

*Thank you to the sponsors of the  
2019 Student Life Awards*



**Thursday, April 11, 2019 | 4:00 pm | Student Union Ballroom**  
*Scholarship. Advocacy. Innovation. Service. Pride. Community. Leadership.*

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

*Guided by its core principles, Leadership and Organizational Development facilitates educational and experiential initiatives that challenge individuals and organizations to explore, strengthen, and elevate their character, leadership and ability to contribute as global citizens.*

**CORE PRINCIPLES:**

*We commit to be:*

- Engaging: interactive programming that provokes critical thinking and action
- Progressive: pushing boundaries in pursuit of continuous growth
- Strategic: intentionally turning big picture concepts into meaningful opportunities
- Authentic: genuine congruence between values and practice
- Unconventional: unafraid to question what is generally used or accepted
- Empowering: guiding our participants in self-actualization

## 2019 Leadership Legacy Experience Students

*The University of Connecticut is proud to recognize the 2019 Legacy Students as part of the Student Life Awards Program. They represent a rich diversity of leadership experiences, personal accomplishments, and academic excellence. The Leadership Legacy Experience was established to recognize and invite some of the University's most exceptional student leaders to participate in a year-long leadership enhancement experience that builds on their legacy as University leaders, and helps prepare them for a life of commitment and contribution beyond graduation.*



*Alyssa Adesso*



*Natalie Calletano*



*Damayanti Castrodad*



*Samantha Dion*



*Walter Dodson*



*Sebastien Kerr*



*Felicita Kuperwasser*



*Sophie MacDonald*



*Chloe Murphy*



*Himaja Nagireddy*



*Omani Ortiz*



*Victoria Reichelderfer*



*Nicholas Sturgis*



*Caesar Valentin*



## *Stewardship Awards*

**Department of Student Activities  
Leadership & Organizational Support**

**Established in 2010, the Stewardship Awards acknowledge Tier III (Student Fee-Funded) Organizations for success in four areas of organizational stewardship: constituents, members, assets, and administrator relations. Throughout the year, these areas of stewardship are emphasized in training and advisement of these organizations, and within the governance bodies of the groups themselves.**

### ***Constituents | Recipient: UConn PIRG***

This organization has demonstrated a strong level of commitment to and awareness of its constituents through sound understanding of organization accountability. Demonstrations of engagement, interaction, and overall care in the best interests of the student body have been shown through continued efforts this past year. This organization has set the stage for improved constituent relations for both their organization and other fee-funded student leaders in the Triad Leadership Program.

### ***Members | Recipient: Nutmeg***

In keeping with the best traditions of their organization and the University, this group has demonstrated successful stewardship of its members through the excellent recruitment, development, and mentorship of an effective membership base in the organization. By providing adequate support, this organization has helped create a positive and supportive place for involvement for current and future members. This group has demonstrated strong efforts to work collaboratively, professionally, and ethically as an organization.

### ***Administrator Relations | Recipient: The Daily Campus***

This organization has displayed excellence in the stewardship of administrator relations during the past year. In collaboration with faculty, staff, and administrators, this organization has developed sound partnerships in order to support the organization's mission and the student body. By working more closely and effectively with administrators at the University, this group has demonstrated how students and administrators can work together in order to achieve a high level of success.

### ***Assets | Recipient: WHUS/UCTV***

This organization has demonstrated outstanding effort in terms of maximizing available assets. By using conscious efforts to use resources in innovative and responsible ways, this organization has learned to balance fiscal responsibility with the needs of the UConn community. This group is an excellent example of how student leaders and fee-funded student organizations can best incorporate their assets to better their successes.

## *Welcome*

### *A Letter from the President*

Dear Friends,

Part of the thrill of being involved in higher education is the fact that, as professors and administrators, we are able to watch students flourish on this campus in classes, through research and, equally important, through service and campus activities.

It is the students who make our campus vibrant and rewarding and truly give life to our mission as a university. It is so fitting that our student leaders be recognized for their extraordinary contributions to the University of Connecticut, this community, and their fellow students.

I feel a great deal of pride in knowing that today's campus leaders – the people making exceptional contributions to UConn and to the lives of others – will undoubtedly go on to do the same for this state, our nation and the world in the years to come.

Please accept my congratulations and best wishes to all those nominated for today's awards. You deserve the recognition.

