

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

(Section 46a-68-93)

January 2016

This section of the 2014 *Plan* was deemed in compliance.

The University makes every effort to support affirmative action in employment and to satisfy all affirmative action regulations. The University has reviewed this section of the regulations and drafted this section accordingly.

Subsection (a)

The University acknowledges that the development and implementation of programs not covered elsewhere in the *Affirmative Action Plan* is an important part of the road to equal employment opportunity. Accordingly, the University accepts the invitation to structure innovative, comprehensive programs to create opportunities not otherwise available to achieve full and fair participation of all protected group members, such programs shall include:

- summer employment programs;
- youth programs;
- apprenticeships;
- work-study programs;
- job sharing arrangements;
- internships;
- day care programs;
- creation of new positions;
- outreach for high school and college students;
- reassignments
- other positive, result-oriented program designed to achieve affirmative action

Subsection (b)

Programs planned or operated pursuant to this section and the results achieved are discussed below:

UConn Mentor Connection

The UConn Mentor Connection program allows gifted high school juniors and seniors to more fully manifest their talents in an environment that fosters creative productivity. Projects focus on art, chemical and biomolecular engineering, computer and electrical engineering, digital media and design, geography, mechanical engineering, nutritional science, pharmacy, physics, and psychology. The program aims to demonstrate high-level talent that can be found and developed across cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups, thereby increasing members' pursuit of higher education and career goals.

Latin American Student Organization

The Latin American Student Organization (LASO) was established in the School of Social Work as an effort to identify the needs of Latino students, influence the policies of the school, and provide a link between the school and the Latino community. LASO provides Puerto Rican and other Latino students in the School with a vehicle to share ideas, enhance identification with Latino culture, and express sensitivity and responsiveness to the needs and issues affecting Puerto Rican and other Latino communities. For the past several years, LASO has worked directly with the faculty of the Puerto Rican Studies Project in the recruitment and retention of Latino students. In addition to numerous conferences, workshops, seminars, and cultural events, LASO and the Puerto Rican and Latin@ Studies Project faculty continue to co-sponsor Hispanic Youth Conferences, special workshops, and other activities aimed at enhancing and strengthening Puerto Rican and Latino social work students, service providers, and the larger society.

Employee Assistance Program

The Employee Assistance Program is a confidential worksite based service available to all University faculty, staff and eligible family members. The Program provides professional assessment, brief counseling and/or timely referrals to community resources for multiple issues and concerns including, but not limited to:

- Job Stress, Relationship Problems, Anxiety / Worry / Depression
- Parenting and Family Concerns, Alcohol and Substance Misuse
- Eldercare / Caregiver Stress, Financial / Debt Counseling
- Communication Issues, Legal Questions

America Reads

The America Reads program seeks to strengthen students' reading and writing skills through individualized and group tutoring in pre-kindergarten through tenth grade. The program works to decrease student illiteracy in elementary schools and community, and provide positive support in a classroom setting to create a positive learning experience for the students. America Reads participants lower the student to adult ratio in the classroom and provide additional academic support. Partnering sites include Kinsella in Hartford, Southeast Elementary School in Mansfield, Center School in Willington, Windham Center Elementary, North Windham Elementary, Community Children's Center, Mansfield Discovery Depot, and Willow House Preschool. UConn participants work in a classroom for approximately two hours each week and attend site meetings and trainings to develop professional skills and strategies.

The Writing Internship Program

The English department's Writing Internship Program puts students in a professional environment, working with professional writers on real-life problems. Current placements include positions in a museum, a newspaper, a publishing house, an advertising agency, a software company, a technical magazine and a variety of other businesses and organizations that employ writers and editors. Positions are available either on or off campus, and the internships are available in Spring, Fall, and Summer programs.

Progressive Action Committee (PAC)

The Progressive Action Committee works toward social change that benefits the welfare of all people. In 2011, students formed *SSW Joins Occupy* in order to raise awareness of the Occupy Wall Street movement's existence and increase student participation in the local encampments. Over the same period, students formed the group *Healthcare4every1*, which worked to advocate for quality and affordable universal healthcare.

The Committee is a vehicle for students to raise awareness and work in the areas of social, political, cultural and economic systems. It seeks to complement the formal education of the social work student by providing the opportunity for students to increase their social consciousness and translate that consciousness into action. PAC also enables students to collaborate on issues in order to bring positive change to the local, state, and/or national community. The Progressive Action Committee will work to challenge issues of poverty, racism, inequality and discrimination through collective, inclusive action.

