



## UConn Hartford dean named chair of Hartford Foundation for Public Giving

by Patrick Boots  
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A local philanthropic organization has elected the dean of the University of Connecticut Hartford campus to serve an important role in their organization: chair of the board of directors. Mark Overmyer-Velázquez, Ph.D., was chosen to fill this position at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving on Jan. 14.

The foundation, which was founded in 1925, acts as a community organization to help improve the economic and innovative development of the greater Hartford metro area. Details on the organization's webpage say the group supports communities and nonprofits based in 29 towns in portions of Hartford and Tolland counties, including

the towns of Tolland, Andover and Hebron—not too far from the main UConn campus in Storrs-Mansfield—and as far as Canton and Rocky Hill.

Overmyer-Velázquez has served as a general board member of the Hartford Foundation since 2019 and vice chair since 2023, according to the Metro Hartford Alliance. He arrived at UConn in 2004 as a professor of history and Latin American studies and co-founded UConn's "El Instituto" program in 2012. He has been the only dean of the new UConn campus in downtown Hartford since its opening in 2017. In a press statement on his new appointment, Overmyer-Velázquez reinforced his commitment to building historical and intellectual bridges in our local communities and abroad.

"The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is a testament to the power of community," said Overmyer-Velázquez in the statement. "Together, we are supporting Greater Hartford by fostering equity and creating opportunities for communities to overcome obstacles and thrive. It is an honor to work alongside my board colleagues and Foundation staff to support this work and to witness the positive impact generosity and collaboration can achieve."

Some of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving's previous successful programs have included several scholarship programs for college students and grant funding for local community engagement. On Jan. 8, the foundation awarded \$2.9 million dollars to every regional town as part of their "Greater Together Community Fund." They each

received \$100,000 in the form of grantmaking and endowed funds, as an extension of the original program from 2019 for local nonprofit organizations to apply for. Local schools, historical societies, health and arts initiatives among others have been the recipient of these grants in their towns.

The board of directors serves the Hartford Foundation in a volunteer capacity, according to the group's charter. In addition to being the dean of the Hartford campus and advocating for its expansion, Overmyer-Velázquez is also the co-chair of the Hartford Consortium for Higher Education and is a board member of other community organizations. From 2011 through 2017, he was also an elected member of the West Hartford Board of Education. Outside of work, he is a keyboard-playing

member of UConn's casual faculty band, "Blues Without Borders," and lives in West Hartford, according to the CT Mirror.

In addition to Overmyer-Velázquez's appointment to board chair, the foundation also announced the election of Marlene Ibsen as vice chair and Beatriz Gutierrez as treasurer. Ibsen previously served on the organization's "Impact!" committee and works as the vice president of community relations at the Travelers Insurance Companies. Gutierrez is the president of CONNSTEP, a Connecticut-based manufacturing consulting service, and has been on the Hartford Foundation board since 2022.

For more information about the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, visit hfpg.org.

## Hunting Lodge Road reopens after three-year closing due to construction

by Aiza Shaikh  
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Hunting Lodge Road in Mansfield, Conn. has reopened after the completion of a construction project, according to a Town of Mansfield press release. The road runs along the edge of the University of Connecticut's Storrs campus and connects to neighboring areas of Mansfield.

The road first closed almost three years ago in April 2022, after a sinkhole was identified raising safety concerns, according to Assistant Town Engineer Derek Dilaj. Then, in November 2023, a publicly bid project solicitation came about, which prompted construction work to begin the following May.

The town's Department of Public Works, along with the contractor Genovesi Construction, worked to replace a "failing twin 48-inch corrugated metal pipe" with a concrete pipe and an 8-by-6 concrete culvert, the press release stated. The metal pipes were "severely deteriorated," resulting in the formation of the sinkhole.

The replacement and expansion of the culvert, which carries Eagleville Brook, is meant to "improve stream connectivity for wildlife and provide a service life of over 75 years," according to the press release. According to Dilaj, it is common to assign bridges and other structures a 75-year service life, a term that considers design parameters, construction and replacement plans.

"Many structures in engineering, bridges as an example, use a 75 year service life which balances costs, changing travel

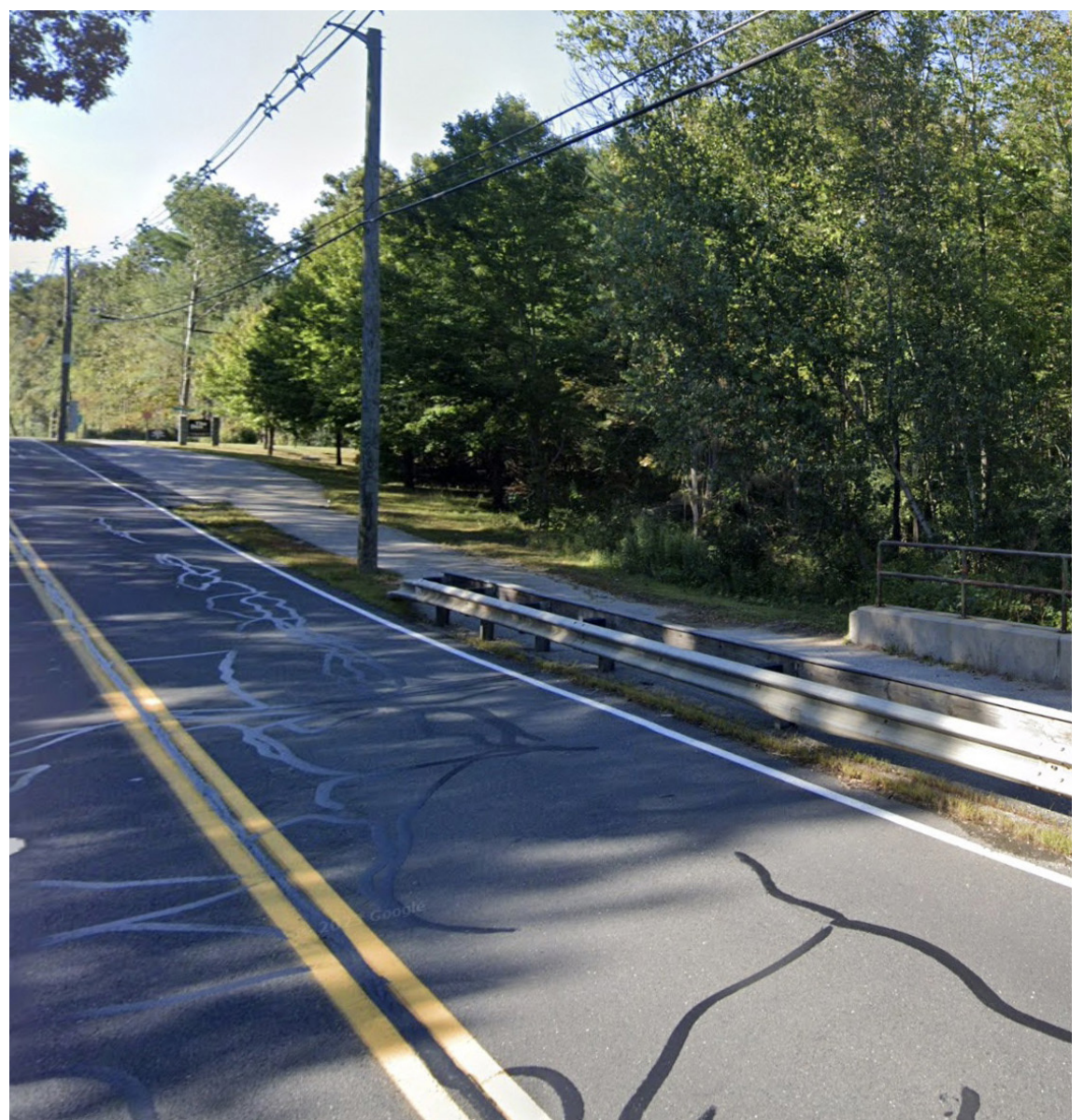
needs and technology changes," Dilaj wrote in an email to The Daily Campus. "Over the last 75 years, technology for vehicles has changed considerably and made them heavier. Vehicles have become larger and currently electric vehicles are much heavier than a similar internal combustion vehicle. This addition [in] size and weight requires stronger designs to accommodate that weight."

