

# Student Accessibility Services Restructuring Proposal

## *Preface—*

Student Accessibility Services, due to its minimal structure and lack of resources, does not currently meet the needs of students. Students seeking accommodations often feel belittled, patronized, and confused.

The following document outlines a structure that we believe will improve Student Accessibility Service's effect on the Connecticut College community by increasing student engagement, amplifying disabled voices, and redesigning the program's mission and procedures. These changes will create transparency and accountability within SAS that will help the program better serve students

This document is constructed by Adrien Landon, Owyn Ledina, Mads Eikinas, Anna Vredevoogd, and Minnie Madden. If these structures are adopted, as we hope they will be, we expect to be included in their implementation. That said, we do not claim to represent the whole disabled community. We all have different experiences and viewpoints. There is no one "disabled experience." At times, this document will reference the formation of a committee to oversee the application of this proposal. Through that body, we commit to include a variety of disabled voices separate from our own, especially those with other marginalized backgrounds—particularly in terms of race or ethnicity.

Various activities of Connecticut College have excluded disabled students due to the toxic combination of a physically inaccessible campus and a severely undersupported disability services organization. Our purpose is to offer a solution to this systemic problem.

## Article 1 - Name and Overview

*Section 1:* The name of this program is Student Accessibility Services, which may be abbreviated as SAS, and it is a program within the Connecticut College Division of Institutional Equity and Inclusion (DIEI).

*Section 2:* This program is established to serve the population of Connecticut College, including its disabled students, faculty, staff, and the greater community, as well as to provide educational services to all abled people associated with the College.

### *Section 3:* List of Abbreviations

CEA - Center for Equitable Access

DIEI - Division for Institutional Equity and Inclusion

RAD - Report of Accommodation Denial

SAS - Student Accessibility Services

SASRC - Student Accessibility Services Restructuring Committee

### *Section 4:* The Student Accessibility Services Restructuring Committee (SASRC)

- A. Immediately upon the acceptance of this proposal, the process will begin to form a committee called the SAS Restructuring Committee, hereafter referred to as SASRC. This body will be responsible for the implementation of this structure, amendments to its contents, and a variety of decisions referenced in Article 4A, Section 1Ah; Article 4A, Section 2Bb; Article 4A, Section 2Daii; Article 4B, Section 2Bb; Article 4B, Section 2Daii; Article 5A, Section 4Ab; Article 5A, Section 4Ba; Article 5B, Section 4Ab; Article 5B, Section 4Ba; Article 6, Section 2A; Article 6, Section 2B; Article 7, Section 1A; Article 7, Section 2; and Article 8, Section 1.

- B. This committee will have 11 members. The first five will be the authors of this document: Adrien Landon, Owyn Ledina, Mads Eikinas, Anna Vredevoogd, and Minnie Madden. The other six members will be duly elected Connecticut College students who are passionate about the values of this proposal as stated in Article 2, Section 1.
- C. Throughout the election process we will maintain full transparency. Any student may run for a seat, and depending on the number of interested students, the election process will vary.
  - a. If six or fewer students are interested, then no election will take place and the committee will begin. Structures and thresholds will be amended to accommodate its smaller size.
  - b. If more than six students apply, an election will take place shortly following the conclusion of the nomination period. Any Connecticut College student—excluding the five authors of this document—may vote in a rank-choice or multi-candidate selection system which will be clarified when that time comes to pass. While individual ballots will be private, all methods, statistics, and results of the voting system and election will be made completely public. As soon as possible after the results are in, the committee will begin meeting.
- D. If any member of the committee either cannot or chooses not to continue to hold their seat, a new election process will be held to replace them.
- E. This committee will meet a minimum of twice each semester until the implementation of the long-term structure. More details about the procedures of the committee will be determined by the committee after its formation.

## Article 2 - Purpose

*Section 1:* This program will promote several values among the whole Connecticut College community:

- A. Shameless and radical acceptance of all bodies for what they do for us; no one should ever be ashamed of the body or mind that they have.
- B. Accessible education, opportunity, and advancement for all people without prejudice on the basis of disability.
- C. Community inclusion and continual growth of programs and support networks as they relate to disabled students.

*Section 2:* This program will work towards accomplishing and continually updating its goals. For the time being, our core focuses are:

- A. To build community among disabled students, faculty, staff, other community members, and their allies. As of Spring 2023, these networks are lacking, and disabled students suffer from isolation, misunderstanding, and exclusion.
- B. To increase equitable access to resources of academic, social, and physical variety for students with various disabilities.
- C. To establish and conduct educational opportunities on topics related to disability and accessibility in order to create a more informed community.
- D. To promote and advise on the continuous growth of campus infrastructure with the goal of making the entire campus and its associated materials genuinely accessible.

*Section 3:* SAS will abide by the espoused values and policies of Connecticut College and work collaboratively with the other DIEI programs to help create a more inclusive community.

## Article 3 - Program Responsibilities

*Section 1:* SAS shall be responsible for approving and facilitating the implementation of accommodations for any legally-recognized disability.

- A. As an example, the ADA defines a person with a disability (or disabled person) as:
  - a. “a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment” ([Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](#)).
  - b. Throughout this document, “disabled” will align with the ADA’s definition of a person with a disability.
- B. The process for the application and evaluation of these accommodations is visualized in Figure 3 and Figure 3’.
- C. Connecticut College, and by extension SAS, is subject to all state and federal regulations concerning commitments to equal opportunity.

*Section 2:* SAS will establish and maintain a physical location on campus, which shall be genuinely accessible for both body and mind. This location will be called “The Center for Equitable Access” and abbreviated as CEA. It shall be functionally maintained by professional staff and operated primarily by student staff.

- A. DIEI-affiliated student organizations may use this space with permission from SAS staff as needed.
- B. SAS administrative offices must be in genuinely accessible proximity to this center, if not directly attached to or located within the center.

*Section 3:* SAS shall be responsible for working with all employees to support the needs of all disabled community members. These actions could be delegated to

various professional and student staff members on a case-by-case basis, and they may include, but are not limited to:

- A. Advocating on behalf of SAS-registered students if any of their accommodations are not provided in the spirit of their approval, especially in cases of negligence, misinformation, or ableism.
- B. Educating all employees about proper ways to address and communicate concerns with accommodations, accessibility, and/or inclusion.
- C. Helping advocate on behalf of disabled students, faculty, and staff for accessible classroom locations and materials.
- D. Educating and assisting staff and faculty in creating or acquiring accessible materials.
- E. Supporting individual disabled community members by making themselves available on a regular basis.

*Section 4:* SAS shall advise on campus grievances relating to ableism or disabled students. For example, if a student is facing disciplinary charges related to ableism or is disabled, the expertise of SAS staff may be called upon by bodies such as the Honor Council.

*Section 5:* SAS shall facilitate a variety of campus activities and events to foster greater community awareness of disability, ableism, and self-care. Many of these events ought to be to cultivate an engaged disabled community.

## Article 4 - Leadership/Employment Structure

We acknowledge that hiring additional staff members will take time, money, and resources. We expect the adoption of our long-term plan as soon as possible but require that the transition to the short-term structure begin immediately following the acceptance of student demands.

