



All SFA Faculty and Staff Meeting

Thursday, February 23, 2023

12:30 – 1:30pm

WebEx Webinar

Welcome and Dean's Updates (Alain Frogley)

The Dean welcomed everyone to the meeting. Before launching into his remarks, he praised a few highlights in recent programming, including CRT's production of *Metamorphoses* at the end of the last semester, the return of the popular *Messiah Sing* event at von der Mehden, which attracted over 1000 people, the recent concert by the Lviv National Philharmonic Orchestra of Ukraine at the Jorgensen, and recent exhibition openings at the Benton and the Ballard. The Dean also recognized the recent Kid Screen Award winner, the "Feel Your Best Self" project, which is a collaboration between Emily Wicks of the Ballard and Sandy Chafouleas of the Neag School of Education. There are many great things going on around the School.

The Dean shared that we have seen a very large increase in applications for admissions to all of our programs. Overall, applications to SFA are about 30% up from last year, which is encouraging. The Dean thanked all involved in admissions for their hard work, which is paying off.

The Dean recognized that many across the School are picking up additional duties due to many departures or other changes to programs. In particular, the Dean's Office has seen many colleagues pursue other opportunities in the last 6 months, such that the Dean's Office is down staff by about a third. Likewise, many venues and departments have also suffered from loss of staff in recent months. Alain thanked everyone for stepping up to maintain operations in spite of the temporary difficulties, and noted that SFA is not alone at UConn in facing a high number of recent staff departures.

The Dean noted that, most recently, from the Dean's Office, Jess Reed and Yvonne Prudente from the Financial Services Office have moved on, and Kate Pierro has moved into the Registrar's Office. Searches to fill those roles are underway.

The Dean shared the good news that a successor to the admissions coordinator position that was vacated by Elizabeth Foody last July has been hired: Celeste Jacobs will join the Dean's Office on March 10th. Celeste joins us from the University of New England. The Dean recognized Amanda Wilde, Director of Advising, for her extraordinary work in covering much of the admissions project while being new in her own position as well.

The Dean also announced that Emily Cole is the new program assistant in the Music Department, and that Paul Spirito has moved into the new role of program assistant for the Krenicki Institute.

The Dean shared that Professor Heather Elliott-Famularo has been reappointed to a further 5 year term as the department head of DMD and the Donna Krenicki Professorship.

Regarding his own roles, the Dean noted that he has not been able to backfill the Associate Dean position he has vacated in taking the interim Deanship, so is continuing to perform some of those roles

himself. He hopes to revisit the possibility of appointing an interim Associate Dean for the coming year, as this is an important role that does need to be filled.

Regarding strategic planning, the Dean noted that this project is on hold at the University level due to shift in the Presidency and Provostship, but the process will be restarting most likely next Fall. He noted that those who worked so hard on this project last academic year should take heart as the work will not be in vain.

The Dean noted that Provost D'Alleva will be in touch towards the end of the semester about the launch of the search for the next permanent Dean. That search will take place next academic year. A search committee will be identified at the end of this academic year to enable that search to launch feet first in the Fall, and we hope to welcome our new Dean in the summer of 2024.

The Dean shared that Dr. Constance DeVereaux, Director of the Arts Leadership and Cultural Management program, will be leaving UConn at the end of the academic year to take a similar role at the University of Buffalo. We are sorry to see her go and are grateful for all she has done for this program. Due to a combination of Dr. DeVereaux's impending departure and some structural/resource difficulties in the program, admissions to the MFA program have been suspended for the coming year, though we will continue to admit students into the certificate program. The future of the program will be reviewed in the coming months.

Regarding the budget, the Dean noted that there is not much more to say than what he already wrote in a previous email, as the situation remains very much in flux. However, he feels there's reason to be cautiously optimistic.

Facilities/Operations Updates (Colleen Bridgeman)

Colleen shared updates on a number of projects. She acknowledged the partnership of Facilities, Operations, University Planning, Design, and Construction, the Provost's Office, and the Budget Office, which has yielded a great number of improvements, deferred maintenance renovations, and capital projects. We could not have accomplished as much as we have in these areas without their support. Colleen added that a non-exhaustive but fairly comprehensive [list of facility updates](#) that have been completed since 2017, as well as those still underway, is available on the Dean's Office website. Colleen also noted that she meets routinely with Facilities Operations to address facility issues, both large and small, and holds facilities advisory meetings with Facilities directors and our SFA department heads and directors twice an academic year. She also meets with our facilities liaison partner, Nate Bedard, on a bi-monthly basis. All of these meetings reflect an effort to continue to advocate and champion for a resolution to many of our facilities needs.

