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## Sen. Blumenthal speaks to Ukrainian Student Association about recurring hate crimes on campus

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The Ukrainian Student Association has been on the receiving end of hateful vandalism for five weeks, and Sen. Richard Blumenthal visited campus on Monday to discuss these occurrences with them.

Over the past five weeks, Ukrainian ribbons across campus have been vandalized with the 'Z' symbol, a Russian military symbol. Russian flags were placed in a Ukrainian flag memorial. Fliers and black and orange ribbons, symbolizing the Ribbon of Saint George, a Russian military symbol, were placed around campus. Most recently, posters were placed around campus and attached to the walls with adhesive accusing the Ukrainian Student Association of Nazism. According to Ukrainian Student Association member Sonia Zazulak, the posters were placed around South, Alumni, Towers and North residence halls.

Due to the lack of a response from The University of Connecticut, the Ukrainian Student Association emailed Sen. Blumenthal to ask for his support in addressing the hate speech, as Blumenthal has been very supportive of Ukraine and has visited the country five times since February 2022. Blumenthal came to UConn on Monday and took questions from members of the Ukrainian Student Association.

Kate Koval, president of the Ukrainian Student Association, said, "Our main point is that all of this has been going on for five weeks now." She



Senator Richard Blumenthal visits UConn's Ukrainian Student Organization to discuss the repeated hate crimes that occurred at the UConn Storrs campus. Blumenthal condemned the university for its lack of action.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF KATE KOVAL

discussed the escalation of these acts and said, "When the posters came out, I was shaking for three hours and I could not stop."

Koval has met with the Dean of Students, Associate Dean, UConn police captain and the Director of Community Standards. UConn President Radenka Maric did not respond to her requests for a meeting. Maric was also emailed by Blumenthal regarding the hate speech. Blumenthal said that he would send another email to Maric following the meeting.

"We have seen in the past

weeks that these incidents have been increasing. We're just worried that, where does this end?" said Zazulak, who brought up that there was a shift in UConn's support of the Ukrainian Student Association. "I was on campus two years ago, and they were extremely, extremely supportive of Ukraine."

She mentioned that President Radenka Maric had organized a vigil and invited people to speak around the start of the war.

"I guess I'm just hoping that UConn continues to stand with the Ukrainian

community," student Mark Rokycky said. "We appreciate Senator Blumenthal's support or continued support for Ukraine."

"I understand that these incidents have been increasing ... the upsurge and escalation are in part due to an unsatisfactory response," said Blumenthal. He repeatedly asked UConn to condemn the hate speech, saying, "The failure to condemn this hate speech will only breed more of it."

He also brought up his legislative record. "I have sponsored hate crimes legislation.

We had in mind acts of intimidation and fear. There is no place at the University of Connecticut for this intimidation or hate crimes."

"I will come back because we need to stop this hate speech from escalating," Blumenthal said. "When you talk about it escalating here, it will expand to other campuses."

Koval and Zazulak said that they were considering organizing a protest or a rally before Blumenthal gave his talk. "I hope that maybe we'll have some rallies for Ukraine. I would be proud to speak at a rally that the Ukrainian Student Association has put on," Blumenthal responded. He complimented the Ukrainian Student Association's record, saying, "I admire your courage, your resolve, your bravery in standing up and speaking out."

"That should have no place at the University of Connecticut, or anywhere in the U.S. or in the world," Blumenthal told the Ukrainian Student Association.

"I ask that the investigation be made public [...] and that there be a more forceful condemnation," Blumenthal said. "I think we need to elevate your courage and determination. I want to see more students know what you're doing and know what a threat it is to have this kind of defacing and desecration [...] and intimidation and threats. People should know."

"UCPD cannot do much because the police do not consider propaganda a hate crime," said Koval. Ukrainian refugee Arsen Dmytryshy said that "propaganda is like a weapon and it is very powerful."

See **HATE CRIMES, p. 2**

## Early voting for the 2024 presidential primaries has opened

by **Gabriel Duffany** | CAMPUS CORRESPONDANT | HE/HIM/HIS | gabriel.duffany@uconn.edu

Individuals 18 years or older may now cast their votes for the 2024 presidential primaries at the Mansfield Town Hall located at 4 South Eagleville Road, until 8 p.m. on April 2.

Early polling for registered Democrat and Republican voters is open on March 26, 27, 28 and 30 from the hours of 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the Mansfield Town Council Chambers. Those unable to vote early may cast their vote on the official presidential preference primary day, held on April 2, from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the same location.

Per Connecticut election statutes, voters must be affiliated with a party in order to cast a ballot in their respective primary. Those who are unaffiliated must self-select

into a party by noon, on April 1 at the Mansfield Town Hall in order to vote on April 2.

New voters must register with a party by noon the day before voting. To vote early, first-time voters must register by March 28 at noon in order to cast a ballot on March 30.

New voter applications are available online at the Mansfield Registrar of Voters website. According to the Office of the Secretary of State, voters must be a United States citizen, be at least 18 years of age before Nov 5, 2024, be a Connecticut resident and not have been convicted of a "disenfranchising felony."

Although many Americans may consider the primaries to be a closed book with incum-

bent Democrat Joe Biden and Republican Donald Trump being the forerunners of their respective parties, a sizable number of citizens are expressing their discontent with the available options.

**"Yes, you are one person, but your voice is loud. Make it count."**

**SEAN DUNN**

Inspired by movements nationwide, the CT Palestine Solidarity Coalition has announced the 'Vote Uncommitted CT' program, encouraging Democrat voters to cast 'un-

committed' votes in protest of President Biden's support for the Israel-Hamas War.

The Daily Campus reports that Vote Uncommitted CT has the support of numerous local politicians, including Hartford

city councilor Josh Micham, Hamden legislative councilman Abdul Osmannu and New Britain alderman Nate Simpson.

Despite the pessimism many may feel towards the U.S. political system, voting remains one of the most powerful tools for change in the American discourse.

"I totally empathize with students who feel fatigued by elections and politics in general. I completely get it," said Sean Dunn, the newly elected undergraduate student trustee at the

University of Connecticut.

"Politics has always led to division and in many respects, perspectives both domestic and abroad, are increasingly fractured. In spite of this, I believe now is a more important time than ever to affect change in our political climate," emphasized Dunn. "Regardless of viewpoint, if you aren't satisfied with policy or the pace of government at any level, you should translate your opinion directly to the polls. 2024 is forecasted to be the most important election year in modern history. You have the opportunity to be a part of that. Your votes have more power than you think. Yes, you are one person, but your voice is loud. Make it count."

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THE DAILY CAMPUS  
NEWSLETTER

# News

## HATE CRIMES, cont. from p. 01

In a statement, University spokesperson Stephanie Reitz said, "We condemn all acts of bias on our campuses; hatred has no place in our community as we work together to ensure an atmosphere of inclusivity, care, and respect. Our Dean of Students and others continue to meet and speak with members of the Ukrainian Student Association and to investigate the incidents reported to us."

"President Maric cares very deeply about this issue and has closely followed the developments, both through discussions directly with students and also with the Dean of Students, the Provost, the Vice President for Student Life & Enrollment, and many others," Reitz continued. "The university condemns hate in any context and will be sending a reply to the senator's letter very soon."

Regarding punishment for vandalism and hate speech,

Reitz said, "Any violations of the law or the Student Code of Conduct will be answered with disciplinary measures and law enforcement where appropriate."

"The posters that are being put up, we have been told not to touch them and not to take them down," Tetyana Banaryk, a member of the Ukrainian Student Association, told Blumenthal. "What should we do then?"

Alumni Hall directors shared an email with Alumni residents regarding the posters informing them of what to do if they saw similar posters, which Zazulak called "a step in the right direction."

"All posters for residence halls on campus must first be approved by the Department of Residential Life and are stamped with approval," the email read. "Flyers without this stamp will be promptly removed, regardless of the content. Any vandalism to our communities will also be dealt with accordingly."

The email also listed instructions on what to do if Alumni residents see any form of vandalism or unapproved postings within the UConn community:

**Call the RA On-Duty at 860-234-2181 (Brock & Eddy) OR 860-234-2179 (Belden & Watson)**

**Alert a professional staff member via email**

**Call Facilities at 860-486-3113**

If you believe the vandalism or posting is also a bias incident, you can report a bias incident at the Dean of Students Office at [dos.uconn.edu/bias-reporting-2/](http://dos.uconn.edu/bias-reporting-2/)

# Illinois helps schools weather critical teaching shortage, but steps remain, study says

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP) — Illinois schools have taken steps to weather an acute shortage of teachers with the state's help, but a survey released Tuesday points to ways to improve training, support and incentives for classroom instructors.