## Article 4A - Short-Term Structure

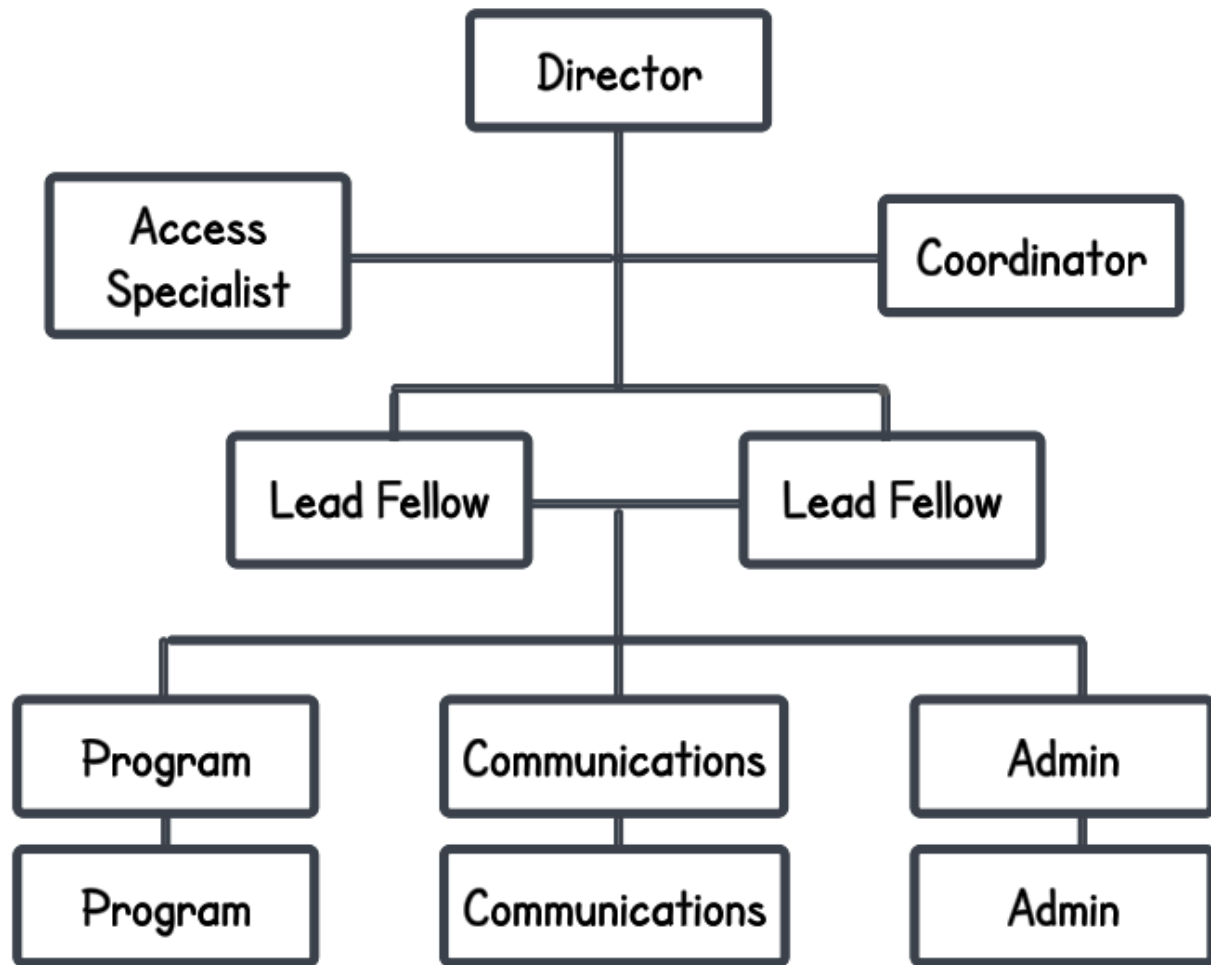


Figure 1- Short term proposed structure of SAS staff (modeled loosely after the structures of other DIEI programs).

*Section 1:* Three professional staff members will take on different responsibilities to lead SAS.

- A. The Director of Student Accessibility Services will manage the legal and administrative materials handled by the program and will be privy to medically sensitive documents as requested. They will be the primary contact for SAS among administrators, faculty, staff, and other employees, and they

will advise and be responsible for the activities of other staff, both student and professional.

- a. The Director will collaborate with the Access Specialist (Article 4A, Section 1C) to complete the responsibilities outlined in Article 3, Section 1, following the procedures visualized in Figure 3.
- b. Review RADs forms filled out by the Access Specialist (Article 4A, Section 1C), who will also be reviewing theirs (Figure 3 and Article 5A, Section 3Cc).
- c. They will assist with and/or delegate tasks outlined in Article 3, Section 3.
- d. The Director will also be responsible for protecting the autonomy and rights of SAS staff and disabled community members.
- e. The Director will also act in a limited maintenance role per Article 3, Section 2 and Article 5A, Section 2F.
  - i. They may delegate some of these center-related responsibilities to the Student Accessibility Services Coordinator or the Access Specialist if they are incapacitated or overwhelmed.
- f. The Director must approve all CEA programming plans with documented consent. They shall not design these programs—that role will be reserved primarily for student-staff—but they are responsible for responding to student-staff questions and requests for advice.
- g. The Director must perform bi-weekly (every two weeks) check-ins with all professional and student staff to remain aware of personal circumstances, in-progress projects, and any important updates to the SAS program.
- h. For the duration of the short-term model, they must be actively looking for and presenting candidates for the long-term positions, outlined in Article 4B, Section 1, to the SASRC defined in Article 1, Section 4.

- B. The Student Accessibility Services Coordinator will manage documents, finances, and communications for the program, including:
- a. Maintaining the online SAS portal where students submit accommodation requests and faculty notification letters.
  - b. Accepting and reviewing access issues reported in the campus form referenced in Article 7, Section 2. Relevant or repeat issues will result in full community notification emails, which they will promptly send.
  - c. Tracking and approving expenses for SAS, CEA, and potentially disability-related student organizations.
  - d. Acting as the third professional staff member involved in any Report of Accommodation Denial (RAD) disputes between the Access Specialist and the Director. This process is described thoroughly in Article 5A, Section 3Cc.
  - e. Every semester, presiding over a RADs review meeting as defined in Article 5A, Section 3D.
- C. The Access Specialist will work with students to mitigate their physical, psychological, and other disability barriers. They will draw from specific knowledge and experience to:
- a. Guide students through SAS procedures including—but not limited to—the approval of accommodations.
  - b. Evaluate student needs through the accommodation process visualized in Figure 3 and described in Article 5A, Section 3.
    - i. This includes taking accommodation meetings (Figure 3), approving or denying accommodation requests (Figure 3), filling out RADs forms for denied requests (Article 5A, Section 3C), and participating in the semesterly RADs review meeting (Article 5A, Section 3D).

- c. Review RADs forms filled out by the Director, who will also be reviewing theirs (Figure 3 and Article 5A, Section 3Cc).
- d. Mentor and support Connecticut College's disabled community.