Sincerely,

Susan Herbst  
President  
University of Connecticut



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# Donald L. McCullough Leadership Award

Established in 1979, in remembrance of the former Director of Student Activities, Don McCullough, the McCullough Leadership award is the University’s highest student leadership award. This award recognizes individual student(s) who have made significant contributions to the University community through leadership of, and/or involvement in an initiative(s) that has had University-wide impact and is representative of the highest level of student leadership and involvement.

## Finalists



### **Batouly Camara**

Batouly, a Sport Management major, is in her third year as a member of the women’s basketball team. She serves as President of Collective Uplift and as an active member of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and the Muslim Student Association (MSA). Batouly started her own nonprofit called Women and Kids Empowerment (WAKE), which focuses on empowering and educating young girls and women between the ages of 7 and 22 in their native country of Guinea through sport. She has used her experience with sports as a vehicle to open conversations regarding race, gender, and class in relations to the world we live in today.



### **Derek Pan**

A molecular cell biology major, Derek serves as the Chair of the USG Student Services Committee. In this role, he has steered USG's efforts towards advocating for the wellness of the student body, with a focus on Mental Health. He led an initiative to provide free Mental Health First Aid Certifications to the student body, and is currently working with the UConn Fire Department Chief to train his first responders in mental health first aid in order to give them skills to respond to wellness checks - one of the most frequent type of calls they respond to at UConn.



### **Wawa Gatheru**

Wawa, an Environmental Studies major, considers herself an environmentalist and has actively engaged in grassroots efforts on campus to ultimately pass an initiative to add an environmental literacy requirement into the general education requirements. She has also interned at the Office of Environmental Policy, served as the student services chairwoman of the Undergraduate Student Government, and served as an FYE mentor and a volunteer for the SOS Food Recovery and the Cross Cultural Connections organizations.



### **Justin Pedneault**

Justin, a senior Nursing major, serves as President for UConn Rescue which works to provide CPR classes to the UConn community and has been a part of an initiative that has trained over 1,000 individuals in the last 2.5 years. Justin was also a leader of a multi-department group that has placed Automatic External Defibrillators (AED's) and Stop the Bleed kits throughout all of the academic buildings at UConn, resulting in the entire University becoming the first HEARTSsafe Campus in Connecticut.

# Student Leader of Character Award

This award recognizes individual student(s) who have demonstrated exceptional character in the course of holding a leadership position within the Division of Student Affairs. This award was established in 2017 to provide scholarship support to University students and is sponsored by the J. Peter & Jennifer Natale Student Leader Scholarship.

## Finalists



### **Kurt Daigle**

Kurt is a senior majoring in Human Development & Family Studies and serves as a residential floor mentor for the Leadership Learning Community. Through his service as a mentor, Kurt has promoted memorable residential experiences and meaningful programs. He has also been actively involved with the Academic Achievement Center and UConn Connects. In his work he advocates for fellow students to become active, invested, and contributing members of the UConn community.



### **Kaitlyn Luft**

Kaitlyn is a Global Health Promotion major who has been actively involved on campus. She recently served as a primary trip leader for the 2019 Costa Rica alternative break. She also serves as a 'Big' in Big Brothers Big Sisters, has been involved in Honors UNIV Courses, and has led campus discussions on the use of inclusive language. Kaitlyn aspires to create an environment where everyone present is a "co-educator," teaching and challenging each other and striving to value every person's experiences and perspectives.



### **Shilpa Rajbahak**

A senior majoring in Psychology, Shilpa has spent the last two years involved with the Jumpstart Americorps program through UConn's Community Outreach office and currently serves as a Team Leader in this role. She has also been involved on campus with multiple alternative break trips and with the Asian American Cultural Center. Shilpa strives to lead with both kindness and respect, and recognizes the need for leaders to be able to follow as well.

# A Message from the Student Life Awards Committee Chair

On behalf of the Department of Student Activities, I'd like to welcome you to the 2019 University of Connecticut Student Life Awards – recognizing outstanding contributions to and leadership of the University community! The campus was very much alive this past year with student involvement, service, leadership and pride! The student engagement represented by all of this year's nominations not only created an environment of diverse opportunities and activities but also served to enrich the campus atmosphere and enhance student learning.

