University of Connecticut

Dean of the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources

and

Director, Connecticut Cooperative Extension System and the Storrs Agricultural Experiment Station
The Search

The University of Connecticut (UConn), one of the nation’s leading public research universities, seeks a visionary and dynamic leader to serve as the Dean of its College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources (CAHNR), and Director of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System and the Storrs Agricultural Experiment Station. UConn seeks candidates who have a comprehensive resume of success in academic leadership roles and who can demonstrate exceptional skills and experience that will enable them to lead a research and educational enterprise across multiple campuses. For the past decade, the University has been on a remarkable journey of expansion and growth. By every measure, from student diversity to research grants, UConn has enhanced its standing. Today, UConn is ranked among the top 20 public research universities nationwide. As the chief executive officer for the CAHNR, the Dean will set the standard of intellectual engagement and accomplishment for the College.

The Dean will provide strategic vision and operational leadership to all aspects of the academic and scholarly program, setting priorities for the College and guiding it toward strategic goals of enhancing scholarship, promoting research and outreach, and providing excellence in undergraduate and graduate education in an academic setting with a diverse population of students, faculty, and staff. In consultation with University officials, the Dean will appoint endowed faculty chairs and professorships and increase faculty awards and fellowships. The Dean is the College’s chief advocate, promoting its goals and achievements, leading its development and fund-raising activities, and speaking for its mission of excellence in scholarship, teaching, and extension outreach. Supporting the University’s research mission, the Dean will advance the scholarly activities of the faculty, including interdisciplinary opportunities. The Dean will also be the College’s public voice, promoting collegiate initiatives within UConn and across the state, articulating the College’s contributions at the local, state, regional, national, and international levels. In pursuing these responsibilities, the Dean, who reports to the Provost, will work collaboratively with the President and Provost, and with Vice Presidents, Vice Provosts, other Deans, and Department Heads.

The successful candidate will be a nationally recognized, self-assured, entrepreneurial leader prepared to extend and expand the sense of pride, of purpose, and of excellence already characteristic of the UConn CAHNR. With experience in a research university, the ideal candidate will have demonstrated success as an educator, a researcher committed to the search for new knowledge, a sophisticated administrator, and someone able to imagine new possibilities for the College.

The University of Connecticut has retained the services of the executive search firm Heidrick & Struggles to conduct this important search. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.
The University

The University of Connecticut is one of the top public research universities in the nation, with faculty and students pursuing answers to critical questions in labs, lecture halls, and the community. Knowledge exploration throughout the University’s network of campuses is united by a culture of innovation. An unprecedented commitment from the state of Connecticut ensures UConn attracts internationally renowned faculty and the world’s brightest students. In just twenty years, the University’s ranking by U.S. News & World Report among public universities has risen from 38 in 1998 to 18 in 2018.

Founded in 1881, UConn is a Land Grant and Sea Grant college and member of the Space Grant Consortium. It is the state’s flagship institution of higher education and includes a main campus in Storrs, CT, four regional campuses, and 13 Schools and Colleges, including a Law School, and Medical and Dental Schools at the UConn Health campus in Farmington. The University has approximately 10,000 faculty and staff and 32,000 students, including more than 23,000 undergraduates and over 8,000 graduate/professional students. UConn is a Carnegie Foundation R1 (highest research activity) institution.

In 2011, the state of Connecticut authorized Bioscience Connecticut, which provides funding to UConn to enhance UConn Health’s facilities, support greater research innovation, and grow the number of scientists and students in UConn’s Medical and Dental Schools. The Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine built a new research campus adjacent to the Health Center campus as a direct result of the state’s investment in Bioscience Connecticut, enabling Connecticut to assume a position of global leadership in developing new medical treatments tailored to each patient’s unique genetic makeup.