Sustainable Community Outreach and Public Engagement (SCOPE) Accelerator

Founded by the School of Business, SCOPE promotes social entrepreneurship and social innovation by working with non-profit organizations and for-profit companies that have social outreach and community impact as a significant part of their strategic missions. It applies a business-centric lens to improve the sustainability and effectiveness of these organizations. Like the School's other learning accelerators, SCOPE is student-focused and project-focused, but stakeholders are defined as they go, depending upon the goals of university and school, interests of faculty, students, and staff involve, sponsorships, and advisory board oversight. Unlike many other programs, SCOPE's vision is not to train non-profit managers. Instead, SCOPE works to create business leaders who pursue careers in either the private or public sector or who want to make a difference in the lives of others around them. SCOPE views for-profit and social-mission goals as complementary at many levels, and takes an experiential approach to understanding this complementarity.

The Teenage Business Program

The Teenage Business Program was initiated over 20 years ago to recognize that greater minority participation in the business sector can only be achieved through the foundation of a quality education and opportunities for students to engage in skill development activities before college.

Each year, the Office of Diversity Initiatives collaborates with various high schools and programs to bring high school students from inner cities throughout Connecticut to campus for a day long program of workshops, presentations and a campus tour. These high school students also have the opportunity to attend panel sessions with current UConn students as well business professionals. The goal of the Teenage Business Program is to increase the pipeline of minority students applying and attending college upon graduating from high school.

Read and Raise - School of Education

Read & Raise is a literacy initiative with kindergarten to eighth grade students at three schools in the North End of Hartford. The three participating schools are:

- John C. Clark Elementary and Middle School
- Fred D. Wish Elementary and Middle School
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary and Middle School

From January to April students read books and complete worksheets designed to improve students' comprehension and vocabulary skills for each book, chapter or article they read (depending on their reading level). Two to three Husky Sport staff members work with each participating school and visit each class in the school weekly to read with students and assist them in completing worksheets.

Connecticut 4-H Program

In conjunction with the University of Connecticut, Connecticut 4-H offers a wide range of events, clubs, and camps for youths, as well as many volunteer opportunities for adults. Programs help build skills such as exploring the environment and nature, learning to grow food in gardens, learning about technology and robotics, developing photography or drama skills, and caring for animals. The program has been proven to increase the chance of youths bettering themselves, their families, and communities; it has also been proven to decrease the risk of youths engaging problem behaviors.

4-H Vernon Afterschool Program

4-H itself is a national youth organization that is "a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills." This establishment provides amazing opportunities for kids to expand their horizons. In 2014, students brought the program to Maple Street Elementary School from UConn who volunteered their time with the 4-H in Vernon After School Enrichment Club. The aim is to provide mentoring, and tutoring to under privileged kids from K through 5th grade in a club like setting through activities involving: Science Technology, Engineering and Math; leadership and community service, as well as team and confidence building.

4-H Youth Development

Through the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, this program prepares youth to meet the needs of a global economy, while learning new skills, meeting new friends and discovering new things about themselves and the world through UConn Extension's research-driven programs. It provides fun, hands-on learning activities that foster skills and character development in science, citizenship, and healthy living.

First Impressions Program

First Impressions is a structured community assessment that offers a fresh perspective on the appearance, services and infrastructure of each community. Volunteer teams undertake unannounced visits, record observations, and give constructive feedback to the exchange

community. Team members receive training and follow procedures and reporting guidelines using a response manual. Reports from the program are often used as part of broader community assessment or planning processes to inform community policy and action. Hundreds of communities across the U.S. and Canada have used and found value in the program.

Jorgensen Outreach for Youth (JOY)

The Jorgensen Outreach for Youth program (JOY!) invites low-income children and adults to attend a range of art events. The program offers free tickets for economically disadvantaged children of all ages; public school programs with transportation assistance; in-school outreach and residency programs; and support for the JOY! Conservatory Program. These services come with the help of private contributors and corporate partners.

