



UConn Faculty Express Concerns Over Proposed Budget Cuts

by Sara Bedigian
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University of Connecticut faculty came together to write an open letter stating their concerns to the university administration after they recently released a five-year plan which included proposed budget cuts.

The five-year plan was released at the end of last semester and will begin to take effect in the fall of 2024. The open letter explains faculty concerns with the five-year plan and proposed budget cuts, which includes a 15% reduction in the permanent two-ledger budget for all academic units over the next five years. Beginning in fiscal year 2025, there will be a 3% reduction rate, with incremental 4%, 3.5%, 2.5% and 2% reduction rates for the following four years.

“While we understand the complexities of financial decision-making, these cuts, as currently proposed, will dramatically degrade UConn’s central mission of teaching and research excellence, and its standing as a world-class institution of higher education,” the open letter said.

Over 300 faculty members signed the letter, which calls for greater clarity, transparency and accountability from the administration.

The letter requests a clear account of budgetary decisions from the last several years and an explanation of the university’s prioritization of expenses and how the projected expenditures for the next five years will serve the university’s core mission. Additionally, the letter also requests updates on negotiations with the governor and state legislature on UConn’s budget and future.

According to the University Senate Budget Briefing on Dec. 4, the five-year financial plan will seek new revenues and grow existing avenues including enrollment mix maximization, rate increases and endowment

growth. It will also utilize one-time fund sources to cover large gaps in earlier years. The plan also will request \$47.3 million worth of state funds for fiscal year 2025, in addition to the 15% reduction.

“While we understand the complexities of financial decision-making, these cuts, as currently proposed, will dramatically degrade UConn’s central mission of teaching and research excellence, and its standing as a world-class institution of higher education,”

UConn faculty detail their concerns as they worry the cuts will have significant impacts on teaching, learning and research. The letter argues how consequences of the budget cuts could include an increase in class sizes, reduced in-person contact between students and faculty and elimination of or reduction in graduate programs.

“These repercussions are nothing short of catastrophic. If implemented, they will have an unprecedented impact on UConn as a whole, undoing all the efforts over the past two decades that have led to it becoming one of the nation’s top public universities and an esteemed R1 research institution,” the letter said. “The challenges ahead will impact students, faculty, staff and all members of the UConn community. We hope for a solution that will preserve UConn as a great university.”

UConn faculty said in the letter that they are welcome to open dialogue to address the questions and concerns. The university has acknowledged their requests and will be holding a series of three town hall meetings regarding the issue.

The first of three virtual town hall meetings will be held today,

Jan. 24, from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. The UConn community is invited to attend to further discuss the budget cuts with university administration. The second town hall meeting will be held on Feb. 21 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. and the final meeting will be in-person and virtual on March 4 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

In a UConn official announcement email, university administration encourages all members of the UConn community to attend and submit questions in advance to communications@uconn.edu. Questions can also be submitted in real time during the meeting.

University administration released more information on Monday for people to view in preparation for the town hall, which includes more details about fiscal year 2024 revenues and expenses, the five-year financial plan, state funding requests and fiscal year 2025 budget outlook.

A recorded presentation on the current budget situation can be found on UConn Media Space and the town hall can be viewed at <https://academics.its.uconn.edu/town-hall/>.

With Oregon facing rampant public drug use, lawmakers backpedal on pioneering decriminalization law

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Democratic lawmakers in Oregon on Tuesday unveiled a sweeping new bill that would undo a key part of the state’s first-in-the-nation drug decriminalization law, a recognition that public opinion has soured on the measure amid rampant public drug use during the fentanyl crisis.

The bill would recriminalize the possession of small amounts of drugs as a low-level misdemeanor, enabling police to confiscate them and crack down on their use on sidewalks and in parks, its authors said. It also aims to make it easier to prosecute dealers, to access addiction treatment medication, and to obtain and keep housing without facing discrimination for using that medication.

“It’s the compromise path, but also the best policy that we can come up with to make sure that we are continuing to keep communities safe and save lives,” state Sen. Kate Lieber, a Portland Democrat, told The Associated Press.

Voters passed the pioneering decriminalization law, Measure 110, with 58% support in 2020. But Democratic legislators who championed it as a way to treat addiction as a public health matter, not a crime, are now contending with one of the nation’s largest spikes in overdose deaths, along with intensifying pressure from Republicans and growing calls from a well-funded campaign group to overhaul it.

Researchers say it’s too soon to determine whether the law has contributed to the state’s deadly overdose surge, and supporters of the measure say the decades-long approach of arresting people for possessing and using drugs didn’t work.

The bill, unveiled by Lieber and other Democrats serving on a recently created committee on addiction, is set to be introduced during the legislative session that starts in February. The Legislature adjourned over the summer, but concern over the state’s drug crisis led Democrats to launch the committee in between sessions. Since September, the committee has held multiple hearings and heard testimony from law enforcement and substance use disorder experts on the law’s accomplishments and shortcomings.

Measure 110 directed the state’s cannabis tax revenue toward drug addiction treatment while decriminalizing “personal use” amounts of illicit drugs. Possession of under a gram of heroin, for example, is only subject to a ticket and a maximum fine of \$100.

Those caught with small amounts can have the citation dismissed by calling a 24-hour hotline to complete an addiction screening within 45 days, but those who don’t do a screening are not penalized for failing to pay the fine.

In the year after the law took effect in February 2021, only 1% of people who received citations for possession sought help via the hotline, state auditors found. As of last June, the hotline received on average of 10 calls per month that were related to citations.

Opponents of the law say it hasn’t created an incentive to seek treatment, a criticism the new bill seeks to address.

The measure’s details have yet to be finalized, but “personal use” possession of illegal drugs would become a misdemeanor punishable by up to 30 days in jail or a \$1,250 fine. The bill would not affect Oregon’s



A person holds drug paraphernalia near the Washington Center building on SW Washington Street, April 4, 2023, in downtown Portland, Ore. On Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2024, Democratic lawmakers in Oregon unveiled a sweeping new bill that would undo a key part of the state’s first-in-the-nation drug decriminalization law. The bill would recriminalize the possession of small amounts of drugs as a low-level misdemeanor.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DAVE KILLEN/AP

legalization of cannabis or psychedelic mushrooms.

Those arrested for small amounts would be referred by police to a peer support specialist to schedule an assessment or intervention. If the person shows up to the meeting, they wouldn’t be charged. If they don’t, the offense could be referred to the district attorney’s office.

If charges are filed, they could avoid jail by agreeing to certain conditions of probation, or by agreeing to have their case diverted to drug court, where judges place people in treatment programs rather than jail.

“We’re trying to give people off ramps while also introducing some accountability into the system,” Lieber said.

The bill would make it easier to prosecute people for selling drugs and create harsher penalties for doing so in parks and near homeless shelters and substance use disorder treatment centers.

Advocacy groups that have backed Oregon’s decriminalization law opposed recriminalizing “personal use” possession as a misdemeanor.

“When people have criminal records for addiction, they permanently exclude people from job opportunities. The legislature should delete the portions of the bill that impose criminal penalties and waste money and double down on increasing treatment funding,” Meli Rose, director of operations for Iron Tribe Network, a nonprofit that

supports people in recovery, said in a statement.

The bill aims to expand access to treatment, particularly medications used to treat opioid addiction. It would allow doctors to prescribe such medication without prior approval or review from insurance companies, and make it easier for pharmacists to refill prescriptions in certain emergency situations.

Additionally, it would expand fair housing standards to protect people prescribed such medication from being discriminated against when trying to maintain or access long-term living facilities, such as permanent supportive housing for people exiting homelessness.

Lawmakers will have just 35 days to pass the bill once the legislative session starts on Feb. 5.

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News

GRETA GERWIG SNUBBED FOR BEST DIRECTOR AND OTHER OSCAR NOMINATIONS SURPRISES

Cue all the “did ‘Barbie’ direct itself” snark. But Greta Gerwig not being among the five best director nominees for this year’s Oscars is one of the biggest shocks in recent memory. Here are some other major “snubs” and “surprises” from Oscar nomination morning.

