraduate students admit they do not always read their email because it is overwhelming. Further, they do not search websites for answers to their questions if they must read a lot of prose to determine responses to their questions.
3. Inconsistencies exist in advising experiences based on major, class standing, home campus, etc.
4. The timing of administrative processes or protocols aimed at helping students may lead to confusion. For example, schedule adjustments during the first 10 days create fee bill changes which may lead to unexpected refunds. Once students adjust their classes, they add charges back to their fee bills that they do not realize are unpaid.

### *Undergraduate Enrollment & Fiscal Services - Recommendation relating to Research Question #1:*

The Committee recommends continuation of its work in 2022/23. Now that input has been gathered from undergraduate students, faculty, and staff, the Committee would like to probe a bit further with designated individuals/departments to better understand existing protocols, practices, general information provided to students, and communication methods. At that point the Committee expects to be in a better position to formulate recommendations.

### Research Question #2:

Can UConn Policy Exception Grants (aka: Completion Grants) be awarded in a more strategic way to support retention and graduation in spite of the need-based eligibility criteria?

### Evidence Gathering Approach:

1. Review and discuss recent trend data (e.g., grant expenditures, number of recipients, award amounts, recipient selection criteria) to gain an understanding of historical practices.
2. Conduct informal benchmarking with colleagues from other large public institutions to determine if they offer a comparable program and if so, what is the source of funding and the criteria for awards.

### Findings Highlights:

1. As a result of the trend data review, the committee realized that the initial funding allocation, annual expenditures, standard award amounts and recipient selection criteria has varied from year to year. This pool of funding has served two broad purposes, awards to assist with financial hardships and awards to assist with outstanding fee bill balances. Both purposes are critical to undergraduate student persistence at UConn.
2. The survey was posed to over (100) institutional representatives from large public institutions. Over (20) individuals responded from universities such as Penn State, Ball State, UNC-Chapel Hill.

Responses as to availability of a pool of funding, funding sources and priority consideration for receiving the funds (if applicable) varies greatly from institution to institution.

#### *Undergraduate Enrollment & Fiscal Services - Recommendation relating to Research Question #2:*

The UConn Policy Exception Grant Program should be converted into two separate programs, “Completion Grants” versus “Hardship Grants”.

- UConn Completion Grants funded by need-based sources should be awarded to financially needy seniors, in good standing (academically), who owe a fee bill balance after designated forms of financial aid have been considered. To the extent individual “remaining unmet financial need” allows, award amounts should be closely aligned to the student’s fee bill balance for the senior year. A short congratulatory communication describing the award should be developed to be sent to each recipient.
- UConn Hardship Grants funded by unrestricted sources should be awarded to undergraduate students in good standing (academically) to assist with fee bill balances and/or other expenses beyond the student’s means such as expenses related to natural disasters or pandemics, books/supplies, emergency travel expenses, etc. Specific eligibility criteria and maximum award amounts should be established. Further, a short communication (bulleted or numbered format) describing the purpose of the award and advising of the possibility for renewal (or lack thereof) should be developed to be sent to each recipient.

### Joint Taskforce Convenings

**Submitted by: Nathan Fuerst**

The Joint Taskforce (including all committee and at large members) convened three times this year, once at the beginning of the fall semester, and once at the end of both the fall and the spring semester.

At the fall semester kick-off meeting, committee membership was established, and breakout sessions were enabled to allow the committees to formulate their research questions for the year.

The end of the fall semester meeting included an in-depth discussion, led by Dr. Peter Diplock and Dr. Tadarrayl Starke, on Student Support Strategies and Resources in the Pandemic Recovery Period. This discussion was followed by presentations from each of the respective committee chairs on the activities of their committees thus far in the year.

The Spring semester meeting included special guest speaker, Dr. Mark Milliron, Senior Vice President, and Executive Dean of the Teachers College at Western Governors University. Dr. Milliron is a prominent, national thought leader in the field of student success, and he shared the philosophy and approach of the New Possible in Education as it relates to the advancement of student success. The presentation was followed by an update on the research findings from each of the respective committee chairs.