UConn Bridge Program

The University of Connecticut's School of Engineering continues its BRIDGE program—a five-week, study-intensive program that provides hand-on experience, professional instruction, and scholarship opportunities. Participants attend approximately 120 hours of course work in Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics and Computer Programming. A component of the School of Engineering's Diversity Program, the residential BRIDGE program targets admitted freshmen who are members of groups traditionally underrepresented among the nation's engineers, including women, African Americans, Hispanics, Puerto Ricans and Native Americans.

Campus Connections

Campus Connections provides adults with physical and intellectual disabilities an opportunity to engage in social and recreational activities in the most inclusive setting with maximum possible participation with non-disabled peers. The program matches clients from Easter Seals of Chaplin, CT with student volunteers who aid them in making simple arts and crafts, playing games, and performing other activities, such as indoor bowling and golf, bingo, and trips to the Dairy Bar. This program works in conjunction with Eastern Seals, a program that matches adult clients from Easter Seals of Norwich, CT with student volunteers who aid them in making simple arts and crafts, playing games, and performing other activities; the Department of Developmental Services, a transitional program for young adults with disabilities; and Horizons Inc., a program that provides transportation and includes socializing, cooking, playing in the park and just having fun.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

The American Language Program at the University of Connecticut in Stamford serves men and women from more than fifty countries around the world. English as a Second Language (ESL) Family Literacy Program matches students with non-English speaking individuals in the local area within a classroom setting in Willimantic. Volunteers assist in the classroom by helping ESL students develop English language communication skills.

Jump Start

In an effort to prepare underprivileged youth in the area to succeed academically, students from the University and citizens from the community participate in “Jumpstart,” a national early education organization, each year. “Jumpstart” focuses on helping preschool students build a foundation of language and literary skills. This program focuses on elementary schools in low-income areas and impacts the children from underrepresented groups in those communities. “Jumpstart” also provides University students with an opportunity to earn their work-study while fostering academic and career success in the next generation of students.

Mansfield Youth Services Big Friends

Mansfield Youth Services Big Friends supports children and their families by encouraging social and academic enrichment through individual and group interactions. UConn Big Friends are paired with a student grade K-8 with whom they will work throughout the year to build a stable relationship by being a positive, enthusiastic role model and by taking an active interest in the student's life. Through their continued participation, Big Friends will increase student's self-worth and confidence in their learning abilities by stressing the importance of their educational and social development. Transportation is provided.

Big Brothers Big Sisters

Big Brothers, Big Sisters serves youth ages 5-18 in 5,000 communities in the US, through 4,700 agencies and matches 1-on-1 mentoring to help at risk youth. At the University of Connecticut, the BBBS program continues to serve several local public schools including the Natchaug School, the Sweeney School, North Windham School, Windham Center School, Putnam, and Windham Middle School. University students go to these locations both during and after school to mentor their academics, and supervise recreational activities. Children involved in the program also have the chance to come to the University to be with their mentor.

Preparing African American Students to Sustain Success (P.A2.S.S)

The School of Business Office of Diversity Initiatives offers Preparing African American Students to Sustain Success (P.A2.S.S.). The goal of P.A2.S.S is to assist first year African American Students in making a healthy, productive and successful transition to college life. The P.A2.S.S Program is a one-credit course facilitated through the H. Fred Simon's African American Cultural Center. Through the P.A2.S.S program first year students will be matched up with an African American upper classmen mentor. Mentors will serve as liaisons to campus resources, services, organizations events and opportunities. It is a program open to all majors who can make a weekly commitment, are full-time students, and have strong leadership, academic, and communication skills. Good University standing (both academic & judicial) is necessary. By being matched up with a peer mentor, incoming students have better opportunities to learn of resources available to them, be encouraged to participate in both AACC, and campus events, and interact with students with similar experiences.

Engineering Diversity Program

The Engineering Diversity Program provides academic support services for underrepresented populations in the engineering fields such as female, African American, Hispanic, and Native American engineering students. In the past, the EDP has sponsored events such as Multiply Your

Options, a one-day seminar for eighth grade girls aimed at exposing them to role models in math, engineering, and technology; Engineering Your Future, a similar program for eighth grade boys; and BRIDGE, a five week intensive summer readiness program designed to prepare students for their first year experience in engineering fields. This year it will host the Pre-Engineering Program, an enrichment program for seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students that includes hands-on math and science exploratory activities aimed at increasing interest in careers involving science, mathematics, engineering, and technology; the da Vinci Project, a program designed to help post-elementary schools integrate elemental engineering into the classroom; and the Joule Fellows Program, another program that aids teachers in incorporating engineering into the classroom. The EDP continues to provide academic retention programs and outreach activities designed to increase the numbers of under-represented students pursuing careers in engineering.