Beginning in the Summer of 2023, a number of acoustical upgrades will be performed across our instructional spaces to address both health and safety concerns and re-accreditation standards. The first phase of the project scope will include the recommended acoustical upgrades to the music ensemble rooms, studio spaces within the Bishop Center and the Jorgensen, and acoustical updates to the von der Mehden Recital Hall.

We are close to finalizing two renovation projects in the Harriet S. Jorgensen lobby and theatre. Upgrades to the lobby were delayed by supply chain issues, but we hope this project will wrap up by

March of this year. The fire safety curtain project for the main stage is also expected to be completed shortly. The sound board and auditorium sound system in the Jorgensen was also recently replaced. These projects were supported in part by a Shattered Venues Operators grant, which also helped sustain the Jorgensen through the pandemic.

At the Benton, a complete redesign of an existing conference room adjacent to the East Gallery will take place over the summer. This space will be repurposed into a multifunctional education and learning space.

Back at the Jorgensen, a refurbishment project in the gallery and adjacent event spaces is underway.

Over in the Bishop Center, plans are in progress to add new locker units and a water refilling station, as well as to continue the wayfinding signage project in that building as well as in the Fine Arts building over the summer.

Colleen noted that we hope to have all of these projects complete by the upcoming Fall semester.

Marketing Updates (Quoron Walker)

Quoron shared updates from the communications and marketing department for the School.

Quoron shared that our official SFA social media accounts have hit 1,600 followers on Facebook, 1,500 followers on Instagram, about 800 followers on Twitter, and 247 followers on LinkedIn. This represents 9.8% growth since August 2022. The news and content on those accounts is submitted by all of you, so thank you for sharing that information, and please keep it up! Quoron is happy to repost from other accounts as well.

Quoron reminded everyone to please always use the [Marketing form hosted on the SFA website](#), as they help him to keep track of all the news and requests and keep that information well-organized. He is happy to connect you with the right people if he can't handle a request himself, but do note that he is a one-person show. While he receives email requests, the use of the forms helps keep all requests in one place so they do not get lost.

Quoron noted that if you aren't receiving the SFA Weekly Digest, to please let him know so he can add you to the mailing list. The Digest comes out every Wednesday around 3pm. There is a [form on our website for submitting items for the Digest](#) as well.

Quoron noted that we have wrapped up the 60th Anniversary campaign. Thank you to all who helped submit names of alumni for this project. We have shifted our webpage of our "60 for 60" alumni into a "Notable Alumni" page where it can live on. Quoron and the Advancement Team will be sending out thank you notes to all of our participants. This project is now being emulated by other Schools and Colleges for their own anniversaries, so we should be proud.

We have had some great news articles this past semester. The Ping Chong residency was a story that was picked up by the Hartford Courant and Yahoo News. There was a recent article about the MFA students and the "Raid the Archive" exhibition which was very popular with several donors. The recent story of John Bell's sabbatical research project in Turkey was also picked up by the Hartford Current and Yahoo News. Since August 2022, we have had over 30 SFA-focused stories in UConn Today. Quoron talks

to Kimberly Phillips, who is the SFA beat writer, quite often, and is always pitching stories to her, so if you have story ideas, please let him know and he'll pass them along.

Quoron noted that he has begun using a new service called Meltwater, which lets him track where SFA is being mentioned in the news, on social media, and in the media as a whole. It also gives him access to media contacts all over the world, which lets him target specific demographics for promoting news stories that might be of particular interest to them. This greatly extends our reach very efficiently. Quoron used Meltwater for coverage of the Ping Chong residency, and it definitely enhanced the coverage we received.

IT Updates (Rick O'Toole)

Rick reminded everyone that there are many resources available on the SFA website, one of which is a [page on technology issues](#). This page includes links to many common questions as well as suggested fixes.