*Section 2: SAS shall employ students in the following roles with the following responsibilities.*

- A. Lead Fellows will operate as the lead student staff members. They will work closely with professional and student staff to ensure a well-functioning program. At times, they may be trusted with confidential information, which they will never be permitted to share outside of the processes specified in Article 5A, Section 3D. In this position, they will:
  - a. Function as the first contact for any issues among student staff. They will solve the problem if possible or consult a professional staff member if more assistance is necessary.
  - b. Preside over SAS all-staff meetings and SAS student staff meetings as explained further in Article 5A, Section 1Aa and Article 5A, Section 1Ac, respectively.
  - c. Participate in RADs review meetings as defined in Article 5A, Section 3D.
  - d. Provide recommendations, assistance, and encouragement to student staff.
  - e. Perform weekly check-ins with all student staff to remain aware of personal circumstances, in-progress projects, and any other important updates to the SAS program. Lead Fellows should develop positive relationships with all other student staff.
- B. Program Fellows will be responsible for creating concepts and ideas for events for both SAS and CEA that align with the goals and values outlined in Article 2. In this position, they will:

- a. Work with other student staff to plan and ultimately execute these projects.
  - b. Pitch proposed projects to relevant authority figures and complete the approval and planning processes to be determined by SASRC as explained in Article 5A, Section 4A.
  - c. Provide regular updates in general meetings to the rest of the SAS staff about in-progress projects.
  - d. They are encouraged to seek support from a Lead Fellow if desired or consult the expertise of any SAS staff for any of these responsibilities.
- C. Communications Fellows will design and circulate information about projects planned by the Program Fellows and work to advertise other SAS news, services, and announcements. In this position, they will:
- a. Ensure all SAS media is accessible for all students, including those with visual and/or hearing impairments.
  - b. Manage the SAS social media accounts per SAS goals and values outlined in Article 2 in order to foster a healthy and accessible online space for SAS and the disabled community and their allies.
  - c. When requested, review and advise other DIEI or college staff on any materials to improve their accessibility.
  - d. Collaborate with various departments to improve all Connecticut College print and virtual materials for improved accessibility with review from disabled-identifying students (whether they are directly employed as Communications Fellows or otherwise), especially when these materials are brought to the attention of SAS.
- D. Administrative Fellows will work closely with professional staff to assist disabled students with administrative procedures and to promote continued progress toward a genuinely accessible campus for all. At times, they may be trusted with confidential information. In this position, they will:

- a. If requested by the accommodation-seeking student, attend accommodation meetings (Figure 3). Expectations for their conduct and participation are as follows:
  - i. They must keep everything they learn or become aware of about the student in accommodation meetings completely confidential. They may not express anything about the student's disability or any other personal circumstances anywhere outside of RADs forms (Article 5A, Section 3Caiii).
  - ii. They and the student requesting their presence will agree on terms of involvement, the perimeters of which shall be decided by the SASRC.
  - iii. Failure to keep sensitive information private will result in termination and referral to Honor Council or any other relevant bodies.
- b. Meet with students to help explain the process of registering with SAS and applying for accommodations. This can occur in individual or group settings.

## Article 4B - Long-Term Structure

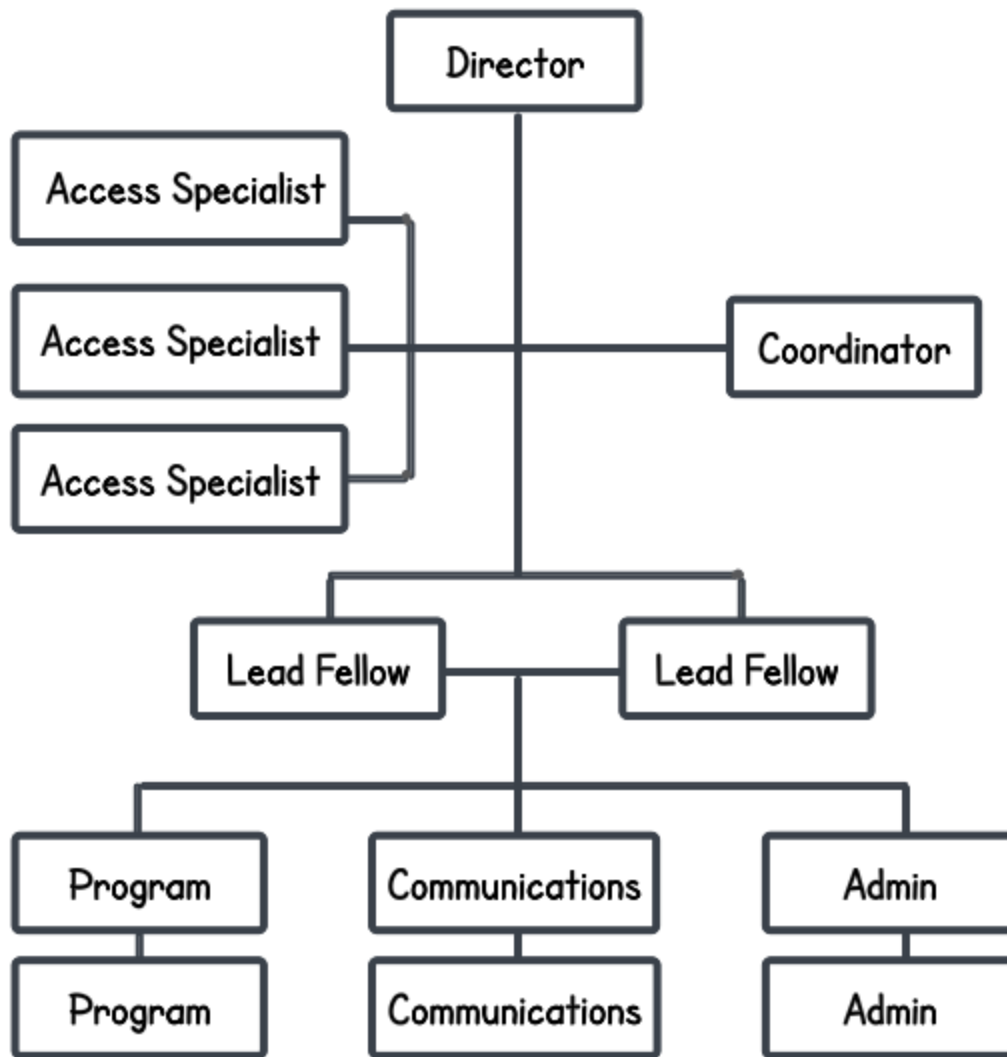


Figure 2: Long-term proposed structure of SAS that is loosely based on the structure of other DIEI programs but modified to protect and center the additional, necessary institutional functions the program provides.

*Section 1:* Two additional Access Specialists will be hired, and each will be specifically equipped to address barriers related to different categories of disability. This means there will be a total of five professional staff members and their responsibilities are as follows.

- A. The Director of Student Accessibility Services will manage the legal and administrative materials handled by the program and will be privy to medically sensitive documents as requested. They will be the primary contact for SAS among administrators, faculty, staff, and other employees, and they will advise and be responsible for the activities of other staff, both student and professional.
- a. The Director will be responsible for protecting the autonomy and rights of SAS staff and disabled community members.
  - b. They will assist with or delegate tasks outlined in Article 3, Section 3.
  - c. The Director will also act in a limited maintenance role per Article 3, Section 2 and Article 5B, Section 2F.
    - i. They may delegate some of these center-related responsibilities to the Student Accessibility Services Coordinator or the Access Specialists if they are incapacitated or overwhelmed.
  - d. The Director must approve all CEA programming plans with documented consent. They shall not design these programs—that role will be reserved primarily for student-staff—but they are responsible for responding to student-staff questions and requests for advice.
  - e. The Director must perform bi-weekly (every two weeks) check-ins with all professional and student staff to remain aware of personal circumstances, in-progress projects, and any important updates to the SAS program.
  - f. If necessary, the Director will collaborate with the Access Specialists (Article 4B, Section 1C) to complete the responsibilities outlined in Article 3, Section 1, following the procedures visualized in Figure 3’.
- B. The Student Accessibility Services Coordinator will manage documents, finances, and communications for the program, including:

- a. Maintaining the online SAS portal where students submit accommodation requests and faculty notification letters.
  - b. Accepting and reviewing access issues reported in the campus form referenced in Article 7, Section 2. Relevant or repeat issues will result in full community notification emails, which they will promptly send.
  - c. Tracking and approving expenses for SAS, CEA, and potentially disability-related student organizations.
  - d. Every semester, presiding over a RADs review meeting as defined in Article 5B, Section 3D.
- C. The Access Specialist will work with students to mitigate their physical, psychological, and other disability barriers.
- a. In their areas of expertise, they will:
    - i. Guide students through SAS procedures including—but not limited to—the approval of accommodations.
    - ii. Evaluate student needs through the accommodation process visualized in Figure 3 and described in Article 5B, Section 3.
      - 1. This includes taking accommodation meetings (Figure 3'), approving or denying accommodation requests (Figure 3'), filling out RADs forms for denied requests (Article 5B, Section 3C), and participating in the semesterly RADs review meeting (Article 5B, Section 3D).
    - iii. Review RADs forms filled out by the Director, who will also be reviewing theirs (Figure 3' and Article 5B, Section 3Cc).
    - iv. Mentor and support Connecticut College's disabled community.
  - b. Due to the complexity of the heterogeneous barriers faced by our diverse community, work should be divided among professional staff with a variety of experiences and knowledge. One Access Specialist will fulfill each of the following areas:

- i. Physical Mobility Disabilities
  - ii. Psychiatric and Learning Disabilities
  - iii. Chronic Health Related Disabilities
- c. The initial Access Specialist hired in the short-term structure shall retain their position and focus on the above area in which they have the greatest breadth of knowledge and experience.

*Section 2:* SAS shall employ students in the following roles with the following responsibilities.

- A. Lead Fellows will operate as the lead student staff members. They will work closely with professional and student staff to ensure a well-functioning program. At times, they may be trusted with confidential information, which they will never be permitted to share outside of the processes specified in Article 5B, Section 3D. In this position, they will:
  - a. Function as the first contact for any issues among student staff. They will solve the problem if possible or consult a professional staff member if more assistance is necessary.
  - b. Preside over SAS all-staff meetings and SAS student staff meetings as explained further in Article 5B, Section 1Aa and Article 5B, Section 1Ac, respectively.
  - c. Participate in RADs review meetings defined in Article 5B, Section 3D.
  - d. Provide recommendations, assistance, and encouragement to student staff.
  - e. Perform weekly check-ins with all student staff to remain aware of personal circumstances, in-progress projects, and any other important updates to the SAS program. Lead Fellows should develop positive relationships with all other student staff.

- B. Program Fellows will be responsible for creating concepts and ideas for events for SAS and CEA that align with the goals and values outlined in Article 2. In this position, they will:
- a. Work with other student staff to plan and ultimately execute these projects.
  - b. Pitch proposed projects to relevant authority figures and complete the approval and planning processes to be determined by SASRC as explained in Article 5B, Section 4A.
  - c. Provide regular updates in general meetings to the rest of the SAS staff about in-progress projects.
  - d. They are encouraged to seek support from a Lead Fellow if desired or consult the expertise of any SAS staff for any of these responsibilities.
- C. Communications Fellows will design and circulate information about projects planned by the Program Fellows and work to advertise other SAS news, services, and announcements. In this position, they will:
- a. Ensure all SAS media is accessible for all students, including those with visual and/or hearing impairments.
  - b. Manage the SAS social media accounts per SAS goals and values outlined in Article 2 in order to foster a healthy and accessible online space for SAS and the disabled community and their allies.
  - c. When requested, review and advise other DIEI or college staff on any materials to improve their accessibility.
  - d. Collaborate with various departments to improve all Connecticut College print and virtual materials for improved accessibility with review from disabled-identifying students (whether they are directly employed as Communications Fellows or otherwise), especially when these materials are brought to the attention of SAS.

- D. Administrative Fellows will work closely with professional staff to assist disabled students with administrative procedures and to promote continued progress toward a genuinely accessible campus for all. At times, they may be trusted with confidential information. In this position, they will:
- a. If requested by the accommodation-seeking student, attend accommodation meetings (Figure 3). Expectations for their conduct and participation are as follows:
    - i. They must keep everything they learn or become aware of about the student in accommodation meetings completely confidential. They may not express anything about the student's disability or any other personal circumstances anywhere outside of RADs forms (Article 5B, Section 3Caiii).
    - ii. They and the student requesting their presence will agree on terms of involvement, the perimeters of which shall be decided by the SASRC.
    - iii. Failure to keep sensitive information private will result in termination and referral to Honor Council or any other relevant bodies.
  - b. Meet with students to help explain the process of registering with SAS and applying for accommodations. This can occur in individual or group settings.

## Article 5 - Common Procedures

### Article 5A - Short-term Plan for Common Procedures

All of Article 5A is written under the assumption that SAS has adopted the short-term structure outlined in Article 4A.

### *Section 1: Staff meeting types and tentative schedules*

- A. Regular SAS staff meetings must be at times and locations when at least 90 percent of attending staff are able to be present physically or digitally.
  - a. All-staff meetings will include all SAS staff.
    - i. Minimum frequency and duration: Monthly, 60 minutes, 15 minute discussion time.
    - ii. Director sets the agenda.
    - iii. Lead Fellows lead the meeting.
    - iv. The Access Specialist takes notes/minutes.
    - v. These meetings keep communication consistent and allow time for all roles to update the group on their area of work. Discussion will take place at the end.
  - b. Professional staff meetings will include all non-student staff.
    - i. Minimum frequency and duration: Twice a week, 40 minutes.
    - ii. Director sets the agenda.
    - iii. Director leads the meeting.
    - iv. The Access Specialist takes notes/minutes.
    - v. These meetings are to keep each other up to date on confidential matters or other regular updates. They may also be used to conduct RADs dispute meetings.
  - c. Student staff meetings will include all student staff.
    - i. Minimum frequency and duration: Weekly, 40 minutes.
    - ii. Lead Fellows set the agenda.
    - iii. Lead Fellows lead the meeting.
    - iv. Communication Fellows take notes/minutes.
    - v. These meetings allow for collaboration between the student roles and help Lead fellows keep track of all current plans, activities, and potential issues.

- B. Multidepartment DIEI meetings shall be attended by SAS staff best suited to the meeting's purpose or with analogous roles. For example, when DIEI Directors meet, the Director of SAS will also attend.
- A. Training meetings for SAS student staff.
  - a. Student staff should be trained on a semesterly basis. This training will include introduction to SAS procedures outlined in this document, best practices in disability language, media, and content, and other topics deemed important.
  - b. Student staff will also attend relevant DIEI training.
  - c. Different roles will have specialized training.
    - i. Lead Fellows will be prepared to participate in RADs review meetings which are described in Article 5A, Section 3D. This will include handling confidential information. They will also learn the specific processes for all subordinate fellow roles in case they must assist.
    - ii. Program Fellows will be taught the Event planning procedure described in Article 5A, Section 4A, and details related to their role in it as they relate to Communications Fellows.
    - iii. Communications Fellows will be taught the Event planning procedure described in Article 5A, Section 4A, and details related to their role in it as they relate to Program Fellows.
    - iv. Admin Fellows will be prepared to attend accommodation meetings as requested, fill out their section of any RADs forms, and handle all related information with tact and discretion. Their role is outlined in Article 4A, Section 2D and the process they partake in is seen in Figure 3.