Pre-Engineering Program

Pre-Engineering Program (PEP) is an enrichment program for seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students that includes hands-on math and science exploratory activities aimed at increasing interest in careers involving science, mathematics, engineering, and technology (SMET). The program engages students in challenging, exciting hands-on problem solving activities facilitated by engineering under-graduate student mentors. Through this interaction, the middle and high school students foster the ability to improve or enhance their level of understanding of mathematics and science and the relation of these concepts to the future study of engineering. Projects include studying composite beams in seventh grade, Lego robotics in the eighth grade, and mousetrap cars in the ninth.

The Organization of Black Social Work Students

The University of Connecticut School of Social Work's Organization of Black Social Work Students (OBSWS) provides support for the Black students in the School as well as in the community. Its goal is to sensitize the School and the larger community to the culture, the experiences, and the needs of Black people of African descent through a variety of forums, workshops, symposia, and artistic displays. In addition, "Black Studies for Social Work Practice" is available as a focused area of study. With the aid of faculty and administration, OBSWS hopes to continue to develop the Black perspective in course content. OBSWS feels that this is critical in light of increased negative racial attitudes in this society.

Platinum HUSKY Service

Platinum HUSKY service, a professional development program focused on providing outstanding service to students, parents, community and one another, was offered this year. There were two open enrollment sessions and three departmental sessions held. Content included Exceeding Expectations, Turnaround Experience and the Internal Customer.

Supervisory Essentials Program

The Supervisory Essentials Program (SEP) is designed to help the University of Connecticut's front-line and mid-level supervisors improve their supervisory skills so they can have an immediate and positive impact on the people they lead. SEP is a multi-track program offering supervisors the option of choosing which track of courses best meets their needs. Built into SEP

are opportunities for participants to develop peer networks, utilize online learning, practice skills through on the job application and take away a tool kit of resources. Topics include On-the-Level-Communication, Managing Others, Providing Feedback to Others, Coaching Through Conflict, Developing Others, Goal Setting and Gaining Commitment, and Delivering Feedback and Conducting Difficult Discussions.

Participating supervisors are organized into cohort groups for the entire program; they engage in practical, interactive, skills based workshops, facilitated by a leadership consultant with over 5 years of experience teaching similar workshops at UConn. Through networking among their cohort group and via online job-aids, participants have mechanisms in place to access on-the-job help after they complete the program, further aiding in the transfer of program learning to the job.

Caring About “U”Conn

Caring About “U”Conn was created with the recognition that employees may be in need of information to support them with events of daily life. Sessions dealing with conflict with colleagues, concerns about health and safety and concerns about job effectiveness were offered to employees. The goal of the program is to connect employees with others in the University community who can help them be productive at work, stay healthy and stay safe. Many of the programs offered have been ‘brown bag’ lunches and have included the following seminar topics:

- Planning for the Unexpected
- Alzheimer’s Discussion
- Care Giver Basics
- Travel and Mobility
- What to Look for When Visiting
- Medicare Basics
- Eldercare
- Housing Options

Work/Life Flexibility

The University has continued to develop its work/life flexibility program and the DHR continues to be an active partner in promoting the University’s programs. The Work/Life Flexibility Committee continues to enhance its website (<http://worklife.uconn.edu/index.html>) which features not only childcare providers, seniors/eldercare information, wellness and parenting information but also information about professional development opportunities, flextime and leaves, cultural and community events, and other helpful information and services available to the University community.

The DHR sponsored the annual Work/Life Exposition. The Expo included exhibitors in the areas of benefits, health, wellness and service, providing resources and information to employees demonstrating the University’s commitment to work/life balance.

Something’s Happening Program

DHR continues to work closely with the Women's Center, ODE, Office of Audit, Compliance and Ethics as well as members of the AFSCME, CEUI and UCPEA unions to promote and sponsor the Something's Happening Program which was developed to heighten sensitivity to gender, cultural differences and other diversities and to educate staff on how these factors impact interaction with co-workers and/or supervisors.

