



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

FOR THE STATE COLLEGES

1280 ASYLUM AVENUE HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06105

RESOLUTION

concerning

Connecticut Public Interest Research Group

Central Connecticut State College

April 1, 1974

- WHEREAS, The Trustees in resolution 73-59⁵⁵ dated October 5, 1973, requested that the President of Central Connecticut State College arrange to collect voluntary contributions from undergraduate students for support of the Connecticut Public Interest Research Group (CONNPIRG); and
- WHEREAS, It was resolved that such collections be made at the time fees are collected for each semester and that if fewer than one half the total number of undergraduate students made such voluntary contributions in any semester the collections would cease and not again be made without the approval of the Board; and
- WHEREAS, Student leaders have requested that the voluntary collections of contributions for CONNPIRG be continued and, therefore, this Board has given further consideration to the matter and concluded that it should not be a collection agency for any organization no matter how worthy it may be; and
- WHEREAS, Many students have spent much time and effort to establish CONNPIRG and, for that reason, the Board desires to provide time for them to find another way to accept voluntary contributions; therefore be it,
- RESOLVED, That the President of Central Connecticut State College is requested to arrange for the collection of voluntary contributions from undergraduate students for the support of CONNPIRG during the collections of fees for the first semester of the academic year 1974-1975, and that such collections shall be

made on his campus and shall be subject to the provisions in the addendum to this resolution, and be it

RESOLVED, That monies collected from the voluntary contributions shall be used first to compensate the College for the cost of the collection and that the sum in excess of such cost shall be made available to CONNPIRG; and be it further

RESOLVED, That after the first semester of the academic year 1974-1975 no further collections shall be made for CONNPIRG.

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Addendum to the Resolution
concerning
The Connecticut Public Interest Research Group

A separate bill will be presented to students listing the CONNPIRG fee. This bill will indicate the following: "Voluntary contribution to CONNPIRG - \$2.00." An explanation accompanying the bill shall state what CONNPIRG is.

The separate bill for CONNPIRG will be presented to students at the same time with all other bills for tuition and fees.

April 9, 1974

President F. Don James
Central Connecticut State College
1615 Stanley Street
New Britain, Connecticut 06050

Dear President James:

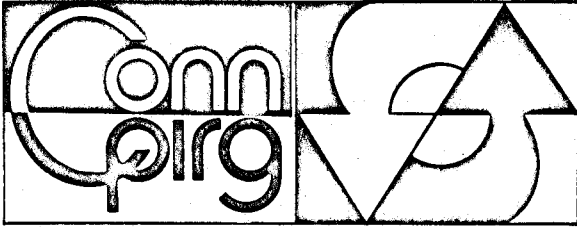
Enclosed please find a copy of the resolution concerning "Connecticut
Public Interest Research Group" adopted by the Board of Trustees at
its regular monthly meeting on April 5, 1974.

Very truly yours,

James A. Frost
Executive Secretary

JAF:sar

Enclosure



CONNECTICUT PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP
P.O. BOX 1571 57 FARMINGTON AVENUE HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06101 TELEPHONE (203) 525-9326

March 11, 1974

President F. Don James
Central Connecticut State College
New Britain, Connecticut

Dear President James:

It was very nice meeting and speaking with you last Wednesday. In accordance with your suggestion at that time, I am forwarding to you the following items which concern the past and the future of ConnPIRG at Central Connecticut State College.

Please find enclosed a xerox copy of the "PIRG Data Sheet" which should give you a fairly good idea as to how PIRGs around the country are funded, a detailed statement explaining why ConnPIRG should be permitted to continue at Central, a copy of "Project Descriptions" which relates to the future work planned for ConnPIRG, and a copy of "Educational Value of PIRG" which explains why the PIRG concept coincides so well with the educational objectives of higher learning. I hope you'll find this information helpful.

Briefly stated, we at ConnPIRG believe that the Board of Trustees should permit the administration at CCSC to serve as our fund collecting agent for another semester. ~~We firmly believe that one semester is not a sufficient amount of time to judge the true effectiveness of our organization.~~

Thank you very much for your cooperation in this matter. If you have any questions concerning this material please feel free to call me at 525-9326. Thank you again.

Sincerely yours,

Steve Wisensale

Steven K. Wisensale
Director - ConnPIRG

March 11, 1974

President F. Don James and
Members of the Board of Trustees
Central Connecticut State College
New Britain, Connecticut

Dear President James:

In 1970 Ralph Nader introduced the concept of a student organized, funded and directed Public Interest Research Group to the colleges and universities in Oregon and Minnesota. Since then, twenty-eight PIRGs in twenty-four states have been established and are doing their part to solve those social, economic and political problems which are currently confronting all of us.

The Connecticut Public Interest Research Group, commonly referred to as ConnPIRG, was first started in January of 1973. By May of that year, three colleges (Annhurst, St. Joseph, and Trinity) had successfully established campus chapters. By December both Central Connecticut State College and the University of Connecticut joined ConnPIRG. By February of 1974 the organization had two full-time staff members, including a director-organizer and a project coordinator, and an office in downtown Hartford.

In the brief two month period since the hiring of a full-time staff ConnPIRG has testified before state legislative committees on such issues as public utility rate structures, returnable bottles, and election reform. ConnPIRG also has a seat on the twenty-one member Clean Campaign Committee which includes such individuals as the President of the Connecticut Bar Association, the Deans of Yale and UConn law schools, and Secretary of State, Gloria Schaffer.