## *Section 2: Expectations for CEA*

- A. The CEA should be open for no less than 8 hours a week.
- B. Lead fellows will propose a schedule that works for all student staff to be approved at monthly full staff meetings by the Coordinator.
- C. If the CEA is not occupied by a scheduled staff member, it must be locked and empty of all persons.
- D. The CEA must be kept clean by any scheduled staff able to do so.
- E. As the needs of the community, inclusive of all staff and student users of the space, are identified, comprehensive rules and systems will be established concerning any allergens or sanitary concerns.
- F. If the center is compromised and it becomes a safety concern, the situation will be promptly reported to the Director and it will be their responsibility to resolve it. These issues will be addressed and updates will be provided at every SAS all-staff meeting. All programs will temporarily move to the next best accessible location as determined by SAS staff until their resolution.

### *Section 3: Accommodation Request Procedure*

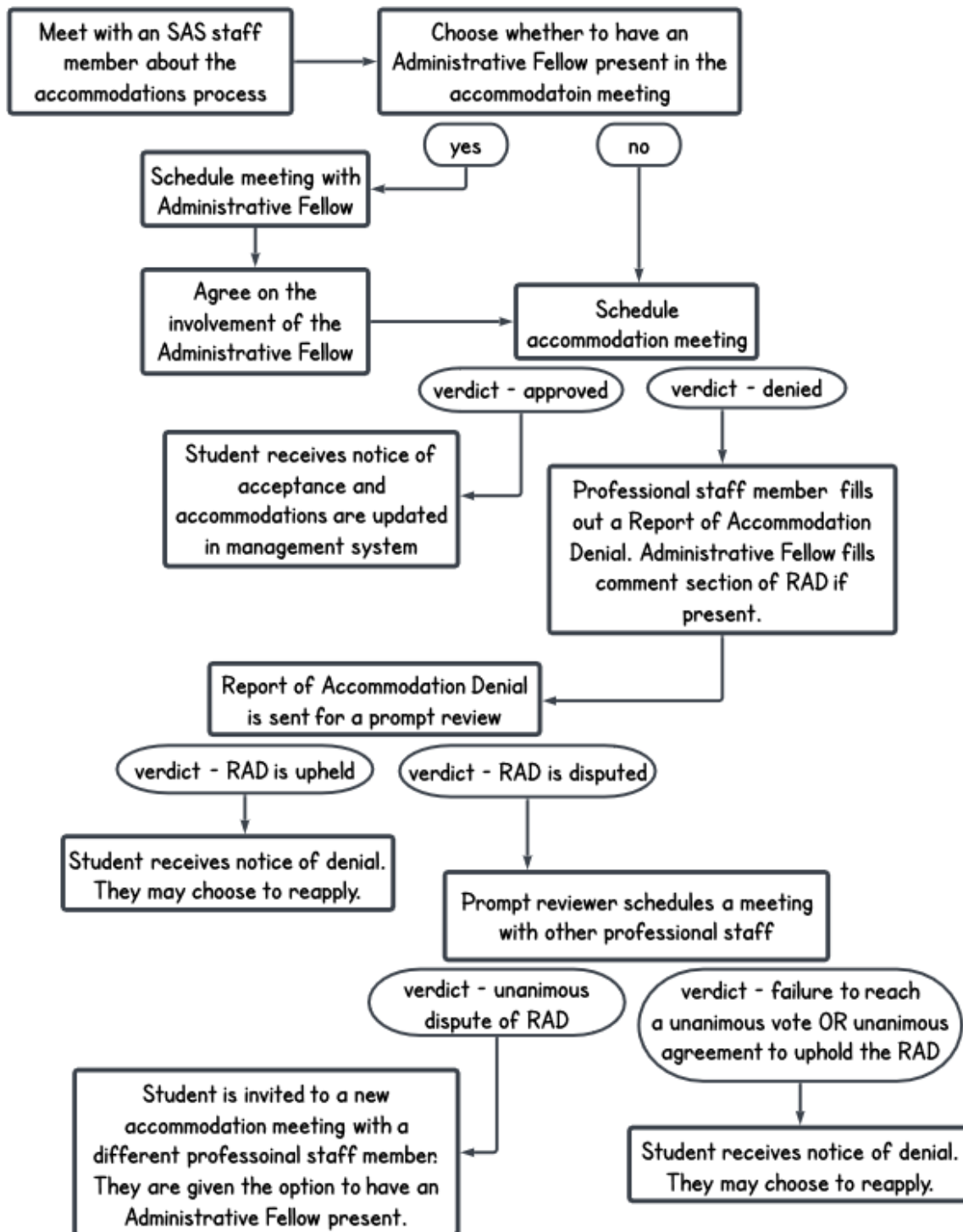


Figure 3: Diagram that visualizes the process for any student to request an additional or original accommodation. Any clarification to this process can be found in the following subsections, and further questions may be directed to the authors of this document.

- A. An accommodation is requested via SAS's online portal. All Fellows and Professional staff will know how to submit these requests, and may teach anyone who asks them. Thorough instructions will also be made available on Connecticut College's website or may be sent by email when requested. An SAS staff member will help the student work through the process outlined in Figure 3'.
- B. When any requested accommodation is approved, the student will be notified and their information will be added to or updated in SAS's accommodation software by the Coordinator. The student will contact any staff member to discuss the campus processes around faculty notification letters, housing placement, or any other concerns. Many of these processes are dictated by the online system used, or other departments like Residential Life, and SAS would point students in the right direction.
- C. A Report of Accommodation Denial or RAD is filled out when any requested accommodation is denied for any reason. They are all kept confidential. Two copies will be made, one containing student identifying info and one without. The first will be used in the process outlined in Figure 3, and made available to the student after the process is completed. The second will be used in the semesterly RADs review described in Article 5A, Section 3B.
  - a. A RAD contains three sections:
    - i. A field for a list of denied accommodations.
    - ii. A field for corresponding explanations.
    - iii. An optional space for Administrative Fellow comments, if one was present.
  - b. RADs may be marked as resolved or unresolved. Unresolved RADs are ones which have never been included in the semesterly review process or which have the capacity to be disputed as campus conditions evolve. Resolved RADs are any that meet neither of these conditions.

- c. A RAD will be reviewed by any professional staff member other than the staff member who denied the accommodation request. This will happen no more than one week after the RAD is filed. The following process will occur:
  - i. The RAD may either be upheld or disputed. This decision is solely based on the provided explanation for denial not the merit of the request itself.
    - 1. If the RAD is upheld, accommodations are denied and the explanations are made available to the student in their notice of denial. The second copy will be included in the next semesterly RADs review.
    - 2. If the RAD is disputed, all three professional staff members will meet and attempt to reach a unanimous agreement about the merit of the explanation for denial.
      - a. If all three agree to uphold the RAD, the requested accommodation is denied and the explanations are made available to the student in their notice of denial. The second copy will be included in the next semesterly RADs review.
      - b. If all three agree to overturn/dispute the RAD, a new accommodation meeting is scheduled with a different reviewer than the original meeting. If the accommodation is denied after this new meeting, a new RAD must be filled out and the process will repeat.
      - c. If no unanimous decision can be reached, the accommodation is denied and the explanations are made available to the student in their notice of

denial. The second copy will be included in the next semesterly RADs review.