The annual study by the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools shows that 9 in 10 schools report a serious or very serious teacher shortage, struggle to find substitute teachers and face fewer than five and sometimes no candidates for open positions — and three-quarters of schools say no more than half of the job hopefuls they see have the proper credentials.

There is a particular dearth of special education and English-learner teachers. Among supporting staff, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists and nurses are critically short. Administrators, too, are in short supply.

Low pay, job demands and burnout have traditionally been root causes of shortfalls, not just in Illinois but nationally. Today's remote world creates a new distraction, said Gary Tipsord, the regional superintendents association's executive director.

"It's competition," Tipsord said. "When you can live and work anywhere simultaneously, that's a draw. Public education is in a different economic space today."

The numbers are similar to those reported in past surveys by the association,

which has conducted them annually since 2017. But examples of flexibility, Tipsord said, at the local and state levels are proving successful.

Among them, school administrators responding to the survey pointed to the 2017 school funding overhaul, which directed more dollars

to the neediest schools. Other key measures include increasing the number of days substitute teachers may work and, in particular, the number retired educators may substitute teach without affecting their pensions and easing the assessment process for new teachers to obtain a professional license.

Those administrators said steps should include making teacher pensions more attractive, school loan forgiveness, providing money to support teacher preparation in areas with critical shortages, offering more scholarships to education majors and studying salary parity with professions requiring

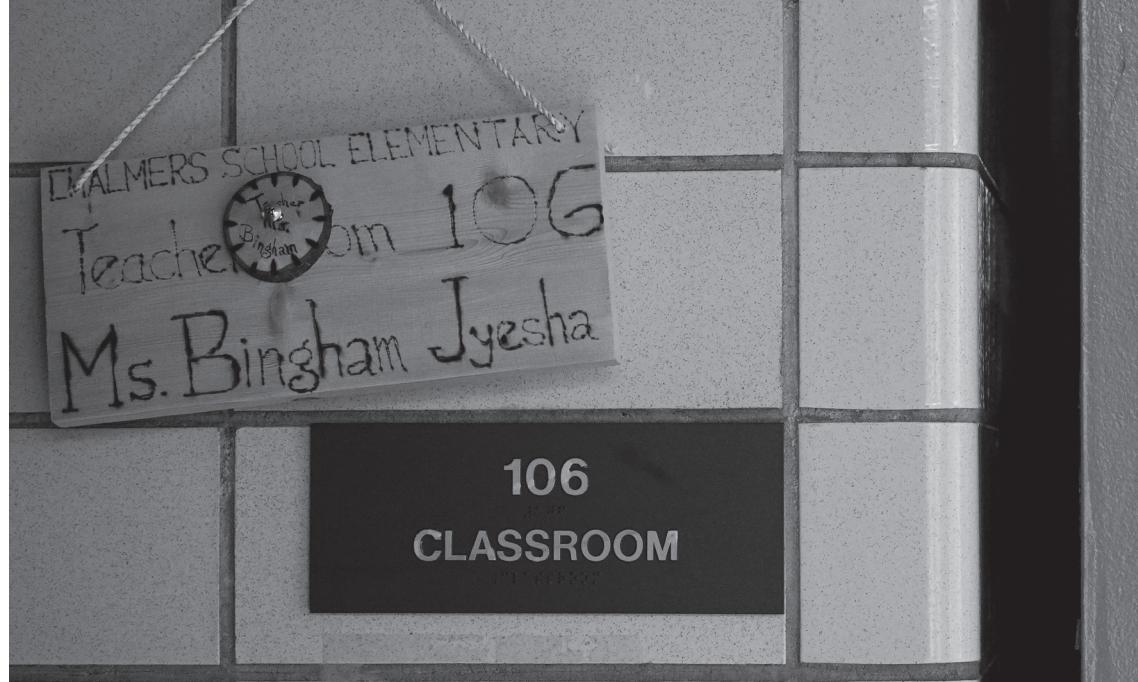
similar licensure and education.

Ensuring teachers are at the heads of classrooms and not overburdened by outside chores would go a long way in preventing burnout, Tipsord said.

On-the-ground support comes from the principal — the school's instructional leader. The survey found that about 2 in 5 schools have a critical shortage of administrators, more than one-quarter say no more than half of the candidates seeking those jobs are properly credentialed and nearly half have too few candidates for openings. And like the teachers they supervise, burnout over working conditions, increased responsibilities and higher pay in other professions are among the reasons.

Long term, the study recommends emphasis not only on retention but on recruiting teachers among pupils in middle and high schools. Paraprofessionals and teaching assistants who get the teaching bug by working in the classroom should be offered tuition assistance and other support toward earning licenses.

More focused mentoring for teachers and for those instructors who show leadership abilities is necessary, the report said, along with increased funding to recruit principals. People in other careers who want to take up teaching should have obstacles removed and legislation should be approved to ensure those with community college educations get credit hours transferred to universities where they pursue teaching degrees, the report said.



Signs are displayed in front of a classroom at Chalmers Elementary school in Chicago, July 13, 2022. An annual study says Illinois schools are taking steps to weather an acute teacher shortage and lists improvements. The study Tuesday, March 26, 2024 by the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools shows 90% of schools have at least a serious shortage, struggle to find substitute teachers and face fewer than five and sometimes no candidates for open positions.

AP PHOTO/NAM Y. HUH, FILE

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Printing since 1896, The Daily Campus is the oldest and largest independent student publication at the University of Connecticut. The Daily Campus circulates 5,000 newspapers daily and strives to serve the student body by delivering accurate, relevant and timely news and content, both in print and online at DailyCampus.com. Our staff is comprised entirely of students, with roughly 200 undergraduates gaining professional development while contributing to the daily production of the paper, with positions including writers, photographers, copy editors, page layout designers, graphic designers, advertisement representatives, receptionists, delivery drivers and digital producers.

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## Be a Change Maker. Volunteer Today!

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\*Based on 7 planned visits, inclusive of screening

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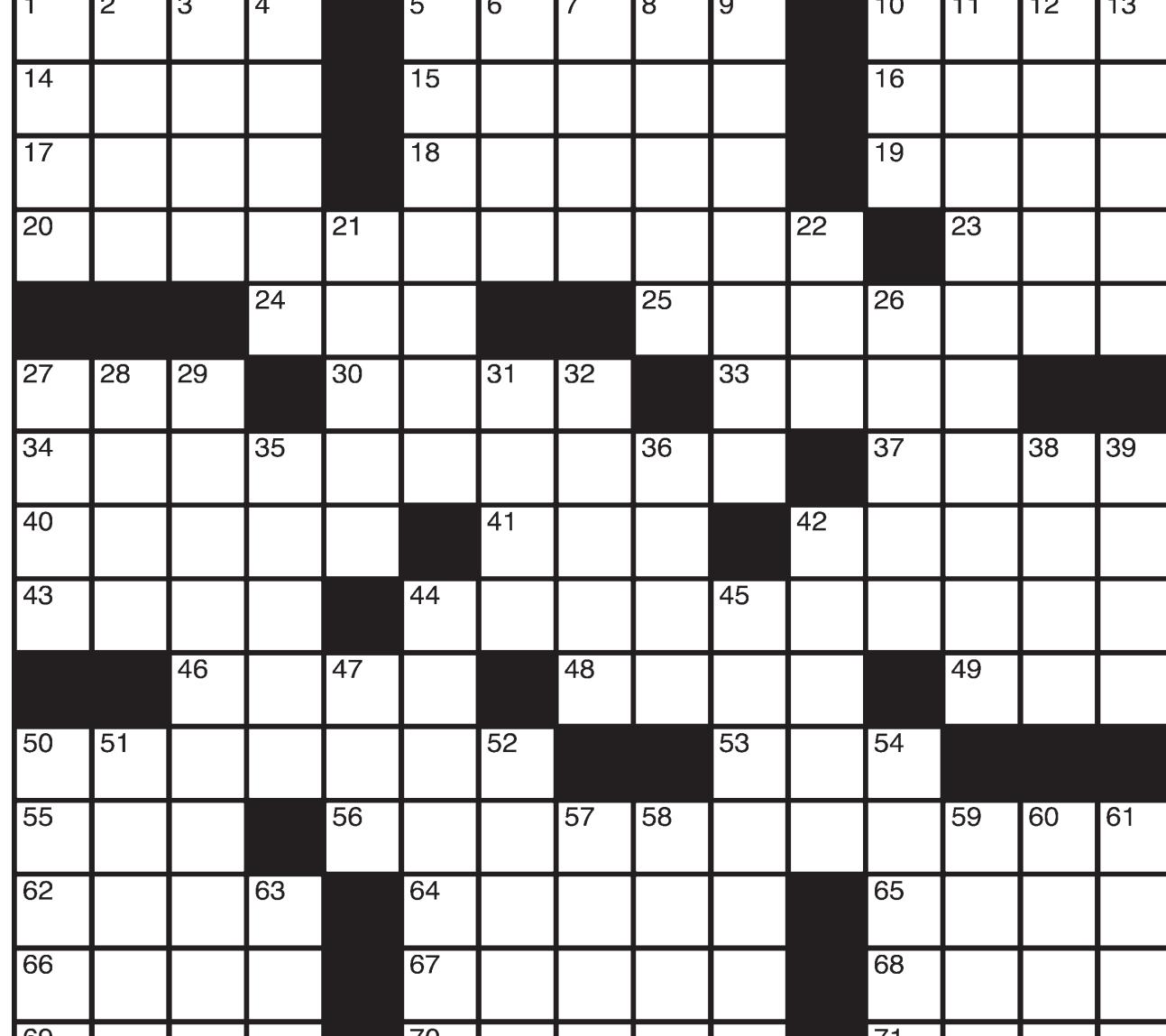
1. Schedule your appointment
2. Tell your friends to sign up and say you referred them
3. You and your friend complete a screening visit