In 2013, the state legislature enacted Next Generation Connecticut, a ten-year capital investment that has increased the size of UConn’s student body, dramatically enhanced physical infrastructure for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math programs, and created premiere STEM programs. In addition, in recent years, the University implemented one of the most ambitious faculty-hiring plans in U.S. higher education strategically to expand its faculty in key research and teaching areas and to increase the number of classes offered.

Thanks to the impressive support of the State of Connecticut, UConn has been undergoing well over a decade of growth at the same time that many other universities have been compelled to restrict or reduce their efforts. UConn’s total budget for 2018 was $2.4 billion, and the current value of its endowment is approximately $422 million. The University receives over $185 million in research awards and is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The University has approximately 254,000 alumni worldwide, 135,000 of whom live in Connecticut. Student diversity continues to increase, as does the number of honor students, valedictorians, and salutatorians who consistently make UConn their top choice. UConn’s retention rate is among the best for public universities in the nation, with 94 percent of students returning for their sophomore year.

The University of Connecticut is dedicated to excellence demonstrated through national and international recognition. Through freedom of academic inquiry and expression, UConn creates and disseminates knowledge by means of scholarly and creative achievements, graduate and professional education, and outreach. With a focus on teaching and learning, the University helps every student grow intellectually and become a contributing member of the state, national, and world communities. As a Land and Sea Grant Institution, UConn is particularly engaged in outreach activities through its extension program, which is housed within CAHNR.
Through research, teaching, service, and outreach, UConn embraces diversity and cultivates leadership, integrity, and engaged citizenship in its students, faculty, staff, and alumni. As the state’s flagship public university, and as a Land and Sea Grant institution, UConn promotes the health and well-being of citizens by enhancing the social, economic, cultural, and natural environments of the state and beyond.

The University serves as a beacon of academic and research excellence as well as a center for innovation and social service to communities. UConn is a leader in many scholarly, research, and innovation areas. Today, the path forward includes exciting opportunities and notable challenges. Record numbers of undergraduate applications and support for student success have enabled the University to become extraordinarily selective.

The College of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources (CAHNR)

UConn CAHNR is located on its main campus in Storrs, with teaching and research activities extending also to its four regional campuses in Avery Point, Hartford, Stamford, and Waterbury. The College evolved from the original Storrs Agricultural School, established in 1881. As Connecticut’s Land Grant university, UConn has federal and state mandates to carry out the tripartite mission of teaching, research, and outreach education. College faculty, staff, and students explore the interrelationships among food, natural resources, and human and animal health, seeking to connect them in a manner that is economically viable and environmentally sustainable.

The College consists of 9 departments (Agricultural and Resource Economics, Allied Health Sciences, Animal Science, Extension, Kinesiology, Natural Resources and the Environment, Nutritional Sciences, Pathobiology and Veterinary Science, and Plant Science and Landscape Architecture), offering 16 undergraduate majors and 17 undergraduate minors, along with 18 PhD, MS, and graduate certificate programs. It is also the home to 12 interdisciplinary research and clinical centers and institutes. CAHNR has a $54 million annual budget, 140 full-time faculty, and 110 staff. Undergraduate enrollment is over 1850; graduate and professional enrollment is around 320. The Storrs Agricultural Experiment Station administers the College’s research programs, while the Cooperative Extension system works with 40,000 volunteers and eight Extension Centers, as well as the CT Sea Grant Extension Program, to provide outreach education to Connecticut citizens.

The research programs of the College are broad in scope, with faculty in each of its academic departments supported by extensive extramural funding programs. Annual research expenditures for CAHNR are $20 million. The faculty includes internationally renowned, award-winning scholars across the disciplines in fields ranging from traditional agricultural disciplines to natural resources and health sciences. Increasingly, exciting new areas of research are emerging at the intersection of departments, as faculty pursue interdisciplinary work that brings together multiple methods of inquiry. These interdisciplinary interests and opportunities are further catalyzing collaborations between CAHNR faculty and colleagues from other colleges, schools, centers, and institutes throughout the University.
The Leadership Opportunity

CAHNR is a unique college amongst its peer set, borne out of an important heritage and mission. It is the oldest college at UConn and the College serves a state known more for its burgeoning local, sustainable agriculture and cutting-edge environmental protection than for traditional, large-scale agribusiness.