Dilaj clarified that while a majority of the work has been completed, minor additions will take place later this spring. As mentioned in the press release, the additions will include "pavement markings, grading the road shoulder and seeding all disturbed areas."

In addition to the culvert replacement, the town and contractor realigned the curved portion of Hunting Lodge Road. According to Dilaj, the decision behind the realignment stems from various factors, including impact to the guiderail due to vehicles traveling too quickly for the curve's conditions. Improvement to the curve largely consisted of elevation of the roadway to improve traction.

"The historical curve and guiderail had been impacted many times during its service life by vehicles for various reasons including traveling too quickly for conditions, an oncoming vehicle and pedestrian, as examples," Dilaj said. "The curve was improved by super elevating (or banking) the roadway such that vehicles will have improved traction."

Along with the elevation of the roadway, new signage was placed on the road to "better indicate the ap-



Hunting Lodge Road after construction. The repairs concluded after three years of closure, allowing safe travel to continue. PHOTO COURTESY OF GOOGLE PHOTOS

proaching curve," according to the press release.

Dilaj added that a multi-use trail is in its final design stage and is scheduled for construction either later this year or early next year.

"In addition the new bridge provides accommodation for a multi-use trail that is currently in final design and scheduled for construction late this year or early next year," Dilaj said.

According to the press release, the Town of Mansfield funded the entirety of the cost of the project. The design cost \$42,300, with the construction component totaling \$869,000.

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NEWSLETTER

## News

# 20,000 ordered to evacuate as fast-moving wildfire imperils homes north of Los Angeles

CASTAIC, Calif. (AP) — Nearly 20,000 people were ordered to evacuate on Wednesday as a huge and fast-moving wildfire swept through rugged mountains north of Los Angeles, as parched Southern California endured another round of dangerous winds and two major previous blazes continued to smolder.

The Hughes Fire broke out in the late morning and within hours charred nearly 8 square miles (21 square kilometers) of trees and brush, sending up plumes of dark smoke near Lake Castaic, a popular recreation area about 40 miles (64 kilometers) from the devastating Eaton and Palisades fires that are burning for a third week.

A 30-mile (48 km) stretch of Interstate 5, a major north-south artery, was closed as flames raced along hilltops and down into wooded canyons. Crews on the ground and in water-dropping aircraft tried to prevent the wind-driven fire from moving across the interstate and toward Castaic, where most of the 19,000 residents were ordered to evacuate. Another 15,000 people in the area were warned to prepare to leave at a moment's notice, according to the LA County Sheriff's Department.

Kayla Amara drove to Castaic's Stonegate neighborhood to collect items from the home of a friend who had rushed to pick up her daughter at preschool. As Amara was packing the car, she learned the fire had exploded in size and decided to hose down the property.

"Other people are hosing down their houses, too. I hope there's a house here to return to," Amara said as police cars raced through the streets and flames engulfed trees on a hillside in the distance.

Amara, a nurse who lives in nearby Valencia, said she's been on edge for weeks as major blazes devastated Southern California.

"It's been stressful with those other fires, but now that this one is close to home it's just super stressful," she said.

To the south, Los Angeles officials began to prepare for potential rain even as some residents were allowed to return to the charred Pacific Palisades and Altadena areas. Gusty weather was expected to last through Thursday and precipitation was possible starting Saturday, according to the National Weather Service.

"Rains are in the forecast and the threat of mud and debris flow in our fire-impacted communities is real," Supervisor Kathryn Barger said during a Wednesday morning news conference.

Fire crews were filling sandbags for communities while county workers installed barriers and cleared drainage pipes and basins.

Red flag warnings for critical fire risk were extended through 8 p.m. Thursday in LA and Ventura counties. Officials remained concerned that the Palisades and Eaton fires could break their containment lines as firefighters continue watching for hot spots.



County Sheriff officers return to their vehicle after monitoring flames caused by the Hughes Fire along a roadside in Castaic, Calif., Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2025. PHOTO BY ETHAN SWOPE/AP PHOTO

Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass warned that winds could carry ash and advised Angelenos to visit the city's website to learn how to protect themselves from toxic air during the latest Santa Ana wind event. LA County public health director Barbara Ferrer cautioned that the ash could contain heavy metals, arsenic and other harmful materials.