GRETA GERWIG SHUT OUT FOR DIRECTOR

If we knew anything going into Oscar nominations morning, it was that Gerwig was obviously going to be nominated for directing “Barbie.” It was that rarest of things, a critically praised original blockbuster (about a woman to boot) that became the highest earner of the year by a wide margin and was a legitimate cultural phenomenon. Gerwig was previously nominated for best director for “Lady Bird,” and missing out for “Little Women” was even a snub. Unfortunately many will likely point to Justine Triet (“Anatomy of a Fall”) for taking Gerwig’s spot, but let’s not pit two great female directors against one another. If it’s any consolation to Gerwig, last year’s blockbuster directors were also shut out of this category — neither James Cameron (“Avatar: The Way of Water”) nor Joseph Kosinski (“Top Gun: Maverick”) made it in.

tingly for Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor’s leading performance as Isabel Wilkerson. It’s not a secret that the Oscars have a bad track record with Black female directors — remember last year how Gina Prince-Bythewood’s “The Woman King” was also shut out? DuVernay’s “Selma” remains the only best picture nominee directed by a Black woman. And Halle Berry will for another year continue to be the only Black woman to ever win best actress, as “The Color Purple’s” Fantasia Barrino also missed out on a nomination.

CHARLES MELTON MISSES THE CUT

Someone tell Charles Melton’s mom to get a comforting batch of her kimchi going ASAP. The “May December” actor was not nominated for his heartbreaking performance as the unknowing victim of an older woman’s grooming. The surprise inclusion in this category was Sterling K. Brown for “American Fiction.” “May December” did not do well at all, getting only one nomination for screenwriter Samy Burch.

AMERICA FERRERA IN, MARGOT ROBBIE OUT

“Barbie’s” chaos didn’t stop with Gerwig’s exclusion from



Actors Ryan Gosling, left, Margot Robbie, center, with director Greta Gerwig on the set of “Barbie.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF JAAP BUITENDIJK/AP

DIANE WARREN GETS ANOTHER SHOT; DUA LIPA IS ‘BARBIE’ CASUALTY

It’s not the Oscars without a Diane Warren nomination. The songwriter got her 15th nomination, this time for “The Fire Inside” from “Flamin’ Hot.” Though she has

from a single film can be nominated, meaning Dua Lipa’s “Dance the Night Away” was the unlucky “Barbie” exclusion.

FAREWELL ‘FALLEN LEAVES’ AND THE ‘TASTE OF THINGS’

The international feature category always has some heartbreakers but this year stung a little more: Aki Kaurismäki’s acclaimed deadpan romantic comedy “Fallen Leaves” looked like it could have been a shoo-in for the Oscars, but it got zero nominations Tuesday. It’s in good company with France’s selection “The Taste of Things,” which was also shut out. Many thought it wild that France selected that film over “Anatomy of a Fall,” which was rewarded with four nominations in other categories including director and picture.

‘PAST LIVES’ NEARLY DISAPPEARS

In one version of nominations morning, “Past Lives” could have been among the top six nominees but Celine Song’s graceful romance came out with only two, for screenplay and best picture. Besides Song missing out for her direction, the biggest snub is for Greta Lee’s gorgeous, soulful lead performance.

GAME OVER FOR SUPER MARIO BROS.

Oh no, Mario! “The Super

Mario Bros.” movie, the second highest-grossing film of the year was completely shut out from nominations including animation. We knew going into the morning that Bowser’s ballad to Princess Peach had not made the shortlist for original song, but it is pretty surprising that it wasn’t at least among the best animated movies. Perhaps the unexpected element of chaos here was Neon’s “Robot Dreams,” a Cannes acquisition that has not yet been released in the U.S.

SHORTS ARE A LITTLE LESS STARRY

The Almodóvar/Anderson duel in the short film category just became a draw. Pedro Almodóvar was not nominated for his Pedro Pascal and Ethan Hawke led film “Strange Way of Life,” making the category a little less starry. Wes Anderson, who has never won an Oscar, did make it in however for his Roald Dahl short “The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar.” This makes eight nominations for Anderson over the years.

‘SALTBURN’ GOES DOWN THE DRAIN

Listen, we didn’t really think that Emerald Fennell’s “Saltburn” would make a big splash nominations morning, but it had been trending that way based on its popularity on Prime Video over the holidays. Time to blast Sophie Ellis-Bextor’s “Murder on the Dance Floor.” Clothing optional.



Actor Barry Keoghan in a scene from last year’s “Saltburn.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF AMAZON PRIME VIDEO/AP

ACADEMY CONTINUES TO DISAPPOINT WITH BLACK WOMEN

Even with her years of service to the academy, Ava DuVernay could see the writing on the wall: “Origin” was completely overlooked by her fellow members, most upset-

best director. Margot Robbie was not among the lead actress nominees Tuesday morning but her co-star America Ferrera, of that now-famous monologue, made it into supporting. Robbie did snag one nomination for the film, as producer in the best picture category.

now received an honorary Oscar, Warren has not yet won a competitive statuette. This is not likely to be her year either, up against two “Barbie” juggernauts: “I’m Just Ken” and “What Was I Made For.” Oscar rules state that only two original songs

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Study Break

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ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE:

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CONVERSATIONS WITH KARLA:

The conflicting sides of Rush-Tok

by Karla Perez | ASSOCIATE LIFE EDITOR | SHE/HER/HERS | karla.perez@uconn.edu

Hello and welcome back to another edition of Conversations with Karla! In the last edition, we discussed the positive and negative ways social media can affect one's college experience. This week, I met with Sofia Papanikolaou, a fourth-semester physiology and neurobiology student, to talk about what it's like seeing Greek life depicted on social media as an active member.

Papanikolaou explained how when she went through the recruitment process, she did not feel negatively influenced by social media because she had firsthand accounts from people she trusted. Her mother, Mary Jane Papanikolaou ('92), was a member of the Pi Beta Phi chapter and had the strongest influence on her mindset going through rush. Seeing her mother uphold amazing friendships with other sorority members after all these years made Papanikolaou feel hopeful about finding her place among Greek life on campus.

During the recruitment process, potential new members visit various houses and speak to active members to get a sense of what each sorority values and determine whether those values align with theirs. As the four-day process goes on, potential new members narrow down their choices and visit fewer houses, one of which they eventually (potentially) join. "I loved the recruitment process," Papanikolaou said, "I got to meet so many people even outside of the sorority I eventually joined, so I felt like it connected me to the campus."

Papanikolaou became a member of the Alpha Phi sorority during her first semester at the University of Connecticut and now serves as the chapter's Panhellenic Delegate.

Every August, social media is taken over by people going through the recruitment process within the infamous University of Alabama's Greek life. Two different camps arise during this time of year: those who love it and those who hate it. TikTok creators such as University of Alabama student Kylan Darnell make Greek life seem like the ideal path to pursue in college, while other creators such as Eli Rallo question the integrity of "sisterhood."

"For me, [Greek life] has been such a positive aspect of my college experience so far, so it makes me sad that other people are influenced by what social media says," Papanikolaou shared. She explained how the negative perspective on Greek life that social media can portray discourages people from rushing and doesn't allow them to potentially have the same positive experience that she did. "It does make me sad because I want other people to feel that way. I want people to find a community, find people that support them and just have a good college experience," she said.

Papanikolaou recognized that some social media representations of Greek life in different parts of the country make it out to be very exclusive. When asked about what initiatives the UConn Panhellenic Council

takes to combat this negativity, she shared that it focuses on emphasizing their aim for inclusivity. One of the ways they do this is through their Greek Expo, an event which anyone can attend and speak to representatives from any of the organizations. She also made the point that the rush experience at UConn is highly different than at SEC schools and how it's depicted on social media.

"I think that the Panhellenic Council does a really good job at showing how Greek life here is a lot more unified and integrated than perhaps at other schools," she said. One of the ways it does this is by holding events for all the Greek life organizations to attend, such as Carniville.

