

Hello, thank you for the opportunity. I'm Mary Beth Allen, Assistant Prof. of French & Francophone Studies, & AAUP member.

I'm here to ask President Maric, Provost D'Alleva, and members of the Administration, to repeal the 5-year financial plan, to change course, and use your power and leverage to mobilize UConn students, their families, faculty and staff to *implore* the state of Connecticut to provide the permanent funding we need to thrive.

President Maric CFO Jeffrey Geoghegan, will you commit to taking responsibility for the fiscal management of UConn and to resigning your own positions before overseeing the job loss of countless dedicated employees? Because that is what we are talking about when you call for a 15% budget cut for academic units over 5 years. People who are currently working at UConn will lose their jobs. This cannot be the "plan" to balance the budget. There are so many better ways to achieve this goal, and we shouldn't even be contemplating such catastrophic measures in the first place.

Everyone here knew there would be a \$70M shortfall for Fiscal Year '25 way back in May. Everyone who stood on the Capitol steps over a year ago (February 2023) and followed the drama of the final budget negotiations in June could see this "crisis" coming a mile away. But this summer and fall, it was business as usual at UConn.

The University appeared flush: schools and colleges announced internal grant funding, recruiting for graduate programs continued apace; we even had a "just-in-time" cluster hire in AI. Then in December, out of the blue, President Maric and CFO Jeff Geoghegan declared that rather than request the full \$70M necessary to balance our budget, their ask of the state would be \$23M short, and academic units would pay the price. They announced a 5-year Financial Plan that sowed chaos and confusion.

Since mid-December, we have spent thousands of hours organizing, protesting, testifying, and letter-writing. I'm proud to be part of this coalition— faculty, grad workers, and staff—that's succeeded in getting the Administration to *actually ask* for all the money we need. But the plan to cut academic budgets by 15% (19.1% in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences) hangs over all of us.

Faculty meetings are no longer about education; they are doomsday gatherings where we wonder privately who among us will lose their jobs first, and which graduate programs will be phased out or immediately terminated. When you are asked to cut nearly 20% of a budget that's 95%+

personnel there is no way to avoid layoffs. This crisis has taken a mental toll on faculty and students.-How many millions of dollars in grants were lost because faculty have spent the last 4 months focused on these cuts? How many books were not written?

This manufactured crisis combined with the adversarial stance of the Administration toward academic units, has broken faculty trust in this Administration's ability to run UConn as a top Research University. This administration is so lacking in vision that their plan to manage a budget shortfall is to take UConn from a world class public research university to a degree mill, designed by higher education consultants who charge millions to recommend: bigger classes, fewer courses, fewer majors, fewer faculty, and fewer graduate programs. (Not the kind of place I would send my own child for an education!)

UConn's focus is on "teaching and learning" according to our official mission statement. While the administration takes an ax to academic units, *we don't see* the administration advocating forcefully and convincingly for UCONN, and *we don't hear* of proposals to cut anything other than academics (teaching and learning).

So I ask President Maric, Provost D'Alleva and members of the administration, again, will you change course? Will you repeal the 5-Year Financial Plan? Will you find another way to balance our budget, one that protects the quality of a UConn education and the jobs of our dedicated employees? UConn is a world class university, we must do better than this.

