

To: UConn faculty, students, and staff

From: Michael Hogan, President
Peter Nicholls, Provost

Re: Commencement planning

Date: January 29, 2009

We have decided to discontinue the annual December graduation ceremony on the Storrs campus. The University will hold commencement ceremonies at the close of Spring Semester only, as was the traditional practice at UConn for many years.

To accommodate the expected larger attendance at our Spring ceremonies, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has agreed to hold two separate undergraduate ceremonies in Gampel Pavilion on Sunday, May 10. The two ceremonies will be divided by departmental majors, with roughly half of the graduates receiving their diplomas in the 12:30 ceremony, the other half in the 4:30 ceremony. CLAS will determine the distribution of departments-to-ceremonies, and will also make final decisions in individual cases when conflicts arise.

The graduate commencement ceremony will be held on Saturday afternoon, May 9, as has been our practice in recent years. The other colleges and schools will continue to take responsibility for their own commencement ceremonies, working in coordination with University Marshal Michael Darre and the Office of the Provost. This May's commencement schedule may be seen online at <http://www.commencement.uconn.edu/may/>

Our primary reason for this change is to reduce the University's commencement expenses. We can achieve savings in several areas by not holding a December ceremony. These include the considerable staff support - much of it overtime - necessary for a December commencement ceremony, the facilities expenses, program printing, and other associated costs.

Another reason to discontinue December commencement is the uncertainty of winter weather in Connecticut and the travel difficulties it has created for December graduates and their families. A commencement ceremony cancelled at the last moment out of concern for travelers' safety means wasted expenditures on preparations by the University, not to mention the unrecoverable travel costs incurred by graduates' families in these circumstances.

To realize further savings, we have asked the University Senate to approve changes to the academic calendar that would allow us to achieve greater consolidation of our Spring ceremonies. This will require an extension of the Spring Semester into later May,

through the reinstatement of a reading day prior to the beginning of exams, and also an interval of two or more days between the close of final exams and the scheduling of commencements.

We ask that the Senate give our full proposal thorough yet prompt consideration, as course planning and hiring decisions in the colleges often depend on the dates set in the academic calendar for future years.