Papanikolaou advises those who may not have had the best rush experience in the past to not feel discouraged. "You can go through recruitment multiple times," she said. "I will say Greek life is a great way to meet people, but there are also so many other ways to do that; there are so many clubs." She shared how she attributes a lot of her positive college experience not only to being involved in Greek life but also to her involvement in other activities such as the UConn Dance Company, or to simply just meeting people from her dorm floor.

That's all for this week's Conversations with Karla! See you next week when we'll be discussing the difference between the male and female experience on social media.



KEVIN JAMES

IS STILL GOING STRONG AS THE WORLD GETS WEAKER

by James Fitzpatrick

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Doug Heffernan and Paul Blart are two well-known characters played by comedian Kevin James. His new comedy special “Irregardless,” available on Prime Video, may focus more on the man himself and his life as a father, yet he maintains the charm that gave his old characters that familiar infectious energy. He still has that same subtle smile that makes its way into any photograph of his, but besides that, his appearance has drastically changed within the last decade. He has lost a considerable amount of weight that defined clumsy characters such as Blart, and he is rocking more facial hair than Blart ever did. These features culminate into a new sense of swagger for James, who began his special by dancing for two minutes, including impressive bouts of break-dancing.

While this all seems trivial, the public eye has not been on James since his glow-up, which provides a hook for people to check out his more recent work. The trailer for the special features him proudly dancing, flipping his former style of physical comedy on its head. Describing the annoying process of deleting an iPhone app by shaking to mimic the app’s animation, he personifies the app to poke at himself: “I’m ‘Learn Spanish in 30 Days.’ This idiot couldn’t learn Spanish if he was raised in Guatemala for 30 years!” Other techniques he frequently

uses are vocal sound effects and onomatopoeia. One example is his mockery of his former Little League coach who used to smoke in front of him and his teammates. James aggressively imitates this obnoxious behavior into the microphone, comparing the coach to a “nicotine oscillating fan.”

Additionally, he targets the uncertain language that pervades our modern English vernacular and the ways this is exploited to make bold claims under the guise of not saying something as fact. He calls out General Mills for marketing Cheerios as having the potential to lower cholesterol, because claiming that a cereal “can help lower cholesterol” sounds speculative and shady. Finally, James is a master of using dead air for a comedic effect. He mentions at the end of the special how there are always thoughts floating about in his head, but he does not always voice them as his wife does. Keeping this in mind, whenever he is describing an awkward moment in a social situation, James makes it all too real when he stops and stares at the crowd to simulate the energy. In these scenarios, the audience cannot help but laugh.

Writing, directing and producing this special on his own allows space for the topics that James cares about most, such as his family. James spends time talking about his troublesome son, who one day dismissed his father’s requests to gather his friends so they could set up and play a football game with a mere “I’m good.” This phrase is

later repeated from James’ own perspective when he describes the hypothetical situation of his father handing him the “knowledge baton” of previous generations, not only showing the lineage of laziness within his family, but also how James has rejected something his own father finds personally important.

Following this pessimistic introduction of his son, James mentions that all of his children had previously been addicted to video games. He noticed the lack of interaction and sunlight his kids got as a result, so he suddenly took the gaming devices away. The girls rebounded without a hitch, but his son displayed withdrawal symptoms after a few days. Whether this was exaggerated is up to interpretation, but I disagree with James and his actions here. I sympathize with his son, but thankfully, James was convinced to buy a Meta Quest virtual reality headset for his son, who proceeded to play Job Simulator to his father’s discontent. Despite all this, he made a hilarious comparison between his remissive son and someone asking for money on the street. As he backs away, he exclaims: “Okay, God bless you, sir. God bless you. Have a good day.” James may harbor outdated beliefs about the adverse effects of video games and technology, but he has a knack for bringing contentious issues down to size.

Relatable as ever, James is a well-meaning family man who can connect us all through comedy.

RATING: 3.5/5





Life

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Roundtable: How many snow days will UConn have this semester?



CARTOON BY SARAH CHANTRES, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

When the first day of the semester is cut short by a cancellation due to snow and ice, you know the semester is going to be dotted by lots of days stuck inside. But how many more days like this can we expect going forward? How much will we need to prepare for long periods of dorm seclusion? In this roundtable, the Life section seeks to do the work of weather researchers and meteorologists. Let's see what they have to say.

by Ben Lassy

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I have never had a less satisfying first day of school than this past Tuesday. With the snow cancellation going into effect at 2 p.m. and my class scheduled at the same time, I felt so strange heading back home and doing nothing for the rest of the day. A first day is supposed to start you off on a good note, not a night spent lazing around waiting to fall asleep.

As a consequence of that experience, I am now anti-snow day and despite troublesome weather patterns, I'm firmly hoping that we have relatively few this semester. I'd place the optimal number around four, preferably scattered on Mondays across the whole semester. This would give us a few three-day-weekends — or four-day weekends for those lucky fellows who have Fridays off.

When the four snow days inevitably come, stay safe and warm out there, UConn!

by Desirae Sin

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As much as I'd love to experience another day where I wake up early to an email saying there are no classes, I'm also realistic. I say that there will be no more snow days at UConn. Not just because we technically haven't had a fully canceled day due to snow yet, but also because of our favorite topic — global warming. I don't see Connecticut getting more than a few inches of snow in the future. Sure, it's freezing cold, but that hasn't stopped the UConn administration from making us trek through the elements to get to a class that's only 50 minutes long.

The problem for me is that some days are below freezing, but on days when it's not too cold, it starts to rain. We likely won't see snow for a while, and if we do, it'll be in very minor flurries. In the first week of classes for the semester, we didn't even have a real snow day, just cancellations and delays that didn't amount to much because UConn parking services decided to start shoveling and salting roads when students had to go back to classes.

by Patrick Boots

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It's hard to tell how many snow days we'll be getting this year due to the changing climate. In previous years, holiday blizzards, heavy wintry mix and March flurries have all contributed to snow days. Recently, Winter Storm Aspen showed that winter is still in full force.

My official guess: 10 total snow days. But as always, countless unofficial snow days tucked within the semester will see students savoring cozy mornings indoors, the siren song of a winter wonderland luring them under warm blankets (instead of going to that morning class). Only time — and the meteorologists — will tell what Old Man Winter throws at the Huskies next!

by Kekoa Krautkramer

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As a student whose sleep schedule would benefit from a surplus of snow days, of course I would want to guess on the higher end. Unfortunately, in the past few winters, snowfall has barely surpassed an inch or two. Nonetheless, Storrs has already been hit with frigid temperatures and a couple of intense snowstorms and it's only been a few weeks into the new year. Weather in the northeast is always a surprise but I predict that UConn will have three snow days including the one from the first day of classes.

My estimate is fairly generous when taking into account the amount of snow days we received last spring semester. It's hard to tell how lenient UConn will be when deciding if the amount of snowfall warrants a day off, considering we endured the snow for hours the first week until the administration let us go home. I think the bigger problem at hand would be rain turning snow into ice and causing delays or cancellations. Does that still count as a "snow day," though?

by James Fitzpatrick

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How would students possibly be able to persevere through the winter semester without snow days? Returning from a restorative break, the prospect of committing to another semester in this miserable weather is daunting.

Snow days are a necessary evil, but as with anything, too many can be detrimental. It's my first semester on the Storrs campus and I have yet to have a class canceled due to snow, as my schedule managed to dodge the early closing and late opening last week. Given the slush on the streets and sidewalks, I am questioning whether the decision-makers are trying to cut back on snow days this year. It would've been a win-win to cancel that first day entirely because the introduction week would've been extended and we wouldn't have had to trudge across campus on a day we were already dreading.

If the conditions are too poor to bike in, that's a good sign that the majority of students shouldn't be walking in said conditions. Therefore, how many snow days will we receive? It will probably be several, but how many should we get? Hopefully we'll be able to count the days on one hand.