Call or visit our website to learn more about our referral program.

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By Matthew Faiella

3/27/24

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# Conversations with Karla:

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

Hello and welcome back to Conversations with Karla! In case you missed it, the last conversation centered around the way productivity is depicted on social media. This week, I met with Yuliana Tsapar, an eighth-semester marketing major with a minor in Spanish, to talk about the many opportunities that have opened for her because of social media.

In her first semester at the University of Connecticut, Tsapar was assigned to watch "The True Cost," a documentary that depicts how fast fashion violates human rights due to poor working conditions and its negative effects on the planet. A passion to further educate people on this issue drove Tsapar to create her blog.

During her freshman year, Tsapar applied and was accepted into the (then-called) Freshman Female Founders program of the Werth Institute for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. In this cohort, members dive into entrepreneurial practices by creating a project out of one of their passions. Tsapar's project would end up being a blog called Shift with Yuliana, where she writes articles about sustainable fashion and ways it can be adopted. This has also since been accompanied by Instagram and TikTok accounts.

However, creating and running this blog has not always been smooth sailing for Tsapar. "I think perfection is the number one enemy and that held me back for so long," she said.

Tsapar explained how small details such as the color scheme and how the logo looked held her back. She also talked about how she believes that focusing on little details poses the biggest challenge to any creative project.

"Once you just make a decision and accept the fact that it's not going to be perfect and you might end up hating it but that's just part of the process — that's the only way you're going to put something out there," she said.

Tsapar also admitted to not consistently uploading on her blog or posting on her social media accounts. She runs the blog and the social media accounts entirely on her own while staying on top of her academics and figuring out plans for life post-graduation. She talked about how she often switches between being consistent on the blog and not posting much on social media.

However, Tsapar said that she does not hold herself or her blog to a stringent set of standards. She said that she does this to give herself more creative freedom and the leeway to lean into whatever interests her at a given moment. Right now, she dedicates most of her time to video editing because that is what piques her interest the most.

"You're never going to have more time than you do right now. That's a hard pill to swallow, but it's the truth," she said. Tsapar gained this perspective because, while she is extremely busy now, the workload will only increase as time goes on. She said that if she can learn to multitask, focus and prioritize now, she will set herself up for success.

**"Once you just make a decision and accept the fact that it's not going to be perfect and you might end up hating it but that's just part of the process — that's the only way you're going to put something out there."**

YULIANA TSAPAR



LOGO BY VAN NGUYEN, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

This blog has opened up many doors for Tsapar in her college career. During her freshman year, just after creating her blog as part of her project for the Werth Institute, Tsapar shared the project with a UConn alumna who worked as a fashion designer and eventually offered her an internship position.

Tsapar went on to use the blog as part of her application to Parsons Paris, where she was able to study fashion for six months in 2023.

Her most recent success story with the blog is that it helped build her applications to master's programs. The blog landed Tsapar a spot at the Institut Français de la Mode, one of the most selective fashion programs in the world.

Tsapar encourages anyone who is considering pursuing a creative project through social media to just post and stop imagining worst-case scenarios.

"Think about yourself five or 10 years from now looking back and having your thoughts back then documented. You're going to be so glad that [you posted] and you didn't let other people hold you back from something you knew in your heart you wanted to follow," she said.

That's all for this week's Conversations with Karla! Come back next week to meet a new student and learn about a new perspective on social media.

## Shift your perspective on posting

**"In real negotiations, many types of **questions** would need to be asked, including open-ended, closed, probing and leading questions to reach a satisfactory conclusion. Being an **active listener** also makes the other party feel valuable, as well as favorable non-verbal **communication**, including eye contact, that demonstrates intent listening."**

# NEGOTIATION IS SURPRISINGLY CIVIL IF YOU CAN COMPROMISE

by James Fitzpatrick | STAFF WRITER | HE/HIM/HIS | [james.fitzpatrick@uconn.edu](mailto:james.fitzpatrick@uconn.edu)



CLIPART COURTESY OF CREAZILLA

**O**n Tuesday, March 26, the College of Engineering hosted an insightful workshop on how to negotiate better, covering indispensable skills that undergraduate and graduate students alike will need in their future career paths. Specifically, the Ombuds Office, which specializes in solving problems without conflict and through mediation, presented terms and scenarios in which negotiations may have high stakes and can lead to issues among participants. The office consists of University Ombuds Jim Wohl and assistant Ombuds Cinnamon Adams who both spoke at this event in the Francis L. Castleman building.

Wohl, a former teacher of negotiations, initiated the workshop by describing the classic negotiation of a buyer at a car dealership, and how the dealer is oftentimes restrictive with information and their expressions to keep a foothold in profiting off the buyer. I was partially compelled to attend this workshop because my mother is a strong negotiator, once chipping a few hundred bucks a

means their car sells, since that is their goal. The buyer also has a goal, except theirs is obtaining a car. There is more nuance to targets such as the emotional vitality of wanting to buy a particular car under a certain price, so Wohl mentioned to not "get married to your target price." Furthermore, counterparts should consider their best alternative to a negotiated agreement, or their BATNA, if the deal falls through. Therefore, buyers should weigh their options at other dealerships before striking a deal, and sellers should name a more reasonable price before dropping the deal and potentially losing out on a sale. Using reference points, they can eventually reach a zone of possible agreement, where the transaction is finalized.

We practiced playing our metaphorical cards properly by negotiating in an imaginary scenario with a partner, each representing rival companies. By selecting from a deck of real cards, those with clubs became Terry Jones, a scientist who has found the cure to a pregnancy-related disease, except he lacks enough of the antidote — the

juice of rare oranges — to save the thousands of infected women. Those with hearts negotiated as Pat Roland, who desires the rinds of those specific oranges, for a different cause involving a gas leak. The task was to find a financial and moral consensus between their respective companies that could solve both issues while avoiding an outright bidding war for the oranges. In essence, a negotiation was to take place between the companies.

Partaking in the exercise and reflecting on it showed just how little each businessman knew about each other. The companies had ongoing lawsuits against each other, so they likely wanted those dropped in light of an agreement on the oranges. Patent money was also on the line, yet those factors were not mentioned during the negotiation. Despite being silly in nature, my partner and I

came up with a solution to have the orange seller separate the rinds from the oranges, as we would pay an equal amount for our parts of the oranges.

In real negotiations, many types of questions would need to be asked, including open-ended, closed, probing and leading questions to reach a satisfactory conclusion. Being an active listener also makes the other party feel valuable, as well as favorable non-verbal communication, including eye contact, that demonstrates intent listening. Finally, it is imperative to repeat the statements of your counterpart to maintain accuracy, but if the negotiation ever goes awry, perspective-taking and understanding must be shown to prevent emotions from escalating.

Alluding to the title of the event, "The Art of Negotiation," information should be gradually given between counterparts, or the two people or groups in a negotiation, to maximize the mutual contentment felt by the end. Wohl elaborated by separating positions and interests during a negotiation, meaning that a car buyer proclaiming they will pay \$20,000 is a position, but if they divulge that \$20,000 is all they can invest in a car, that displays their interests. In a sense, someone stating their upper threshold of payment at the beginning of a negotiation is like playing their advantageous cards too early.

Though it may not happen immediately, the dealer is willing to make sacrifices by expanding the pie, or relinquishing information, if it

the Ombuds Office usually helps engineering students in a one-on-one setting for any conflicts that arise during graduate school.