Career Ladders Program

The goal of a career ladders program is to enhance employees' opportunities for future upward mobility and is fully supported at the University. DHR continued its support of the Career Ladders Program mandated by the UCPEA collective bargaining agreement (Article 25).

Recruitment Efforts

The DHR continues to maintain annual contracts with three recruitment sources where all faculty and unclassified job openings are posted. The three sources, Inside Higher Education, Diverse, and the Higher Education Recruitment Consortium are broad-based recruitment sources used in higher education.

The DHR established a relationship with the Department of Labor and now all staff positions are posted on CT.Jobs, Connecticut's Employment Exchange web site.

In addition, the Department of Human Resources and the Office of Diversity and Equity, in collaboration with the Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity, continue to promote the new program aimed at improving the search and hiring process for candidates, the Recruitment Ambassadors Program. The Program is designed to connect candidates with a trained UConn faculty or staff member to learn more about working and living in Connecticut, social and cultural activities, religious communities, family resources, educational opportunities and community information. The Recruitment Ambassador website continues to be enhanced to provide both ambassadors and candidates with a variety of information about working and living in Connecticut. DHR identified the top 15-20 towns in which Storrs based employees live in Connecticut, and developed a web page for each town identifying child care services, animal care services, arts and entertainment, restaurants, sports and recreation, places of worship, school systems, and transportation services to name a few. The site includes additional resources for multicultural services and veterans services, as well as a developing list of nearby attractions.

DHR Website

During the 2015 Plan year, the DHR made significant modifications to the jobs website, the new website is called UConn jobs, a more interactive website which provides applicants with valuable information and resources in addition to providing them with an easier way to view and apply for jobs. The DHR will continue to update the UConn jobs site with a focus on improving diversity recruitment efforts at the University.

Aces & Aros

In 2014, UConn launched a new discussion group hosted by the University's Rainbow Center for LGBTQ* students called Aces & Aros. The group is designed for students on the asexual and aromantic spectrum to have a safe space to discuss issues regarding nonsexual and nonromantic life in a sexualized and romanticized world. The group is closed to allies in order to give the marginalized students privacy, yet the group is open for students who question their identities.

Aetna Health Professions Partners Initiative (HPPI)

The Aetna Health Professions Partners Initiative (HPPI) offers many programs to students who are typically underrepresented in medical fields. Through HPPI, 200 students from middle school through college completed UConn Health's summer career preparation program in 2014. These enrichment programs expose minority students to various careers and tracks in the medical field. HPPI participants can also receive study aid for SATs and MCATs as well as assistance searching and applying for colleges from mentors within UConn's School of Medicine.

Burgdorf Clinic

UConn Health collaborated with Saint Francis this year to create a garden center in a clinic in Hartford's North End. UConn professionals as well as its medical, dental, and pharmacy students staff the clinic while volunteers from the UConn Extension Master Gardener Program help grow affordable and healthy produce in the garden.

Common Fund

In 2014, the Connecticut Institute for Clinical and Translational Science (CICATS) at UConn was chosen to receive an award by the National Institute of Health known as the Common Fund. UConn's commitment to increasing diversity in the biomedical research field won it with partnership with NIH and the Common Fund.

Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity (BUILD)

This Common Fund award is designed to attract minority students to the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields through the development of interventions and initiatives for underrepresented groups.

M1 Mentorship Program

The M1 Mentorship Program was recently launched by CICATS in order to fund chosen faculty to recruit and mentor underrepresented minority students.

Young Innovative Investigator Program (YIIP)

The Young Innovative Investigator Program (YIIP) is another of CICATS's sponsored programs. Its goal is to provide underrepresented minority UConn graduate students with support for research and academic achievement. The program also aims to provide mentorship and career guidance so the students may be prepared and qualified to enter master's and doctoral programs.

Connecticut Collegiate Awareness and Preparation (ConnCAP)

The University's Center for Academic Achievement continues its high school outreach program called the Connecticut Collegiate Awareness and Preparation Program for the academic year of 2014. First generation and low-income high school students who demonstrate academic need are provided assistance completing high school and preparing for post-secondary education. The program offers summer classes in addition to services provided during the school year. Some of these programs include: weekly meetings, tutoring services and academic advising, assistance with career or college and scholarship searching, cultural and social activities, and community service participation.