Students walk through the snow-covered campus at night on Jan. 23, 2024. Frequent storms over the span of a week has left Storrs frozen over for a considerable amount of time. PHOTO BY SKYLER KIM, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



Opinion

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CARTOON BY SARAH CHANTRES, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Absolute failure is the only way to describe the disastrous presidential campaign of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis. After being touted as "DeFuture" of the Republican Party and the biggest threat to pry the 2024 GOP nomination away from the greedy hands of Donald Trump, DeSantis suspended his campaign on Sunday, only two days before the critical New Hampshire primary, effectively sealing the deal for Trump to receive the nomination. The DeSantis campaign had a golden opportunity to win in the wake of Trump's mounting legal struggles. Instead, he failed to even make the race competitive thanks to one of the most disastrous presidential campaigns in recent memory.

DeSantis' campaign was doomed before it even began. By the end of 2022, DeSantis was riding high after winning reelection by almost 20 points, one of the lone bright spots for Republicans in an otherwise disappointing midterm year. He was viewed as the next logical successor to Trump in the hierarchy of the Republican Party, as he pushed a hard-right MAGA agenda and didn't have the baggage associated with Trump. Instead of seizing this momentum and starting his campaign early, he instead focused on his book, "The Courage to Be Free," where he rambled on with his overplayed talking points about "woke elites." He failed to capitalize on the momentum he had earned in 2022 by not declaring his campaign until May

2023. If DeSantis had declared his candidacy earlier, he would likely still be in the race, at least through the pre-Super Tuesday primaries.

When he decided to officially launch his campaign, he didn't hold a traditional rally; instead, he opted for a virtual announcement over Twitter Spaces hosted by tech guru-turned-wannabe political commentator Elon Musk. The event was marred by technical difficulties, as the app kept crashing for users trying to join the event and the audio kept cutting in and out. Though the event attracted an estimated 161,000 listeners, the failure of the non-traditional launch portrayed the DeSantis campaign as incompetent and gave the already laughable DeSantis more ammunition to be mocked by his opponents on both the left and right.

With the campaign starting on a strange note, DeSantis immediately sought to attack Trump through a series of questionable ads released by the "DeSantis War Room" Twitter page in June that did more harm than good to the campaign. One of these ads focused on Trump and Anthony Fauci, featur-

ing a clip of Trump talking about how he would not fire Fauci, a figure that DeSantis has regularly attacked. However, the ad also featured AI-generated images of Trump hugging Fauci, something that was immediately fact-checked. Trump acolytes like Senator J.D. Vance and conspiracy theorist-turned-congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene were quick to deride DeSantis for using AI to

attack their beloved insurrectionist savior. Later in the month, DeSantis released an ad slamming Trump for not being a hardliner on LGBTQ+ issues and contrasting that by promoting the "extreme" and "draconian" laws that Florida had implemented over the past year. The ad was attacked by his opponents on the left for being homophobic, which was understandable given Florida's relentless attacks on LGBTQ+ citizens of the state. It's mind-boggling to think that his campaign believed that it would be a good idea to release ads that looked more like something produced by incels on 4Chan rather than political strategists. The incredibly questionable decision by the DeSantis campaign to produce these ads resulted in him being blasted by both sides of the political aisle.

Over the next six months, DeSantis failed to establish himself as the heir apparent to Trump that he was once viewed as. This can largely be attributed to the GOP debates held in the fall, where he consistently delivered mediocre performances in which he came off as awkward, unrelatable and uncomfortable on the debate

stage. Though his performances weren't terrible, DeSantis didn't do enough on the debate stage to gain any momentum. The debates also gave rise to Vivek Ramaswamy, the smooth-talking young businessman who became the newest GOP star with his Trump-esque vitality and forceful debate style. Ramaswamy's growing presence caused him to replace DeSantis as the "Trump without the baggage" alternative, a label that DeSantis had long held onto, sending his campaign into further irrelevancy.

After a distant second-place finish in the Iowa caucuses, a race that DeSantis desperately needed to win in order to have a fighting chance to win the Republican presidential nomination, DeSantis bowed out of the presidential race and endorsed Trump, who has affectionately given DeSantis various nicknames such as "Meatball Ron" and "Ron DeSanctimonious." 2024 was DeSantis' best shot to win the presidency and he squandered his chance with a campaign that turned him from the next face of the Republican Party to a soon-to-be-forgotten failure. It's too early to rule out another presidential run in 2028, but his remaining starpower will likely be gone by then. DeSantis blew his greatest opportunity to become president and now must accept the reality that he will never hold that office in his lifetime thanks to his failure of a campaign that deserves to be studied by political analysts as one of the worst campaigns of the 21st century.



IMAGE COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA COMMONS FILE LOGO/THE DAILY CAMPUS



WHAT WENT WRONG

FOR THE DESANTIS CAMPAIGN

by Dan Stark | ASSOCIATE OPINION EDITOR | HE/HIM/HIS | daniel.stark@uconn.edu

Study Break

Photo of the Day | Dinosaur Art



The UConn Hartford campus is home to Alexander Calder's sculpture "Stegosaurus," which was dedicated in 1973. The sculpture is an iconic piece located outside of the Wadsworth Atheneum, which is the oldest continuously operating public art museum in the United States, opened in 1844.
 PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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THE DAILY CAMPUS SUDOKU

FLIP PAGE OVER FOR TODAY'S SUDOKU ANSWERS

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7	6	3	5	9	1	4	2	8
5	8	2	4	6	3	1	9	7
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Which NBA player is most likely to/should get traded at the NBA trade deadline?

With the NBA fast approaching the midway point of the season, that also means that the league's trade deadline is creeping up closer. As contending teams look to grow stronger by adding more pieces to their lineups and rebuilding teams look to unload valuable players, this is one of the best times to be an NBA fan. With that being said, which player remains the most likely to arrive on another roster? With plenty of options to choose from, our team of writers will look to answer that question in this week's edition of The Daily Campus sports roundtable.

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DeMar DeRozan

While the Orlando Magic rank fourth in the NBA with a 112.2 defensive rating, they sit 25th in points per game with 111.4. Having the third-most wins of any team in the bottom 10 in scoring is not going to get Orlando as far as they may want to go in the NBA Playoffs. Adding DeMar DeRozan from the Chicago Bulls will address the Magic's scoring struggles while providing a veteran leader to their up-and-coming young core. The former USC Trojan is in the final season of a three-year contract, and with Chicago's long-term future highly uncertain, a change of scenery may be necessary for the soon-to-be free agent. Averaging 21.9 points per game, DeRozan's scoring prowess and clutch gene could be the difference between Orlando winning and losing several games as they make a push for the playoffs. It may mean the Magic will have to trade away core pieces such as guard Cole Anthony on top of draft capital, but acquiring the six-time All-Star will benefit them and their offense when the playoffs come around.

by Evan Rodriguez
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Malcolm Brogdon

Since my previous selection, Terry Rozier, somehow got moved before this article's publication, I'll go with another guard on the other side of the country. Since being selected as the NBA's Rookie of the Year in 2017, Malcolm Brogdon has bounced around several different teams throughout the league, but don't let that distract you from the fact that the former second-round pick is a bucket-getter. This season with the Portland Trail Blazers, he's accumulated 15.5 points per game, while shooting an efficient 42% from beyond the arc. Along with his scoring, he's still a great passer with about five dimes per contest. In the middle of a rebuild, Brogdon could likely be dealt at age 31, but he still provides a ton of value that many NBA contenders could use. If a franchise is willing to part with some draft capital that Portland is desperately seeking in an attempt to rebuild for the future, they could very well grab an underrated talent in the league.

by Stratton Stave
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Lauri Markkanen

Though the Utah Jazz recently enjoyed a six-game win streak that put them above .500, they don't have a team that is in position to contend. They followed the streak with losses to the Oklahoma City Thunder and lowly Houston Rockets, which doesn't bode well for their long-term ability to succeed, and they don't appear to be in position to do so next year either. Markkanen, still with a year and a half left on his contract, would be an attractive addition for a team that is looking to make a run at a championship. Fresh off his first NBA All-Star appearance, the forward's stats are nearly identical this year. The time he has left on his contract would allow the Jazz to get a nice return on Markkanen that would help them build a future around Collin Sexton and Walker Kessler.



by Sean Ahern
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D'Angelo Russell

As the NBA trade deadline approaches, rumors and discussions pick up about what teams need to make a deep playoff run. If there is one thing for certain, the LeBron James-led Lakers are no stranger to midseason acquisitions. The most obvious piece that is likely to be moved is D'Angelo Russell. Russell has had a weird second tenure with the Lakers thus far, playing minutes as a starter and even being benched as the team looked to improve their record, but in his last five games as a starter, Russell averages 27.2 points and 6.4 assists on great efficiency. With Russell's contract and age, he can be packaged in a deal that could end up getting the Lakers that desired third option, more specifically the Atlanta Hawks' Dejounte Murray. The Lakers sit in ninth place in the Western Conference at 22-22 and need to make a big splash if they wish to contend for a championship. Russell may be the key to making that dream a reality.