The process and work of recognizing all of our outstanding student leaders and bringing everyone together today began at the start of this academic year and has continued non-stop throughout the past eight months. Below is the list of the members of our 2019 Selection Committee, who spent a significant amount of time reviewing nomination material and interviewing finalists. It is also important to recognize the many folks who have played a role behind the scenes in everything that culminates in today's event. Therefore a special thanks to Alfredo Ramirez, Amanda Foxen, Anna Milot, Lillian Palacios, Karen Provost, Dr. Michael Gilbert, Dr. Christine Wilson and the entire staff in Leadership & Organizational Development.

Finally, a note of particular thanks to our donors and award sponsors who have so generously supported this program, and more importantly our students. It is only with their support that the Student Life Awards program is able to award \$30,000 in scholarships and aid this year. You are invited to learn more about all of our donors and sponsors on the following pages.

Congratulations to all of the nominees and thanks for making the University of Connecticut a vibrant campus community in which to live and learn.

Joseph P. Briody  
Associate Director  
Leadership and Organizational Development



## Student Life Awards Selection Committee

Terrence Abney, *Residential Life*

Lauren Berberich, *Leadership & Org Development*

Joe Briody, *Leadership & Org Development*

Kayla Brown, *Leadership & Org Development*

Kristen Carr, *Leadership & Org Development*

Morgan Coleman, *Major Events and Programs*

Miguel Colon, *Community Outreach*

Andrea Dennis LaVigne, *Alumni*

Dan Doerr, *Office of the VPSA*

Steve Drasdis, *Club Sports*

Gabrielle Erestain, *Major Events and Programs*

Kathy Fischer, *Women's Center*

Melissa Foreman, *First Year Programs*

Jessica Gramajo, *Trustee Student Org Support*

Trisha-Ann Hawthorne, *Athletics*

Kaitlin Heenehan, *Honors Program*

Lindsey Masterson, *Dean of Students*

Jennifer Morenus, *Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center*

Alfredo Ramirez, *Leadership & Org Development*

Sasha Richardson, *Trustee Student Org Support*

Taylor Stiller, *Student Athlete Success Program*

Ashley Vrabely, *Office of the Provost*

A special thanks to all of the members of this year's Student Life Awards Selection Committee for their time and commitment to recognizing and supporting student contribution to and leadership of the University community.



## First Year Excellence in Innovation Award

The First Year Excellence in Innovation Award stems from a university-wide initiative to cultivate talent among first year students. This award recognizes a current first year student(s) that has displayed a significant level of innovation and creativity. This award was established in 2015 and is sponsored by the Office of First Year Programs and Learning Communities and the Peter J. Werth Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation.

### Recipient



#### **Michael Aisevbonaye**

Michael is a first-year student majoring in Mechanical Engineering and is a member of the ScHOLA2RS House Learning Community. He co-founded and is Vice President of the UConn Maker Club, an organization focused on utilizing the Werth Tower Innovation Zone to design and construct different devices that the members vote on. Additional involvement includes Publications Chair of the National Society of Black Engineers and the Major Weekends Committee and Outreach Committee of SUBOG. His goal is to be seen as a source of inspiration to people from underrepresented communities who are skeptical to enter a STEM field.



## Willis N. Hawley Service and Leadership Award

Willis N. Hawley, (1875-1898), attended Storrs Agricultural College, beginning in the fall of 1895 and soon after graduating in 1898, he joined the U.S. Army, Company H, Third Connecticut Volunteer Infantry. This award recognizes a student veteran(s) who has made significant contributions to the University community through leadership and service during their tenure as a student. This award was established in 2010 and is sponsored by the Office of Veterans Affairs and Military Programs.

### Recipient



#### **Emily Lugo**

Emily is a senior Human Development and Family Studies major who served in the Marine Corps for four years as a maintenance data analyst from 2012 to 2016. Emily has worked in Student Support Services where she has had the opportunity to work directly with veterans and military-affiliated students. She has overseen the establishment of the veteran oasis lounge, which makes certain that the veterans of UConn's campus have a place to gather and support one-another. Emily has made it her mission to making UConn a more veteran-friendly campus.

## Individual Community Service Award

This award honors a student(s) that has initiated and/or actively engaged in a community service project(s). The project may be a single event or a series of activities. This award is intended for those engaged in activities that offer direct service, as opposed to fundraising or lobbying activities. Such service(s) should directly benefit a community external to the University and have occurred in the past academic year. This award was established prior to 2005 and is sponsored by the Department of Student Activities.