Daily

## Life

@dailycampuslife

# Food Fight:

## Ice cream armageddon

by Charlotte Chen | DIGITAL EDITOR | SHE/HER/HERS | charlotte.chen@uconn.edu  
 and Naiya Patel | BUSINESS MANAGER | SHE/HER/HERS | naiya.patel@uconn.edu

Welcome back to the third edition of Food Fight. Every week, we will discuss two of our favorite foods or orders and battle to find out whose choice wins. This week, we are diving into an ice cream armageddon and figuring out what we truly can call the best ice cream flavor.

### CHARLOTTE: PEACH ICE CREAM IS PERFECTLY PLEASANT

Over the years, I've had my fair share of ice cream flavors. Though I won't deny that a classic flavor every once in a while is nice, I think I've started to get sick of them. Don't get me wrong, I probably will still eat cookies and cream or strawberry ice cream, but they don't really do much for me anymore. Seeing them at the dining hall and having access to them all the time has made me realize that they're not actually all that great (the exception being coffee ice cream, despite me not liking coffee, I still really like coffee ice cream). However, one flavor that has consistently wowed me is peach ice cream. I remember that one summer the UConn Dairy Bar was offering a seasonal peach ice cream flavor, and I was curious so I tried it. Nothing could have prepared me for the punch of tangy peach mixed with sweet cream. It was delicious. So much so that for the rest of the summer, every time I had the chance to go to the Dairy Bar and get ice cream, I always ordered peach. I'm honestly surprised that peach isn't a more commonly seen and distributed flavor because wow, is it good! The next time that I got a chance to have peach ice cream was at a local shop in Michigan, and when I saw that they had peach ice cream, I immediately took the chance and tried it. Yet again, it was the same delicious combination of creaminess with the fresh flavor of juicy peaches and I devoured it. I think peach is definitely growing in popularity as a flavor and I'm excited to see more people discover it.

As far as niche ice cream flavors go, I think there are more uncommon flavors that I've really enjoyed, but I won't push them as my favorite or as one that everyone should try because they're so hard to find. If you do get the chance, though, I will say that I tried a jasmine ice cream at a Turkish ice cream shop and it was delightful! Same goes with milk flavored ice cream. This flavor is more common in Asia, but trust me on this one, it's good. Lastly, if you're looking for something you can pick up at the grocery store, you can't go wrong with Häagen-Dazs green tea ice cream. It's got a creamy consistency and mild matcha flavor, and something about it is simply addicting to me. If you ever get the chance to try peach ice cream, though, I highly recommend that you do!

It's absolute blasphemy if you think the best ice cream is anything but cookies and cream. Everyone has their niche flavors that they love; I will devour matcha or peanut butter crunch ice cream. However, when we think of the best ice cream, you must think universally. What is an ice cream that is beloved by all? What is an ice cream that can stand the test of the picky eaters while simultaneously pleasing those with an advanced palate? The clear answer is cookies and cream.

I love it because it is so classic to my childhood. It is impossible not to love a little Oreo moment. When an ice cream menu is really confusing and boring, I will go to my tried and true, cookies and cream — and guess what? It's amazing! Whether it's the cookies and cream from a local ice cream shop or Friendly's, it never fails me! They really can't mess it up. The best ice cream should go to a classic flavor which is 100%, without a doubt, cookies and cream.

YOU CANNOT DENY COOKIES AND CREAM ITS RIGHTFUL THRONE

### ICE CREAM ARMISTICE

Chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, cookies and cream or peach; no matter what flavor you prefer, we won't judge! There are plenty of really great flavors out there, both those we've mentioned and others we haven't. It's always fun to see where ice cream flavors are going and what the newest trends and combos are. Although we can't agree on which flavor is best, we can agree on which ones are the worst. We're looking at you, banana, orange creamsicle and rocky road lovers. But you can do — and eat — whatever floats your ice cream float, to each their own!



LOGO BY HALEIGH SCHMIDT, ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Daily

# Opinion

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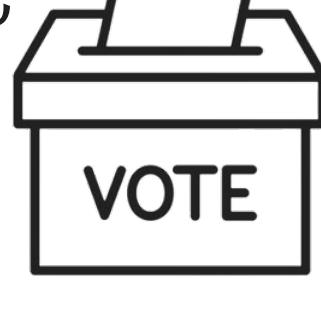
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## ► Editorial

## Students: You are more than a



**V**oter turnout increased by 35% between the 2023 and 2024 University of Connecticut Undergraduate Student Government spring elections, according to reporting by The Daily Campus.

2,254 students voted in last year's spring election compared to this year's 3,053. According to the most recent population estimates, roughly 15% of the undergraduate population at UConn voted in the 2024 USG presidential election. The Daily Campus Editorial Board is encouraged by this increase, as we have long advocated for students to make their voices heard on campus in a variety of ways. In keeping with this, we also believe that political involvement at UConn should not be limited to simply voting when USG elections roll around.

We've previously covered the host of institutional problems facing UConn, including rampant food insecurity, dwindling support for students who experience sexual violence, continued reliance on fossil fuels, numerous ties to a violent military-industrial complex and a rapidly increasing cost of attendance. USG and other leadership positions are sold as the most accessible avenues through which to solve these issues and advance conditions for students and workers at UConn. However, it is patently clear that, pending dramatic changes to the culture of campus activism, student representatives remain unequipped to combat tuition hikes, the undermining of undergraduate and graduate student labor and underfunding of services like SHaW Mental Health and university cultural centers and programs. Ultimately, it is students themselves who must become more directly involved to combat these problems on campus.

**Promises are great, but it takes an active and engaged undergraduate body to hold their elected leaders accountable.**

If the last few months have been indicative of anything, there are deep-rooted issues throughout UConn that will have lasting impacts on the undergraduate student population for years to come. As COVID-19 relief funding runs out, UConn anticipates a \$70 million deficit starting in July 2024. Additionally, UConn has received a record number of applicants for the class of 2028, according to The Daily Campus. The university received more than 56,700 applications this cycle, expecting approximately 4,350 new undergraduate students to enroll in the Class of 2028, according to UConn Today. Simply put, the university has to stretch fewer funds across a greater number of students, and combined with impending academic budget cuts, these factors only serve to hurt future undergraduate populations.

The people who are directly impacted by these policies first and foremost are students. This is why undergraduates making their voices heard — loudly and consistently — is paramount. From the countless on-campus student advocacy groups to staying informed about daily news at UConn (a task that our lovely news department does wonderfully), universities are fundamentally better when their students are informed and engaged. While USG lacks the broad administrative power of the board of trustees or upper administration officials, they are still the representatives of the student body, and it's important to hold them accountable to their promises of transparency and accountability. Promises are great, but it takes an active and engaged undergraduate body to hold their elected leaders accountable.

CLIPART COURTESY OF ISTOCK

## GEORGE SANTOS RUNNING FOR CONGRESS AGAIN: THE REBOOT NOBODY WANTED

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

Just when I thought I was out, they pulled me back in. After my absolute favorite drag queen and congressman George Santos was expelled from the House of Representatives in December, I figured I wouldn't have to write about him ever again. But the oh-so-kind and compassionate Santos took a sledgehammer to my plans by announcing that he's running for Congress this year during the State of the Union two weeks ago. To top it off, he's jumping ship from his old district, New York's 3rd District, to run in the 1st District, which just so happens to be the district that I call home.

Excuse me while I punch through some drywall.

Now that my wall is full of holes, let's break down Santos' attempt at a comeback bid. My first reaction to his announcement that he posted to X made me wonder if he could legally run again. Even though he was expelled from the House, which I believe should automatically disqualify him from running again, there is nothing that legally prevents Santos from running again, as he still meets the constitutional requirements for serving as a representative. Santos is also not the first expelled representative to attempt a comeback run. James Traficant, a representative from Ohio, was expelled from the House in July 2002 due to racketeering charges and then ran as an independent that November. Not only did Traficant run for his old seat after being expelled, but he was in prison at the time. So despite an upcoming federal court trial in September and a cartoonishly long list of legal issues and scandals, none of these block Santos from running again.

When Santos made his initial X post about running again, he made sure to attack his challenger, incumbent Republican Nick LaLota. Santos has continuously branded LaLota as a "RINO" and someone who is out of touch with Republican voters. But let's be real here: The real reason that Santos has gone after LaLota so much is that he led the charge to expel Santos, calling him a "lying fraudster."



**Rep. George Santos, R-N.Y.,**  
faces reporters at the Capitol, Nov. 30, 2023, in Washington. Santos said Friday, March 22, 2024, that he will leave the Republican Party and run as an independent in a bid to return to Congress after having been expelled while facing fraud charges.

