

Academic Affairs UPDATE



July 30, 2026



INSIGHTS

From the Provost

This summer has been filled with positive developments for UConn. One of my favorite events celebrated UConn families—how their love of our school inspires them to give back and create opportunities for our students and faculty. A true family affair, the Rhoda Shivers Chair was established in September 2021 in recognition of the generosity of retired professor in the Department of Kinesiology at the Neag School of Education Jay S. Shivers, Ph.D., and his son and daughter-in-law, Jed Shivers, '81 MBA, and Sandra E. Shivers, Ph.D. The endowed chair supports a faculty member who has made significant contributions to nineteenth century art and impressionism. Prof. Alexis Boylan was the unanimous choice of the School of Fine Arts leadership and was installed as the inaugural Rhoda Shivers Chair in a ceremony earlier this month. The photo above depicts the Shivers family with Prof. Boylan and Dean of Fine Arts Deanna Fitzgerald at the endowed chair celebration, which I joyfully attended earlier this month. *Helene de Septeuill*, an original Mary Cassatt pastel owned by the Benton, is the centerpiece of the photo.

We're still buzzing from the recent announcement of the NSF QuantumCT Engines award, and I've shared the good news in interviews with WTIC and the Hartford Business Journal. Last week our Quantum Alliance faculty met to be briefed on the award and opportunities for collaboration. The Quantum Alliance encompasses faculty working in quantum-related topics from quantum materials and sensors to quantum education.

Despite summer schedules, I have remained actively engaged with senior leaders in addressing important concerns and planning for the future. In my regular meetings with the deans, we have continued our discussions on topics such as the budget, our research goals, and some planned improvements to our Nexus platform. I also met with our newly appointed Senate Executive Chair Michael Morrell, where we also discussed the budget transformation initiative. I appreciate how much thought and consideration our academic leaders are putting into these initiatives to strengthen our university. Although challenges are often on everyone's minds, these conversations reinforce just how strong UConn is. We are doing exceptional work for our students and our state.

Hoping your summer is going well,

Pamir Alpay
Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

NEWS



UConn-Led Team Wins \$525K DOE Grant

Wei Ren, associate professor of Natural Resources and the Environment, leads a UConn research team awarded a \$525,000 U.S. Department of Energy Genesis Mission grant. The team will develop an artificial intelligence-powered digital twin to improve understanding of water and chemical movement across the Northeast. [Read more](#)



Kun Chen Named Academic Director of M.S. in Data Science Program

Kun Chen, Professor of Statistics, has been named Academic Director of UConn's M.S. in Data Science program. An internationally recognized scholar whose work spans statistical learning, machine learning, health data science, and healthcare analytics, Chen will lead the program's academic direction and continued growth, including expanded opportunities at the intersection of data science and artificial intelligence. Chen succeeds Jeremy Teitelbaum, Professor of Mathematics and former dean of CLAS, who has led the interdisciplinary program through a formative period of growth and development since 2023. [Read more](#)

UPDATES



Classroom Use by Student Organizations

Please note that Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) wishing to use academic classroom space must register via the Student Union and Event Services (SUES) reservation request process and that classroom use is limited to registered student organizations only.

The SUES system will open at noon on Tuesday, September 15, for academic classroom reservation requests for the fall semester. Details on the process and room reservation forms can be found [here](#).

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