"Even a brief exposure can potentially cause skin irritation and lead to more serious problems," Ferrer said Wednesday, asking people to wear protective

gear while cleaning up.

The low humidity, bone-dry vegetation and strong winds came as firefighters continued battling the Palisades and Eaton fires, which have killed at least 28 people and destroyed more than 14,000 structures since they broke out Jan. 7. Containment of the Palisades Fire reached 68%, and the Eaton Fire was at 91%.

LA County Sheriff Robert Luna said Wednesday that his department was still investigating 22 active missing person reports in both fire zones. All

of those reported missing are adults, he said.

The federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms is investigating the causes of the fires but has not released any findings.

Several lawsuits have been filed by people who lost their homes in the Eaton Fire, alleging Southern California Edison's equipment sparked the blaze. On Tuesday a judge overseeing one of the lawsuits ordered the utility to produce data from circuits in the area where the fire started.

## Las Vegas hotel workers union reaches deal with casino to end longest strike in decades

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The longest strike in decades by Las Vegas hotel workers ended Wednesday with a ratified contract between the union and a casino where hundreds of employees had walked off the job in November.

The Culinary Workers Union announced on the social media platform X that it secured a five-year deal for about 700 employees at Virgin Hotels Las Vegas near the Strip. In a

joint statement, the union and casino said they were committed "to fostering a positive and collaborative working relationship for the benefit of all team members at the property" after the 69-day strike that began Nov. 15.

Bethany Khan, a spokesperson for the union, said the deal came together in recent days and was approved unanimously Wednesday by the union's rank-and-file. That brings an

end to the highly contentious contract negotiations that had stalled in the public spotlight because of disagreements over pay. The union's previous contract with Virgin Hotels expired in June 2023.

The new contract likely contains significant pay raises similar to what the rest of the union's members on the Strip, downtown and at other off-Strip properties have gotten in the last year. That includes

what the union has described as a historic 32% increase in wages over five years, an amount Virgin Hotels had said isn't "economically viable" for the casino's future.

But throughout the strike, Ted Pappageorge, the union's secretary-treasurer and lead negotiator, repeatedly said workers at Virgin Hotels would not settle for a "second-class contract."

Lee McNamara, a cook who has worked there for more than 25 years, told Clark County commissioners in early December that they deserved to be paid a living wage like their counterparts at other casinos.

"We're doing the same amount of work for less pay," he said. "We are literally the lowest-paid union casino as it stands right now."

For months the union maintained around-the-clock picket lines outside the hotel-casino that's within walking distance of the Strip and along a common route between the main tourist corridor and the city's international airport. Throughout the strike, the union publicly criticized Virgin Hotels for hiring temporary workers who crossed the picket line.

Democratic Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto and Reps. Dina Titus and Steven Horsford also joined workers on the picket line.

The union last went on strike in 2002, when employees at the Golden Gate hotel-casino in downtown Las Vegas stopped working for 10 days.

The Culinary Union is the largest labor union in Nevada with about 60,000 members statewide. Most of them are in Las Vegas.

## The Daily Campus

Printing since 1896, The Daily Campus is the oldest and largest independent student publication at the University of Connecticut. The Daily Campus circulates 1,500 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. Thanks for reading.

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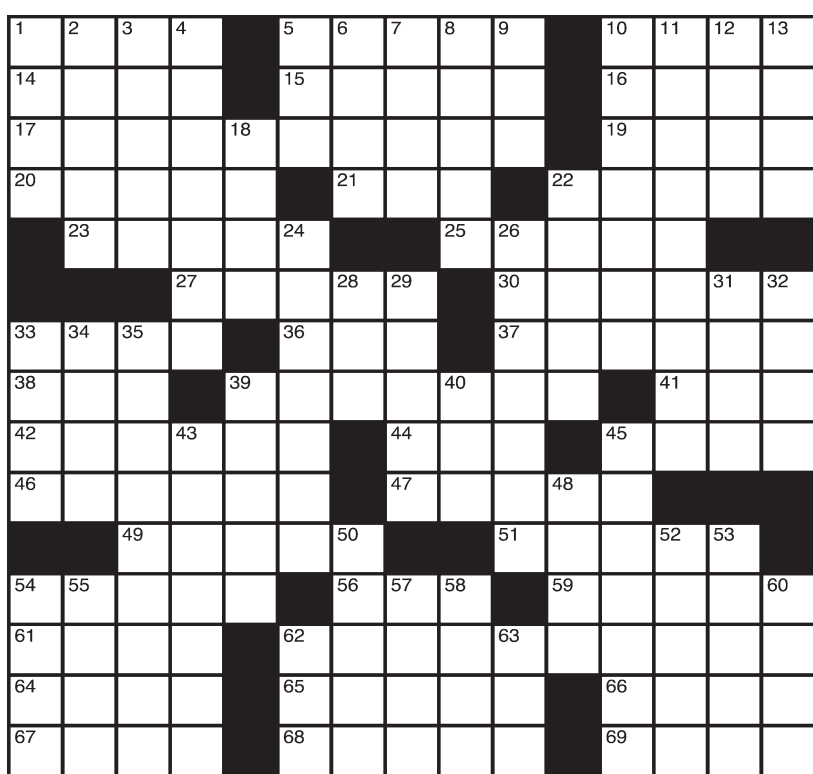
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- ACROSS**
- 1 Vase flaw
  - 5 Fragrance
  - 10 Like a thesis defense
  - 14 Bar mitzvah dance
  - 15 Bloom from a bulb
  - 16 Wrap for onigiri
  - 17 Keywords?
  - 19 Seemingly forever
  - 20 Word with code or colony
  - 21 Organ protected by lashes
  - 22 Kilt detail
  - 23 Sticker
  - 25 More crafty
  - 27 Laughing relative of a meerkat
  - 30 Wildlife tracking device
  - 33 Abbey space
  - 36 \_\_\_-Mex
  - 37 Japan's "Kimigayo," for one
  - 38 \_\_\_ of averages
  - 39 Crosswords?
  - 41 Path of a fly ball
  - 42 Three-note chords
  - 44 No longer trendy
  - 45 Corp. scientific execs
  - 46 "Why not?"
  - 47 Green
  - 49 Worked as a secret agent
  - 51 "What a shame!"
  - 54 Parents honored in May
  - 56 \_\_\_ de parfum
  - 59 "Good heavens!"
  - 61 Purple berry high in fat
  - 62 Safewords?
  - 64 Acronym after a lengthy post
  - 65 Felt a workout later
  - 66 Foreboding sign
  - 67 Brings legal action against
  - 68 Lets tears flow
  - 69 Libya-to-Algeria direction
- DOWN**
- 1 Pork cut
  - 2 Crossed one's fingers
  - 3 Leader of the girl group Red Velvet
  - 4 Dashing style
  - 5 Enjoyed a mochi doughnut, say
  - 6 Ploy
  - 7 Beauty brand with a Retinol 24 line
  - 8 Silent performers
  - 9 Tailless primate
  - 10 Ready for action
  - 11 Catchwords?
  - 12 63, for a 7x9 rectangle
  - 13 Reminder on the fridge
  - 18 Defeat, as a dragon
  - 22 Steinway product
  - 24 "As I remember it ..."
  - 26 Primitive shelters
  - 28 Org. that awards grants to orchestras
  - 29 Self-evident truth
  - 31 Flight-related prefix
  - 32 Yukon and Sierra
  - 33 Midrange voice
  - 34 Get into a spot?
  - 35 Watchwords?
  - 39 Elba who played Luther
  - 40 Half a quartet
  - 43 Live-in nannies
  - 45 Reliable moneymaker
  - 48 Lake bird with an eerie call
  - 50 Tie score in tennis
  - 52 Peak performance
  - 53 Amounts of medicine
  - 54 Judo class surfaces
  - 55 Org. with a Women's Rights Project
  - 57 "Days of Grace" memoirist Arthur
  - 58 Sch. that publishes the bilingual magazine *Minero*
  - 60 Ding on a bumper
  - 62 Mouth part
  - 63 Cards shown to bouncers



