

August 29, 2017

Dear Students and Colleagues,

To the newest members of UConn Nation – welcome! I hope you're already settling in and finding your way in this outstanding University. With over 6,300 new Huskies joining us this year, we continue to be a destination for talented, ambitious and diverse students from across the country and throughout the world.

And for those of you returning to our campuses: welcome back!

We begin our fall semester at an uncertain time for our country, which is as polarized and volatile as many of us can recall. With the shocking tragedy that unfolded in Charlottesville fresh in our minds, a group of faculty, staff and students have organized an event to take place tomorrow evening here on the Storrs campus (<http://s.uconn.edu/3uf>) as an expression of our values as a community. I encourage you to attend, if you are able to.

But this event is really only a beginning of what must be an ongoing effort this semester and beyond. Education is paramount in combating the kind of hatred we saw on display this month, and the commitment we bring to our mission as members of a diverse and inclusive academic community will be the measure of our success here.

In order to effectively accomplish this, we must embrace one of the central missions of an American university: to create an educated and active citizenry. We must engage one another on an intellectual level across all our campuses to understand and navigate what is taking place at this moment in our history. We have incredible resources in our faculty and staff, and I am asking them to lend their time, energy and expertise to this effort, both in and out of the classroom. We should see this as a call to action. With the support of my office, the Division

of Student Affairs, University Communications, and the Chief Diversity Officer are already discussing and organizing events and programming throughout this semester focused on this effort. Groups of faculty, staff and students are independently doing the same. A key aspect of this work is engaging as many members of our community as possible. A calendar of related events will be compiled, shared widely, and will be updated regularly as these events develop.

I look forward to a rigorous, challenging and rewarding effort in the semester ahead. Across UConn, we can embrace this semester as a time of “firsts” and new experiences: new campuses, new facilities, new roles, and new opportunities. Take a chance on a class you know is challenging. Attend a lecture on a subject that’s unfamiliar. Strike up a conversation with someone you don’t know well. Challenge one another in debate and discussion – including people whose views may differ from your own.

These are the decisions that will lead to lifelong friendships. We are so very lucky to work and study on an open university campus – a place where we can always speak freely, argue with undaunted passion, celebrate our diversity, and be who we are.

Once again, welcome back and best wishes.

Sincerely,



Susan Herbst

### **Latest News:**

#### **New Frontiers of Research**

From the humanities to the sciences to the arts, scholarship at UConn is continually innovating. Recent examples include research into whether baseball can help people with dementia; social media addiction; and a historical examination of how the idea of equality evolved in Constitutional law. Learn more at <http://today.uconn.edu/category/research/>.

## **In the Heart of Hartford**

The brand-new UConn Hartford, located in the heart of the booming Front Street district, will bring thousands of students and faculty members to learn, teach, and uncover new discoveries. Located within walking distance of state government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and some of Connecticut's leading businesses, the new campus gives our community unparalleled opportunities as part of a true urban campus. Learn more at <http://hartford.uconn.edu>.

## **Home Sweet Home in Stamford**

Another major project completed this year will see the opening of the first-ever genuine UConn student residence hall outside Storrs. Some 290 students will be housed in brand new apartments close to our Stamford campus, offering them a residential college experience in the heart of a thriving city. Learn more at <http://s.uconn.edu/3tz>.

## **The Class of 2021**

This year's incoming class is one of the most diverse and accomplished in our 136-year history. With a record number of valedictorians and salutatorians, and with 54 percent of the class having graduated from the top 10 percent of their high schools, they're sure to make a deep and lasting impact here at UConn. Learn more at <http://s.uconn.edu/3ue>.

## **View this email on a browser:**

<http://president.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1800/2017/08/2017-08-29-Herbst-Welcome-Message-to-the-Community.pdf>

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