### APLU Powered by Publics Initiative

**Submitted by: Dr. Tadarrayl Starke**

The university continues to participate in APLU’s Powered by Publics initiative, aimed “at eliminating the achievement gap, increase college access and award hundreds of thousands more degrees by 2025.” Powered by Publics are organized through “transformation clusters”, which group institutions together in collaboration with one another. UConn is a member of Cluster 9, which is led by the University of Missouri,

and includes institutions such as the University of Vermont, the SUNY University at Buffalo, University of Delaware, and others.

The focus of Cluster 9 has shifted slightly from discussions of achievement gaps for first generation and male students to using campus-based mentoring as a strategy to achieve student success outcomes. This has resulted in gathering data on mentoring programs, including assessment efforts, at UConn as the Cluster begins developing definitions and examples in practice. The result of the Cluster's efforts will be development of a best practice guide focusing on mentoring as a means to improve student success and retention.

In November 2021, UConn presented on Ensuring Belonging to Promote First-Generation Student Success at the APLU Annual Conference to highlight current strategies used at UConn, as well as additional practices used across higher education to promote holistic student development and success.

UConn's experience in mentoring efforts has aided the development of the guide, but the university continues to benefit from the exchange of ideas, review of current efforts at partner institutions, and refining of our own definitions and strategies to use mentoring to support student outcomes across the system.

## The Probation Taskforce

**Submitted by: Dr. Michael Bradford**

The Probation Taskforce is comprised of approximately 14 colleagues from ODI, Office of the Provost, Student Academic Support Services, University Advising, Registrar and the Cultural Centers. The Taskforce was formed to address the significant increase in Fall 2021 academic probation numbers. Specifically alarming was the percentage of non-white students at Storrs and the Regional campuses represented on that list.

- 685 1<sup>st</sup> year students / 545 non-white students / 471 students on the regional campuses

Since convening in February 2022, the Probation Taskforce has met three times and focused on three areas.

### 1. Interpreting the Data

- Data focused on total probation numbers across all campuses, disaggregated by academic year, campus, and ethnicity.
- Using NEXUS as a data collection tool and a platform to communicate with students, advisors, and mentors.

### 2. Bookmarking current Requirements, Interventions, and Resources for Students on Probation

- Students are limited to 14 credits and are required to complete an Academic Recovery Plan.
- Advisors are informed of their advisees on Academic Warning/Probation.
- Advisors are encouraged to create a retention success plan and to connect students to UConn Connects and other academic support resources.

### 3. Immediate and Long-Term Solutions, both Reactive and Proactive

- Some immediate action this semester; focus will be on first year students who will receive an email concerning their Academic Standing on April 19.
  - University Advising is creating a follow-up letter to send to the 685 first year students, strongly advising these students to check in with their advisors/mentors, offering study resources for finals, and detailing the appeal process for those may eventually receive a Dismissal letter.
  - 1:1 engagement with this cohort, enlisting faculty and staff advisors, staff at the Cultural Centers, UConn Connects, academic support services staff at the Regional Campuses and Storrs, University Advising, ODI, and the Office of the Provost.
- Some possible long-term action in the 2022-2023 academic year:
  - Increase faculty advising to alleviate the load on staff advisors.
  - Create a cohort of Success Coaches focused on first year students.
  - Move pre-math testing back to in-person, schedule time for advisors to communicate with advisees concerning their personalized math plan.
  - Propose changing term “Academic Probation” to “Academic Notice” / edit the language sent to students on academic warning or probation / change the April 19<sup>th</sup> Academic Warning notice email to an earlier date to lessen the impact on finals preparation.