- D. Every semester, all unresolved RADs will be reviewed and sorted together by all professional staff members and the Lead Fellows in a meeting presided over by the SAS Coordinator. The copies assessed will not contain identifying student or staff information, and only be labeled with case numbers.
- a. Three questions will be asked as the RADs are processed:
    - i. Has the validity of an upheld RAD changed (due to campus conditions, additional information, etc.)?
    - ii. Are there any patterns between RADs exposing issues with campus resources or staff bias?
    - iii. Do the RADs reveal structural or individual weaknesses in any areas relating to SAS, DIEI, or Connecticut College as a whole?
  - b. After the review, each person in the meeting will individually reflect and think of methods to address the answers to these questions. If any attendees notice a pattern they shall report it together to the Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion.

#### *Section 4: Event Planning Procedure*

- A. Events for Connecticut College students involved with SAS or CEA will be planned and promoted by Program Fellows and Communications Fellows respectively.
- a. They may pitch any ideas to Lead Fellows or professional staff for comments or advice, but all events must be approved by the Director and any funds must be allocated by the Coordinator.
  - b. The SASRC, whose formation is described in Article 1, Section 4, will, as a part of their implementation plan, design forms and record keeping systems for these Fellows to use to ensure the creation of an accessible,

safe, well thought out event. These forms will be the documents submitted to the Director and Coordinator for final approval.

- B. SAS will also run special campus events led primarily by professional staff. These events will be designed for engaging all employees with our program, goals, values, and processes.
  - a. The documentation and planning process for these events will be designed by SASRC in consultation with any DIEI professional staff and through the examination of other program's existing processes.

## Article 5B - Long-term plan for Common Procedures

All of Article 5B is written under the assumption that SAS has adopted the long-term structure outlined in Article 4B.

### *Section 1: Staff Meeting Types and Tentative Schedules*

- A. Regular SAS meetings must be at times and locations when at least 90 percent of attending staff are able to be present physically or digitally.
  - a. Full staff meetings will include all SAS staff.
    - i. Minimum frequency and duration: Monthly, 90 minutes, 20 minute discussion time.
    - ii. Director sets the agenda.
    - iii. Lead Fellows lead the meeting.
    - iv. The Access Specialists take notes/minutes on an alternating schedule.
    - v. These meetings keep communication consistent and allow time for all roles to update the group on their area of work. Discussion will take place at the end.
  - b. Professional staff meetings will include all non-student staff.
    - i. Minimum frequency and duration: Twice a week, 60 minutes.
    - ii. Director sets the agenda.

- iii. Director leads the meeting.
  - iv. The Access Specialists take notes/minutes on an alternating schedule.
  - v. These meetings are to keep each other up to date on confidential matters or other regular updates. They may also be used to conduct RADs dispute meetings.
- c. Student staff meetings will include all student staff.
  - i. Minimum frequency and duration: Weekly, 40 minutes.
  - ii. Lead Fellows set the agenda.
  - iii. Lead Fellows lead the meeting.
  - iv. Communication Fellows take notes/minutes.
  - v. These meetings allow for collaboration between the student roles and help Lead fellows keep track of all current plans, activities, and potential issues.
- B. Multidepartment DIEI meetings shall be attended by SAS staff best suited to the meeting's purpose or with analogous roles. For example, when DIEI Directors meet, the Director of SAS should also attend.
  - a. Additionally SAS professional staff will seek out and attend professional development related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. They will especially attend development within our own institution.
- C. Training meetings for SAS student staff.
  - a. Student staff should be trained on a semesterly basis. This training will include introduction to SAS procedures outlined in this document, best practices in disability language, media, and content, and other topics deemed important.
  - b. Student staff will also attend relevant DIEI training.
  - c. Different roles will have specialized training.

- i. Lead Fellows will be prepared to participate in RADs review meetings which are described in Article 5A, Section 3D. This will include handling confidential information. They will also learn the specific processes for all subordinate fellow roles in case they must assist.
- ii. Program Fellows will be taught the Event planning procedure described in Article 5A, Section 4A, and details related to their role in it as they relate to Communications Fellows.
- iii. Communications Fellows will be taught the Event planning procedure described in Article 5A, Section 4A, and details related to their role in it as they relate to Program Fellows.
- iv. Admin Fellows will be prepared to attend accommodation meetings as requested, fill out their section of any RADs forms (Article 5B, Section 3Caiii), and handle all related information with tact and discretion. Their role is outlined in Article 4B, Section 2Da and the process they partake in is seen in Figure 3.

## *Section 2: Expectations for CEA*

- A. The CEA should be open for no less than 8 hours a week.
- B. Lead fellows will propose a schedule that works for all student staff to be approved at monthly full staff meetings by the Coordinator.
- C. If the CEA is not occupied by a scheduled staff member, it must be locked and empty of all persons.
- D. The CEA must be kept clean by any scheduled staff able to do so.
- E. As the needs of the community, inclusive of all staff and student users of the space, are identified, comprehensive rules and systems will be established concerning any allergens or sanitary concerns.

- F. If the center is compromised and it becomes a safety concern, the situation will be promptly reported to the Director and it will be their responsibility to resolve it. These issues will be addressed and updates will be provided at every SAS all-staff meeting. All programs will temporarily move to the next best accessible location as determined by SAS staff until their resolution.

