

*President Susan Herbst; Great Lawn Event – Along Storrs Road between N. Eagleville and Willowbrook – Wednesday, September 26, 1:30pm*

One of the great things about universities is that they will outlast all of us.

And so, when we work at an institution like this one, we can't lose sight of the fact that no matter how long our tenure may be, we are only its temporary champions and caretakers.

We are cognizant that we are not simply working for the present, but are also planting the seeds of success for the future.

And yet, as importantly, everywhere you go at old institutions like this one, you see many of our predecessors in the form portraits on the walls and names on the buildings.

They are a reminder that our obligation is not only to the future, but to the past.

We have to advance and grow – but also hold on to those traditions and achievements that are rooted in our beginnings.

The beautiful landscape at UConn is an incredibly important part of that.

It is not purely symbolic, or just nice to look at; it goes to the heart of who we are as an institution:

...a living, breathing, thriving place that is always changing, but also has a long, proud history behind it.

There are times in the life of a university when change is not what is called for, but constancy.

People come and go, but the physical university lives on and we must all ensure it receives the care and attention it deserves.

Because our success is not only reflected in the charts and graphs showing the quality of our students, or how productive our faculty are – it is in the physical state of our campus.

Every bit of lawn, every tree, flower bed, shrub, walkway and road tells us something about ourselves.

And it is the first and last thing our visitors and guests will see.

We must always improve and enliven our beautiful and historic landscape – and ensure it is being cared for properly– but we must never compromise it.

Great big state university campuses, which have grown at unprecedented rates in the last century, can be frustrating places when it comes to the landscape and facilities.

A walk across campus is like a tour through the decades.

You may be in a picture-perfect historic section one minute, like the lawn behind me, but just a few minute's walk from a grave architectural error.

Because sometimes short-sighted mistakes are made; I almost can't bear to recall the now-removed red temporary trailers that were plunked down right in our campus core.

It is for our reasons like that and many others that that we are hiring a master planner to map our physical growth wisely and consistently for the coming decades.

This event and the architecture of our landscape have a special significance for us here in Connecticut.

As some of you no doubt know, Frederick Law Olmstead, who many consider to be the father of landscape architecture in America, was born in Hartford.

Among his many achievements was the design of Central Park in New York City. Of it, he said:

“The Park throughout is a single work of art, and as such, subject to the primary law of every work of art, namely, that it shall be framed upon a

single, noble motive, to which the design of all its parts, in some more or less subtle way, shall be confluent and helpful.”

It is that sentiment that should have always guided the instincts of this university for more than 130 years when it comes to our landscape, and we'll do our part to ensure it will guide us into tomorrow.

Thank you for celebrating our beautiful campus.

We celebrate it today, and enjoy it every day.

Thank you.