## Financial Aid

**Submitted by: Suzanne Peters**

The university is aggressive in its investment in financial aid resources to reduce financial barriers associated with the pursuit and completion of a college education at UConn. EPM directs financial aid activity utilizing the following guiding principles:

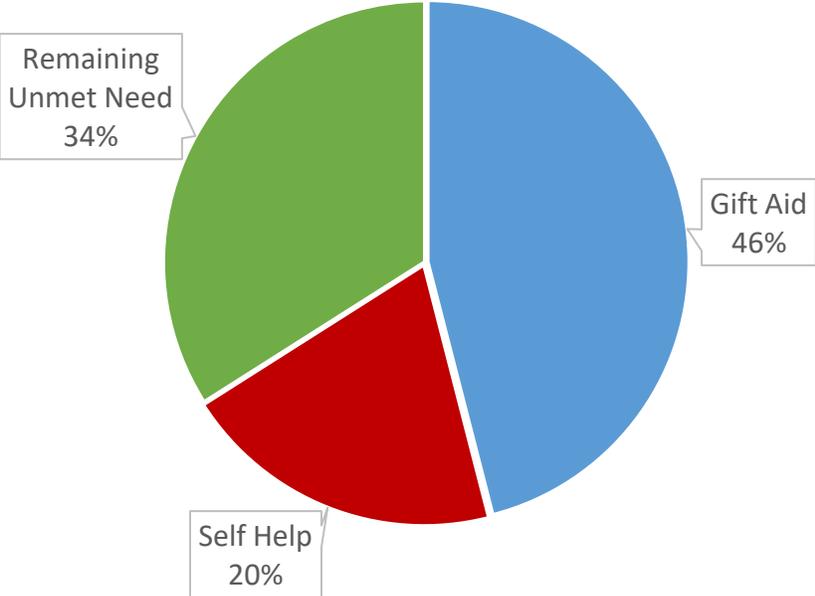
1. Address financial barriers for our neediest students first.
2. Ensure reliable financial support for students throughout their undergraduate education.
3. Allocate financial aid in a manner that supports student success and meets enrollment goals.
4. Accomplish these goals while living within a limited pool of financial aid resources.

By the end of the Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21), UConn distributed \$222 million to approximately 15,839 undergraduate students. Forms of gift aid include Federal programs (Federal Pell, SEOG), State grants, Foundation supported awards, and institutional scholarships and grants. Of these funds, \$168 million, or 76%, in gift aid directly covered demonstrated financial need of Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), or Institutional Aid Application filers.

The overall financial need of UConn students continues to be sizable, coming in at a total of \$365 million in FY21. The balance of remaining unmet need was addressed with student loans, federal work study (self-help) and other personal or family resources (e.g. family support, college savings plans).

The below pie chart illustrates the total financial need (\$365M) of our undergraduate students, and the manner in which it is addressed at UConn.