AP PHOTO/J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE, FILE

would be leaving the Republican Party and running as an independent. He proudly proclaimed that he "cannot affiliate [him]self with a party that stands for nothing and falls for everything." To call this only ironic would be the understatement of the century. Santos only became a congressman by standing for absolutely nothing and tricking the voters of Nassau County and Queens into believing his lies. He has benefited more than anybody from the gullibility of Republican voters to believe anything they hear from the Fox News outrage machine. And while he is correct in pointing out how poorly run the GOP is today, he has no right to act like he's standing on moral high ground when he's one of the most immoral and dishonest politicians of my lifetime.

FILE LOGO/THE DAILY CAMPUS



# Opinion

Photo of the Day | Husky luck



A UConn student rubs the Jonathan statue's nose for good luck. Many students visit the statue before taking their exams or before big events, such as job interviews.

PHOTO BY EMMA MEIDINGER, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS



CARTOON BY SARAH CHANTRES, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

## THE DAILY CAMPUS COMICS

CARTOON BY VAN NGUYEN, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



# Roundtable

The Daily Campus Sports

## If March Madness ended today, who would be the MOP?

by Cole Stefan  
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### JAMAL SHEAD

#### Houston

Jamal Shead has been the engine driving the Cougars' high-powered offense. While he scores just 13.2 points per game, the Big 12 Player of the Year's 6.4 assists per contest are 17th most in the nation. Only once in his last 12 games has Shead recorded fewer than four dimes, and that was against the Iowa State Cyclones in the Big 12 Championship game on March 16. He has taken that blowout loss personally through two NCAA Tournament contests. Shead notably took over late in Sunday's second-round contest as his teammates fouled out. The Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year scored five of top-seeded Houston's 14 points in the extra period, preventing the ninth-seeded Texas A&M Aggies from pulling off a stunning upset. The Cougars have several quality candidates I could have selected: Baylor transfer LJ Cryer has been an effective scorer and sophomore guard Emanuel Sharp buried seven triples in Sunday's overtime thriller. Despite each of their vital impacts, Houston does not make their fourth-straight Sweet 16 appearance without Shead's leadership.

by CJ Dexter  
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### JAEDON LEDEE

#### San Diego State

From seeing six minutes per game as a freshman at Ohio State to earning Third Team All-American honors as a senior at San Diego State, it's been quite the journey for star forward Jaedon LeDee. LeDee, who came off the bench for the Aztecs' 2023 squad, was a surprise breakout player this year in the world of college basketball, seeing his points per game skyrocket from 7.9 to 21.5. The reigning Mountain West Player of the Year has continued his impressive play on the biggest stage, leading his squad to the Sweet 16 with 29 points and 8.5 rebounds per game on 66% from the field so far. LeDee will certainly be called upon to deliver another big game as the Aztecs are tasked with facing the tournament's No. 1 overall seed UConn on Thursday.

by Evan Rodriguez  
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### TERRENCE SHANNON JR.

#### Illinois

It's common knowledge that Terrence Shannon Jr. transforms this Illinois roster from a strong team to a feared squad in this tough field, and this current run for the Illini has showcased that. In the first two games of the tournament, the highly touted NBA prospect has dropped 26 and 30 points against Morehead State and Duquesne, respectively. While it's not the highest level of competition he'll see throughout March Madness, it's undeniable that Shannon Jr. has been the heart of this offense with his ability as a three-level scorer. He's been a key reason why Illinois has the most efficient offense in the country and a major problem as they head to the Sweet 16 against Iowa State. Shannon Jr. has the toughest challenge of the season in Boston, but if his current run in the tournament is any sign of what's to come, the Cyclones are in for a long night.

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### DJ BURNS JR.

#### NC State

While he hasn't been the highest scorer or the most aggressive rebounder, DJ "Beast Boy" Burns has won the hearts of college basketball fans all around the country. He has been the best player on 11-seed NC State's Cinderella run to the Sweet 16, with improvements over his regular season production. Burns has tallied 40 points, 12 boards and four assists across the Wolfpack's first two games, which includes a 24-11 line in their overtime victory against Oakland. The graduate student may not look like your typical star, but his efforts throughout his team's five wins in five days in the ACC tournament, plus their tournament run so far have been MOP worthy. There's also the added impressiveness of being the only double-digit seed left in the tournament, overcoming all the odds to make it as far as they have. Though Burns will have his hands full with Marquette, his impact on NC State's first Sweet 16 since 2015 will be felt forever.



LOGO BY HALEIGH SCHMIDT, ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

## Photo of the Day | All eyes on Paige



Paige Bueckers awaits her name to be called as the starting lineup for both teams are being announced during the match against Syracuse on March 25, 2024. Bueckers continued her dominant performance in the tournament with 32 points on the match, bringing the Huskies to yet another Sweet 16.

PHOTO BY SKYLER KIM, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

## PREVIEWING THE SAN DIEGO AZTECS BEFORE THURSDAY'S SWEET 16

by Evan Rodriguez  
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When UConn men's basketball finished on top as national champions last year, the program had to get past an impressive San Diego State team to do so. Naturally, in typical March Madness fashion, there were certainly some moments where the Aztecs were competitive, but overall, Connecticut's strength went unmatched.

Now, this year's Sweet 16 is almost here. While the stakes may not be the same in the upcoming rematch between the Huskies and Aztecs, it is nonetheless the most important game of each program's season up to this point. UConn of course looks to continue its

path toward a sixth ring, while San Diego State are vying for their first championship. If the Huskies repeat what they were able to do in the 2011 Sweet 16 and last year's championship against this same institution, they'll be on their way to the Elite Eight.

What makes this Aztecs team so dangerous this time around? Similar to my preview of the Stetson Hatters from last week, I'll be examining the Aztecs and what exactly this UConn squad needs to do to continue moving forward on their championship path.

### The personnel

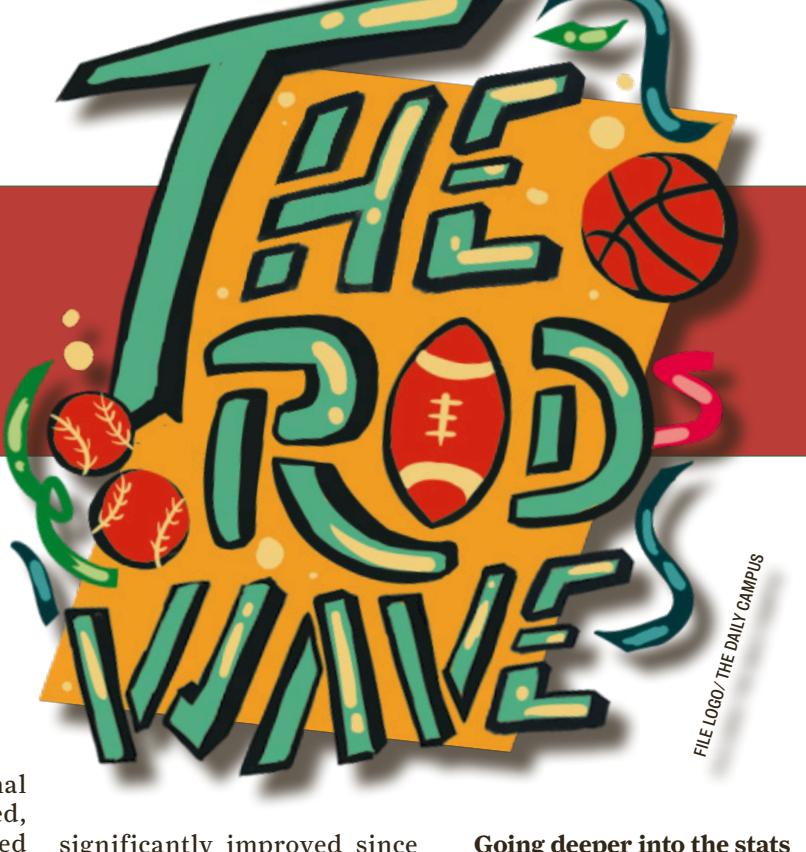
When you compare this season's Aztecs lineup to last season, you'll immediately notice some key return-

ers. Although offensive weapon Keshad Johnson, who led San Diego State in scoring during the national championship, transferred, other players notably stepped up to fill that hole.

If you're to scout anyone from this roster, the first guy that needs to be circled is 6-foot-9 big man Jaedon LeDee. What's even more impressive than the Houston native's accomplishments this season was his performance before the season started. This is a player who averaged just 7.9 points last season and scored just seven points during the 2023 National Championship. Now, he's an All-Mountain West First Team member who averaged 21.5 points and 8.4 rebounds on 56.4% from the field in about 32 minutes of action per game during the regular season.