By Zhouqin Burnikel

1/23/25

**Wednesday's Puzzle Solved**

R	A	P	S	T	A	T	A	M	I	S	O	D				
A	L	O	E	S	T	A	G	E	D	T	W	O				
B	A	K	E	D	P	O	T	A	T	O	R	E	V			
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Level **1** **2** **3** **4**

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			4		3			
5	7		2				9	
2	5						3	
6	8						5	9
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	3				1		6	
			7		2			
		1	8		4			

Solution to Wednesday's puzzle

1/23/25

5	9	8	2	6	7	3	4	1
7	4	1	9	5	3	2	6	8
6	3	2	4	1	8	7	9	5
1	8	3	7	2	6	9	5	4
9	6	5	1	3	4	8	2	7
2	7	4	5	8	9	1	3	6
3	5	6	8	7	2	4	1	9
8	2	9	6	4	1	5	7	3
4	1	7	3	9	5	6	8	2

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit [sudoku.org.uk](http://sudoku.org.uk).

Daily Campus Crossword and Sudoku

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## Life

# UConn ARMS holds meeting about Extreme Risk Protection Orders

by **Maleena Muzio**

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**Content warning: Discussion of gun violence below.**

Gun violence: a widespread issue across the United States making news headlines daily. Ranging from mass shootings to homicide or suicide, guns are often tied to tragic events. However, laws known as ERPOs have been found in some situations to mitigate the negative impacts of firearms. 21 states across the U.S., as well as the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands have adopted such regulations in recent years.

On Wednesday, Jan. 22, associate professor of health management and policy at the University of Michigan and policy core director of the Institute for Firearm Injury Prevention, Dr. April M. Zeoli, met with the University of Connecticut to discuss her research on ERPOs.

The meeting took place over Zoom, sponsored by the UConn Center for ARMS in Gun Injury Prevention as part of a series called “On Target.” This is a virtual research seminar meant to bring gun violence prevention researchers together. UConn ARMS has listed gun-related injuries as the No. 1 cause of death for children and teens.

Zeoli began her presentation by explaining that change takes time. Inter-

ventions regarding firearm violence need time to make actual progress and much of her research does not include specific outcomes, but rather relies on descriptive methods. She then went on to define ERPOs as “court-issued civil orders that temporarily prohibit the purchase and possession of guns by those at imminent risk of harming themselves or others.” Such civil orders can be used to protect against self-harm, interpersonal violence or mass violence.

Connecticut was the first state in the U.S. to legislate Extreme Risk laws, dating back to the late 1990s. Despite this, it was only decades later, following the 2018 Parkland school shooting, that many states began to implement these laws. Tragic attention-grabbing events, such as school shootings, have set off the need for legislation, opening policy windows and bringing up the conversation of gun regulation.

Recognizing that not all data regarding ERPOs is scientifically valid, Zeoli promised to do her best to provide the most relevant and accurate statistics during the presentation. However, one consistent statistic is the general approval of ERPO. Around 70% of the public believes that both civilians and officers should have the ability to file these orders, with firearm owners having slightly

lower approval ratings as opposed to their counterparts.

Petitions to file for ERPOs are on the rise, as Zeoli’s data presents. They have been found in several states to lower the rates of firearm suicide, though variations in the law process in different states have led to slightly different outcomes. Procedures to file an ERPO are not uniform amongst states, making the process much more difficult in some areas of the country than others. Choosing the best approach depends on the specific state, according to Zeoli.

Questions surrounding who should be able to file an ERPO have risen. In many states, police officers are the only people able to do so, while in others, civilians and healthcare providers may also. Studies show that friends and family members are less willing to do so, while healthcare providers almost never do. One major concern is what Zeoli coins “the myth of the vengeful woman,” otherwise explained as an intimate partner falsely accusing the other as a means of revenge. Research illustrates that false cases of ERPOs are almost never filed and that these orders are serving their intended purposes.

To learn more on the topic of gun violence prevention, check out the next session of the “On Target Seminar Series,” taking place on Tuesday, Feb. 11 on Zoom.

## Life Section Roundtable:

# MEDIA RELEASES WE’RE EXCITED FOR

January may be a miserable month for many, but one thing it succeeds in is procuring hype for new media releases. Music, movies and television shows keep students motivated to trudge through classes week-by-week, so what better way to start the semester than list some off with their expected release dates? Here is the media Life is looking forward to in 2025.

