

To the University Community,

I am writing to all of you because the Undergraduate Student Government is looking for your feedback and guidance on the issue of Spring Weekend.

Although most of you already know, Spring Weekend is an unsanctioned University event held the weekend before the conclusion of the spring semester. The event occurs over a three-day period and is held at multiple off-campus locations. Spring Weekend has become a UConn tradition for many students. However, there have been instances of underage drinking, sexual assault, and violent behavior that occur during the event. Last year, the University lost one of its own when Jafar Karzoun was knocked unconscious by a non-UConn student and later died as a result of the injuries he received.

At this time, the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) acknowledges the value in University traditions and the right to celebrate a year of academic achievement. However, we have received comments from students, faculty, and community members who say the University administration and law enforcement should put a stop to Spring Weekend. There are many who feel unsafe during the event and others who believe Spring Weekend is too costly for the State and the University.

In order to represent the student's interests to the administration, USG has decided to formally take a position on Spring Weekend, which is not something we have done in recent history. In order to better understand why USG is taking a formal position, I feel it is important to briefly describe our organization's role at the University. USG is the primary recognized voice of students to all audiences and actively partakes in the university-wide decision making process through representation and advocacy. Our job as elected leaders is to represent the interests of students to the administration, but to do this effectively we need to know how students feel and what students think.

In order to decide how our organization should approach Spring Weekend, we need your input. **This is why I would like to invite you to attend our Spring Weekend community forums. They will be held on:**

Wednesday, January 19, 2011 at 11:00am in Student Union 304B

Thursday, January 20, 2011 at 4:00pm in Student Union 104

Friday, January 21, 2011 at 4:00pm in Student Union 304C

These forums present an opportunity for the University community to express their thoughts, opinions, and concerns regarding Spring Weekend. We need to hear if you think Spring Weekend should continue. We need to hear if you feel unsafe during the event. We need to hear if you see value in this tradition. If we do not hear from you we can only represent our own opinions.

We invite faculty, staff, and community members to share their thoughts as well. We would like to receive feedback from the widest variety of constituencies.

I understand the timing is difficult, so if you are unable to attend these forums, we still want to hear what you think. Feel free to provide us with written testimony via email. Please send all written testimony to president@usg.uconn.edu.

Your thoughts and concerns will be shared with the entire USG Senate and strongly considered before we pass a final position.

The statement of position along with a report containing your testimony will be delivered to the University administration and used as our guide for future discussions involving Spring Weekend. Your feedback is crucial to helping us solve this community problem.

Thank you for reading this email. I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,

Tom