In addition to lobbying at the state level, ConnPIRG has also been working closely with students throughout Connecticut on numerous projects. In the weeks ahead our researchers will produce handbooks on banking, buying life insurance and a student guide to landlord-tenants rights, not to mention the development of an advisory service for those students who may desire to utilize small claims courts as a means of voicing their grievances. At the national level, ConnPIRG will soon begin work on a national PIRG project concerning energy waste.

Few individuals question the educational value of PIRG. Students throughout the nation are being given the opportunity to devote their time to serious social problems while earning academic credit and/or small stipends for their work. ConnPIRG is planning to hire several student interns for summer research projects and we are currently negotiating with authorities at UConn's law school and the urban semester program and Central Connecticut's cooperative education program for student interns during the 1974-75 academic year. We are definitely moving in a very positive direction. Instead of discussing social problems in the classroom, students everywhere are meeting these very problems face to face. The student learns and society benefits in the end. What better combination can be found?

While few question the educational value of PIRG, several question the various types of funding mechanisms which serve to maintain PIRGs throughout the nation. Funding is indeed a serious and complex matter and Connecticut PIRG is more than willing to assume its share of the burden in clarifying this often times misunderstood area. Only through a constant and rational exchange of thoughts and ideas can clarity secure and maintain its dominant position over confusion.

Generally speaking, PIRGs, and those colleges and universities which are willing to serve as collecting agents, have three types of funding mechanisms from which to choose. They are as follows:

- 1) Self-imposed fee increase with right of refund three weeks into each semester. Trinity, Annhurst, and St. Joseph are currently operating under this option.
- 2) Negative check-off. ConnPIRG would appear on the fee bill with the student being granted the opportunity to "check it off" if he or she does not wish to contribute \$2.00 to PIRG for the semester.
- 3) Positive check-off. This procedure is simply the opposite of #2. If a student wishes to contribute \$2.00, he or she "checks off" ConnPIRG accordingly. UConn has a system similar to this but students are required to submit a separate check if they wish to support ConnPIRG. Central Connecticut's system is also similar but quite unique when compared to other PIRGs which are funded under the optional system.

Last year students representing ConnPIRG and members of the Board of Trustees of the State Colleges agreed that Central Connecticut State College would serve as the collecting agent for ConnPIRG provided, 1) the funding system was optional and, 2) it was understood that C.C.S.C. would no longer serve as the collecting agent if less than 50% of

the student body failed to contribute funds to ConnPIRG during any given semester.

Because 31%, not 50% of C.C.S.C. students contributed to ConnPIRG this past semester, the question before us is very clear. Should Central Connecticut State College continue to serve as the collecting agent for ConnPIRG?

We at ConnPIRG choose to answer such a question in the affirmative for the following reasons:

- 1) We believe that one semester is not an adequate length of time to objectively judge the success or failure of our organization at C.C.S.C. It should be noted that a full-time staff was hired after the funds at C.C.S.C. were collected, thus ConnPIRG now has a director and an attorney who are capable of devoting more time to the needs of the students. We need an additional semester to get our organization on the map, to let students know that we are serving them and they are receiving their money's worth. Also, it should be emphasized that the University of Connecticut was granted a two semester trial period. We think it only fair that C.C.S.C. be granted the same privilege.
- 2) No PIRGs anywhere have such a 50% cut-off clause under the optional fee system. The 50% clause normally appears in those contracts where a "self-imposed fee increase with right of refund" is instituted. Then, if more than 50% of the students at a given institution demand refunds, PIRGs will cease operations on that campus. We know of no PIRG contract in existence which includes a 50% cut-off figure under the optional funding mechanism. The only PIRG which would even come close to such a policy can be found in Michigan. The students there have what is referred to as a "yes-no" system which is simply a slight variation of the optional mechanism. However, it should be noted that the cut-off is 33%, not 50%, Michigan PIRG was granted a five year contract, not just a one semester trial period, and, quite significantly, the PIRG was granted permission to establish a "funding table" at registration each semester. Also, Michigan PIRG is currently negotiating a new contract with the Board of Trustees whereby the cut-off would be 20% with the understanding that PIRG will end on campus if it fails to meet 20% two semesters in a row. Quite obviously, such a system is very different from that which exists at Central Connecticut State College
- 3) We believe that there are basic flaws in the collection of funds at C.C.S.C. and it is extremely necessary that we be granted more than one semester to isolate and neutralize these problems. For example, 65% of C.C.S.C.

students signed petitions calling for the establishment of a PIRG on campus. However, only 31% (the highest figure ever recorded in the nation under the optional system) contributed funds to ConnPIRG. We contend that because many parents who may not be aware of ConnPIRG's existence pay the final fees, our organization may simply be ignored many times. We do not consider this to be a fault of students, parents, or administrators. It is simply a problem of the fee collection system. We at ConnPIRG maintain that more time is needed to resolve such problems. A 50% cut-off figure for one semester is simply unrealistic.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize the fact that approximately 65% of the students at Central petitioned themselves to establish a PIRG on campus and 31% actually contributed money during its first semester of existence. Both figures are exceptionally high and the latter is in all truthfulness an outstanding accomplishment. No school has ever come close to the 31% mark under such a funding mechanism. Clearly, more than 2,300 C.C.S.C. students contributed money to PIRG when the organization was without full-time staff and struggling desperately to establish itself on campus. To ignore such an accomplishment and to abort ConnPIRG in its infancy is to flirt with the irrational. We are simply asking the Board of Trustees to permit the administration at C.C.S.C. to collect ConnPIRG funds for another semester. Considering the reasons already presented, we do not consider such a request unrealistic. It only seems fair that both parties will have a clearer picture of the entire situation after one full year of practice.

Sincerely yours,

Steve Wisensale

Steven K. Wisensale
Director - ConnPIRG