### *Section 3: Accommodation Request Procedure*

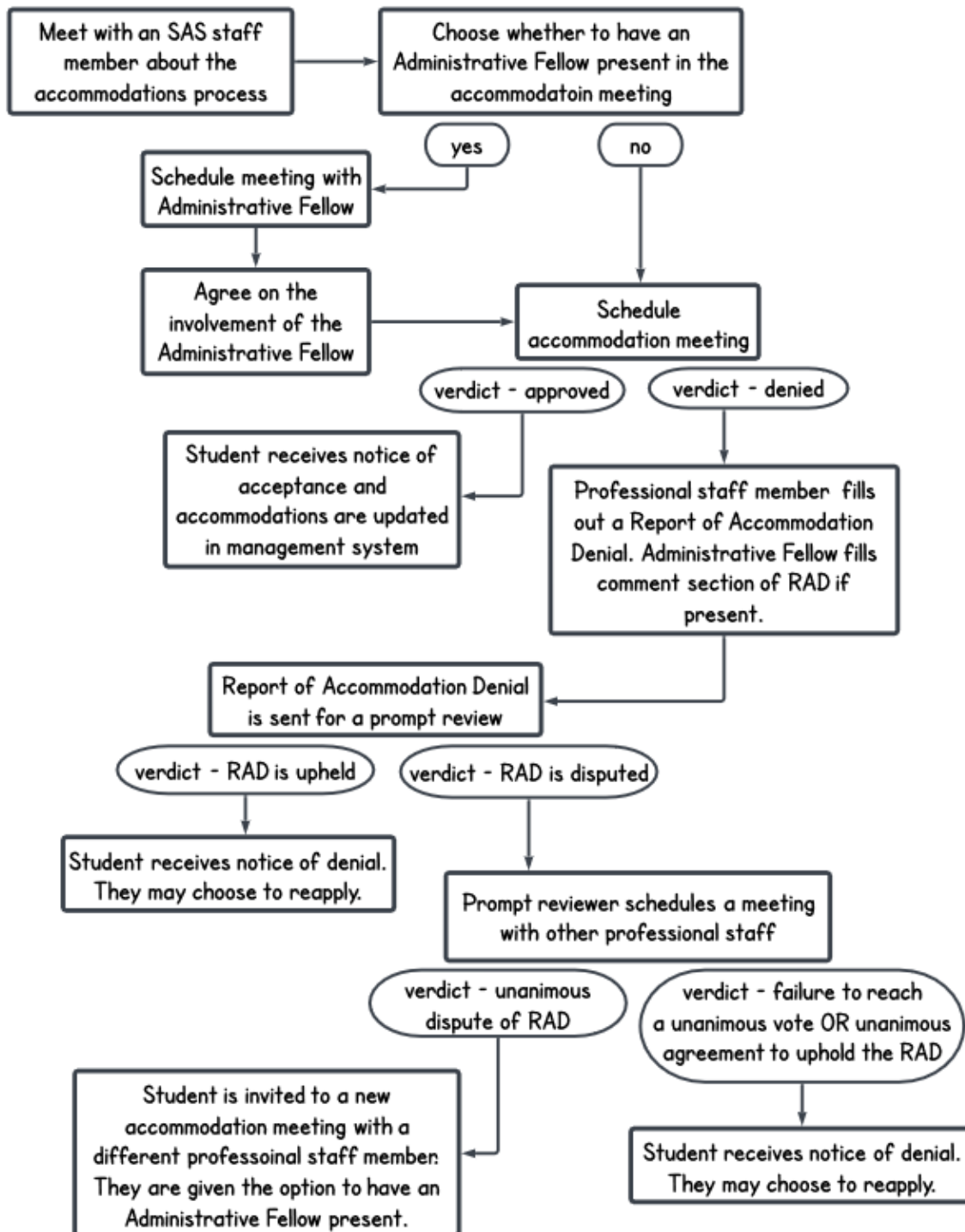


Figure 3': Diagram that visualizes the process for any student to request an additional or original accommodation. Any clarification to this process can be found in the following subsections, and further questions may be directed to the authors of this document.

- A. An accommodation is requested via SAS's online portal. All Fellows and professional staff will know how to submit these requests, and may teach anyone who asks them. Thorough instructions will also be made available on Connecticut College's website or may be sent by email when requested. An SAS staff member will help the student work through the process outlined in Figure 3'.
- B. When any requested accommodation is approved, the student will be notified and their information will be added to or updated in SAS's accommodation software by the Coordinator. The student will contact any staff member to discuss the campus processes around faculty notification letters, housing placement, or any other concerns. Many of these processes are dictated by the online system used, or other departments like Residential Life, and SAS would point students in the right direction.
- C. A Report of Accommodation Denial or RAD is filled out when any requested accommodation is denied for any reason. They are all kept confidential. Two copies will be made, one containing student identifying info and one without. The first will be used in the process outlined in Figure 3, and made available to the student after the process is completed. The second will be used in the semesterly RADs review described in Article 5B, Section 3B.
  - a. A RAD contains three sections:
    - i. A field for a list of denied accommodations.
    - ii. A field for corresponding explanations.
    - iii. An optional space for Administrative Fellow comments, if one was present.
  - b. RADs may be marked as resolved or unresolved. Unresolved RADs are ones which have never been included in the semesterly review process

or which have the capacity to be disputed as campus conditions evolve. Resolved RADs are any that meet neither of these conditions.

- c. A RAD will be reviewed by any professional staff member other than the staff member who denied the accommodation request. This will happen no more than one week after the RAD is filed. The following process will occur:
  - i. The RAD may either be upheld or disputed. This decision is solely based on the provided explanation for denial not the merit of the request itself.
    - 1. If the RAD is upheld, accommodations are denied and the explanations are made available to the student in their notice of denial. The second copy will be included in the next semesterly RADs review.
    - 2. If the RAD is disputed, any three professional staff members will meet and attempt to reach a unanimous agreement about the merit of the explanation for denial.
      - a. If all three agree to uphold the RAD, the requested accommodation is denied and the explanations are made available to the student in their notice of denial. The second copy will be included in the next semesterly RADs review.
      - b. If all three agree to overturn/dispute the RAD, a new accommodation meeting is scheduled with a different reviewer than the original meeting. If the accommodation is denied after this new meeting, a new RAD must be filled out and the process will repeat.

- c. If no unanimous decision can be reached, the accommodation is denied and the explanations are made available to the student in their notice of denial. The second copy will be included in the next semesterly RADs review.
- D. Every semester, all unresolved RADs will be reviewed and sorted together by all professional staff members and the Lead Fellows in a meeting presided over by the SAS Coordinator. . The copies looked at will not contain identifying student or staff information, and only be labeled with case numbers.
  - a. Three questions will be asked as the RADs are processed:
    - i. Has the validity of an upheld RAD changed (due to campus conditions, additional information, etc.)?
    - ii. Are there any patterns between RADs exposing issues with campus resources or staff bias?
    - iii. Do the RADs reveal structural or individual weaknesses in any areas relating to SAS, DIEI, or Connecticut College as a whole?
  - b. After the review, each person in the meeting will individually reflect and think of methods to address the answers to these questions. If the Lead Fellows notice a pattern they should report it together to the Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion.

#### *Section 4: Event Planning Procedure*

- A. Events for Connecticut College students involved with SAS or CEA will be planned and promoted by Program Fellows and Communications Fellows respectively.
  - a. They may pitch any ideas to Lead Fellows or professional staff for comments or advice, but all events must be approved by the Director and any funds must be allocated by the Coordinator.

- b. The SASRC, whose formation is described in Article 1, Section 4, will, as a part of their implementation plan, design forms and record keeping systems for these Fellows to use to ensure the creation of an accessible, safe, well thought out event. These forms will be the documents submitted to the Director and Coordinator for final approval.
- B. SAS will also run special campus events led primarily by professional staff. These events will be designed for engaging all employees and other community members with our program, goals, values, and processes.
  - a. The documentation and planning process for these events will be designed by SASRC in consultation with any DIEI professional staff and through the examination of other program's existing processes.

## Article 6 - Employment Notes

All hiring procedures within SAS will act with emphasis on the values and goals stated in Article 2, Section 1 and Article 2, Section 2. Purposeful emphasis may also be placed on hiring those who are personally affected by ableism or inaccessibility. This section contains certain responsibilities associated with roles described in Article 4A/B.

### *Section 1: Measurement of SAS Staff Effectiveness*

- A. Every SAS professional staff member will be evaluated at the end of every school year. Evaluation materials may include all RADs reviewed in the two most recent Article 5A/B, Section 3D meetings, any shared student experiences, SAS student staff reflections, any community or college employee reports concerning the staff member, and that staff member's self-reflection.
  - a. The Director, in conjunction with the Lead Fellow(s), will assemble the Article 6, Section 1A materials for each professional staff member, excluding themselves and review in a private meeting. A short

reflection will be drafted by those 2-3 people and will be sent to any relevant administrative authorities at DIEI and the professional staff members themselves.