As such, CAHNR has grown to become a diversified, modern college that addresses a broad set of pressing issues, from food production to the natural environment to health outcomes in humans and animals. The faculty at UConn CAHNR are deeply committed to research and to their students and, given its breadth and collaborative approach, the College addresses the crucial interconnectivity of these challenges. Likewise, because of its mission to serve the state of Connecticut, the College is an important, necessary influencer and actor in Connecticut’s agriculture, its environmental protection, and its economy.

Given the changing landscape of the state and national economy, environment, and higher education, the College must continue to innovate. The Dean will lead the College in that evolution, drawing from all assets of the enterprise, from the College to the extension system to the experiment station. From development of new programs, to attracting new sources of extramural funding, to encouraging more cross-disciplinary collaboration: the Dean will work with the faculty and staff to continue the College’s evolution to address some of the most pressing issues facing society.

UConn will welcome a Dean who thrives on innovation and the challenges and opportunities of developing, organizing, and managing new initiatives. The Dean will articulate a vision for the College, defining its role in research and teaching within the University community, the state, and the nation. From that vision, the Dean will shape the organization and, with the faculty, configure, create, and grow programs and attract a student body to realize their success.

The Dean will also serve as a uniter of the College, ensuring that different departments and disciplines are not only unimpeded, but encouraged, to collaborate further. Of course, the Dean will be responsible for leading fundraising efforts for the College and encouraging faculty to identify new streams of funding. Finally, the Dean of CAHNR is naturally and necessarily a visible figure in the state; the next Dean will continue to serve as an important voice and advocate to the state government, regulatory agencies, industry groups, and mission-oriented non-profit organizations. This is an extraordinary opportunity for an individual with the drive, skill, and experience to bring creative leadership to the organization and to play a meaningful role in shaping its future. The new Dean will embrace these opportunities, helping to realize the potential of UConn CAHNR. The Dean will build on a solid foundation to contribute to the College and its diverse constituents to pursue important opportunities, including:

- Provide visionary and strategic leadership for CAHNR
- Recruit, retain, and develop excellent faculty
- Aggressively advance research and sponsored programs across the College
- Foster an active, engaged, and dynamic teaching and learning environment
- Oversee financial decisions and create clear and efficient processes, staffing, and structures
- Support and promote a diverse and inclusive culture, including the hiring and retaining of faculty and staff from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds
- Strengthen and expand engagement of CAHNR with the public, including but not restricted to Extension outreach activities
The Position

Reporting to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs for all matters, the Dean is the chief academic and administrative officer of the CAHNR, responsible for providing strategic vision and operational leadership to all aspects of the academic and scholarly program. The Dean also serves as the Director of both the Connecticut Cooperative Extension System and the Storrs Agricultural Experiment Station.

The Dean oversees faculty appointments, along with the promotion, tenure, and review process in CAHNR. The Dean has administrative responsibility for undergraduate education and, in partnership with the Dean of the Graduate School, for graduate education within the College. The Dean is also responsible for implementation of academic rules and regulations, academic advising, promotion of academic integrity, faculty staffing and development, research activities, management of academic resources, oversight of academic departments, interdisciplinary centers, institutes, and programs, and other academic activities within the College.

Reporting to the Dean are the Associate Dean of Academic Programs, the Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies, the Associate Dean of Extension, and the College’s nine department heads. In addition, the Dean’s office is staffed by the Head of the Office of Communications, the Head of Business Affairs, the Head of the Office of Information Technology, the Director of Alumni Relations and Development, and the Dean’s Executive Assistant.