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Dejounte Murray

Being an Atlanta Hawks fan in 2024 is not for the faint of heart. As the team holds an 18-25 record within a loaded Eastern Conference, it's clear that something needs to change. However, they are in an excellent position to compete in the near future. With teams like the Lakers and Knicks filled to the brim with draft picks and young talent, it makes all too much sense to trade Dejounte Murray. The Hawks need to build around Trae Young, which involves fixing their atrocious defensive effort despite their status as one of the highest-scoring offenses in the Association. Murray is in the midst of another excellent season, averaging 21.4 points per game on 47% shooting. The 27-year-old is also an oversized point guard at 6-foot-5 and can hit the three-ball, meaning likely suitors can scheme him in different ways. Even if Atlanta makes the playoffs, they cannot compete with the likes of the Bucks or 76ers. They need to reload. Don't be surprised to see Murray on the move in the coming days.



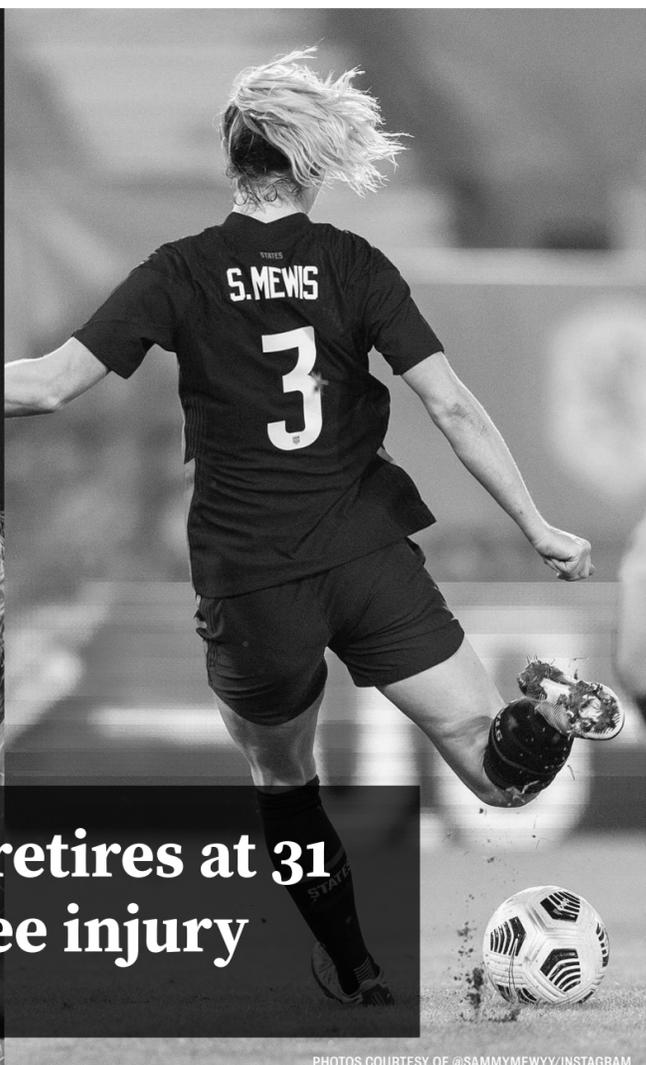
(Left) Lauri Markkanen goes for a layup to score for the Utah Jazz in the Delta Center.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @LAURIMARKKANEN/INSTAGRAM
LOGO BY HALEIGH SCHMIDT, ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



USWNT Legend Sam Mewis retires at 31 as a result of a long-term knee injury

by Francesca Rameau | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | SHE/HER/HERS | francesca.rameau@uconn.edu



PHOTOS COURTESY OF @SAMMYMEWYY/INSTAGRAM

Sam Mewis, a United States women's national soccer team legend who played a key role in their 2019 World Cup victory, retired at 31 years old due to a persistent knee injury. On Jan. 19, Mewis posted a statement on social media announcing her retirement from the game. She promised to someday talk more about her journey and the struggles she has faced throughout her career because of the injury. In her post, she also announced that although her playing days are now over, she will still be involved in the game. Mewis is set to join the Men in Blazers Media Network to head their women's soccer coverage. The podcast, dubbed "The Women's

Game," will follow American, European and international women's soccer. Nicknamed the "Tower of Power" for her 6-foot frame that made her the tallest player in USWNT history, Mewis started her soccer career at a young age along with her older sister Kristen. They both played for various youth clubs including the Scorpions Soccer Club, as well as the U-17 and U-20 U.S. national teams. In high school, Mewis played for her school's squad, where she recorded 77 goals and 34 assists on top of winning multiple awards. She was named the Gatorade Massachusetts Girls Soccer Player of the Year twice and won the ESPN RISE All-American award. In college,

she played soccer for the UCLA Bruins, where she was named to the Pac-12 All-Freshman Team in her first year. She led the Bruins to their first NCAA Championship as well as the Pac-12 Championship during her junior year. Her professional club career started in 2013 when she played for the Pali Blue of the W-League, with whom she won the western conference title in 2014. In 2015, she was selected fourth overall by the Western New York Flash in the National Women's Soccer League entry draft. In 2017, the Flash was sold to new ownership, moved to North Carolina and rebranded as the North Carolina Courage, and Mewis continued playing for them until 2020. She also briefly played for Manchester City FC during

the 2020-2021 season. In 2021, she rejoined the Courage, only to be traded to the Kansas City Current in November 2021 in exchange for another player and the No. 3 overall pick in the 2022 NWSL draft. Mewis only played two games for the Current during the March 2022 Challenge Cup after recovering from the arthroscopic surgery she had following the 2021 Olympics and was not able to play the rest of the season. In January 2023, she had a second knee surgery where cartilage donor grafts had to be placed in her knee. This caused her to miss the entire 2023 NWSL season and eventually marked the end of her career. Mewis' career with the USWNT started in 2014 when she was named on the roster for friendlies against Canada and

Russia after previously playing for the U-17 and U-20 teams. Her official debut came in a 1-0 loss against Sweden in the 2014 Algarve Cup. In 2015, she was on the Women's World Cup squad and was named an alternate on the 2016 Olympics roster, even after helping the U.S. win the SheBelieves Cup earlier that year. In 2017, Mewis gained more consistency with the team as one of three players who appeared in all the U.S. games that year. Since then, she has been a consistent member of the team, except for when she missed a few months in 2018 because of a knee injury. Throughout her career with the Stars and Stripes, she made 83 appearances, totaling 24 goals and 10 assists.

STORY CONTINUED, p.11

Sports

Photo of the Day | A helping hand



UConn Women's basketball returns to a sold-out Gampel Pavilion on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024, taking the win against Big East opponent DePaul. This win sets the Huskies at a 12 game win streak and an 8-0 standing vs Big East teams this season.

PHOTO BY ZACHARY MOLLER, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

FROM ZERO TO HERO

THE PUCK DROP:

BIG NEXT FEW WEEKS FOR COLLEGE HOCKEY

The cards appeared to stack against Rodgers as he came from a small town in California with little recognition from major programs. His collegiate football career began at Butte Community College where he quickly made a name for himself at the quarterback position.

Rodgers stepped on the gas the minute he stepped on the field as he threw 28 touchdowns and reigned in a 10-1 record during his first season. In no time, he began to attract more notable attention.

