

A photograph of three students in a greenhouse. A Black male student in a blue hoodie is on the left, looking down at a plant. A female student in a red sweater is in the center, looking at the camera with a slight smile. A female student with glasses and long brown hair is on the right, looking towards the camera. They are surrounded by various green plants and branches. The text 'COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES' is overlaid in the center, with 'LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES' in yellow and 'COLLEGE OF' in white.

COLLEGE OF  
**LIBERAL  
ARTS AND  
SCIENCES**

**UConn**



📷 Cover: Graduate students **Maurice Amee**, **Noorpreet Kaur**, and **Lindsey Kollmer** at the UConn Botanical Conservatory greenhouses in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.

📷 Below: Is the in-person experience richer than watching an event on TV? A study, led by **Gabriela Baranowski Pinto '19 Ph.D.** and conducted with **Associate Professor of Anthropology Dimitris Xygalatas**, analyzed data from 182 UConn fans who attended or watched basketball games during the regular season. Fans who attended games at Harry A. Gampel Pavilion were outfitted with wearable heart monitors, as were those who watched games in small groups on a 102-inch television in the lab. Researchers found that live events created more heart rate synchrony among spectators, which led to a more transformative and emotional experience.

## CONTENTS

- 2** From the Dean  
A message from Dean Juli Wade
- 3** Anti-Racism at the Forefront  
New CLAS faculty advance social justice
- 4** Preserving Connecticut's Coastline  
Long Island Sound reserve will protect the State's estuaries
- 5** New Degrees in Data Science  
Two new majors meet a demand for training in 'big data'
- 5** A Smooth Transition  
Students transferring from regional campuses to Storrs get help from veteran campus changers
- 6** An Alaskan Adventure  
One student's account of the Juneau Icefield Research Program
- 6** UConn's First Schwarzman Scholar  
The program recognizes leadership and work to bridge cultural differences
- 7** Malerba Named First Native American U.S. Treasurer  
The CLAS alum is also the first female Chief of the Mohegan Tribe
- 8** Supporting Future Leaders  
CLAS alumni mentor women undergraduates and build lasting friendships
- 9** By The Numbers
- 10** Transforming K-12 Curricula  
CLAS faculty contribute expertise to rejuvenated school courses



## **COLLEGE LEADERSHIP**

**Dean**  
Juli Wade

**Associate Dean for Diversity,  
Equity, and Inclusion**  
Katharine Capshaw

**Associate Dean for Research  
and Graduate Affairs**  
Ofel Harel

**Associate Dean for Life  
and Physical Sciences**  
Andrew Moiseff

**Associate Dean for Social  
Sciences, Regional Campuses,  
and Community Engagement**  
Bandana Purkayastha

**Associate Dean for Humanities  
and Undergraduate Affairs**  
Evelyn Tribble



Dear Friends,

As the largest, broadest, and by many measures, most diverse college at UConn, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the backbone of the University. Our faculty educate nearly every UConn undergraduate across core disciplines and novel interdisciplinary areas of study. Their research and creative activities advance knowledge and help to shape the future of Connecticut and the world beyond.

This year, we focused on advancing research and scholarship in areas of academic strength, as well as offering new courses and programs designed to improve student success.

I am particularly proud of progress in efforts that combine our priorities of advancing research with those related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. These include bringing outstanding new faculty scholars to UConn; you can meet a few of these excellent scholars on these pages.

We also continue our tradition of preparing students for their careers. Beginning this fall, our students will be able to pursue a BA in Applied Data Analysis or BS in Statistical Data Science. We also will offer an expanded peer-to-peer mentoring program for students transferring to Storrs from regional campuses, following on the great success of last year's pilot program.

As we ease out of the pandemic, we are finding new ways to engage with the community and make a strong impact across Connecticut. This year our faculty gave expert input into state requirements for K-12 curricula, including new social studies and history standards.

