

UConn | PROVOST'S MESSAGE

Dear UConn Community,

As I begin my tenure as provost at the University of Connecticut this week, I am honored to play a part in building on UConn's strengths, helping us all navigate current challenges brought on by COVID-19, and positioning us to emerge stronger than ever. At the end of this message, we are sharing the first in a series of COVID-19 updates that are particularly relevant to the academic mission.

My goals align with those of President Katsouleas in supporting life-transformative education, enhancing research, and driving economic growth in the state. I am eager to approach these goals in ways that are relevant to all disciplines within our academic community; prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion for our faculty, staff, and students; and approach our path forward with a strong interdisciplinary, innovative, and entrepreneurial spirit. Moreover, I look forward to engaging all of our campuses including the Avery Point, Hartford, Stamford, and Waterbury regional campuses.

I have had the privilege of many great conversations over the past few months and what I have learned is central to how I am approaching the role of provost. After extensive discussion, evaluation, and consultation with the exceptionally talented and dedicated team in the Provost's Office, we have decided to undertake a reorganization to maximize service to our faculty, staff, and students. The change in structure will redistribute responsibilities to enhance depth of focus in critical areas, as well as strengthen our communications infrastructure. I am pleased to share that this reorganization has also benefitted from extensive conversation with stakeholders across campus including the president's cabinet and our academic deans, as well as leadership from University Senate and the unions.

We have been able to make these changes in a fiscally responsible manner, through targeted efficiencies and realignment of responsibilities, keeping our office lean but also strategically aligned to prioritize the services needed by our community.

The first new role will be focused on organization and communication. Kristi Henderson, who served in a similar combined role with me at the University of Kansas, will be coming to UConn this summer as the assistant vice provost for strategic communications and chief of staff in the Provost's Office. Kristi will play a pivotal role in the work we will do together as a community to determine and communicate our path forward in the context of an ever-evolving pandemic.

I am also pleased to announce that we will be searching for a new vice provost for faculty/staff affairs and development. This position will be crucial in our ability to balance and focus the portfolios of our existing leadership in the Provost's Office. In complement to our already strong emphasis on students, this position allows us to prioritize equitable attention to the needs of our faculty and staff. We will announce an internal search for this role in the coming days. With this new position, Vice Provost John Volin will focus his portfolio on undergraduate student success and Vice Provost

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Jeffrey Shoulson will focus on interdisciplinary and strategic initiatives. The other areas in the Provost's Office remain unchanged, including graduate education, global affairs, budget, and capital planning, and a committed staff who continue to strive together to maintain excellence in this office.

I am grateful to all those who have welcomed and advised me as I've prepared for this new role. I want to especially thank my predecessor, John Elliott, for his leadership this past year, as well as Kathy Slowik, who has steadfastly supported me through a seamless transition before she retires as executive assistant to the provost this August after 20 years in the Provost's Office.

UConn feels like home already. I am excited to work alongside you as we advance UConn's mission.

Thank you,
Carl

Carl Lejuez

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

COVID-19 Updates for the Academic Community

- We are in the process of determining teaching schedules for the Fall and are moving as quickly as possible. We are in regular contact with the Senate Executive Committee and will make sure to prioritize safety and the rigor we've come to expect as part of our educational mission. Until we are able to communicate decisions, please continue to follow the guidance from President Katsouleas and prepare for the possibility of your courses being delivered online.
- The Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) has provided new guidance for the phased reopening of research activities in light of the lifting of certain state restrictions. All faculty, post-docs, and students are encouraged to consult the resource page at the following [link](#) for important details.
- Faculty and staff who have the ability to work from home are encouraged to continue to do so until further notice. Please contact your supervisor if you have any questions.
- Please be sure to follow the daily [COVID-19 updates](#) from University Communications, which is your most up to date and comprehensive source of COVID-19 related news and updates.

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