### Recipients



#### **Grace Burns**

Grace Burns, a first-year student in the Honors Learning Community, has worked with organizations that support financially struggling populations in local communities, such as the Windham Area Interfaith Ministry and the No Freeze Hospitality Project. Grace has worked with the United Way of Northeastern and Central Connecticut and hopes to start a "United Way" club at UConn. As a news writer for The Daily Campus newspaper, Grace hopes to bring awareness to various issues including public policy developments for socioeconomically discriminated populations.



#### **Peter Garmon**

Peter is a senior psychology major and has contributed to increasing literacy skills for students at Sweeney, Verplanck, and Waddell elementary schools. As an aspiring school counselor, Peter has co-facilitated and volunteered at service events for middle school students in East Hartford. Peter is also active in additional service work such as organizing a shoe drive at UConn to deliver lightly worn shoes to local communities in need and collecting over 60 pounds of toiletries to distribute sanitation kits to the Mansfield homeless shelter.

## Emerging Leaders Award

This award recognizes a student(s) that, despite not holding a visible, established leadership position on campus, has actively demonstrated attributes of an emerging leader through his/her actions and character. The recipient(s) will demonstrate attributes of an emerging leader, poised for significant contribution and accomplishment through their future academic work, community service, organizational leadership, issue advocacy, and/or active participation in a campus-wide initiative. This award was established in 2005 and is sponsored by the Department of Student Activities.

### Finalists



#### **Erdit Abendini**

Erdit is a sophomore Exploratory major and has been awarded a grant to start up a soccer club for underprivileged students in Hartford. After extensive planning and recruiting on his part, the camp launched in the summer of 2018 with 35 players registered. Erdit ran the camp with several volunteer assistant coaches, using the grant funds to purchase equipment and uniforms, and for transportation to and from the High School Summer League at Farmington Sports Arena, where the team played.



#### **Emily Burke**

Emily Burke is a sophomore majoring in Youth Development and Wellness. She serves in a variety of roles on campus such as a Bodywise Instructor at the UConn Recreation Center and as an active member of Husky Nutrition. She is also an active member in UConn's Jumpstart Program as an AmeriCorps member in which she works with UConn students at preschools in low-income neighborhoods to help the students build up their literacy skills in preparation for Kindergarten.



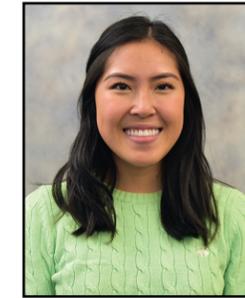
#### **Alexandra Goldblatt**

Alexandra (Sasha) is a first-year student majoring in Political Science and Communications. She is a member of the UConn Consulting Group (UCG), a student-run strategy consulting group on campus that works with companies to solve their business problems. Sasha expressed concerns about the inclusiveness of the organization and met with the Talent Director for improvement, and created a list of new interview questions along with a rubric for scoring answers for the next stage of recruiting. She has strived to make changes to the organization to promote the recruitment and retention of future women and people of color.

## Individual Husky Pride Award

This award honors an individual for outstanding external representation of the pride and spirit associated with being a part of the University of Connecticut. This award was established prior to 2005 and is sponsored by the Department of Student Activities.

### Recipient



#### **Ming-Yeah Hu**

Ming-Yeah is a Molecular and Cell Biology and Allied Health Sciences major and serves as a student leader in a variety of roles. As a student leader for the SOS Food Recovery Program, cheerleader, student ambassador, and Honors Learning Community Floor Mentor, she is continually working to create a community that shows its pride for UConn at the University and in the greater community. She is known for her commitment to leadership, maturity, and energy that she contributes to the programs in which she is active.



## Organization Husky Pride Award

This award honors an organization for outstanding external representation of the pride and spirit associated with being a part of the University of Connecticut. This award was established prior to 2002 and is sponsored by the Department of Student Activities.

### Recipient



#### **Student Union Board of Governors (SUBOG)**

The Student Union Board of Governors (SUBOG) is the largest programming board on campus and prides itself on serving all huskies while supporting the social, recreational, cultural and educational environment here on campus. SUBOG has created community through events such as Homecoming Week, the UCONNIC Music Festival, and comedy shows. SUBOG hosts events that celebrate students, and they create an atmosphere where students feel represented, appreciated and heard. By hosting these events and creating this atmosphere, the public is able to see the pride of being a Husky.