Thank you for your continued support of UConn and CLAS.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juli Wade". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Juli Wade**  
Dean

# Anti-Racism at the Forefront

CLAS investments in new faculty who study social justice and anti-racism have led to novel courses and programs dealing with discrimination and its effects on society. The new faculty below will benefit not only the College, but the whole University.

## Jolaade Kalinowski

Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Sciences



Jolaade Kalinowski comes from what she calls a long line of strong Black women who have experienced adversity and embodied Black feminism. Despite high rates of hypertension in

American Black women, and the known link between hypertension and cardiovascular disease, few studies have investigated this population. Her studies look at stress measurements in women who have survived heart attack, to help understand the role of stress in their health. She hopes her work will bring women's health issues, particularly Black women's issues, more exposure.

**"It's important to look at challenges that are common and normalized that shouldn't be. I have a moral obligation to do this work."**

## Elva Orozco Mendoza

Assistant Professor of Political Science and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies



Orozco Mendoza's research centers on feminist analyses of maternal activism in Latin America. Her forthcoming book, tentatively titled "The Maternal Contract: A Decolonial Approach to

Subaltern Justice in the Americas," theorizes the concept of a maternal contract. In the classroom, Orozco Mendoza incorporates authors and texts from the global south to encourage students to develop a global perspective and be able to think across histories and experiences.

## Briona Simone Jones

Assistant Professor of English and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies



Jones specializes in African American literature, feminist and queer theory, and Black queer studies. She has published a collection of Black Lesbian writings titled "Mouths of Rain: An

Anthology of Black Lesbian Thought," which focuses on the intellectual, cultural, and political productions of Black lesbians, and has been called the most comprehensive anthology of Black Lesbian thought to date. Jones's teaching philosophy includes centering the knowledge and experiences of Black, Indigenous, and queer people of color and other underrepresented students.

## Jiyoun Suk

Assistant Professor of Communication and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies



Specializing in big data and diversity, Suk uses computational approaches such as natural language processing, social network analysis, and machine learning to examine how

communication processes influence civic trust and activism. She has examined how sharing trauma and showing solidarity supported and sustained #MeToo activism on Twitter. Through her research, Suk seeks to enhance people's understanding of diverse populations and attitudes toward them.

## Sandy Grande

Professor of Political Science and Native American Studies



A Quechua national, Grande came to UConn as part of a Native American and Indigenous Studies cluster hiring initiative. Her research works across the fields of Native American and

Indigenous studies, contemporary political theory, education, and comparative ethnic studies. Grande's upcoming book, "Indigenous Elders and the Decolonial Elsewhere of Aging," explores what can be learned about the colonial present through the study of elders and older adults.

**"Some institutions want scholars who happen to be Indigenous. And other institutions make room for Indigenous scholars. The way we do work is different, and UConn is beginning to understand that."**

## Ayanna De'Vante Spencer

Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies



Spencer's research weaves together Black feminist theory, sexual violence literature, and settler colonial studies. Through her work with Girls for Gender Equity and the Firecracker

Foundation, Spencer's research examines structures of knowledge verification that contribute to what is called the "sexual abuse to prison pipeline." As a first-generation college graduate, Spencer is committed to equity and inclusion in her classes and is a strong proponent of undergraduate research.

**"Bringing new, diverse faculty to the College benefits all UConn students, who now have access to these world experts, both as teachers in the classroom and researchers who will advance knowledge and policy on racial equity."**

- Juli Wade, Dean



# Preserving Connecticut's Coastline

This year, UConn and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) designated 52,160 acres of Long Island Sound, adjacent marshes, and upland areas as the Connecticut National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR).

The area includes the lower Connecticut and Thames Rivers, several islands and state parks, and UConn's Avery Point campus in Groton. It is the 30th NOAA reserve of its kind in the country.

The CLAS Department of Marine Sciences and the nonprofit Connecticut Sea Grant were instrumental in efforts on behalf of UConn to create the research and preservation reserve, which will ensure these special places are properly cared for by leveraging the existing rules in place for state parks, preserves, and waters of Connecticut.