- b. The Coordinator, in conjunction with the Lead Fellow(s), will assemble Article 6, Section 1A materials and evaluate the Director in a private meeting. A short reflection will be drafted by those 2-3 people and will be sent to any relevant administrative authorities at DIEI and the Director of SAS themself.
  - c. Any specific reasons for concern which may result in changes in position, procedure, or change in direction will be handled by the Connecticut College employee who acts in a direct supervisory role to the person of concern. As such, the Director of DIEI will address the Director of SAS, and the Director of SAS will address all SAS professional staff.
    - i. The appropriate course of action will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the concern in accordance with policies set by DIEI and the Connecticut College administration.
- B. Every SAS student staff member will be evaluated at the end of every semester. Evaluation materials may include forms involved with any activities they carry out (such as time sheets, event planning documents, or notable correspondence), any reports concerning the student staff member, and a self-reflection. The Director and Coordinator will collect all these materials and meet to discuss any concerns.
- a. Each student staff member will be provided a performance evaluation by the Director of SAS before the conclusion of the academic year.
  - b. Any cause for concern which may result in a redirection of behavior, an infraction (Article 6, Section 4) building towards termination, or

another conduct process will be addressed by a professional staff member or Lead Fellow at the direction of the Director of SAS. The appropriate course of action will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the concern in accordance with policies set by DIEI and the Connecticut College administration.

- C. Every semester, the Lead Fellow(s) will be evaluated. Evaluation materials may include any reports concerning the Lead Fellow(s) and their self-reflection(s). The Director will meet with the Coordinator to discuss any concerns.
  - a. Complete performance evaluations will be provided to the Lead Fellow(s) before the conclusion of the academic year.
  - b. Any cause for concern which may result in a redirection of behavior, an infraction (Article 6, Section 4) building towards termination, or another conduct process will be addressed by a professional staff member at the direction of the Director of SAS. The appropriate course of action will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the concern in accordance with policies set by DIEI and the Connecticut College administration.

*Section 2:* As a program within the Division of Institutional Equity and Inclusion, SAS shall be incorporated into and adopt the DIEI staff hiring procedures. To prioritize speed and accountability to student voices, the initial hiring process will differ. Subsequent SAS hiring will be fully incorporated into DIEI staff hiring procedures.

- A. Initial Hiring - Professional Staff
  - a. The search for new professional staff shall be conducted by the Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion, at least one volunteer member of Connecticut College staff or faculty, and the current Director of SAS. They will find and interview candidates through a process of their

design. Candidates deemed qualified and acceptable to this group will be compiled onto a short-list and presented to SASRC.

- i. SASRC will contact, meet with, and evaluate all candidates presented. In keeping with the spirit past DIEI student hiring committees, they may veto any candidate for any reason. What level of disapproval constitutes a veto will be determined by SASRC when the committee is formed.

#### B. Initial Hiring - Student Staff

- a. First choice of SAS student staff positions will be given to students already employed by SAS. The remaining student staff positions will be filled through an application and interview process to be conducted by SASRC.
  - i. Applications will be reviewed by each member of SASRC and scored on a 1-5 point scale. All applicants scoring 3 or better on average will get an interview with a member of SAS professional staff and at least one member of SASRC.
  - ii. If an SASRC member would like to apply, they must recuse themselves from the entire initial student hiring process. Committee procedures will be altered to maintain balance among the remaining members for this process.
- b. The committee will meet at the conclusion of all interviews to discuss applicants. All SAS student staff positions must be filled. Student staff will be hired with the consent and approval of the SASRC, the Director of SAS, and the SAS Coordinator.
- c. All applicants will be eligible for all open student staff positions during the initial hiring process. SASRC must consider the requirements of each position when approving candidates and prioritize matching responsibilities to candidate strengths.

- C. All subsequent hiring, once the long term structures and procedures outlined in Article 4B and 5B are in place, will be conducted in the same way as all other DIEI programs.
- D. In accordance with the Student Voices for Equity Demands of Spring 2023, all professional staff will be full-time, salaried employees with benefits and accessible working conditions.

*Section 3:* When staff use words or engage in actions that oppose the purpose of the program as defined by Article 2 or do not meet the expectations for their performance of position responsibilities, that will be known as an ‘infraction.’

- A. SAS will operate a three-strike policy among all staff.
  - a. Three notable infractions among SAS professional staff will result in a conversation with the Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion which may include job termination if deemed appropriate.
  - b. Three notable infractions among SAS student staff will result in a conversation with the Director of SAS which may include job termination.
- B. The Director of SAS, Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion, or another appropriate individual will notify the staff member when any action(s) or word(s) is considered an infraction. They may also decide to give warnings in the case of honest misunderstandings.
- C. All staff in the new staff training will be instructed on the three-strike policy.
- D. When any infraction occurs, it is the responsibility of all SAS staff present to report this at the next possible time to the Director of SAS or Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion as appropriate.
  - a. Lead Fellow(s) will be made aware of all infractions, but do not have the authority to receive or process the report and declare an infraction.

- E. Concerning actions or words which may lead to an infraction must be personally dealt with or reported as any SAS employee observer deems appropriate for the situation. The way to personally deal with such a situation is to have a purposeful, respectful conversation with the concerned individual to explain the harm caused by the word(s) or action(s).
- F. Any reported infractions become the responsibility of the Director of SAS or Dean of Institutional Equity and Inclusion to address.

## Article 7 - Other Miscellaneous Notes and Suggestions

*Section 1:* Before the CEA can be established and maintained as per Article 3, Section 2, a location must be selected and outfitted to support the needs of the disabled campus community. The SASRC will be consulted as this location selection process occurs and as it is adapted to the purpose described in Article 3, Section 2, and the procedures of Article 5A, Section 2 and Article 5B, Section 2.

- A. A proposed location for the CEA may be rejected by the SASRC with a voting threshold to be determined by the committee upon formation. If SASRC chooses to reject a proposed location, they must provide an explanation outlining the specific concerns of the committee.

*Section 2:* SAS will create and maintain an accessibility form for the public tracking of access concerns on campus. As per Article 4A, Section 1Bb and Article 4B, Section 1Bb, the SAS Coordinator would be responsible for accepting and reviewing inaccessibility reports and promptly making all of campus aware of all status updates regarding their current state and specific plans for repair put forth by relevant authorities. SASRC (Article 1, Section 4) will determine the practical format of this system as well as what sorts of conditions constitute “access concerns.”

## Article 8 - Amendments

*Section 1:* The SASRC will be the only body in the short-term structure of SAS with the power to edit this document. The SASRC may approve amendments to this proposal with at least a 9 out of 11 vote in favor of the amendment.

*Section 2:* After the fully-staffed long-term structure is implemented, amendments can be made to this document with the unanimous support of the SAS student staff and at least 4 SAS professional staff members. If the necessary individuals do not support the amendment, it will not be adopted.

- A. If an amendment is not adopted, it can be put to additional votes during SAS all-staff meetings. Once an unchanged amendment has been rejected by vote three times during a single meeting, it cannot be voted on at that meeting for a fourth time. Therefore, the amendment proposal must be moved to a subsequent SAS all-staff meeting.

### *Author's Note—*

The authors of this document affirm that this proposed restructuring of Student Accessibility Services will empower the program to better serve our whole College community. We have dedicated ourselves completely to the construction of what we believe to be a better system for our disabled and abled community members alike. We firmly believe that no student should experience an administration that cannot or does not care for their wellbeing.

We have faith in the structures we envision. The Student Accessibility Services Restructuring Committee, which we insist the administration to respect and appreciate, will take on the brave task of continuing this work for the benefit of all. The SASRC will settle all ambiguities, provide necessary clarifications, and maintain the spirit of equitable access in all its work to ensure the implementation of this proposal with voting thresholds the members shall determine for themselves.

We are proud of what we have constructed and we hope for a brighter future for all disabled people associated with Connecticut College.