**Noa Climor, Social Media Outreach Coordinator (she/her/hers):**

Last year, I made it my mission to watch all the Best Picture nominees at the Oscars—and I did. That experience was a way for me to experience incredibly cool films and to watch more movies, which has been a goal of mine. I think it goes without saying, but in times of doubt and stress, we all turn to art to feel, see and experience something. It doesn’t have to be too different or involve science fiction/fantasy, but something outside of the norm can always make a difference, even if it’s small.

So, without further ado, my highly anticipated—to someone I’m sure—list of films and shows I am looking forward to. There are so many shows coming back this year (for example, we are getting a new “Yellowjackets” season on Valentine’s Day) and many new movies. I, for one, am thrilled that we are seeing more of Sophie Thatcher in 2025. She was incredible in “The Heretic” and will surely shine in “The Companion,” releasing on Jan. 31. Advertised as “a new kind of love story,” it looks like a project to keep an eye out for.

In February, we are getting none other than Paddington himself in “Paddington in Peru.” Not only that, we are also getting “Love Hurts” with Ke Huy Quan and Ariana DeBose and “Mickey 17” starring Robert Pattinson and directed by Bong Joon-Ho—who you might recognize as the Academy Award-winning director for the film “Parasite.”

So many words and so little time! We have “Black Bag,” “Novocaine,” “Snow White” and “The Alto Knights” in March. April is bringing forth “A Minecraft Movie,” “Sinners” and in May, we are getting “Thunderbolts” and a new “Karate Kid” movie. Another “Superman” should be in July, and many more movies and shows are releasing that I’m so excited for. 2025 is truly coming through with films and shows that I hope will blow our minds, so here goes!

**Maleena Muzio, Staff Writer (she/her/hers):**

As  
2024

came to a close, some of the best media became available to the public. The hit movie musical, “Wicked,” based on the familiar Broadway musical, performed well at the box office, ranking in the top 10 highest grossing films of the year. Many fans, including myself, are highly anticipating “Wicked: For Good,” the second and final film in the series, which is set to release in November of this year. While the first movie explored Act 1 of the musical, the sequel will show Act 2,

featuring songs such as, “I’m Not That Girl (Reprise)” and “For Good.” The movie is set to further showcase Elphaba and Glinda’s friendship as well as represent Oz pre and post Dorothy.

Another highly anticipated release is the newest season of hit series, “Stranger Things.” It is one of the most watched Netflix original series of all time, with a large and enthusiastic fan-

base. Season 5 is comprised of eight lengthy episodes, with each resembling a full-length movie. Though the official release date has not been announced, the season is rumored to come out sometime in the summer or early fall.

I am most looking forward to seeing how the last season compares to its predecessors, specifically seasons one and three. Many viewers are

anticipating the death of beloved character, Eleven. However, the only thing that is certain is that once released, “Stranger Things” will take over social media, dominating the “For You pages” and hearts of many.

Switching tracks, the alternative singer with a cult fanbase, Lana Del Rey, is scheduled to release her tenth studio album, “The Right Person Will Stay,” this year. Previously titled “Lasso,” the new version of the album will play more into her traditional sound, in-

new album. Her recent set of shows following her headlining Coachella performances have also sparked her popularity on social media, adding to the anticipation for “The Right Person Will Stay.”

**Mikayla Murphy, Campus Correspondent (she/her/hers):**

Although I’m excited about many media releases this year, the one movie that I am hands down the most excited for is “Wicked: For Good.” Act II of the Broadway musical holds one of my favorite musical songs of all time, “For Good,” so I’m particularly excited to hear Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo’s rendition of the song. I will talk about my excitement for this movie to anyone who will listen, so I am going to become the most insufferable person when the movie is released in November. I wouldn’t be surprised if the “Wicked: For Good” soundtrack makes it onto my Spotify Wrapped this year.

Besides the new Wicked movie, I’m also excited for the release of season 5 of “Stranger Things” and season 3 of “Squid Game.” I grew up watching “Stranger Things,” so I’m excited to see how the show is going to be wrapped up.

“Squid Game,” on the other hand, was a recent interest of mine. I didn’t watch the first season when it was released back in 2021, but I heard the hype about it at the time. Like with Wicked (and most other media that I watch), my sister got me into “Squid Game” after season 2 was released. Through her constant TikTok messages of solely “Squid Game” videos, she convinced me to watch it, and I thoroughly enjoyed the first two seasons. There’s no confirmed date for when season 3 will be released, nonetheless, I’m excited to tune in.

A few other releases that I’m excited about are the new “A Minecraft Movie” coming out in April, the live action “Snow White” with Rachel Zegler and the “Lilo & Stitch” movie. Letterboxd here I come!





LOGO BY COLBI LORANGER, ASSOCIATE MANAGING EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

# WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

by Isaac Grad | HE/HIM/HIS | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | isaac.grad@uconn.edu

Welcome back to another issue of Your Movie Mage, where I discuss underrated movies across genres. Before break, we discussed the highly underrated buddy-cop film, “The Nice Guys.” This week, we’ll be talking about the little-known and controversial film adaptation of the very popular book, “Where the Wild Things Are.”

While the “Where the Wild Things Are” film is very different from its source material, the movie takes the story’s basic plot and translates the complexities of childhood and growing up from the book to film.

This is not easily achieved, and if it already sounds too complex to be a children’s movie, you may be onto something. A lot of movie-goers were surprised and disap-

pointed with the film after bringing their young children to see it, as they expected it to be a movie for children because it’s adapted from a children’s book. The director of the film, Spike Jonze, said the movie is about children and wasn’t necessarily made to be a children’s movie. This isn’t to discourage children from seeing it, but rather to clarify why it’s so dark.

This film manages to capture something about childhood that isn’t often portrayed in films. We are able to remember the heartache and powerlessness felt in childhood, which is often ignored or forgotten about. That being said, it becomes clear why some people adore this film, while others were bored enough to leave the theater. Not everyone

felt this way throughout their childhood, and in the film, it’s made clear that the central character, Max, and his wild tendencies are connected to his parents’ divorce.

This movie captures childhood in a subtle way, including through the overwhelming emotions that can turn an enjoyable game into anger and betrayal. The sense of wonder and possibility is captured in the magical aspects of the film and juxtaposed with fear and powerlessness.