Research and conservation efforts in estuarine reserves of this kind have shown tangible benefits. NOAA analyses of other reserve sites around the country show millions of dollars of annual revenue and thousands of jobs created by preserving these estuaries. In Connecticut, the reserve is expected to protect economically important habitats and ecosystems that are key to the shellfish industry that operates along the shoreline.

As a living laboratory for marine science activities, the reserve will also provide opportunities for students and researchers to get their hands and feet in the water and salt marshes as they learn about critical habitats for birds, fish, and other marine life.




---

**“We hope that the reserve can serve as a focal point for the ecosystem services provided by estuaries.”**

George McManus, UConn professor of marine sciences and interim manager of the reserve.

---



## New Undergraduate Degrees in Data Science

Data scientist jobs are on the rise, stemming from an increased demand for data-driven business and political decisions. Beginning in Fall 2023, the College will offer two new undergraduate degrees: a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Statistical Data Science and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Applied Data Analysis. Students enrolled in the interdisciplinary programs will explore data generation, analysis, visualization, and ethics. Students will select domain areas that range from American political institutions to financial analysis to population dynamics.

### A Smooth Transition

The UConn Fostering Ideal Regional Student Transitions (FIRST) program, spearheaded by **Michael Finiguerra, associate professor-in-residence of ecology and evolutionary biology**, is helping regional campus students make a smooth transition to Storrs. Finiguerra did a preliminary analysis on transfer students, which showed that many suffered a reduction in science course grades upon moving to Storrs. Follow-up surveys showed that the reasons included unfamiliar course formats; difficulty navigating support systems at the larger campus; and a poor sense of community.

With his colleague **John Redden, associate professor-in-residence of physiology and neurobiology**, Finiguerra recruited 15 Storrs students who had transferred from regional campuses as mentors. During the Spring 2022 semester, the cohort met with their mentees in small-group sessions. Their marquis event was a day-long field trip to Storrs, where students got to know one another, attended a class in their major, ate in dining halls, and toured campus with their mentors.

The program is part of Finiguerra's work as a College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Leadership Fellow in the Office of the Dean.





## An Alaskan Adventure

### Caroline Wexler '24 (CLAS)

spent eight weeks traversing 75 miles across Southeast Alaska and Canada as part of the Juneau Icefield Research Program. Hosted by the University of Maine, the academic course brings together students interested in glacier science and field skills training. Wexler learned how to navigate through remote and hostile environments, while performing remote field work with faculty members from around the world. She presented her research at the American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting in Chicago.



## UConn's First Schwarzman Scholar

**Nidhi Nair '23 (CLAS)**, a former CLAS Student Leadership Board member, was named UConn's first Schwarzman Scholar. Selected from more than 3,000 applicants worldwide, Nair will join 150 fellow scholars at Tsinghua University in Beijing in pursuit of a one-year master's degree. The program highlights students who have demonstrated exemplary leadership qualities and the potential to understand and bridge cultural and political differences. The scholars come from 36 countries and 121 universities from around the world.





© Associated Press Photo

## **Lynn Malerba '08 MPA Named First Native American United States Treasurer**

Lynn Malerba '08 MPA, who became the first female chief of the Mohegan Tribe in modern history in 2010, was this year named Treasurer of the United States by President Joe Biden. She is the first Native American to hold this position.

“I am honored to be chosen for the position of Treasurer,” said Malerba. “Since becoming Chief, I have done a lot of policy work at the federal level. I have done a lot of work with policy and issues around economic development for tribes and how we might improve some of the processes.”

Malerba initially gained experience at the Department of the Treasury when she was appointed to the Treasury Tribal Advisory Committee. As Treasurer, Malerba will supervise the newly established Office of Tribal and Native Affairs that will house staff directly dedicated to communication with tribal nations and the hub for tribal policy. Her signature will also appear on all United States paper currency.