Cross Cultural Connections

The Cross Cultural Connections program is run by UConn Community Outreach and its goal is to help international students improve their English and transition to American culture. UConn students are matched with UCAELI (UConn American English Learning Institute) students and engage in one-on-one mentoring sessions in an effort to bridge cultural gaps and foster diversity at UConn.

Diversity Week, UConn Law

UConn Law's Karen DeMeola continues her annual program of Diversity Week after being awarded the Edwin Archer Randolph Diversity Award by the Lawyer's Collaborative for Diversity for her work aiding the success of female lawyers and lawyers of color. Diversity Week hosts a number of UConn Law organizations and student speakers to share personal narratives particular to their identities and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Eastern Area Health Education Center (AHEC)

UConn's School of Nursing is continuing its collaboration with the Eastern Area Health Education Center (AHEC) to provide service learning opportunities to students pursuing careers in healthcare. AHEC emphasizes service in diverse communities through leadership and educational programs.

Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities

UConn's School of Business was recognized by the Paul Newman Foundation for positive and innovative community impact for its program, Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities. The program works on training veterans with disabilities in business management and entrepreneurship and has become important for the reintegration of U.S. military service members to civilian society.

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) of the College of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources continue in its commitment to providing quality nutrition education to low-income families with young children and youth. EFNEP is just one program in

UConn's Cooperative Extension System, which connects UConn research to local issues through public outreach.

First Star Academy

The First Star Academy continues its partnership with UConn to improve the education of high-school foster children. The program begins as a 4-week residential experience in Storrs, during which students are immersed in academics and other activities of the University. The program extends to a 4-year college immersion program that provides the students support, tutoring, and mentorship. This program helps the foster children realize the possibilities of higher education are not closed to them.

Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need Program (GAANN)

The School of Engineering has been awarded fellowships from the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need Program, which comes from the US Department of Higher Education. The fellowship is designed for graduate students who are pursuing doctoral degrees in fields designated by the Federal Register as "areas of national need," such as: area studies, biology sciences/life sciences, chemistry, computer and information sciences, engineering, foreign languages and literature, mathematics, nursing, physics, and educational evaluation, research, and statistics. The School of Engineering encourages women and students from minority backgrounds to apply for this fellowship.

Health Disparities Clinical Summer Research Fellowship Program

In conjunction with the Aetna Health Professions Partnership Initiative, the UConn School of Medicine is offering a research fellowship for UConn an undergraduate that focuses on health disparities, cross-cultural issues, and the intricacies of working with diverse communities as a healthcare provider. Applicants are required to be from traditionally underrepresented groups, such as African American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Native Alaskan, Native Hawaiian, or other disadvantaged groups.

Institute for Urban School Improvement

UConn's Neag School of Education continues with its Institute for Urban School Improvement since it began in 2014. The Institute focuses on helping schools with a wide variety of ethnic, language, and socioeconomic backgrounds improve their educational programs.

CommPACT Schools Initiative

The Institute for Urban School Improvement launched a reform initiative called the CommPACT Schools Initiative. This push to create community schools and also provides resources, materials, technical assistance, and evaluation assistance to schools. The CommPACT model of school reform strives to collaborate between community, parents, administrators, children, and teachers in urban areas.

“Just Community: Change Starts Here” (JCC) Student Sub-Committee

A subset of the School of Social Work, the “Just Community: Change Starts Here” Committee, or JCC, is continuing its mission in 2015 to promote cultural competence and inclusivity within the school. The student sub-committee of the JCC officially recognizes disability as diversity. The forum allowed students and staff members to share experiences and spread awareness of disability programs for students. Through formally recognizing disability as diversity, the School of Social Work is able to better assist disabled students and train its students to assist disabled students.

Kids are Scientists & Engineers, Too (KASET)

This program is for students entering 5th through 10th grades to gain experience in science fields not traditionally or widely taught in schools, such as archaeology, astronomy, chemistry, engineering, marine science, and more. KASET is sponsored by UConn’s Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Scholars Program. UConn hosts the summertime workshops, where students are encouraged to explore STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields early in their academic careers.

Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation Scholars Program (LSAMP)

UConn’s LSAMP program continues in 2014 in its mission to increase enrollment, retention, and graduation of underrepresented minority groups in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields. LSAMP students collaborate with faculty and their peers in research, community service, fostering leadership, and mentorship programs.

