

The Bristol Press

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Investigation launched after claims against prof

By LISA BACKUS
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NEW BRITAIN — A dozen Central Connecticut State University students and faculty claim they were victims of unwanted advances from a professor there, the school's newspaper reported online this week.

Emails obtained by The Recorder's managing editor, Ruth Bruno, show the university had received complaints that associate professor Joshua Perlstein had allegedly engaged in unwanted touching and advances over the span of several years, but he continues to teach at the school.

"What I read in the article is truly disturbing and surprising to me," said CCSU President Zulma Toro who was appointed in January 2017. Toro called Tuesday for the school's provost, chief human resources officer and chief diversity officer to conduct "a comprehensive investigation."

Toro also wants the
See PROFESSOR, Page A2

Signed and sealed

Bristol Hospital, city close on Centre Square deal

By BRAIN M. JOHNSON
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BRISTOL — The city has closed on the deal to allow Bristol Hospital to develop a portion of Centre Square, said Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu during Tuesday night's City Council meeting.

Bristol Hospital announced its intention to construct an ambulatory care center on the corner of Riverside Avenue and Main Street during the administration of former Mayor Ken Cockayne. Plans continued to move ahead under Zoppo-Sassu, with contracts signed by the city, hospital and contractor. The deal with the hospital, which closed at 5:15 p.m., is intended to spur downtown development.

"This process has gone on for quite a bit of time," Zoppo-Sassu said. She then thanked Tom Conlin, assistant to the Corporation Council, for helping the city through the legal process including "thousands of easements."

"Hopefully this building will
See MAYOR, Page A2

Second chance



Sasha was recently rescued from a neglect situation and is at the Southington dog pound. See story page A3.

Mike Orazzi | Staff



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Mayor also encourages organ donation

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be the beginning of many more developments downtown," said Zoppo-Sassu.

The council also voted to establish a City Arts and Culture Commission. There is currently one vacancy on this seven-person committee. Members appointed Tuesday night include Jesse Gallagher, Lindsay Vigue, Samantha Cloutier, Bill Stortz, Kim Valenti and Juliet Norton.

Just prior to the meeting, Zoppo-Sassu participated in a flag raising ceremony for a Donate Life Flag outside of City Hall. The flag is intended to raise awareness that organ donation saves lives and to recognize April as the 15th Annual National Donate Life Month.

"We seek to commemorate the

families that have benefited from donation and encourage others to donate as well," she said.

Recipients and family members of donors stood with her and shared their stories.

One speaker, Angela, donated a portion of her liver to save her husband.

Another speaker, Pam, said her daughter Ashley donated her heart, kidneys and liver after she died in 2009. Her heart went to a woman in Boston and her kidneys saved the life of a 14-year-old boy who was then able to graduate high school and go to college.

Councilor Mary Fortier mentioned the flag raising at the council meeting. She encouraged those who wish to sign up for organ donation to visit registre.org.



Brian Johnson | Staff

Bristol Mayor Ellen Zoppo-Sassu participates in a flag raising ceremony for a Donate Life Flag prior to the council meeting outside of City Hall.

Professor: 'All allegations made ... have been dealt with'

Continued from Page A1

university's 90-day reporting deadline for sexual harassment incidents reviewed as well.

Perlstein has been teaching theatre at the school since 1992 and was granted tenure in 1996. His current salary is \$97,847 a year. He is still working at the school, officials confirmed Tuesday.

"I will only say that all allegations made to (the) University have been dealt with," Perlstein said in an email to The Press on Tuesday. "I will cooperate with any further requests from (the) University."

Bruno learned about the allegations from a source and then followed through, finding a dozen victims, eight of whom agreed to talk on the record, said The Recorder's Editor-In-Chief

Angela Fortuna. All the victims except one were named in the article published in the print edition of the The Recorder today. The story was posted online to The Recorder's website Monday night.

"She worked for months on the story," Fortuna said. "She met every one in person in public settings."

As part of her investigation, Bruno spoke to school officials who declined to provide Perlstein's personnel records. The school's Human Resources Department told Bruno they had no record of any complaints against Perlstein, she said.

But emails and documents Bruno obtained from victims indicates that at least three people contacted school officials by email

or filed complaints including one that resulted in the professor being told to stay away from a female student.

"An email chain from a faculty member showed she was submitting complaints," said Bruno, a 22-year-old senior majoring in journalism. "She was told that nothing could be done unless a student came forward."

In one 2014 email, a former student carefully described to the head of the theatre department her interactions with Perlstein which included an instance when he allegedly came up behind her and attempted to kiss her. He then allegedly told her, "don't pull away when I try to kiss you," he kissed her on the cheek, the woman said. She wound up declining to be stage manager for a show because it meant being alone with him when the production closed every night, the woman said.

Another 2010 email chain shows a female student had been approached by the school's head

of human resources to discuss "concerns" about the Theatre Department. The young woman agreed but was then told by the HR head that there was no need for a meeting.

Documents obtained by Bruno and shared with The Press also showed that a student came forward to complain that Perlstein had asked for a lunch meeting and then allegedly kissed her and grabbed her buttocks. The complaint was investigated and resolved by Perlstein being told not to be in contact with the student again, the documents showed.

"I'm glad our president responded as quickly as she did," Fortuno said. "I'm glad we could be there for the three or four victims who contacted the university and complained."

Lisa Backus can be reached at 860-801-5066 or lbackus@centralctcommunications.com.

LOTTERY

For April 10

Play 3 day: 9-5-8
Play 4 day: 7-4-9-3

For April 9

Play 3 night: 9-4-6
Play 4 night: 1-0-1-6
Cash 5: 6-13-17-27-28

CORRECTION

Super Natural Market is seeking to raise \$25,000 through their [gofundme](http://gofundme.com) page. A story in Monday's Bristol Press reported the incorrect amount.

Elks Lodge family dinner is Thursday

BRISTOL — Bristol Elks Lodge No. 1010 will be holding their family night dinner this Thursday, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. There will be baked chicken, vegetables, potatoes, soup, salad, Italian bread or fish. You must call ahead for fish at 860-583-3350. The price of the meal is \$8 per person.

— Bristol Elks Lodge No. 1010