Along with the other complex emotions dealt with in the film, one that stands out is loneliness. When we are introduced to Max, he’s spending his time alone, trying to get his mom, sister and her friends to engage with him. He has a very active imagination but doesn’t have any friends to play with. We feel this loneliness very strongly throughout the film, despite it not necessarily being in the forefront of what’s being portrayed.

The music throughout the film elevates these emotions to a degree that many films are unable to reach. The songs match each scene perfectly, encouraging us to experience the feelings in moments of less action.

The use of practical effects was amazing and resulted in a very realistic film that made the “wild things” look and seem real. The writing and dialogue were great and the conversations between the wild things felt real and raw.

There was significant creative liberty in the creation of this movie considering how short the book is and how long movies are by comparison. The creators of the film made much of it based on their own interpretation of the book and the feelings it gave them.

The thought and care put behind each character is profound. They each brought varying complex emotions that Max was dealing with himself. Once they were isolated in various wild things, he was able to better understand his emotions and reactions. Being throned the king of the wild things put him in a position of authority with responsibility, similar to that of his mom, who he struggles to show respect to when his emotions overpower him.

The film also touches on universal feelings and fears for children, such as the sudden realization of mortality. For Max, this is brought on by

learning in school that our solar system and eventually our universe will freeze and cease to exist. This realization is terrifying for a young child, and this newfound fear impacts his imagination and feelings that he’s struggling to understand. Once with the wild things, this fear dominates his reign as king, as he promises to create a land where nothing that they don’t want to happen, happens.

This sense of control that Max is struggling to find is resolved by the end once he recognizes he can’t control these things.

I found the entire film to be melancholic, serene and nostalgic. If you are a fan of movies that are slower and less action-packed, or if you’re a child of divorce, I’d recommend this film. Overall, given the positive response and recognition of this film by at least half of those who viewed it, I’d say this film has an underratedness score of 3/5. It deserves more love and attention, but has its fans who understand and appreciate it.

3/5

# A LENTILS RECIPE TO MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER

LOGO BY LILLIAN LAFEMINA, ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

by Oliver Power  
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Welcome to a new year and new recipes for “I Made it So You Don’t Have To.” For those that are just joining, in this column I explore recipes on TikTok, which seems to be the new cookbook of today. This week I have decided to take an alternate course due to TikTok’s impending ban, but I will resume making these recipes next week.

With the return to school, it can be easy to get overwhelmed with work and many may not have time to labor through difficult recipes every day. So, I have decided to make something that can be meal-prepped, consumed multiple days in a row without worry of health concerns and enjoyed as if it were prepared that day.

Today’s recipe is lentils over rice. Served with Parmesan cheese, this makes for a delicious lunch or dinner. It can sit for a few days and be mi-

crowaved to feel as if it was just made. The best part is it is healthy—something I know I am desperately in search of after the holidays.

First, add all of your lentils to a bowl with water high enough that the line sits above them. Let these soak for about 15 minutes so they become softer and get rid of any starches on their surface. In the meantime, cut up one and a half onions, one red bell pepper (making sure to cut out the stem) and add it to the food processor and pulse the vegetables. It is up to you how fine you want them cut. I know I do not like crunching on an onion in the middle of a meal, so I make sure to process them until they are really fine.

Now for the more powerful flavor, cut up four slices of bacon into small bits and then throw them in a pot with a little bit of olive oil to cook for about seven minutes on medium to medium-high heat. Let the bits cook until browned and then immediately add onions and red pepper. Let these sauté for

about five minutes on medium heat. Once the vegetables have been sufficiently cooked, then add your lentils to the pot.

Next is where the tedious part of the recipe comes in. Start with four cups of water and keep the heat between medium and medium-low. If you put the lentils on too high heat, then it will make them mushy. Add one tablespoon of Better Than Bouillon roasted beef base. This gives the lentils a much-needed depth of flavor. Add in your salt, pepper and nutmeg. Let roughly half of the water boil out and add another cup of water. Repeat this step five to six times depending on how quickly the lentils cook. For me, it was about thirty minutes before they were ready. Adjust seasonings to taste. If you want to give it a kick of heat, sprinkle in some red pepper flakes.

Remember to keep tasting. While you are waiting for the lentils to be done, add about two cups of rice to a pot and four cups of water to a pot and salt it like the ocean. Let the rice cook on medium-high heat for about ten minutes, stirring the rice every now and then so it does not stick at the bottom. Then, lower the heat to medium low



for five minutes and lastly steam with no heat for another five minutes. This process for rice is called the ten-five-five rule. Never again have I had issues with making rice as I had before.

Once the lentils are at a nice, soft consistency, strain out the water so it stops the cooking process, otherwise they will turn out mushy. Finally, you have all the things you need. Serve the rice first and then lentils above topped with Parmesan cheese. When mak-

ing this recipe, it is important to keep adding water to the lentils because if they are left unattended, the bottom of the pan will burn them. While this recipe does take some time watching and adding water, it more than makes up for it in simplicity, healthiness and cost. It only uses six ingredients and three spices, making it a respectable recipe for a college student. This comfortably made four portions, which could be stretched out to five or six portions, making it a perfect meal prep for the week.

## Ingredients:

One bag of Goya lentils

Two cups rice

One red bell pepper

One and a half onions

14 cups water (total)

One-quarter tsp of nutmeg

One-half tbsp salt

One-quarter tbsp pepper

Four slices of thick-cut bacon

One tbsp of Better Than Bouillon roasted beef base

RATING: 4.5/5

COST: \$18.19



# Life

@dailycampuslife

THE MUSIC NEVER STOPS.  
THE MUSIC NEVER STOPS.  
THE MUSIC NEVER STOPS.  
THE MUSIC NEVER STOPS.

## Noah Bielecki

by Dan Stark | STAFF WRITER | HE/HIM | daniel.stark@uconn.edu



Noah Bielecki performing with AshBaby in September 2024. PHOTO COURTESY OF NOAH BIELECKI

Punk and jazz fusion are two of the most contrasting music genres out there. One has stripped-down arrangements with aggressive delivery, while the other has long, improvisatory passages with dynamic changes. Given these differences, it would be rare — maybe even shocking — to find someone in bands that plays both of these wildly different styles.