## International Student Leadership Award

This award recognizes a student(s) who has actively engaged in activities that foster the integration of international students and their experiences and cultures into the campus community in a visible and meaningful way. This award was established in 2010 and is sponsored by the Office of Global Affairs.

### Recipient



#### **Thomas Briggs**

Thomas is a graduate student studying political science and has served on the Graduate Student Senate. Additionally, he has advocated for better transportation to and from campus, brought attention to visa fees, and sat on a variety of committees where he served as a voice and advocate for international students at UConn. Thomas has served on university committees including the Senate Student Welfare, the President's Working Group on Immigration Changes, and the Senate Scholastic Standards committees. Thomas serves as the Associate Director of the Humanities Learning Community where he works to improve the college experience of international students.



## Learning Community Leadership Award

This award recognizes a current Learning Community student(s) that has displayed a significant level of, either formal or informal, leadership within their Learning Community while supporting the overall mission of the Learning Community Program, which prides itself in the holistic education of students in an academic environment while supporting significant opportunity for co-curricular engagement. This award was established in 2015 and is sponsored by the Office of First Year Programs and Learning Communities.

### Recipient



#### **Rebecca Feldman**

Rebecca is a sophomore majoring in Civil Engineering and serves as an Engineering House Floor Mentor and Learning Community Executive Council Vice President. As Floor Mentor, she works with the Engineering House Leadership team to act as a role model to the first-year students in an effort to ease and support their transition to UConn while creating an overall comfortable safe space for the residential floor. Additionally, Rebecca has developed an evaluation process for programs in the learning community and remains committed to continuing her involvement and growth while giving back to the learning community.

## Edward Victor Gant Scholarship Finalists (continued)



#### **Undergraduate Nominee: Mitali Banerjee**

Mitali, a senior majoring in Physiology & Neurobiology and Molecular & Cell Biology, serves as a STEM Scholar in the Honors Program and a floor mentor for the Honors to Opportunities (H2O) Learning Community. Mitali is also involved with research at UConn Health and teaches UConn Rescue emergency medical service courses where she shares critical life-saving knowledge. In addition, she exemplifies her professionalism through her leadership in Peer Allies Through Honors (PATH) by pairing Honors students with mentors.



#### **Undergraduate Nominee: Alexis Bazydol**

Alexis, a junior majoring in Sports Management, plays a large role in the First Year Programs office, serving as a mentor and as a Teaching Assistant for EPSY 3080. Alexis is the Associate Vice President of UConn Sports Business Association and has also been an administrative assistant for the Men's Hockey Team since her freshman year. In addition, she held a position as an operations intern in the front office for the Nashville Predators, a National Hockey League team. Alexis' long-term goal is to become the first female General Manager in the National Hockey League.



#### **Undergraduate Nominee: Odia Kane**

Odia is a senior majoring in Cognitive Science and Political Science and serves as a New Haven Promise Campus Ambassador. In her role as ambassador, Odia helps first-year students get acclimated to college, and she is a representative for minority and first-generation college students at UConn. She has conducted research with the Writing Center, the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, and the Nunnally lab in political science. In addition, Odia has been Vice President of Sisters Inspiring Sisters, as well as Secretary and President of the African Students' Association.



#### **Undergraduate Nominee: Abigail Lafontan**

Abigail is a senior majoring in Political Science and is an active participant in University organizations such as UConn Mock Trial Society and the Special Program in Law. She has been both a facilitator and an elected representative of her class while also serving as the Captain of the B Team and Secretary for the UConn Mock Trial Society. Abigail is the recipient of an IDEA award, was selected as an UConn BOLD Women's Leadership Scholar, and plans to dedicate her BOLD service project to lobby for improved school food policy in Connecticut and Washington D.C.



#### **Undergraduate Nominee: Timothy Mason**

Timothy is a senior majoring in Molecular and Cell Biology and serves as the Undergraduate Coordinator for the Peer Mentoring Program in the biology department. Timothy was accepted into the McNair Fellows Program and currently researches dysenteric chromosome formation in drosophila. He also held a research position at the UConn Health Center and was awarded the Cato T. Laurencin Travel Fellowship Award. In addition, Timothy attended the Society for Biomaterials National Conference and met with professionals and leaders in the fields of medicine and biomaterials.