What should scare any opponent is how LeDee can score the basketball. A quick look back at the Aztecs' game against UAB in the Round of 64 showcases that knack for scoring. He had 18 points in the first half alone and was hitting from both mid-range and in the paint. This season, LeDee has even shown his ability to hit from beyond the arc and, albeit on rare occasions, also demonstrated that skill in the first-round win.

Overall, this is a massive defensive challenge for any opponent, even for a team like the Huskies who have



FILE LOGO/THE DAILY CAMPUS

significantly improved since the start of the season. To top it all off, San Diego State's man in the middle has been doing an incredible job at getting to the free throw stripe, as evidenced by top-five rates in fouls drawn per 40 minutes and a 68.6% free throw rate, which is good for 26th in the country. If they're able to lock down LeDee, the Huskies will have the opportunity to gain some much-needed momentum.

But of course, San Diego State didn't just get carried here on the back of their star big man — they've got plenty of other players to look out for.

The heart of this defense lies with Lamont Butler, the Mountain West Defensive Player of the Year. He's certainly a capable scorer and the Aztecs guard has had some key moments for his squad, such as his buzzer beater that sent San Diego State to the national championship last season.

However, the strength of his game is on the defensive end, and his 1.5 steals per contest leads the Aztecs. Butler has had multiple four-steal games this season, including the matchup against UAB in the first round that was massive in giving this lineup some momentum. He's a key reason why the Aztecs have the ninth-most efficient defense in the entire country according to KenPom and is a player that Dan Hurley and company absolutely need to be locked in on.

There are also plenty of other players to look out for. One guy who may fly under the radar is Darrion Trammell, who dropped 18 points against Yale to advance to this matchup. He may have dropped just four points in the first round, but he's shown up in some big moments for this squad throughout the season, such as when he dropped 17 points during the team's contest versus Gonzaga.

### Going deeper into the stats

Legendary football coach Bear Bryant once said, "Defense wins championships." In the sport of basketball, that statement is certainly true, and this San Diego State team thrives on it. Along with having the ninth-most efficient defense in college basketball and a top 20 team ranking in KenPom like last season, the team sat at No. 20 in NET rankings, No. 25 in Haslametrics, No. 18 according to EvanMiya and No. 27 in BPI.

They're ranked 53rd in offensive efficiency, which may not blow many away, but as I've stated prior, they've got the weapons to really cause some trouble.

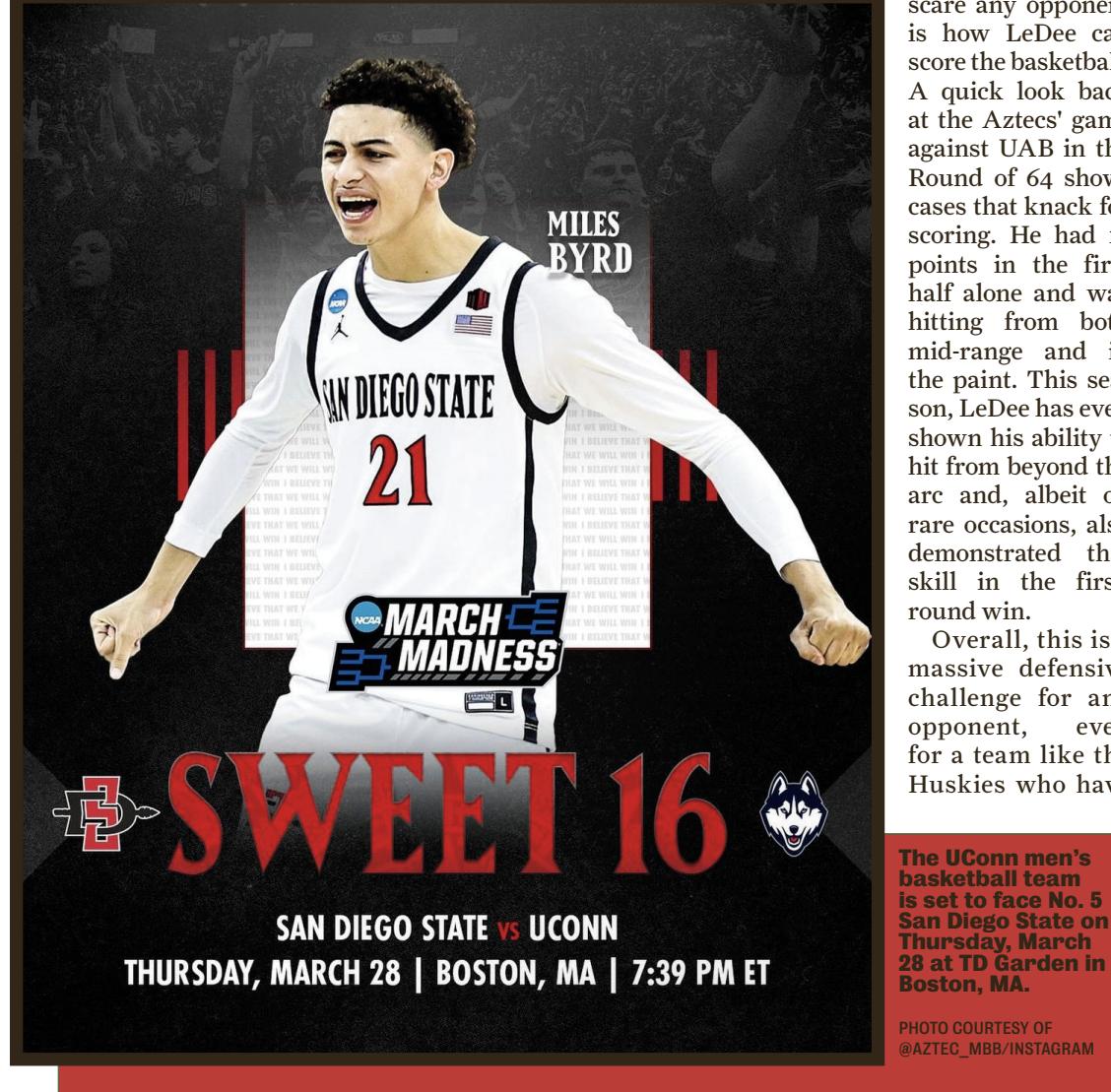
### Weaknesses

While players like LeDee are great on the offensive end, there are certainly some overall weaknesses on that side of the ball from this unit. This is not a great 3-point shooting team, as evidenced by a 31.3% mark in that department, and they'll look to get most of their looks from the paint or in the mid-range area. That's an area that Connecticut will look to take advantage of throughout this game and take away opportunities closer to the basket.

### Final Thoughts

Overall, this is the perfect defensive challenge for Connecticut. Going up against one of the top units in the country in that department, a win would be monumental for UConn's confidence.

With the potential to go up against Iowa State, who has the most efficient defense in the country in the Elite Eight, the Huskies need to show why this team is feared on both ends of the court. If they don't, you can expect that this Aztecs team will certainly look to capitalize.



# Sam's Section

## Why the NCAA tournament should NOT expand

by Sam Calhoun

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The NCAA Tournament has included 68 teams since 2011, with four play-in games leading up to the Round of 64, which has been the magic number of teams in the NCAA Tournament since 1985.

Charlie Baker, the president of the NCAA, said that the organization's basketball committee is having discussions on potentially expanding the men's NCAA Tournament. He's also brought

**Never underestimate the NCAA's capacity to do something stupid [...] When anyone says more teams need access to the tournament: every team has the same access to the tournament now. All you have to do is win your conference automatic bid, which is against your peers with a group of teams you have chosen to be among."**

- Jay Bilas

"Never underestimate the NCAA's capacity to do something stupid," he said. "If they did this, it would be profoundly stupid. When anyone says more teams need access to the tourna-

ment: every team has the same access to the tournament now. All you have to do is win your conference automatic bid, which is against your peers with a group of teams you have chosen to be among."

The perfect number of teams is 68. Expanding it would water down what makes the tournament and college basketball so special. However, the NCAA, along with the networks they partner with, seem to only care about the money they make from the tournament instead of the quality of the tournament. The

NCAA Tournament should be

about quality, not quantity.

UConn head coach Dan Hurley has advocated for the tournament to stay at that number, dating back to his press conference before the national championship game in 2023.

"For me, I think it's great the way it is," he said. "I feel like devaluing the regular season potentially hurts the regular season and what it means. I think the pressure

to win games and being rewarded for winning big non-conference games and then taking care of enough business in the league."

