

The Dean's Almanac

Play "Stump The Dean"

September 20, 2006

Yeah, I know. It's been a while since I wrote. I've been waiting on a few answers to some of the questions you've sent in. Here they are:

- ▶ University Communications
- ▶ Yes.
- ▶ No.
- ▶ Not enough money.
- ▶ Because.
- ▶ Concerns about safety and issue.
- ▶ No.
- ▶ Because there are too many of you.
- ▶ No one really knows.



See below for the questions.

And how am I, you wonder? Fine. Thanks for asking. Now that I've been here a year, I can actually answer questions with some reasonable degree of accuracy (instead of trying to make up for my ignorance with enthusiasm, a strategy I don't recommend in your classes). So that's made the start of the year a bit less intimidating than last year. Sophomores, you are my people. Isn't it great not to be the newest kid on the block?

That's why I like to pick on my new colleagues, especially Todd Sullivan in Fraternity and Sorority Life and Christine Wilson in Student Activities. Sometimes I give them inaccurate directions to get somewhere just to see how late they'll show up. So if you see either of them wandering around, just smile encouragingly and be glad you don't work for me, too.

Okay, no. I don't really do that. I do, however, spend a lot of time watching you all get to places. I like to wander up Fairfield Way during class change times and watch you empty out of one building and head for another. I wonder about where you study, where you go to have a conversation, where you go to pray to St. Otter, patron saint of students who didn't study at all over the weekend. So send me a note and tell me where you like to go on campus for these and various other things.

Okay, so here's an interesting thing. I was stuck in Hillside Rd. traffic and saw a guy walk past me, looking like he was on his way to class, wearing a black fedora and a red rubber ball on his nose. Is he a friend of yours? Maybe you should tell him he's got a ball on his nose.

Hey, want to have lunch? I'm interested in treating a group of students to lunch at Chuck and Augie's for some conversation about UConn and your life here. Like to eat? Like to chat? Are you free on Wednesday, October 11 at noon? Yep—free lunch for the first eight students to email me (lee.williams@uconn.edu). I'll send you a reminder beforehand. If I have a good time, I'll do it again next month.

Onto the email bag. **Sarah** wants to know what's going on with the construction at Lakeside Apartments (across N. Eagleville from the Chem Building). They're renovating that space to house University Communications which is being displaced by Storrs Center (the downtown-in-a-box that's headed our way).

Preston expressed some concern about walking on King Hill Rd because of the drivers going too fast, the lack of sidewalks and the overgrowth of trees on the side of the road. I sent his note on to Dave Lotreck, Head Landscape Guy, and he went out and trimmed the branches, so hopefully it's at least a little safer. (Behold the awesome power of the Dean of Students: potholes filled and branches trimmed while-u-wait). Drivers—here's your fair warning. Slow down, because I'm also sending this note over to the Police and asking them to aggressively enforce the speed limit on that road.

Thep wants to know if the tap water in Grad Dorms is safe to drink. Yes. Does it taste good? It's a matter of preference, I guess. And speaking of safe, **Dipti** wants to know if Dining Services puts extra fiber in the food. People! They don't intentionally put anything weird in the food. No laxatives! No fiber! So eat up.

On a related note, though, the air around Carriage House has been found to be extremely hazardous to freshmen, so stay away from there. However, the air in Babbidge Library will give your hair more body, clear up your skin and just make you generally more attractive. So go there instead.

And speaking of the library, **Alea** wonders why there aren't more leisure-reading books in the library. Head Library Guy Brinley Franklin reports that the leisure reading section was started with a gift, but that the library can't afford to keep it stocked with current titles (they have other priorities, like academics or something). They get some current titles from a publisher that rotates them, but even these "fly off the shelves." The library would love to provide more of these, and suggests a class gift would be put to good use buying some good quality fiction and non-fiction that wouldn't normally be purchased by the academic side of the house.

Michelle would like to know why classrooms and residence halls are kept at such cold temperatures. And of course, she and others will wonder, come January, why they are ovens. The simple answer is that one person's cold is another person's comfortable, and trying to take into account everyone's preferences is impossible. The less simple answer is that very few of our buildings have zone heating and cooling, and since different rooms and floors retain different levels of heat due to location (think back to high school science), there will inevitably be differences within the building. Add to this the complexities of the human body and our differing abilities to regulate heat (an ability you lose as you get older, hence your grandmother's sweatbox of a house), and keeping everyone comfortable is impossible. So dress in layers and

remember that sandals with socks is not the biggest fashion faux pas in the world (that would be long orange gym shorts and black and yellow sneakers worn by the guy who is passing below my window at this very moment. Excuse me for a minute... Hey fella! What's up with the shorts?).

Parking questions continue to pour in. Here's one I can answer, from Gina, who wonders why the gate behind Hilltop Apartments, which was open during move-in, is now locked. The gate is there for fire engine access to the rear of the complex, but by agreement with the town (made when the plans for Hilltop were announced), the gate is kept closed to eliminate vehicle traffic through a residential neighborhood.

Speaking of the Fire Department, **Jennifer** wonders if the University insures your belongings in the event of a fire. No. Please insure your own belongings, which you can do most easily through a rider on your parents' homeowners' insurance.

Lastly, I am sorry, sorry, sorry about the lack of adequate student seating in Gampel and the Civic Center. Several of you have written to ask why we can't accommodate all students. The Division of Athletics is sympathetic to this, and that's why they came up with the different package plans this year. But it's just a supply-and-demand problem. I know you think that students should get first crack at seats, but you know what? Alumni think the same thing. Someday, you'll be alumni and you'll be complaining that we give too many seats to students. Alumni and other supporters also pay a lot more for their seats (my two season tickets—to see the women's team play in Gampel—will cost me about \$530, and your seats are better than mine). Athletics needs to generate revenue, and ticket sales is one way they can do it. For better or worse, the Huskies belong to the state of Connecticut, and the rabid support of the team means that some group or other is going to be too limited in their access to tickets.

So go see the women play (the games are just as much fun, and you'll actually get to see them play for an entire college career, which, for most of you, is four years...most of you). Watch the men on TV with friends (also a lot of fun, plus the food's better and the bathroom's closer).

Oh—and I don't know what's up with the steam plant on Glenbrook Road either. Is it going to explode? Probably not, but when that steam pours out with incredible force and noise, it freaks me out, too.

So email me. We'll do lunch.

Have a question? Heard a rumor? Just want to express your frustration? Send me a note at: Lee.Williams@uconn.edu.