# Edward Victor Gant Scholarship

Established in 1979 and first given in 1987, the scholarship is a gift of the University Of Connecticut Board Of Trustees and the family and friends of Edward V. Gant, former Provost and Professor of Civil Engineering. Edward V. Gant, who also served as the University's acting president for brief periods in the 1960s and '70s, passed away in 1985. The scholarship is granted on the basis of academic excellence, professional potential, dedicated service, and exemplary integrity. The scholarship(s) are awarded to students, graduate and/or undergraduate, who will be continuing their studies at the University of Connecticut next fall.

## Finalists



### Graduate Nominee: Kiera Dalmass

Kiera is a graduate student in Statistics and is a member of the women's lacrosse team. She is also the President of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), where she oversees 46 members and 7 executive board members. She is a representative for her peers and speaks on panels, in all-staff meetings, and on other platforms as a primary voice for student-athletes on campus. She is currently a part-time statistician for a defense company in the Philadelphia Navy Yard for the United States Navy.



### Graduate Nominee: Anastasiia Minenkova

Anastasiia is a PhD student in Mathematics and serves on research projects for UConn Health's Center for Quantitative Medicine and the Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine. She focuses on creating iron-oncogene interactions in cancer cells, such as melanoma. Anastasiia has given Math Club talks, mentored an undergraduate in the Directed Reading Program, and has taught for UConn SSS Summer Program. In addition, Anastasiia is the president of the American Mathematical Society Chapter (AMS), has published mathematical papers in applied analysis, given multiple research presentations, and participated in several conferences.



### Graduate Nominee: Anna Ziering

Anna is a PhD student in English and serves as a Teaching Assistant for Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS). Her first peer-reviewed article was published in the Journal of Multi-Ethnic Literature, and Anna has received the AETNA Graduate Writing Prize for best graduate student essay, an AETNA Graduate Research and Travel Award, and first prize in the Wallace Stevens Poetry Prize. In addition, Anna is the President of the English Graduate Student Association, serves on the UConn Reads Committee, and serves on the University's Diversity Council.

# Organization Community Service Award

This award honors a Registered Student Organization that has initiated and/or actively engaged in a community service project that offered direct service, as opposed to fundraising or lobbying activities, to a community external to the University. This award was established in 2002 and is co-sponsored by the Office of Community Outreach and The Office of Public Engagement.

## Recipient



### Brothers Reaching Our Society

Brothers Reaching Our Society is a cultural organization within UConn's African American Cultural Center that has dedicated its time to cultivating a community of aspiring young men in the community. Members in the organization have created an event, A Day with the Bros (ADWB), which exposes students of O'Brien Elementary School in East Hartford, predominantly attended by young black boys and girls, to collegiate African-American males providing earnest mentorship to push their academic ambitions. This organization has also developed a leadership development program at East Hartford Middle School with a goal to provide EHMS students with a support system consisting of young leaders in higher education.



# Outstanding Graduate Assistant of the Year

This award recognizes a Graduate Assistant(s) who goes above and beyond their assigned responsibilities by contributing their time, energy, and talents to further the growth and development of undergraduate students on campus. This award was established prior to 2002 and is sponsored by the Graduate School.

## Recipient



### Semin Park

Semin is a Ph.D. student in Business Administration and Management and conducts an independent study where she teaches undergraduate students how to perform applied academic research in real-world settings, use text analysis, and learn the basics of social network analysis. Additionally, Semin teaches multiple sections of a junior-level management class, runs three interdisciplinary research teams, and mentors students in the Management Department. She has also served in a reverse mentoring role for a new management faculty member, working closely with them on syllabus development, ways to structure the courses, and strategies to assess students.

## Program of the Year Award

*This award recognizes the development and/or execution of an event/program that significantly enhanced the social, recreational, educational, and/or cultural life of students and the general community at this institution. This award was established prior to 2002 and is sponsored by SUBOG (Student Union Board of Governors).*

### Recipient



#### **HuskyTHON**

HuskyTHON is a student organization that plans an annual event by the same name in which students fundraise to support Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC). To participate in HuskyTHON, students form teams with their friends or within a student organization, academic department, or other unifying entity. Teams work to raise funds and develop team spirit. Through this organization and program, members of the community have had the opportunity to engage in giving back and helping others. The members of the community involved with the HuskyTHON program raised over \$1.3 million at this year's event.



