

The University of Connecticut Chapter of

AAUP

American Association of University Professors, Inc.
1875 Storrs Road, Storrs, CT 06268

Campus Mail: AAUP U-6028

WWW.UCONNAAUP.ORG

Telephone: (860) 487-0450

Fax: (860) 487-0341

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

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E. Carol Polifroni, Professor & President

Peter Q. Nguyen, Director

Honorable Chairs, and Members of the Committee

My name is Carol Polifroni. I am a faculty member at the University of Connecticut School of Nursing where I have served for more than 35 years in a variety of roles, including Interim Dean of the School of Nursing on three occasions, but today I am here representing all the faculty and research professionals as president of the UCONN AAUP.

Our chapter has served the faculty for over seventy years, and we have proudly worked with numerous university presidents, successive boards of trustees, Governors of Connecticut, many of you and your predecessors.

The AAUP endorses a workable budget, a reasonable tuition and a tuition assistance plan that keeps UCONN within reach of all Connecticut residents. We endorse a faculty to student ratio that facilitates the development of the minds and personhood of the students we serve through participative and dynamic pedagogy. We embrace a research-oriented university that stands for innovation, discovery for application and cutting edge invention. We also conceptually endorse the proposed Next Generation STEM initiative, just as we earlier supported the UCONN 2000 plan. We can attest to the results of a changed university manifest in so many ways.

Connecticut can point to a long history of innovation and invention in the mechanical age, and as we transition to the information age the University of Connecticut is now poised to be the partner with so many innovative businesses in the state, and through research and patent potential, to be the agent for technological change.

When New York in the early 1800's astonished the country by investing in the new transportation system called the Erie Canal, it led to commercial development unheard of before; it also led to the manufacturing meccas, the highways and airports which even today serve to tie education and business, culture and agriculture together.

Thanks to earlier legislative commitments and vision, the University of Connecticut we see today hums with ideas and innovation, its graduates fill the ranks of citizens in every community in the state. It is a vastly different university than it was a mere ten years ago; all for the better. AAUP members are building a University that has and will continue to create a brain draw to the state rather than a brain drain. We intend to continue making meaningful progress toward positioning UConn among the great universities in the United States and attracting talented individuals who wish to learn, teach, and discover in a top-tier intellectual community.

With this STEM initiative we are ready to create a 21st century contribution to economic development which will place UCONN in the position of job creation through construction, facilitation of ideas, and the new versions of highways and canals of the information age. Information is changing hands at the speed of electricity, and industries with the good jobs are taking advantage of it.... Whether computer based, medical information in real time across the state or the continent, computer designed manufacturing and so much more.

Technology will be the driver of new jobs; we in Connecticut have a choice...to be in the center or on the sidelines. UConn and AAUP choose to be at the center and will do so with your assistance.

Connecticut cannot compete on the basis of low priced labor, nor will we compete in areas of well compensated labor without the ideas and education needed to make it possible; education in STEM areas as well as specialty education in agriculture, the humanities, the liberal arts, business, fine arts, law, pharmacy, social work and nursing. Our students receive a liberally acquired education that enhances their competitiveness in the marketplace through development of skills, knowledge and ability in critical thinking, communication, appreciation of global connectedness and utilization of informatics and technology.

Some ask if this can be afforded at this time. All indicators of development suggest that as a state, we cannot afford to miss this opportunity and know that in years to come, this will be looked back on by future generations as the pivotal time for UCONN and the state of Connecticut.

Thank you.

E. Carol Polifroni, Professor

President of UCONN AAUP