"I think it's a privilege to play in this tournament, not a right," Hurley said.

That last sentence sums it up perfectly. You have to earn your way into the Big Dance. The teams on the bubble rarely make it far in the

NCAA Tournament. Only two No. 9 seeds have made the Final Four (Wichita State in 2013 and Florida Atlantic in 2023). Only one No.

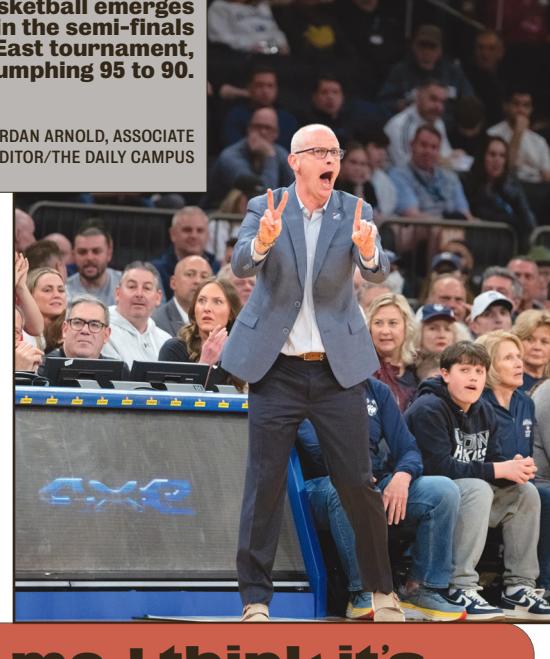
10 seed has made the Final Four (Syracuse in 2016). No. 11 seeds have made the Final Four five times (LSU in 1986, George Mason in 2006, VCU in 2011, Loyola Chicago in 2018 and UCLA in 2021).

No. 12 seeds have made it to the Elite Eight twice (Missouri in 2002 and Oregon State 2021). Those statistics show that it's rare that these teams on the fringe of making the NCAA Tournament make it past the Sweet 16.

Miami head coach Jim Larrañaga talked about the parity of the NCAA Tournament when backing expansion during an interview on ESPN Radio last year. While Larrañaga knows what it's like to make an improbable run having coached George Mason to the Final Four in 2006, I have to disagree.

During a hard-fought battle against St. John's, head coach Dan Hurley directs plays to his team. UConn men's basketball emerges victorious in the semi-finals of the Big East tournament, triumphing 95 to 90.

PHOTO BY JORDAN ARNOLD, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



**"For me, I think it's great the way it is [...] I think it's a privilege to play in this tournament, not a right."**

**COACH DAN HURLEY**

conference. Let's take a look at how they did: Auburn lost to Yale, Mississippi State lost to Michigan State, Kentucky lost to Oakland, Florida lost to Colorado, South Carolina lost to Oregon and Texas A&M lost to Houston.

Mid-major teams shouldn't be left out to rot. We've had incredible runs over the years by these schools. It's what makes the NCAA Tournament so much fun to watch: all the storylines. Expansion could mean fewer Cinderella teams.

I was all for the expansion of the College Football Playoff because of all the opt-outs in the bowl games and only four teams getting a chance for a national championship. There's not any parity in the sport. However, I am completely against the expansion of the NCAA Tournament.

There's an old saying: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." That's exactly what the NCAA basketball committee is trying to do. They're trying to fix something that doesn't need to be fixed.

# AROUND MARCH MADNESS

## No perfect brackets remain despite chalky second round

by Sam Calhoun

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According to March Madness men's basketball on social media, every bracket created was busted during the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

It inevitably happens, but the number of upsets in the first round compared to the second round was night and day. In the first of three editions of Around March Madness this year, we will recap the best games, players and upsets from the first weekend.

### BEST GAMES

**No. 7 seed Dayton rallies from 17-point deficit to stun No. 10 seed Nevada in closing seconds, 63-60**

With 7:36 remaining in the game, Nevada was up 56-39 and had roughly a 99% chance to win, according to ESPN. Led by DaRon Holmes II, who had 18 points in the first-round win, Dayton went on a 24-4 run, taking the lead for the first time since the first half as Holmes made an old-fashioned 3-point play with 2:01 remaining. Enoch Cheeks gave the Flyers the lead for good with a layup with 34 seconds left. Dayton made their last seven baskets to advance to face No. 2 seed Arizona in the second round.

**No. 13 seed Yale shocks No. 4 seed Auburn after chaotic final sequence, 78-76**

Ivy Madness is real. Yale was down 10 points midway through the second half, but the Bulldogs fought to survive. John Poulakidas, who finished the game with 28 points, hit a step-back 3-pointer with just over two minutes remaining in the game to give Yale a 73-72 lead. Despite Auburn's chances to win in the final seconds, Samson Aletan made a key block that helped the Ivy League Champions advance.

**Simpson's clutch shot pushes No. 10 seed Colorado past No. 7 seed Florida, 102-100**

Colorado looked unstoppable for a good portion of the second half. The Buffaloes led 94-81 with 4:28 to play. However, Iona transfer Walter Clayton Jr. led the Gators single-handedly as Florida rallied. He scored the last 16 points for Florida, including a 3-point play with 1:12 left and another 3-pointer with 37 seconds left. Clayton tied the game at 100 with nine seconds left after pulling up from long-range. He finished with a career-high 33 points. KJ Simpson pushed Colorado to the second round with a tie-breaking jumper from the baseline with two seconds left.

**No. 1 seed Houston survives No. 9 seed Texas A&M in OT, advances to Sweet 16 100-95**

It was one of the final games of the day on Sunday, with No. 4 seed Duke waiting to find out their Sweet 16 opponent from the outcome between Houston and Texas A&M. Houston head coach Kelvin Sampson called the final two minutes of regulation "Murphy's Law" as his team missed free throws and loose balls on multiple occasions. Texas A&M rallied late, outsourcing the Cougars 17-5 in crunch time. Andersson Garcia, who had only eight 3-pointers the whole season coming into the game, beat the buzzer to force overtime with a 3-point shot from the key. Despite four of Houston's five starters fouling out, including All-American guard Jamal Shead, Houston beat the Aggies for the second time this season.

**BEST UPSET**

**Jack Gohlke, No. 14 seed Oakland upset No. 3 seed Kentucky, 80-76**

Despite having the two best freshmen in the country, Kentucky's season has come to an end. In a game where guards Reed Sheppard and Rob Dillingham combined for just 13 points coming off the bench, Oakland took advantage. Every shot that Oakland guard Gohlke shot was from long-range. He made 10 of them, scoring 32 points.

### BEST INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCES

**Marcus Domask, F, Illinois (vs. Morehead State: 12 pts, 11 reb, 10 ast)**

Recording a triple-double in college basketball is rare. It's even rarer in the NCAA Tournament. Before Domask's triple-double performance in a comfortable win over Morehead State, only nine triple-doubles have occurred in the Big Dance since 1987. The most iconic triple-doubles include former Murray State guard Ja Morant's performance against Marquette in 2019 and former Marquette guard Dwyane Wade in their Elite Eight win over Kentucky in 2003. Domask becomes the first player in the Big Ten to record one in March Madness since Draymond Green during his time at Michigan State.

**Jermaine Couisnard, G, Oregon (vs. South Carolina: 40 pts, 6 ast, 14-22 fg, 5-9 3pt, 7-7 ft)**

Couisnard played for South Carolina from 2019 to 2022 before transferring to Oregon. Against his former school, the East Chicago, Indiana native recorded a career-high 40 points, the most scored in an NCAA Tournament game by an Oregon player. The record before Couisnard was held by Tajuan Porter's 33-point performance in the 2007 NCAA Tournament against UNLV in the Sweet 16.

**Zach Edey, C, Purdue (vs. Grambling State: 30 pts, 21 reb, 3 blk, 11-17 fg)**

Edey's dominant season will add him to college basketball history. After sweeping the National Player of the Year awards last season, he will do the same once they're all announced. The only players to have back-to-back seasons winning at least one of the major National Player of the Year awards include Oscar Robertson (Cincinnati), Jerry Lucas (Ohio State), Bill Bradley (Princeton), Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (UCLA), Pete Maravich (LSU), Bill Walton (UCLA), David Thompson (NC State), Ralph Sampson (Virginia), Michael Jordan (North Carolina) and Luka Garza (Iowa). That is incredible company to be among. He was dominant in both games, continuing to build on his legacy as Purdue's greatest player ever.

