UCONN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

PUBLIC ISSUES COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

June 22, 2026

Time: 4:00 – 5:00 pm
Location: Microsoft Teams

Voting Members Present:	Drs. Thomas Agresta (arrived: 4:08), Anton Alerte, Jenna Bartley, Audrey Chapman (arrived: 4:13), Emil Coman (arrived: 4:19), Jaclyn Jaeger, Neena Qasba, Linda Sprague Martinez (arrived: 4:08), Christopher Steele (arrived: 4:30), D. Anthony Yoder, and Ms. Miriam Miller, and Deb Polun
Voting Members Excused:	Dr. Kirstin Guertin and Ms. Carolyn Alessi
Others in Attendance:	Dr. Patrick Murphy, Oversight Committee Liaison
Non-Voting Members Excused/Absent:	Dr. Linda Barry, ex officio member

Meeting was called to order at 4:03pm by chair, Dr. Jenna Bartley.

1. **Update from Deans Council and Oversight Committee:**

   Dean's Council:
   Dr. Jaclyn Jaeger stated that in Dean's Council, Clinical Council reported continued expansion of primary care services in Southington and East Hartford, with efforts underway to establish a point person for clinicians seeking privileges at the new Waterbury sites. While the clinical budget is slightly behind projections, work RVUs (Relative Value Unit) and productivity remain 2–3% above target. Education Council reported to Dean's Council no issues with recent Step 2 exams, though anatomy scores were noted to be below national averages. Discussion at Dean's Council also focused on the proposed merger of the Center for Vascular Biology and Cell Biology; Center for Vascular Biology faculty unanimously opposed the merger, citing concerns about unclear benefits related to cost savings and productivity.

   Oversight Committee:
   Dr. Patrick Murphy reported that at the Oversight Committee reviewed proposed bylaws revisions to align with current reporting structures and LCME (Liaison Committee on Medical Education) expectations, including clarifying that the Dean reports to the provost on academic and non-clinical matters and collaborates with the Executive Vice President in managing clinical practice. The Committee also discussed faculty salary increases and upcoming leadership changes, as current Chair Dr. Parham Kourosh plans to step down with a new chair appointment anticipated later this summer.

2. **Approval of Meeting Minutes as presented from May 22, 2026:**

   Motion made by Dr. Thomas Agresta, seconded by Dr. Audrey Chapman, to approve the meeting minutes from May 22, 2026.

Favor to approve:	Drs. Thomas Agresta, Anton Alerte, Jenna Bartley, Audrey Chapman, Emil Coman, Jaclyn Jaeger, Neena Qasba, Linda Sprague Martinez, Christopher Steele, D. Anthony Yoder, and Ms. Miriam Miller, and Deb Polun
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Motion Passed:	12:0

3. **Discussion of Interim chair and possible summer meetings:**

Dr. Jenna Bartley informed the Council that her term will conclude at the end of June and emphasized the need for nominations for both an interim chair and a permanent chair. Following discussion of summer attendance, members agreed that holding meetings with limited participation would not be productive. The Council plans to reconvene in September, with efforts underway to solicit chair nominations prior to that meeting.

Motion made by Dr. Jaclyn Olsen, seconded by Ms. Deb Polun to approve the cancellation of the July and August meetings.

Favor to approve:	Drs. Thomas Agresta, Anton Alerte, Jenna Bartley, Audrey Chapman, Emil Coman, Jaclyn Jaeger, Neena Qasba, Linda Sprague Martinez, Christopher Steele, D. Anthony Yoder, and Ms. Miriam Miller, and Deb Polun
Against:	0
Abstain:	0
Motion Passed:	12:0

4. **Public Issues Council Communications regarding Federal Student Loan Changes on Healthcare Professionals:**

Discussion continued regarding the Council's first potential article to be submitted through the newly approved communications process. Members reviewed a draft story on the potential impact of student loan changes on healthcare professionals and discussed the need to develop a fully written article for submission to University Communications. Additional ideas included connecting the topic to UConn Health's recent clinical expansion efforts and the importance of strengthening primary care services. Members also discussed broader workforce development challenges, including the loss of funding for summer research and training programs, and how such issues might be incorporated into future public-facing communications where appropriate.

5. **Future Topics for Public Issues Council Consideration:**

Members reviewed previously identified public policy and healthcare topics, including AI in medicine, medical misinformation, healthcare access, health disparities, reproductive health, cannabis legalization, and the politicization of medicine. Discussion focused on prioritizing topics that align with UConn Health's mission and strategic goals. Several members emphasized the importance of addressing healthcare workforce shortages, particularly in primary care, recruitment and retention challenges, provider burnout, and disparities in access to care across Connecticut communities. Members also discussed framing future topics around their impact on patients, communities, and the healthcare system to support meaningful public engagement and advocacy.

Adjournment:

Having completed the agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Liza M. Bocchichio

Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting

[Public Issues Council Operating Guidelines]

September 28, 2026
October 26, 2026
November 30, 2026
December 28, 2026
January 25, 2027
February 22, 2027
March 22, 2027
April 26, 2027
May 24, 2027
June 28, 2027