## Protect Our Pack Award

*This award recognizes a student(s) whose actions exemplify the bystander intervention concept of Protect Our Pack. By stepping in, either directly or indirectly the student(s) has aided a member of our community who was in a problematic situation which could involve sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, hazing, harassment, a bias related incident, alcohol or other drugs, depression and/or suicide, or many other dangerous or difficult issues. This award was established in 2017 by the Dean of Students Office to recognize students who exhibit actions which clearly help protect our community members.*

### Recipient



#### **Jordan Theroux**

Jordan is a first-year student majoring in Allied Health Sciences and believes being a part of the UConn community means looking out for others. She believes in the importance of exemplifying and utilizing the bystander intervention concept of Protect Our Pack. This past fall Jordan utilized the bystander intervention model through her work with the SUBOG fall concert, where she played a role on the concert committee. As a first year student, Jordan has been able to display her leadership while serving her peers on campus.

## Andrea Dennis LaVigne Scholarship for Advancing Diversity

*This award recognizes a student who demonstrates a commitment to encouraging and enhancing diversity at UConn. This scholarship was established in honor of former Trustee, Andrea Dennis LaVigne, through gifts of many alumni, Trustees, and friends.*

### Finalists



#### **Boutouly Camara**

Batouly Camara is a Sport Management student and women's basketball player who believes in the power of dialogue to foster an inclusive campus. Batouly serves as the President of Collective Uplift, collaborates with the Muslim Student Association and Asian American Cultural Center and volunteers for Husky Sport. Batouly is also the founder of a non-profit in Guinea, West Africa, for girls ages 6 to 16, which facilitates and organizes sport-based youth development programs.



#### **Imani Morgan**

Imani is a Biological Sciences major and has worked to get involved with organizations that promote cultural diversity and create sustainable relationships throughout the community. Imani currently serves as the President of Hearts Over Latin America and is the Event Co-Coordinator in the UConn Afro-Latinx organization. As the President of Hearts Over Latin America, Imani aims to educate people on becoming more culturally competent and discuss what is happening in Latin America not only with the members of her organization but also throughout campus.



#### **Avolyn Nieves**

Avolyn is an Allied Health Sciences and Human Rights major and plays an active role in promoting diversity and inclusive initiatives at UConn and in the greater community. She is a member of the President's Council for Race and Diversity where she strives to advocate for undergraduate students and influence the institutional leadership to prioritize inclusion and diversity. Avolyn has also assisted in the development of mandatory diversity education programs as well as a new Diversity Module for all first year students. She serves as a Reaching Inclusive Excellence (RISE) facilitator, a member of the University Diversity Counsel, and as the Academic Affairs Chairwoman of Undergraduate Student Government.

# Building Community Award

This award honors a student(s) that has initiated and/or actively engaged in an activity that has significantly contributed to the sense of community on campus. This project may be a single event or series of activities. The project should also have been significantly advanced during the past academic year and it should directly enhance the sense of community among various members of the campus community. This award was established in 2005 and is sponsored by the Department of Student Activities.

## Finalists



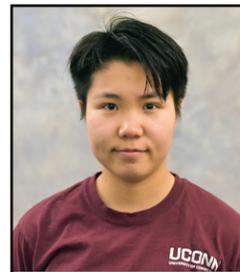
### **Kelli Bates**

Kelli is a senior majoring in Sports Management and is the Vice President of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. She also serves as a committee member of Special Olympics Connecticut and as a three-year captain of her Division I softball team. Kelli is part of conference-wide initiative to create more awareness about the value of mental health for student-athletes, and has contributed to the production of a UConn Athletics mental health awareness video that was shared across campus.



### **Emily Fountain**

Emily is a senior majoring in Exercise Science and has worked to create a community for transfer students at UConn. She spends her time engaging in dialogue with other transfer students, learning procedures and protocols on best ways to lead a student organization, and thinking up new ways to support transfer students. She has volunteered for multiple semesters to serve as a transfer student representative at events such as UConn Open Houses and Resource Fairs. As President of the Transfer Student Association and Tau Sigma, Emma meets weekly with her fellow e-board members to create a positive environment for other transfer students.



### **Qimei Liu**

Qimei is a junior majoring in Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies and has worked as an Asiantation Mentoring Program (AMP) coordinator to expand the program to be more inclusive to international students. She has co-facilitated more than 20 workshops and social events working with AMP mentor groups to promote connectedness on campus. She co-founded the student organization, Queer, Asians, and Allies, to provide a safe space for the Asian and Asian American LGBTQ+ community.