Financial Need - All Undergraduates



## Appendix A: 2021-2022 Retention & Graduation Taskforce Members

R&G Member	Title
Terrence Abney	Assistant Director of Residence Education
Rae Alexander	Director, International Student and Scholar Services
Maureen Armstrong	Associate Dean of Students/Director of the Dean of Students Office
Lloyd Blanchard	Interim Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer
Kimberly Bornstein	Admissions Officer, UConn Stamford
Gregory Bouquot	University Registrar
Michael Bradford	Vice Provost for Faculty, Staff and Student Development
Joe Briody	Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs & Executive Director of Student Activities
Daniel Burkey	Professor in Residence, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education and Diversity
Jamie Caruso	Director of Academic Services, UConn Waterbury
Erin Ciarimboli	Director, Academic Advising & Pre-Professional Advising
Sarah Croucher	Director of Academic Policy & Faculty Affairs
Eleanor Daugherty	Associate Vice President for Student Affairs & Dean of Students
Peter Diplock	Associate Vice Provost for the Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning
Morgaen Donaldson	Associate Dean for Research, Neag School of Education
Nathan Fuerst	Vice President for Enrollment Planning & Management
Jeff Gagnon	Enrollment Analyst & Fiscal Officer, Enrollment Planning & Management
Michael Gilbert	Vice President for Student Affairs
Eva Gorbants	Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs & Director of Advising, School of Fine Arts
Vern Granger	Director of Undergraduate Admissions
Erica Granoff	Director of Student Services, UConn Stamford
David Gross	Director of Undergraduate Advising, Department of Mathematics
Fany Hannon	Director, Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center
Jim Hill	Executive Director, ACES & Director, Bachelor of General Studies Program
Kathleen Holgerson	Director Women's Center
Lauren Jorgensen	Director, Institutional Research
Leo Lachut	Director of Academic Achievement Center
Jennifer Lease Butts	Associate Vice Provost for Enrichment Programs, Director of the Honors Program
Eric Loken	Associate Professor, Neag School of Education
Mona Lucas	Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Policies & Strategic Initiatives
Katherine Martin	Assistant Campus Director & Director of Student Services, UConn Hartford
Dan Mercier	Director of Academic Services, UConn Avery Point
Mansour Ndiaye	Assistant Dean & Executive Director, CLAS Academic Services
Tamara O'Day Stevens	Director of Academic Affairs, Stamford Campus
David Ouimette	Executive Director, First Year Programs & Learning Communities
Suzanne Peters	Director of Student Financial Aid Services
Willena Price	Director of H. Fred Simons African American Cultural Center
Lauren Schlesselman	Executive Director, Learning Initiatives & Program Assessment, CETL
Maria Sedotti	Director of Orientation Services
Annemarie Seifert	Campus Director, UConn Avery Point

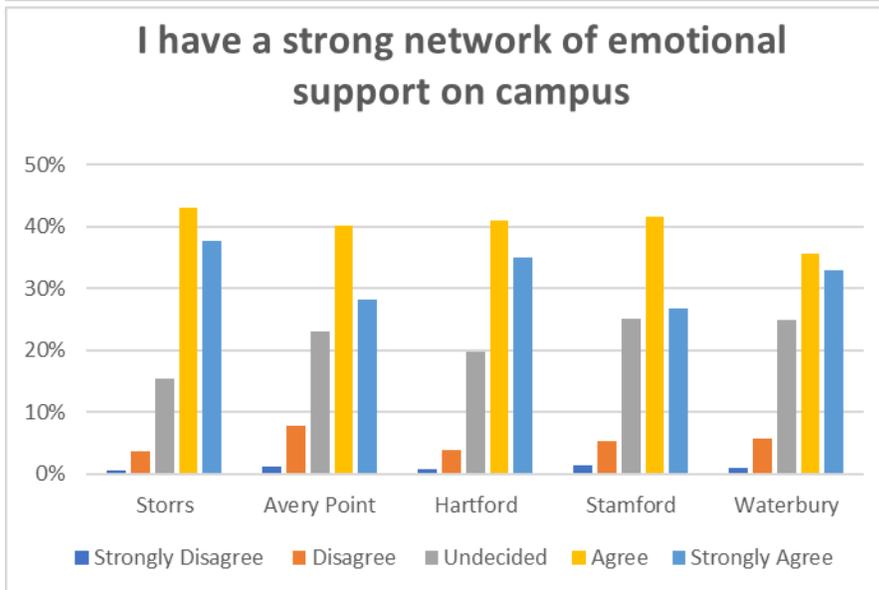
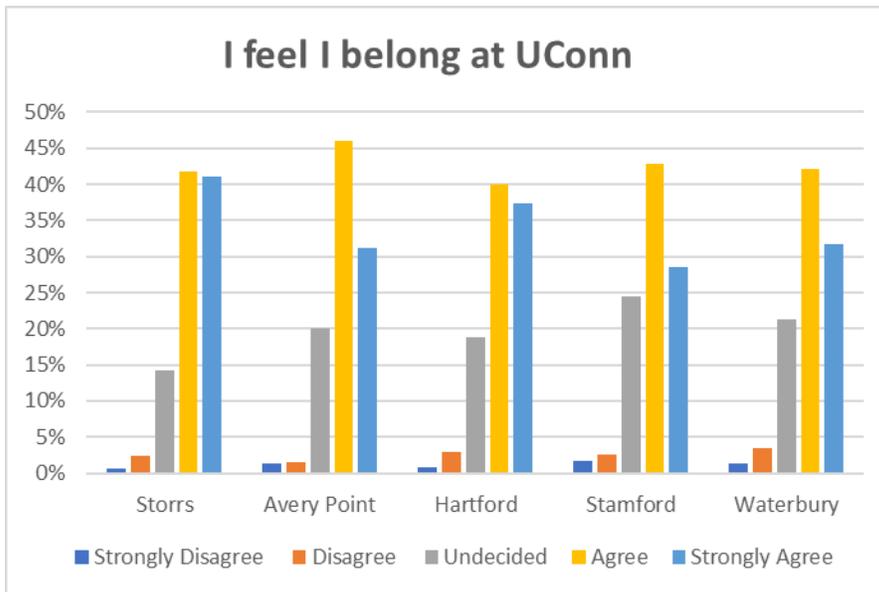
Peggy Selleck	Director of Cash Management and University Bursar
Dan Sokol	Data Warehouse Administrator, Institutional Research
Tadarrayl Starke	Associate Vice Provost, Institute for Student Success
Patricia Szarek	Associate Director for Enrollment Management, Honors Program
Ellen Tripp	Director of Student-Athlete Success Program
Frank Tuitt	Vice President & Chief Diversity Officer
Susana Ulloa	Director of College Access Programs, Center for Academic Programs
Dan Weiner	Vice President for Global Affairs
Jeff Winston	Director, Nexus Student Success Platform, CETL