Noah Bielecki is that rare case. Bielecki defies this logic, as he's currently the bassist for indie punk group Overlöd and the guitarist and founder of AshBaby, a jazz fusion-inspired jam band. As a multi-instrumentalist who regularly flexes his talent in the Storrs music scene, he brings versatility and creativity to a scene that can often be bogged down in repetitiveness.

Bielecki's journey started with the trumpet before picking up a guitar during sixth grade, though starting to learn bass in ninth grade is what opened up his creativity and confidence. He said that "bass was my first instrument that I actually felt confident to play standing up," as he referred to himself as a "sit-down guitarist" at the time. He sharpened his chops over the next few years by playing both instruments in the jazz band at Bolton High School.

As both a guitarist and bassist, Bielecki explained that he's applied guitar techniques to his bass playing, something that gives him more room to create more flowing basslines.

"It's not an instant switch, but sometimes, I'll try to apply guitar stuff [to bass]," he said. "In a lot of my more recent Overlöd performances, I've been trying to use a lot of triads and arpeggios."

Bielecki started college at the University of Connecticut's Hartford campus during the Fall 2023 semester, where he would commute to

from home. Life as a commuter was isolating, as he felt he was missing out on musical opportunities he was trying to find.

"One thing [commuting] did to me was make me sort of pessimistically lonely," he said. "I always heard about my Berklee [College of Music] friends' adventures, and I was always like 'Man, I missed the boat to get better with guitar to play with people.'"

Opportunity came knocking when later that fall, he connected with Overlöd frontman Aiden Bonilla on Vamper, an app designed for musicians to connect. Bonilla was looking for a bassist to bring his music to life with a full band, and recruited Bielecki to join the new lineup. Bielecki shared that he was "kind of nervous" going into the band since he had never been in a punk band or even considered himself a punk fan, much less a punk bassist.

"It was a little scary. I didn't know what the standard was or if I was going to come off as a poser, but I knew that there's no genre that's below you, it's all stuff that's going to help you become a better player," he said.

After a few short weeks of rehearsal, the new-look Overlöd lineup augmented by Bielecki and lead guitarist Nathan McKenna took to the stage at WHUS Radio's Battle of The Bands in

February 2024. For Bielecki, this first show was a trial by fire: Not only was it his first time performing in a rock band, but there were hundreds of people staring back at him.

"I just rehearsed with these people less than two weeks ago, and now I'm on a stage in front of 400 people," he said. "And I had never played in front of a crowd like that before."

Since that first show, Bielecki has played nearly two dozen shows with the band and appeared on the group's third album, "Miss President." He expressed his gratitude for how welcoming the band was to him and that being in the band allowed him to get into and make connections in the local music scene.

"They welcomed me with open arms and got me into the scene," he said. "It was really cool to be able to make connections. I tried to talk to every venue owner and get their information too."

While his tenure with Overlöd was taking off, the

seeds of a new project

began to grow in Bielecki's mind. He was itching to play guitar again and wanted to do something more jam-focused, so he made some calls and rounded up some friends to jam in February 2024.

"I got a bunch of guys because I thought 'It's cool to do punk stuff, but I still want to play guitar,'" he said. "And part of it was that I was sick of playing to a backing track. I wanted to get people together in a room."

Bielecki recalled that in that jam session, "I don't think we played particularly well, but I had a lot of fun playing." Two of the attendees, bassist Judah Friedman and drummer Sam Brudz, would soon join Noah in AshBaby, with the trio

making their debut at Storrs house venue, The Dog Pound, in September.

Bielecki recalled being "nervous out of my mind" that night, as it was the first time he would be singing live. He stepped into the role out of necessity, explaining that "unless you're a really good guitar player, no one's going to go see a fusion band." However, the night ended up being a success, with the crowd dancing and swaying along to their grooves.

Since then, the now four-piece group has continued to expand their presence in the UConn music scene. He said that being a jazz fusion-inspired jam band in a scene largely made up of punk and heavier bands has gone better than expected, as "there's not really a gatekeeping of genres" at venues.

With his work in both Overlöd and AshBaby, it has certainly been a very busy past year for Bielecki. But he's shown little signs of slowing down anytime soon, with more shows on the way with both groups.



ILLUSTRATION BY CONNOR SZREJNA, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

LOGO BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



# Opinion

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# PATRICK'S POLITICS: THE DANGEROUS RISE OF ELON MUSK, OUR UNELECTED PRESIDENT

by Patrick Minnerly | WEEKLY COLUMNIST | HE/HIM/HIS | patrick.minnerly@uconn.edu

On Monday, Jan. 20, Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 47th president of the United States. The number of words written about Trump could drown the country in paper, not to mention the pieces still to come over the next four years. But there can be no talk of Trump without mentioning Elon Musk in the same breath. In just a few short months from Election Day to the present moment, Musk has solidified himself as Trump's right-hand man, becoming a massively influential player in the Republican Party. He poses a significant danger to American politics, having carved out a threatening mantle of power both in and outside of government.

In outgoing President Biden's farewell address on Jan. 15, he warned of an oligarchy taking shape in America that "threatens our entire democracy." There is no better representation for this phenomenon than Elon Musk. Among this cadre of absurdly rich people, which includes figures such as Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Amazon leader Jeff Bezos, and Google CEO Sundar Pichai, Musk is the wealthiest. He is at the very top of the one percent, owning several companies such as X (formerly Twitter), Tesla and SpaceX. But money is not what makes him stand out. While the others may hope to foster profitable and influential ties with Trump's government, Musk has gone all in on one strategy to increase his power: get as close to Trump as possible, with no expenses spared.

In the 2024 campaign, Musk donated 277 million dollars to help Trump and other Republican candidates win their elections, easily making him the largest donor to either political party. But he wasn't content to simply sit on the sidelines like other major donors, instead campaigning with Trump and even calling himself "Dark MAGA." In doing so, Musk cemented a rapid hard-right turn from the previous election, when he voted for Biden, although he has always had unpredictable, clouded, and often contradictory politics. The reason for these contributions, however, could not be more clear: Musk aimed to buy his way to favor with Trump, and he soon got what he wished. In the aftermath of Trump's victory, the president-elect put Musk as the co-head of the new Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)—and yes, it was named after the

famous dog meme. This project was originally tasked with cutting two trillion dollars in waste from the federal government by 2026, although that goal has already been revised to one trillion. This effort could result in harmful layoffs and massive cuts to federal programs. Since the 'department' is ostensibly an advisory organization in the government and its leader is not subject to a cabinet hearing, Musk will likely not have to answer for the many conflicts of interest his company portfolio would present; for instance, SpaceX has been awarded 15.4

billion dollars in government contracts over the last decade. It was reported that Musk will receive an office in the West Wing of the White House, therefore being extraordinarily close to Trump's ear for a private citizen. The impact of DOGE may be far-reaching or it may sputter out, but either way Musk gets what he wants.