McNair Scholars Program

Relatively new to UConn, the McNair Scholars Program continues its mission to provide low-income, first-generation, and other underrepresented students research opportunities at the main Storrs campus during the summer. The undergraduates selected are mainly from STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields and are pursuing doctoral degrees. The program allows the students to conduct research as well as attend classes to encourage admission and success in graduate school.

Next Generation Connecticut

President Susan Herbst and Governor Dannel Malloy launched Next Generation Connecticut in January 2013, this transformative initiative is still ongoing with the goal to expand educational opportunities to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) students. In addition to creating jobs for the update of infrastructure, the Next Generation CT plan will create jobs for new STEM faculty. The program hopes to increase STEM enrollment at UConn while providing opportunity for the whole state’s economy to prosper.

Out of the Box

UConn’s Rainbow Center continues to host a new discussion group for students of non-binary gender identity called Out of the Box. The group meets to discuss the unique challenges that

come with identifying outside the normalized spectrum of gender identity (male or female), such as public perception of gender fluidity, re-structuring of gendered language in favor of neutral pronouns and terms, as well as navigation around gendered environments on campus and society.

Peer Advising

Student Support Services (SSS) continues its Peer Advising Program in 2014. The program is designed to assign incoming freshmen and campus change students to veteran SSS students in order for the new students to receive social and academic support during the transitional time of the first year in a new academic environment.

Project SPARK

Dr. Barbara Little of UConn's Neag School of Education has recently received a grant for her project known as SPARK, or Supporting and Promoting Advanced Readiness in Kids. Little hopes to foster the talents of minority students, students with disabilities, as well as other underrepresented groups to increase their participation in programs for gifted children. Kindergarteners to second-graders will be screened and grouped in enrichment programs to fulfill potential that might have been otherwise overlooked because of their backgrounds.

Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Program

UConn's Chemistry Department hosts a program open mainly to students in non-Ph.D. granting institutions in order to expose them to research opportunities. Students in the REU Program receive a variety of academic support pertaining to future graduate-level research. The REU Program strongly encourages female students and student from underrepresented groups.

South Asian Law Students Association (SALSA)

UConn Law's South Asian Law Students Association group as well as other South Asian advocacy groups established a library at Hartford's transitional housing center, My Sister's Place. SALSA helped fill the need for books among the homeless in the inner city, which can help with the education of disadvantaged children along with their parents, who could learn new skills to apply to the workforce with new books.

Students Engaged in Academic Leadership (SEAL) Program

The SEAL Program is an initiative designed by the Vice Provost for Diversity to cultivate leadership, professional development, and engagement among first-generation UConn students (i.e. students who are the first in their families to attend college). Since this particular demographic faces a high drop-out rate, the SEAL Program aims to support and mentor first-generation students through their UConn careers.

UConn Brooklyn Collaborative

UConn Community Outreach is continuing its partnership with the Brooklyn Correctional Institute to rehabilitate inmates through the UConn Brooklyn Collaborative. In this program, students prepare inmates for the GED (General Educational Development) test by tutoring and

facilitating learning through activities and other lessons. The UConn Brooklyn Collaborative aims to get inmates ready for their return to the community through educational empowerment.

Urban Service Track (UST)

UConn's Urban Service Track (UST) students continue to receive accolades for their work organizing medical workshops for the community in Hartford. The UST participants are educated on health issues to the community, such as asthma, hypertension, diabetes, smoking cessation, immunization, and an affordable medicine program. An exclusive 50 UST scholars are selected based on their commitment to service in the inner cities of Connecticut as aspiring health care professionals. The School of Dental Medicine was awarded with the American Dental Association Foundation's "Bud" Tarrson Dental School Student Community Leadership Award for its Urban Service Track program.

Veterans Affairs and Military Programs

The Office of Veterans Affairs and Military Programs provides a full range of benefits and services to Students, Faculty and Staff that have served in the Armed Forces. The services include benefits processing, event programming and community outreach. The Veterans Advisory Council, comprising of Faculty, Staff and Students continue to provide guidance and support to the university and its goals to increase support and services to veterans. In 2015, the board established the definition of Veteran Community to include family members and dependents of any current or prior member of the uniformed services. They also established a Diversity Subcommittee to increase support and outreach to veteran minorities on campus.