## Supporting Future Leaders

The CLAS Women's Leadership Collective, which was founded in 2020, provides undergraduate students with a unique leadership learning experience coupled with group mentorship from UConn alums. In its first three years, nearly 150 students and alumni have participated in 35 different mentorship circles, which focus on career communities in social justice, counseling, law, international relations, policy, and more. They meet throughout the semester to identify career and life goals, develop leadership skills, and discuss issues that affect women in the workplace and society.

This year, Nicole Sanclemente '19 (CLAS) and Geraldine Uribe '23 (CLAS), who are both Latina and first-generation students, formed a special bond in the Women's Leadership Collective. Reflecting on Sanclemente's empathy and leadership, Uribe nominated her for the program's Outstanding Alumnae Mentor Award — and says they're now "like a family."



Learn how you can get involved and share your talents with UConn CLAS students.





## OUR MISSION

### The UConn College of Liberal Arts and Sciences transforms lives.

Through critical research and inquiry, creative education and mentorship, and ethical social engagement, we generate the foundational, collaborative environment that empowers all members of the UConn community to discover their agency and do meaningful work in the world.

## FAST FACTS

**9,725** Undergraduates  
49% of Degrees Earned

**53**

Undergraduate Majors

**66**

Undergraduate Minors

**64**

Graduate Degree and  
Certificate Programs

**1,063**

Graduate Students

**38**

Academic Units

**117,000+**

Alumni

**784** Faculty  
51% of UConn





📷 The Black and Latino History Project, a series of working groups for teachers to develop curriculum and resources on Black and Latino history, includes a workshop about agricultural labor in the state's shade tobacco industry.



📷 Members of Make Us Visible CT, including Jason Chang (fourth from left), stand outside the Connecticut State Capitol after the signing of the AAPI curriculum mandate in 2022.



📷 Avinoam Patt (center) stands with former Gov. Dannel Malloy in 2018 after passing legislation that mandates Holocaust and genocide education in Connecticut public schools.

## CLAS Experts Help Transform Connecticut K-12 Curricula

More than half of Connecticut's public school students came from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds in 2020-21, up from 44% in 2015-16. As the state's schools diversify, and yet the curriculum remains much the same as it has for decades, momentum has been building to move K-12 education in line with its students.

**Fiona Vernal, associate professor of history, and Anne Gebelein, associate director and associate professor in residence in El Instituto**, are collaborating with the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance, and Abolition at the MacMillan Center at Yale University on a Connecticut Humanities grant. The award supports the Black and Latino History Project (BLHP), a series of working groups for teachers to study and develop curriculum and resources on Black and Latino history. Teachers in the program are supported in developing collective units on three themes: shade tobacco, migration, and eugenics.

**Jason Oliver Chang, associate professor of history and director of the Asian and Asian American Studies Institute (AAASI)**, co-founded the first Make Us Visible state

chapter in January 2021, which successfully advocated for the integration of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) contributions, experiences, and histories in classrooms across Connecticut. AAPI studies will be required to be taught in the state's K-12 public schools by 2025.

**Avinoam Patt, Doris and Simon Konover Chair of Judaic Studies and director of the Center for Judaic Studies and Contemporary Jewish Life**, serves on the Connecticut Holocaust and Genocide Education Advisory Committee, which provides curriculum materials and resources to assist schools with implementation.

**Noga Shemer, assistant professor in residence of anthropology**, developed a K-4 toolkit for Mansfield elementary school teachers to build on themes related to events and holidays informally celebrated in the classroom. Teachers are provided with a set of books and lesson plans for every month of every grade, which allows students to explore diverse, historical, and intersectional perspectives as they discuss justice, injustice, and action.



**Office of the Dean**

215 Glenbrook Road, Unit 4098 | Storrs, CT | 06269-4098  
[clas.uconn.edu](http://clas.uconn.edu)