The Dean will lead the College in promoting an innovative research environment and educational programs. The Dean assists the President and Provost in representing the University on matters related to its core missions of research, education, and outreach. The Dean partners with the UConn Foundation to assure robust fundraising and alumni relations. The successful candidate will be a nationally recognized, strong, self-assured, entrepreneurial leader able to infuse UConn CAHNR with a sense of pride, of purpose, and of excellence.

Qualifications

The University of Connecticut seeks a dynamic leader that must have at least the following minimum knowledge and skills:

- A Ph.D. in a relevant field, or an equivalent degree.
- Credentials that merit appointment at the rank of full professor in one of CAHNR’s departments.
- A proven leader and talented administrator.

The successful candidate must have the following traits:

- A profound sense of integrity and professionalism.
- A deep commitment to excellence.
The ideal candidate will also have the following preferred characteristics:

- Demonstrated experience at a research university and success as a researcher committed to the search for new knowledge.
- Demonstrated capability to support research at the student and faculty levels, and to foster interdisciplinary collaboration.
- A robust understanding of the process required for gaining extramural research funding.
- Demonstrated success as an educator and a genuine appreciation of, and good rapport with, students.
- The ability to imagine new possibilities for the College, develop and articulate a vision, and develop and implement effective strategic plans, including the ability to translate institutional strategy into operational goals, and to specify and prioritize short and long-range objectives.
- Experience as an agent of innovation and change achieving excellence across a complex organization.
- A demonstrable track-record of administrative achievement that gives strong evidence of his or her capacity to manage a complex College, including its budget, workforce, and programs.
- The skills to navigate the organizational, political, and fiscal realities unique to a major public research university, and to make changes to improve current practice, including effective advocacy for the resources required to uphold mandates and achieve aspirations.
- Familiarity with the distinctive features of, and opportunities for, a Land and Sea Grant institution.
- Demonstrated capability to manage professional and support staff effectively, including hiring, motivating, training, developing, and evaluating the job performance of employees.
- A strong record of accomplishment with respect to promoting diversity, including assessing needs, developing initiatives, and applying best practices.
- The ability to recruit and retain highly desirable research and instructional faculty in a competitive environment.
- The ability to work productively and cooperatively with administrators, faculty, students, staff, educators, and community leaders as partners to advance the University’s research, teaching, engagement, outreach, and service missions.
- Significant experience with outreach and cross-organizational cooperation.
- Experience and/or the clear potential to represent the College articulately and compellingly to external constituencies, enhancing the visibility and impact of its work while increasing gifts, funded research, and other mission-aligned revenue.
- The ability to develop and maintain an active alumni network.
- Strong written, oral, and interpersonal skills; the ability to communicate the College’s needs, plans, and programs effectively.
To Apply

The University of Connecticut is committed to building and supporting a multicultural and diverse community of students, faculty, and staff. UConn’s faculty and staff are the critical link to fostering and expanding our vibrant, multicultural and diverse University community. As an Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity employer, UConn encourages applications from women, veterans, people with disabilities and members of traditionally underrepresented populations.

Employment of the successful candidate is contingent upon the successful completion of a pre-employment criminal background check. All employees are subject to adherence to the State Code of Ethics which may be found at http://www.ct.gov/ethics/site/default.asp.

Review of applications, nominations, and expressions of interest will begin immediately and continue on a confidential basis until an appointment is made.

All inquiries, nominations/referrals, and applications (including curriculum vitae and letters of interest responding to the position challenges and objectives outlined above) will be held in the strictest confidence and should be submitted to Heidrick & Struggles at uconn-CAHNRdean@heidrick.com.
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Heidrick & Struggles serves the executive leadership needs of the world’s top organizations as a trusted advisor for leadership consulting, culture shaping and senior-level executive search services. Our data driven solutions empower senior executives and boards of directors to transform their organizations by leveraging top talent and accelerating performance across all layers of the business.