Appendix B: Research Committee – Supplemental Tables and Charts

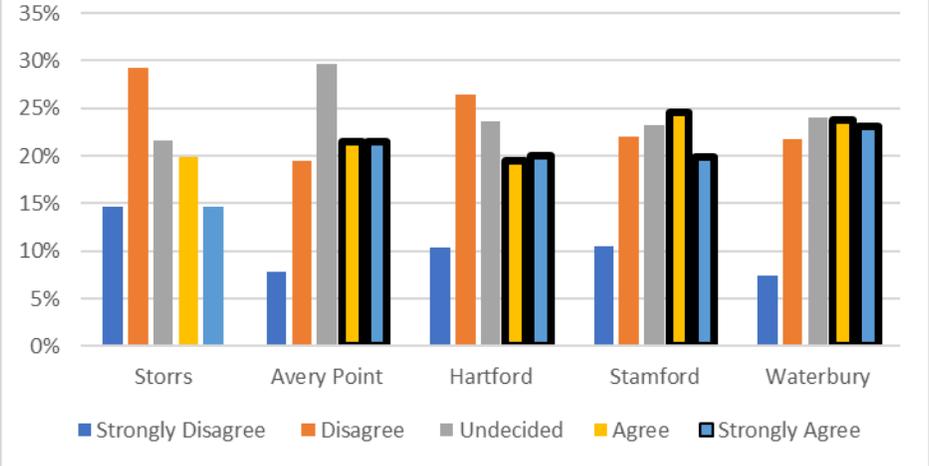
- Spring 2022 Undergraduates at Storrs Campus:

	Storrs	Now at Storrs, originally entered as a first-year student at:				Grand Total
		Avery Point	Hartford	Stamford	Waterbury	
Underrepresented Minority	3,545	55	191	208	87	4,086
All Other	12,098	230	755	458	274	13,815
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>15,643</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>17,901</b>

- Selected items from Nexus 60-Second Profile taken in Spring 2022



### I am feeling overwhelmed about financing my education



### I am comfortable approaching faculty with questions