### **Nathan Schechter**

Nathan is a senior majoring in Communications and serves as the Vice President for Marketing of the Hillel Student Board. Since his first semester, he has contributed to building community among Jewish and non-Jewish students alike around campus. He has rebranded the organization with a new website and built relationships with students and departments around UConn. He also created initiatives such as a semesterly Shabbat with the Rainbow Center and the development of two gender-inclusive bathrooms at the Hillel building.

# Matthew B. Schechter Scholarship

This scholarship is named after Matthew Benson Schechter, who earned a Bachelors of Art in English in 1962 and served as president of the Associated Student Government. It was established in 1969 to recognize a deserving student(s) on the basis of citizenship, need, scholarship, contribution to the University, and contributions to the causes of human rights and human dignity, civil liberties and freedom of thought.

## Recipient



### **Daasebre Asante**

Daasebre is a Political Science and Law and Society major. He is the founder of The National Black Law Student Association at UConn and founded this group in an effort to articulate the educational, professional, political and social needs of minority pre-law students and to promote direct representation of African Americans in the legal field. Through his role, Daasebre works with students from various backgrounds and has organized events focused on social and legal issues facing the African American community and has brought Black legal professionals to speak to students interested in pursuing law.



# Spirer/Dueker Student Humanitarian Achievement Award

The award was first given in 1994 and was established by Louise and Herbert Spirer and Marilyn Dueker, retired faculty members from the University of Connecticut-Stamford campus. This award honors an undergraduate student(s) for outstanding contributions to public service. Recipient(s) will have demonstrated a concern for others that benefits society and impacts positively on their personal and professional life.

## Recipient



### **Xavier Arriaga**

Xavier is a senior Economics major and serves as a Trip Director for a Detroit Alternative Break trip that focuses on Urban Education, Development, and Civic Engagement. In addition, Xavier was a mentor with the Dean of Student Office and has been involved the Swift Factory neighborhood revitalization project with Community Solutions, and the Hartford Urban League. Xavier currently works with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and has analyzed data related to Child Fatalities and Arrest Reports to inform future research and funding efforts that will support policy change.

## *Student Employee of the Year*

*This award honors the outstanding contributions and achievements of students who work on-campus or earn their work-study off-campus in community service positions at agencies with an established Federal Work-Study contract with the University. This award was established in 1998 and is sponsored by Student Financial Aid Services.*

### *Recipient*



#### **Jessica Gagnon**

Jessica is a senior Psychology major and is in the Honor's program. She has been a student employee with the Honors Program as a student instructional specialist for a few years and has made her impact on her peers as well as the full time employees in the office. She exhibits empathetic listening skills during stressful and difficult conversations with her peers and is knowledgeable in the various resources available to guide students towards additional support. She is committed to her team, but more importantly, she is committed to the success of each first year honor's student.



## *Student Employee Supervisor of the Year*

*This award was established to recognize permanent staff members of UConn who supervise student employees and to acknowledge these staff members and the work they do. This award was established in 2016 and is sponsored by Student Financial Aid Services.*

### *Recipient*



#### **Stephanie Parker**

Stephanie is a Program Assistant in the Dean of Students Office. She is dedicated, welcoming, and creates a comfortable work environment not only for the student employees, but also for the students and families that come to the office. As a supervisor, one of her main responsibilities is training the student, front line staff to be sensitive, knowledgeable and confident with various tasks. Stephanie is known by her students as pushing them to make them better and by always being there as a professional and personal resource.

## *Student Organization Advisor of the Year*

*This award honors an advisor(s) of a student organization who has provided outstanding service and advisement to an organization. This award was established prior to 2002 and is sponsored by Leadership and Organizational Development.*

### *Recipient*



#### **Eric Bouchard**

Eric serves as the primary staff advisor to two of UConn's largest student organizations, SUBOG and HuskyTHON. He has made it his goal to assist his students in creating goals for themselves and holding them accountable to following through with those goals. Eric has made it a part of his advising philosophy to serve his students and work collaboratively with them to make their aspirations come to fruition. Eric is known by his students to be a constant source of support, one who creates a welcoming environment, and someone who inspires and brings out the best in all students he works with.