After just one season at Butte, he earned a scholarship to play at the University of California, Berkeley. By his fifth game at Cal, Rodgers claimed the starting position where he led the team to a 7-3 season record.

In 2004, Rodgers grew to be one of the top quarterbacks in college football, leading the Golden Bears to 10-1 with 24 touchdowns and over 2,500 passing yards. Before long, he declared for the NFL Draft where he was chosen in the first round by the Green Bay Packers.

Although Rodgers had somewhat of a straighter path to success than Allen, his road to the big league started small and is now larger than imagined.

Rodgers remains highly accredited in his success. He has been named to 10 Pro Bowls, received four regular season NFL MVP awards and is the all-time career leader in passer rating.

A few of the other noteworthy players who had dysfunctional journeys to successful NFL careers are Antonio Brown, DeMarcus Lawrence and Matt Paradis.

With millions of high school football players in the country, receiving a collegiate scholarship is a rarity, so rare that just 3% of hopeful applicants will receive a Division I scholarship. Although Allen, Rodgers and several others weren't part of that 3% at the start, they made the impossible possible.

Now, as they earn paychecks larger than most, dominate headlines and make football history, their career milestones truly represent the light at the end of the tunnel. Although they were all required to go the extra mile for a chance, the cards they were dealt eventually turned out in their favor. With some serious grit and go-getter mentalities, the fight to the top was well worth it for this group as they brought themselves from zero to hero.

have any scholarship offers from any NCAA Division I programs. Even though he received an offer to walk on from San Diego State, playing time wasn't promised.

With no promising opportunities and the odds stacked against him, Allen attended Reedley Junior College in California. Just one year in, Allen made the most important decision of his career. He sent out over 1,000 emails to college coaches asking for a chance and included a link to a highlight video showcasing his skills.

This course of action proved to be life-changing, leading Allen to receive one singular offer from the University of Wyoming.

In his three years as a Wyoming Cowboy, Allen appeared in 27 games and led the team to a record of 8-5 his junior year and to 8-3 as a senior. With over 5,000 passing yards to his name and the record for the highest single-season passing efficiency at Wyoming, Allen's professional future was slowly changing its course.

Since Allen was selected seventh overall by the Bills in the 2018 NFL Draft, the rest has been history. In the 11 starts he made during his rookie year, Allen made quick work and set five franchise records for passing and rushing.

While it may be easy to get wrapped up in the highs and lows of his professional career, Allen's high school and collegiate journeys have proven to be the most inspiring. Despite being an underdog, Allen changed the narrative and took himself from the bottom to the top.

Another one of the NFL's household names, Aaron Rodgers, didn't always hold the gaze of millions.

by **Bridget Bronsdon**

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Some major NFL players weren't always the hotshots they are now, but somewhere along the way, stars were born. As the postseason is winding down, it's key to recognize the starting grounds for some of today's most talked about players and their lesser-known history.

Whether they were overlooked as a youngster or received a lack of offers from college athletic programs in high school, these players all had to start somewhere. Some had to email coaches to try to gain recognition, and others had to climb the steep ladder to success. In Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen's case, he had to go the extra mile just to get a shot at going pro. Luckily, one coach was willing to take a chance on him.

Although Allen's 2023 season ended just a few days ago in a nail-biting loss to the Kansas City Chiefs, his six seasons in the NFL have been a major topic of conversation, but he wasn't always making headlines.

With millions of high school football players in the country, receiving a collegiate scholarship is a rarity, so rare that just 3% of hopeful applicants will receive a Division I scholarship.

Coming out of high school, Allen's football future seemed bleak. Despite amassing over 5,000 passing yards in his high school career, he didn't

by **Avery Becker**

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For those who have attended a college hockey game, you know that the atmosphere is unlike the NFL. You have the pep band playing the school's fight song and the students heckling the opposing team's goalie.

It's an experience like no other. For college hockey fans based in New England, the next few weeks are the most thrilling part of the season aside from the playoffs.

This is because of the CT Ice tournament, a series of contests that features the men's hockey teams from UConn, Yale, Quinnipiac and Sacred Heart, which commences this Friday afternoon.

Additionally, the annual Beanpot tournament, consisting of the men's hockey teams from Boston College, Boston University, Harvard and Northeastern, begins next Monday evening at TD Garden.

After years of planning, CT Ice was finally established as a tournament in 2020. Unfortunately, the 2021 tournament was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In its early season, it took place exclusively in Bridgeport, Connecticut at the Total Mortgage Arena. Then, in 2023, it was decided they would rotate from the four teams' competing home arenas. Last year, Quinnipiac hosted the tournament at M&T Bank Arena. This year, UConn will host it at the XL Center in Hartford.

The Quinnipiac Bobcats are the reigning 2023 CT Ice Champions and National Champions. Led by captain Jayden Lee, the Bobcats are currently ranked No. 7 in the nation and are the only team competing in CT Ice with a top-20 ranking. With leading goal scorers Collin Graf and Sam Lipkin at the forefront, they are the favorites to win the title for the third year in a row.

You can't write off the other Connecticut foes that Quinnipiac will be playing against, though. The UConn men's hockey team is hoping to win the title this year after being the runner-up to Quinnipiac in the past two years. They haven't had as great a year as they were hoping for so far, but with goaltender

der Arsenii Sergeev recently earning Hockey East Goaltender of the Week two weeks in a row, their future looks bright.

The tournament will begin this Friday, Jan. 26. The preliminary round will begin with UConn facing the Sacred Heart Pioneers at 4 p.m., and for a rivalry game, Quinnipiac will face Yale at 7 p.m.

On Saturday, Jan. 27, the teams who lost the preliminary rounds will face off in a third-place game beginning at 3:30 p.m. The championship game will begin at 7 p.m., one hour after the end of the third-place game.

If fans aren't able to make it to Hartford this weekend, all games will be available to watch on SNY.

Meanwhile, the annual Beanpot is celebrating its 72nd anniversary this year. Both Boston College and Boston University remain two of the top programs in the tournament with rankings of first and second in the nation, respectively.

Both teams boast deep histories, as various players who have made their mark with the schools have made it professionally as well. Boston College has a star-studded roster this year with notable players such as Ryan Leonard, Will Smith and Gabe Perreault. Each were first-round draft picks in the 2023 NHL Draft and played together in the U.S. National Development program. This makes them the favorites to take the Beanpot title home to Chestnut Hill. However, the Boston University Terriers, led by former Hockey East Rookie of the Year Lane Hutson, have also been a powerhouse this year.

The showdown between these four teams will begin on Feb. 5 at TD Garden with Harvard and Northeastern facing off at 5 p.m., while the puck will drop between Boston University and Boston College at 8 p.m.

On Feb. 12, the losers of the first two games will face each other at 4:30 p.m., while the winners will face each other at 7:30 p.m. at TD Garden.

If you can't make it to Boston, both of these games can be viewed on NESN.

All in all, it's going to be an exciting next few weeks for New England college hockey, giving us a preview of what's to come in the next half of the season and the playoffs.



FILE ILLUSTRATION/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Which young NFL quarterback will have the best career?

by **Evan Rodriguez** | ASSOCIATE SPORTS EDITOR | HE/HIM/HIS | evanrodriguez@uconn.edu
 and **Gavin Friedman** | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | HE/HIM/HIS | gavin.friedman@uconn.edu

During the 2023 NFL season, we've seen breakout performances from several young quarterbacks, and some of them look like they could be potential stars in this league for years to come. In their first full season as starters, three young quarterbacks (Jordan Love, Brock Purdy and C.J. Stroud) were able to impress their team and lead them to the playoffs. Purdy has continued to show that he is capable of producing at a high level despite being the last pick in the 2022 NFL Draft selected by the San Francisco 49ers. He helped his team earn the No. 1 seed in the NFC and now has his sights set on winning the NFC Championship game against the Detroit Lions. Stroud has rejuvenated the Houston Texans by leading them to an AFC South championship and is likely the favorite to win Offensive Rookie of the Year. With these impressive seasons in mind, Campus Correspondent Gavin Friedman and Associate Sports Editor Evan Rodriguez debate who will have the better career.