One new service available on that page is the LastPass password manager, which is supported by the University. If you need to manage your passwords and accounts, you may consider using LastPass to do so.

Rick also has several [devices which are available to borrow](#). There's a [request form](#) if you are interested.

Rick noted that we also have a page about [requesting the use of rooms managed by the Dean's Office](#). Many of these spaces have built-in technology, so if you need assistance with that, please note it in your request so Rick can be aware in advance.

Rick reminded everyone that using your OneDrive (rather than saving files to a local machine or device) makes it seamlessly easy to access your files from any device, and backs them up safely in the cloud.

In a similar vein, Rick noted that the University has plans in the coming months to migrate the files currently hosted on the shared Q drive onto SharePoint instead.

Development Updates (Lauren Prause)

Lauren introduced herself for the benefit of any new faculty and staff she hasn't met yet. She noted that she has an office within the Dean's Suite, and can usually be found there on Tuesdays and one other day each week. She is our primary liaison to the Foundation.

Lauren explained that the Foundation is a separate 501C3 organization from the University, which is an important distinction as related to grant applications. She hopes to present at a future meeting with more information on partnering with the Foundation on grant applications. While the Foundation is a separate legal entity from the University, its principal purpose is supporting the University. She noted that the Foundation welcomed alumni relations into their organization in 2015.

Lauren noted that she, Emily Auger Murray, and Quoron Walker comprise the SFA Advancement Team. She and Em are employees of the Foundation, while Quoron is an employee of SFA. The team works together to build engagement and promote events to donors and alumni. The team is also committed to

building a volunteer pipeline, and one way they do this is through their work with the Dean's Advisory Board and the Recent Alumni Council.

Lauren noted that faculty and staff play an important role in connecting the Advancement Team with interested alumni. As storytellers and connectors, you all have unique qualifications that can help build on our success. If you are approached by alumni, parents, patrons, etc. who express an interest in giving back or becoming involved, please connect them with Lauren and Em.

Lauren shared some best practices for working together on donor engagement, which include collaborating closely and coordinating. If you are hosting an event that a donor will attend, or if you have a high profile alum coming to talk with students or advise on a project, please let the Advancement Team know in advance. We want to find those opportunities to connect and elevate those experiences.

Another best practice is to be positive when talking with donors and volunteers – present the positive aspects of the school or college or unit or program, and frame challenges as opportunities.

Lauren noted that it's so important to engage donors and alumni; they are more likely to make major gifts or make a larger impact to projects that match their passion areas, and if they have a good giving experience where they can see the impact of their gift, they are more likely to give again.

Lauren noted that patience is an important part of the donor engagement process. It takes time to build those relationships. Some of our donor relationships have evolved over many decades, so staying engaged and staying in touch is important.

Lauren reminded everyone of the importance of thanking donors or helping student scholarship recipients to thank donors. There is a portal on the Foundation webpage for students to do this easily. Lauren noted that we definitely hear from donors when they don't hear from student scholarship recipients.

Finally, Lauren shared that the annual giving event UConn Gives is coming up on March 8-9. She shared a demonstration of the website; the platform will be live 7am on March 8 through 7pm on March 9th, but you can check it out in the meantime. It is possible to filter the site to Fine Arts projects only.

Q&A (Alain Frogley)

The Dean fielded questions. One question was whether the search for the next dean will be limited to internal candidates. The answer to that is no; the plan is to have a full national search.

Alain added his appreciation to Colleen and the Financial Services team for their work on the budget, which is a large part of his cautious optimism about the overall budget situation. Their good work has put us into as strong a position as possible for whatever we may face.

Quoron added a note regarding Commencement: UConn Today is writing profiles of graduating students, so if you have any graduating students (grad or undergrad) who have a good story, please let Quoron know who they are.

Colleen added that most of us will have seen that the South campus project has begun across the street from our facilities. She does not have much information to share, as information has not been shared

with her, but there will be a town hall in March hosted by University Planning, Design, and Construction to share more information about that project.

As there were no further questions, the Dean closed the meeting by thanking everyone. We will meet again in April.

Save the Date:

All SFA Faculty and Staff Meeting
Wednesday, April 19, 2023, 12:15-1:15pm