A group of students, staff and faculty represented Connecticut College in the first annual We Are New London Somos New London Parade in downtown New London on Sunday, September 25. New Londoners Wanda Cotto and City Counselors Efrain Dominguez and Anthony Nolan organized the event to bring people together to honor the rich diversity of New London. “We are beautiful! We are strong! We are United! We are New London!” was the theme as people of all ages and backgrounds came together in a spirit of solidarity and unity on a beautiful sunny Sunday.

Many New London schools participated with children, teachers, principals and Dr. Manuel Rivera, the Superintendent of Schools, proudly holding school banners from Winthrop Science & Technology Elementary School, Jennings Elementary School, New London High School and the Science & Technology Magnet High School. Connecticut College joined the march proudly displaying the Connecticut College banner and supporting the We Are New London Somos New London principles. President Bergeron and her husband joined the lively Connecticut College contingent marching down State Street and assembling at the Parade Plaza. The Mayor of New London Michael Passero, ’79 and M’89, read a proclamation honoring the Grand Marshal of the parade, Zenaida Martinez for her many years of teaching service in New London and local youth groups performed a range of dances. “It was an excellent opportunity to gather together as members of the New London community and march collectively for unity and peace,” said Rocio Cardenas, ’19.
Celebrating New London At My First Parade
>Aleksandr Chandra’16, AmeriCorps VISTA

The inaugural Somos New London parade showcased the richness of the city’s diversity on Sunday afternoon. Participating in the parade alongside members of the Connecticut College community illuminated what I had already known all along: New Londoners deeply care about their close-knit community they love and call home. The parade was a lynchpin for the cultural diversity and community building that make New London such a special place. From Church of the City to State Street, members of our community marched with pride to Parade Plaza where music blared and the parade’s grand marshal Zenaida Martinez accepted a citation from Mayor Michael Passero. For an inaugural parade, Somos New London had a fantastic turnout and I’m looking forward to what next year brings.

Why Voting Matters

In high school, I couldn’t wait to be able to vote. I was filled with romantic notions about why voting was important: it was my civic duty, women before me had fought to give me this right and if I wanted my voice heard then I needed to vote. Since that time my understanding of voting has evolved to include the multitude of reasons people may feel that voting doesn’t matter for them. Despite this evolution, my belief in the fundamental importance of voting has remained strong. My hope is that I can convince as many individuals as possible that voting is an important means of political expression, and a first step towards holding representatives accountable.

Young people and other politically marginalized individuals have long been made to feel like our vote doesn’t matter and that representatives aren’t working for us. At the same time we are told that it is our responsibility to get a candidate elected. Despite these conflicting messages from candidates and officials, we hear that “young people are apathetic” as if that is the only possible explanation for our lack of turnout. I look around this community and see so many passionate individuals, some committed deeply to one issue, others with more activities and passions than I can count. For some of us voting is a major part of our political engagement, but many people are very engaged in the community but don’t see voting as worthwhile. This shows me that youth not voting is not about apathy, but instead reflects our ideas about voting as a specific form of expression.

So why should we vote? I will be the first to admit that there have been times when I have been unenthused by the candidates before me, or disappointed with results, or frustrated that candidates that I voted for don’t follow through with their promises; and despite my enthusiasm for voting there have been times that I have questioned whether there is really a point to getting to the polls. Each time I have questioned the importance of voting, I have decided it’s worth it. The more people in our community who vote, the more voice our community has and the more we can demand attention for the issues we care about. If we are frustrated with our officials not representing us, then the best way to leverage our constituent power is to vote, so when the candidates don’t measure up, we can say when I voted for you, you said you would do this, and hold them accountable.

Creating the government we want does not end at the polls, it starts there. We need each other to register and vote in order to realize our community goals.

Claire Prihoda ’17
A New Beginning With Community Partnerships  
Xia Wu

One of the most exciting things that happened to me this year was joining Connecticut College Community Partnerships! When I first walked onto this beautiful campus and met with my future colleagues in Community Partnerships, I knew I would enjoy this new next step in my life.

My passion and excitement for working here has a lot to do with my past experiences. I was born and raised in northeast China, where I majored in English. Before I moved to America, I worked for a Beijing TV station as an interviewer/editor for four years. It was a very interesting and challenging job which gave me a great opportunity to speak with people in different areas with various backgrounds. I strongly agree with the saying that the media is a service. It is true especially for the kind of shows that I worked for. We listened to the questions and needs of our audience and got information from experts on different areas. Then we edited and provided answers to the audience in the form of TV shows. You could say that the talk show was a bridge between people and relationships were built between audience and experts from different organizations. I believe my experience provides me with a good background to work towards the Community Partnerships mission, “Community Partnerships works to advance student development while working in partnerships with the local community to build a healthier and more just society…Community Partnerships builds community and diverse partnerships”.

In 2008, I moved to the United States with my husband and during my first four years here, I earned my bachelor’s degree in accounting from Central Connecticut State University. Being an international student, I was afraid and confused at the beginning due of the unfamiliar environment and the unpredictable future. Even though I had attended a college before and had been working a full-time job, I still was unsure how to immerse myself into a brand new society after graduation. I know for a fact that I was not the only student that felt the way I did. Departments like Community Partnerships help students prepare for the life after school and are always available to speak with them about issues or concerns they may have.

Before I joined Community Partnerships, I worked in the administrative office at the Rectory School in Pomfret, Connecticut. Having worked there for three years, I realized that I really enjoy working in an academic environment. Now, as the Administrative Assistant for Community Partnerships, I could further develop my accounting skills while engaging more with the community I have called home for the last eight years.

Mobilizing the Latino Vote

October 6th
7:00pm-8:30pm
Cro’s Nest

Listen to Chris Soto, running for State Representative in our district, discuss his political journey in a local environment that has national implications.
The communities of Groton and New London, sitting on opposite banks where the mouth of the Thames River opens into Long Island Sound, have been home to innovation since before the Revolutionary War. From whaling and shipbuilding to national defense and biopharmaceuticals, we have been on the cutting edge of technology. Now there is an opportunity for Groton and New London to work together to be officially designated as one of the Innovation Places in the State of Connecticut. The state has created this new program in which $4.9M per year will be allocated over the next 5 years with a limited number of Innovation Places. This grant money would help our community make investments to attract and retain talent which in turn will create new businesses and jobs for all skill levels.

Spark Makerspace in New London and CURE Innovation Commons in Groton are co-leading the local effort. Spark Makerspace is a community-run workshop and learning center in downtown New London that is organized cooperatively. CURE Innovation Commons, led by Susan Froshauer ’74, is a place for entrepreneurs, scientists and service providers to build their businesses in a vibrant and collaborative community. Connecticut College Community Partnerships has built internship opportunities with each of these exciting organizations. Connecticut College is a key collaborating partner in the Thames River Innovation Place initiative and one of the main anchor institutions within this designated geographic area. The municipalities of New London and Groton are also key collaborators. The process to become an innovation place happens in two parts. First, the collaborators have applied for a grant to help develop a master plan for innovation over this winter. Then, the collaboration will submit the plan to apply for Innovation Place status in April 2017. Awards will be made in June for a minimum of $250,000 per year for 5 years. The Thames River Innovation Place will move our region forward.