GAVIN

While both of these players have the talent to be successful in the NFL, I believe that Brock Purdy has a brighter future in San Francisco. Despite being the last pick in the 2022 NFL Draft, he has proven that he can be a top quarterback in this league. During the regular season, Purdy led the NFL in yards per attempt (9.6) and quarterback rating (72.8). He also finished third in touchdown passes (31) and second in completion percentage among full-year starters (69.4%). Purdy was one of the best quarterbacks this season and he has been considered a potential league MVP candidate for parts of the season. Purdy is surrounded by tons of other talented players including Christian McCaffrey, Deebo Samuel, George Kittle, Nick Bosa and Fred Warner. The talented players on offense will give Purdy more confidence when making passes to receivers. Furthermore, the efficient defense will keep San Francisco in games which will create less pressure for Purdy to force the ball downfield. Additionally, Purdy is part of an offense run by 49ers head coach Kyle Shanahan, who is widely regarded as one of the best offensive play-callers in the NFL. All of these factors will set Purdy up for even more success in the future as Shanahan will continue to utilize both Purdy's strengths and those of the offense surrounding him.

EVAN

I agree that Brock Purdy has proved himself on the field, but even with the impressive statistics that the former Iowa State quarterback has displayed as a member of the Niners, I feel that you still have to go with C.J. Stroud. First and foremost, while Purdy clearly has the better team around him in San Francisco at the moment, Houston has certainly shown that they're not about to let teams pass them over. They brought in a new head coach with DeMeco Ryans and notably added more firepower on both sides of the field. A lot of the pieces that they brought in to help Stroud out on the offensive side of the ball, including Dalton Schultz and Tank Dell, were huge weapons that he utilized very well. In the future, they're going to continue to bring in even more talent, and considering that Stroud just took this Texans team to a 10-7 record, you better believe that it means that better things are on the horizon. Additionally, Stroud has already shown the ability to help his teammates excel on the field, and you don't have to look further than Nico Collins to prove that point. The former Michigan prospect caught 80 receptions for 1,297 yards this season after failing to break the 500-yard plateau in previous seasons. If you combine my previous point with that fact, I don't think it's a shock that many NFL fans are on the Stroud hype train.

GAVIN: I certainly see the appeal for Stroud, but it's hard for me to look past what Purdy has done so far in his early career. Being Mr. Irrelevant in the draft has given Purdy plenty of skepticism, especially since at the beginning of the season, he was trying to become a viable starting quarterback for a San Francisco team that was ready to compete for a Super Bowl. Despite the immense pressure that he faced, I believe that Purdy has been able to silence his critics and has proven that he can perform at a very high level in the NFL. Purdy has been a big reason as to why the Niners have made it to the NFC Championship game where they are currently seven-point favorites to defeat the Detroit Lions this Sunday. Additionally, there are areas of Purdy's game that he is looking to improve upon in the future. According to an ESPN article, Purdy is looking to improve on his throwing power, something he was criticized for when he was drafted in 2022. He is also looking to improve his pocket presence so he can make better passing decisions. I'm sure most young players in this league, including Purdy and Stroud, will look to make improvements to their game, but if Purdy is able to make these adjustments in future seasons he will be able to distinguish himself as an elite quarterback in this league. When you add the talented roster and coaching staff that the 49ers already have in place, I feel Purdy has everything he needs in order to be successful in the NFL.

EVAN: I won't argue that Purdy will be a very successful quarterback in the league as long as he's a 49er, but that brings me to my next point, which is the personnel in San Francisco. When the young quarterback entered the starting role, he was added to a lineup that consisted of several viable offensive weapons, including Samuel, McCaffrey and Brandon Aiyuk among others. He may have made the team better from there as he went undefeated as the starter. However, you could easily argue that the work of Shanahan and the players around Purdy turned a larger role than the 2023 Pro Bowler did himself. In his rookie season, Stroud turned a team that was deemed one of the worst rosters in the entire league into a playoff team that dismantled a hot Cleveland Browns roster. He did this without a single superstar around him and in my mind, this is just the beginning for Stroud and company. The Texans' front office will find a way to add even more firepower to both sides of the field and the former No. 2 overall selection will continue to get even better with his relentless work ethic. Eventually, I can see them being one of the most feared teams in the league with the former Ohio State quarterback under center and bringing back hope to a city that has suffered for far too long.

USWNT Legend Sam Mewis retires at 31 as a result of a long-term knee injury

CONTINUED from p.9

During her career, Mewis also won multiple individual awards in addition to team trophies. From 2017 to 2019 with the North Carolina Courage, she won three consecutive NWSL Shields, a title won by the team that finishes at the top of the NWSL at the end of the regular season-equivalent to the Commissioner's Cup, and two consecutive NWSL Championships. With Manchester City FC, she won the delayed 2019-2020 Women's FA Cup, scoring goals both in

the semifinal against Arsenal and in the final against Everton. Internationally, Mewis won the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup, the 2018 CONCACAF Women's Championship, the 2016 and 2020 CONCACAF Women's Olympic Qualifying Tournament, the 2016 and 2020 SheBelieves Cups, the 2018 Tournament of Nations and an Olympic bronze medal in 2020. That same year, Mewis was voted U.S. Soccer Female Player of the Year and in 2017 she was named to the NWSL Best XI. After the 2020-2021 season, she was nominated to the FA WSL PFA Team of the Year.

UConn seniors start 'Husky Pound' in hopes of improving student section

by **Sam Calhoun**
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 HE/HIM/HIS
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Growing up as a UConn men's basketball fan, there were many electric moments, whether at Gampel Pavilion or the XL Center, that I remember watching. There was the whiteout in 2010, when the unranked Huskies upset then-No. 1 Texas. ESPN analyst Dick Vitale coined the now trademarked "Basketball Capital of the World" in 1995 when Connecticut took down their rival Syracuse, and that was before either program took home any national championships. Those who were around for the 1989-1990 "Dream Season" know how electric the Hartford Civic Center (now XL Center) was when the Huskies took down rivals Georgetown and Syracuse in back-to-back games.

There have been a lot of those moments over the years of the historic program, no matter where the game was played. However, UConn graduates feel that the student section has lost the spark that shined in the old Big East days.

Nate Herman, a senior majoring in sports management and a student manager for the UConn men's basketball team, started the "Husky Pound" alongside Casey Ruff, a senior majoring in mathematics and brother of head student manager Tyler Ruff.

"We just wanted to re-energize the Gampel environment and student section," Herman explained. "We have tailgates and now events and giveaways."

The co-founders knew that they needed to start small in order for them to grow.

"We started it about two weeks ago," Ruff said. "Our soft launch was at the DePaul game. We knew it wasn't going to be a good show out because of winter break and everything, but we wanted to see how it would do."

Starting as just a basketball hoop and with no more than 20 people in line for the Jan. 2 game against the Blue Demons when doors opened, the Husky Pound grew dramatically for last Wednesday's top-25 matchup against Creighton. In sub-freezing temperatures 11 hours before tipoff, Herman and Ruff created a schedule for a day-long tailgate to keep people engaged while suffering through the cold.

"The whole point of tailgating is to have fun, right?" Ruff argues. "And the best way to bring people in is to have fun. Free merchandise? Fun. Free doughnuts? Fun. People are going to want to do this often and we can't do this if we don't get the support. So the more support we get, the more that we can do this over and over again."

To the vocal UConn alumni who have criticized the student section for not being what it used to be: you're in luck. That's exactly the goal of the Husky Pound.

"We just wanted to re-energize the Gampel environment and student section [...] We have tailgates and now events and giveaways."

NATE HERMAN
 SENIOR SPORTS MANAGEMENT MAJOR

"We're number one in the nation, there's no excuse now [...] Let's show them we just won [the national championship] last year and let's show our Husky pride."

CASEY RUFF
 SENIOR MATH MAJOR

"We want to have a little bit of a tradition going," Ruff said. "We want to bring back the old chants. If there are alumni who want to hear that, tell us because we probably haven't seen all the old chants and everything. We would love to hear feedback."