**Jared McCain, G, Duke (vs. James Madison: 30 pts, 10-15 fg, 8-11 3pt)**

The five-star freshman isn't just a star on TikTok. He also is an excellent player. To advance to the Sweet 16, the Sacramento, California native hit eight 3-pointers, including his first six, breaking the Duke record for most 3-pointers in an NCAA Tournament game. It was previously held by Quinn Cook, who drilled seven in 2014. His performance is tied for the second-most by a freshman in an NCAA Tournament game. The record-holder is former Temple Owl Johnny Miller, who hit nine in 1995.



# Sports

## STRATTON'S STAND

# THE PROBLEMS WITHIN WOMEN'S MARCH MADNESS LOCATIONS

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As we've emerged from the opening days of the women's NCAA Tournament, the dust has settled and we've reached the Sweet 16. Everyone has a moment to catch their breath before we head to the regionals, part of today's topic of discussion.

The women's sport has grown in tremendous ways over the past few years. There are stars that are garnering attention like never before such as Caitlin Clark, JuJu Watkins and UConn's own Paige Bueckers. Women's college basketball has never had this much hype, giving this tournament the chance to take the sport to the next level. Though it's lacked many of the upsets that increase its excitement, the stars have come to play and it has paid off.

Even with the increased viewership the sport has seen, the tournament's structure is still far from perfect. Even as local as the Storrs, Connecticut pod this past weekend, coaches have found fault in the way both the first and second weekend is done. I'll look at each concern and provide my thoughts.

### TOP 16 TEAMS HOSTING

After 14-seed Jackson State was booted out of the first round by the hometown Huskies, head coach Tomekia Reed noted her reservations about the way the system works, currently involving each of the top 16 teams hosting a pod (four-team bracket, with the winner making the Sweet 16) on campus.

"I would love to see this tournament go to a neutral site like men's basketball," she said. "We would have a better chance, teams coming in at the 16 seed, 15, 14 have a better chance to compete and not have those jitters and be on an even playing field. I would love to see the game continue to grow to that."

I have mixed feelings about Reed's comments. In theory, I do agree that it would make sense to give the three teams not hosting an equal chance. After all, there is the aspect of the NCAA Tournament that involves the desire for an even playing field across all the participating teams. This is taken away with home court advantage.

However, there are some other factors to consider. The primary reason is the one that the NCAA likely is focusing on the most: revenue. If UConn's women's team was playing these first-round games at some neutral site like the men do, fewer people would be in attendance. Students can roll out of bed and be in their seats within 10 minutes with the current setup. Especially given that more often than not, the team with the most fans is the host, ending up with the most excited supporters having the easiest access to attend. As such, Monday's game against Syracuse was

a sell-out and the first-round game on Saturday was pretty full. If the game was in Albany, New York or someplace similar, perhaps it'd be half full.

Though I understand that Reed is looking out for her team, I'm going to say that we stick with the current format of top-16 teams hosting. It's great for the teams that get to host and does create an extra incentive to be one of those teams. If the sport keeps growing like it is now, then we should reconsider, but it's just not ready yet.

### TWO REGIONALS VERSUS FOUR

Last year, the women's tournament switched to a two-regional format for the first time. Like in the men's tournament, prior to 2023, regionals were played in four different locations around the country each year, typically geared towards basketball-centric areas like Greenville, South Carolina or Bridgeport, among others. If a team was a No.1-seed, they could generally find a location that made sense geographically.

This changed last year, with the regional locations reduced to two. As such, eight teams go to each location and two emerge with final four bids. So far, these spots have been split on an east-west basis, with daunting travel for anyone who is either in the middle of the country or was picked for a location on the other side of America. The stated reason for this, according to NCAA Associate Director for Media Rick Nixon, was that it would help maintain neutral sites. In an interview with UConn WBB Weekly last week, UConn coach Geno Auriemma was not in love with it.

"It's challenging for a lot of teams because if you're a west coast team, you gotta go 3,000 miles," he said. "If you're an east coast team, you gotta go 3,000 miles. It's a real challenge for those teams that have to travel that far."

Auriemma wasn't done there, expanding on the impact that it has on the fans of the sport too.

"I hope this is the last year of this nonsense with two regionals," he said. "It makes absolutely no sense for anybody. The game of women's basketball has never been better, never been stronger, never been more popular with people watching. So you limit how many places you can watch it. Now you go to Albany or you go to Portland and everybody in the rest of the country goes, 'What about us?' So I think it's the dumbest thing ever."

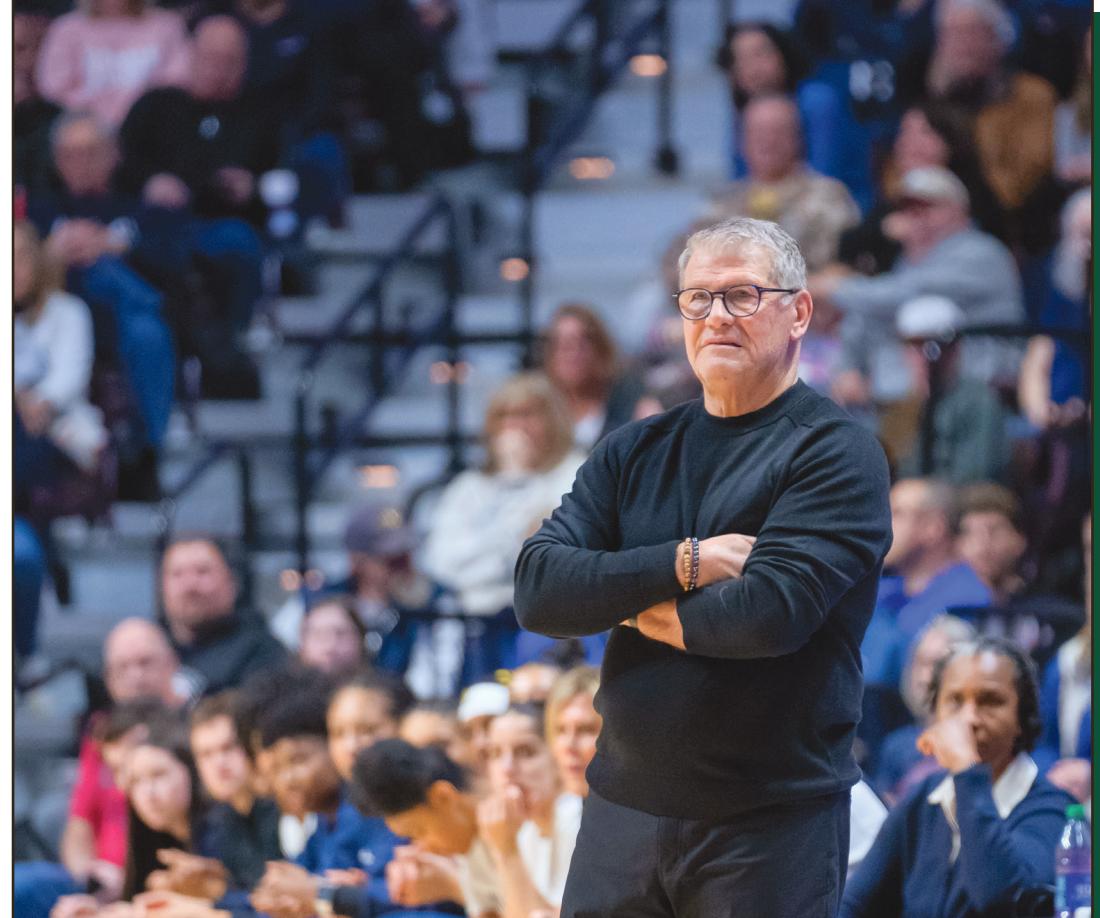
While I wasn't in agreement with Reed, I do have to side with Auriemma here. Not everyone has the means to fly all over the country to see women's basketball. One

of the biggest goals when growing a sport is to make it more accessible to casual fans. Those who live in or near a big city might see that there's women's basketball being played at their local arena and decide to see what it's all about. When you split the number of locations in half, you also split those viewers.

Whether people like it or not, the men's tournament is swimming in viewers and could make an irresponsible decision like this to limit the tournament's scope and still be okay. For a sport that's still in something of a critical period like women's basketball, I think that it needs to get switched back as soon as possible.

Give more people the chance to watch the sport, get more eyes on it. It's silly to so strongly promote neutrality in the second weekend but go against it so strongly in the first weekend. Consistency is key here. Either way, this tournament has been a great product. People will continue to watch it on TV, even if it's not as accessible in person.

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**UConn women's basketball head coach Geno Auriemma spectates from the sideline as the Huskies destroy the Georgetown Hoyas in the Big East Tournament final 78-42 to punch their ticket to the NCAA tournament.** PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

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**- GENO AURIEMMA**