It's no secret that basketball powerhouses such as Kansas, Duke and Kentucky all have incredible homecourt advantages thanks to their rowdy and engaged students. Now that UConn is considered a blue blood program by many, it seems reasonable that every game needs to bring Gampel Pavilion and XL Center to the levels that Allen Fieldhouse (Kansas), Cameron Indoor Stadium (Duke) and Rupp Arena (Kentucky) are at every single game, no matter the opponent.

So, outside of getting feedback from the alumni and starting day-long tailgates, how exactly is the Husky Pound improving the student section?

"Just everyone being in sync," Herman noted. "Whether it's chanting during free throws, doing certain distractions all in sync, making sure all students are on the same page and making it as loud and hard to play as possible for our opponents."

The tailgate before the Creighton game last week was a hit. Many people stopped by the north entrance of Gampel Pavilion, where they received free food, drinks and merchandise throughout the day. The Husky Pound also gave away a basketball and a sign autographed by center Donovan Clingan. Clingan seemed to approve of the Husky Pound as he appeared at the tailgate in the morning and dropped off hand warmers.

If those perks don't appeal to students, the founders argue that the Huskies' ranking in Monday's AP Poll should.

"We're number one in the nation, there's no excuse now," Ruff attested. "We are number one right now. Let's show them we just won [the national championship] last year and let's show our Husky pride."

To help the program grow in prominence, both founders emphasized the importance of following the Husky Pound on Instagram and X (formerly known as Twitter). Without social media, getting the word out to students is nearly impossible.

Thanks in part to the great environment the Husky Pound provided during last week's game against Creighton, the Huskies won 62-48. It also didn't hurt that it was \$2 beer night.

The defending national champions will be in Hartford on Sunday to host Xavier with a chance to sweep the Musketeers after being on the other end of the brooms last year. Regardless of the weather or anything else, Herman and Ruff will likely be standing in the front row of the student section, ready to lead them to what could be the team's eighth-straight victory.



Sports

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

No. 8 Huskies break away from Marquette behind second-quarter run

by Cole Stefan
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Twice, senior forward Aaliyah Edwards got called for an offensive foul against the Marquette Golden Eagles in the second quarter. A third foul, this time on defense, sent Edwards to the bench for the remaining 4:25 of the first half. The No. 8 UConn women's basketball team fell behind 29-28 on Golden Eagles forward Liza Karlen's 3-pointer 12 seconds later, but the foul flipped a switch.

Senior guard Nika Mühl responded on the other end with a triple, one of five Huskies hit over the next four minutes. Marquette twice called a timeout to try and bring the game back to its competitive nature. No matter how many times they attempted to do so, Connecticut could not miss.

Most times in basketball, a dagger ices the game for the team leading by a slim margin. Redshirt junior guard Paige Bueckers delivered it at halftime. Senior guard Jordan King drained a trey with six seconds left in the first half, but it was too much time for Bueckers. The redshirt junior hustled halfway down the court, releasing the ball just before the buzzer sounded. It hit nothing but net, putting a stamp on the Huskies' 85-59 victory over Marquette at the Al McGuire Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Bueckers, who finished with a game-high 26 points, celebrated with her teammates afterward. Her fourth-straight performance with 20-plus points almost did not happen. The arena fell silent for the second time in six days when the redshirt junior remained on the ground following a collision 3:10 into the contest. The UConn fans in attendance could not even look as Bueckers held on to the back of her left knee.

During the time she spent on the bench, the Golden Eagles went on an 8-4 run and grabbed a three-point lead. Marquette was one step ahead several times, but with the redshirt junior back on the court two minutes later, the Huskies had the ammunition they needed to go toe-to-toe in a heavyweight bout.

"Any team you put her on would be a different team," head coach Geno Auriemma

said about Bueckers. "The things that she does impact each and every player on our team in a positive way."

The game's physicality continued with no end in sight. Players entered foul trouble, both teams exchanged the lead like a hot potato and turnover issues occurred on both ends of the floor. For almost an entire half, it felt like Connecticut was in the midst of their closest Big East contest to date.

Yet the Huskies kept their streak of both scoring 80-plus points and winning by 25-plus. After outscoring the Golden Eagles 21-9 in the final four minutes of the first half, UConn kept its foot on the gas with 22 points in the first 5:50 of the second half. Both Edwards and first-year guard KK Arnold crossed double figures, leading the charge for an offense that shot 9-17 from the field in the third quarter.

On the other end, the Huskies' defense surrendered one two-pointer in that frame. Marquette's three triples kept them in the game several times, but Connecticut continued clamping down, holding their opponents to a 3-13 clip from the field in the final frame and two points in the last 7:37. It officially iced the Golden Eagles' first loss in Milwaukee this season, three weeks after the Huskies handed them their first defeat of the season in Hartford, Connecticut.

This was Arnold's first collegiate game in Wisconsin. The four-time Big East Freshman of the Week hails from Germantown, Wisconsin, which is approximately 30 minutes away from Milwaukee. Limited to 11 first-half minutes because of foul trouble, Arnold attacked the transition game behind her quickness for two steals alongside her 13 points.

Connecticut buried just three triples when they lost in Milwaukee last season, the same number they made in their win over the DePaul Blue Demons on Saturday. Against Marquette, they put together their deadliest performance from downtown yet with 11 3-pointers, all but one of which came in the final 24 minutes. Bueckers buried four for the second time in three games; Big East Freshman of the Week Ashlynn Shade shot a perfect 3-3 from downtown; Mühl made her first three and finished 3-5.

Edwards, meanwhile, commanded the glass en route to her 25th-career double-double with 12 rebounds to go alongside her 10 points. The senior forward also accounted for one of the team's 11 steals, a staple of a defense that scored 24 points off 16

Golden Eagle turnovers.

Karlen scored 13 points in the first meeting between these two teams; she exceeded that total in the first half with 19. Despite being a nuisance in the interior for the first 20 minutes, however, the Huskies limited the senior forward to two points across the second half and 21 on the night.

Her silence allowed sophomore guard Mackenzie Hare to create most of the offense for Marquette, who scored 21 points in the second half. Hare accounted for four of the team's eight triples, further establishing herself as one of the nation's most dangerous 3-point threats and finishing with 19 points. Senior guard Rose Nkumu collected six rebounds while dealing with foul trouble for most of the game.

Other than King, who had 10 points and six assists, the

rest of the team struggled to keep up with the pack. The Golden Eagles have been outrebounded in a game only twice this season; Connecticut accounts for both, taking this battle of the boards 38-28.

The Huskies, now halfway through their 18-game conference slate, will not play a Big East foe for a week. That does not mean a seven-day break, however, as one of UConn's longtime rivals, the No. 15 Notre Dame Fighting Irish (14-3, 5-2 ACC), rolls into Storrs on Saturday night. Tip-off from Gampel Pavilion is at 8 p.m. on FOX.



UConn women's basketball returns to a sold-out Gampel Pavilion on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024, taking the win against Big East opponent DePaul. This win sets the Huskies on a 12 game win streak and an 8-0 standing vs. Big East teams this season.

PHOTO BY ZACHARY MOLLER, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/ THE DAILY CAMPUS

WHAT TO KEEP AN EYE ON THIS WEEK

UConn SCOREBOARD



Women's Basketball
Saturday | 8:00 p.m.

INSTAGRAM OF THE DAY



@uconnhuskies
Championships run deep here 🏆
@UConnWBB & @UConnMBB run will celebrate anniversaries and induct Huskies of Honor this weekend!

TWEETS OF THE DAY

Tyler Morrissey

@TylerRMorrissey

Hearing the tape to tape passes from the #UConn students playing pond hockey outside of my office window makes me so happy. Some of my favorite memories as an undergrad were playing pond hockey for hours outside the Chem. building.

Little Red

@hblethh

Gampel might not be the best venue but, we are certainly capable of creating an insane home court environment. I borderline foam out of the mouth at UConn games, if you don't bring that kind of energy stay home because, I'll just end up pissing you off

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