The establishment of DOGE was bad enough, but Musk quickly flexed his newfound political muscle. In December, legislators had prepared a bipartisan bill to renew government spending and avoid a shut-

down, which appeared likely to pass. But Musk unleashed a barrage of posts on his X app disparaging the bill with blatant misinformation, and quickly the bill was dead in the water. Last-minute opposition against legislation is traditional Trump territory, but the new president didn't even weigh in until the dust had settled. Eventually, lawmakers finally approved a smaller bill more to Musk's liking. Afterwards, Republican House member Tony Gonzales floated the idea of Musk as a "prime minister" of sorts—a powerful title marking his sud-

denly inescapable influence in the GOP, and an underscoring of how Musk is interfering with the American political system.

Musk's ascent didn't stop there. He later got into a social media slugfest over his support of H-1B visas, which allow foreign tech workers to come and work in the U.S., with diehard MAGA figures such as Steve Bannon. Trump, although previously on record as opposed to those visas, ended up supporting Musk. In doing so, he confirmed Musk's influence over the current MAGA landscape, rejecting the people that had helped sweep him to office before.

Over the past few days, Musk has become embroiled in an outcry over his maybe-accidental, maybe-not gesture of a Nazi salute, lighting social media and the news on fire. If nothing else, the whirlwind has proved that Musk is everywhere and, like Trump, has a unique ability to provoke controversy while claiming innocence to his devoted followers—213 million on X, to be exact. The firestorm also distracted from more substantial developments in Musk's influence, both past and present. The Nazi salute, intentional or not, overshadowed Musk's very real commitment to the AfD, a far right and virulently anti-immigration German political party, which he supported in an opinion piece back in December. Moving forward to inauguration day, Musk was promised an initiative to send humans to Mars, one of his longtime and treasured pet projects. Hours later, it was revealed that Musk's co-leader of DOGE, fellow tech mogul Vivek Ramaswamy, was on the outs, leaving Musk as the sole driver of the program's initiatives. The path has been cleared for Musk to have free rein and a massive reach in pursuing his goals, whether they be pushing into space, fighting for drastic budget cuts or advancing the ideology of the far-right.

On the surface, the rise of Musk signals a return to the corrupt politics of the Gilded Age in America, when wealthy robber barons exercised lucrative influence over the government. It also demonstrates the unstable power of one man with the ability to spread a wealth of falsehoods in service of his wide-ranging aims. In a way, Musk was correct when he proclaimed himself as Dark MAGA: another form of Trump, hidden in shadow, the new president's power behind the throne.



LOGO BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

# Opinion

Photo of the Day | Snowball fight!

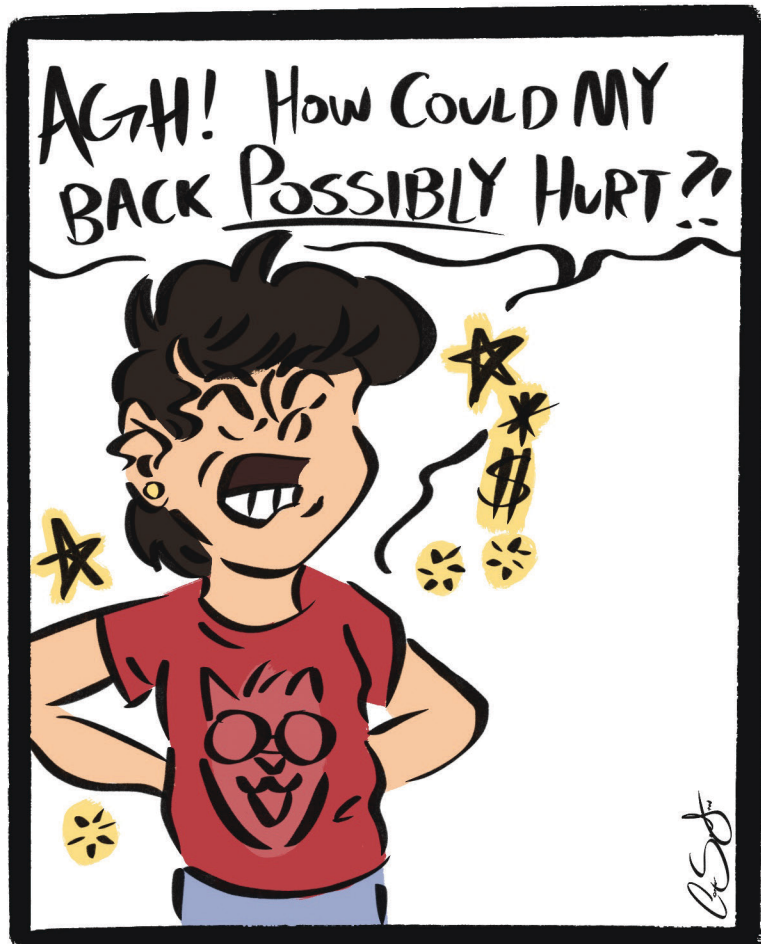


Students at the University of Connecticut enjoying a snowy day in Storrs, Conn. on Jan. 22, 2025. Students have and will continue to experience below-freezing temperatures throughout this week. PHOTO BY EMMA MEIDINGER, ASSOCIATE PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

# Comics



COMIC BY SARAH CHANTRES, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS



COMIC BY CONNOR SZREJNA, STAFF ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

# HUSKIES IN THE PROS:

## UConn Players Who Declared for the 2025 NFL Draft

**by Tyler Pruneau**  
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With the 2024-2025 college football season ending, the 2025 NFL draft process is on the horizon. Over the past several years, UConn has sent players to the pros, and this year is no different. After an impressive 9-4 campaign and winning the 2024 Wasabi Fenway Bowl, 13 Huskies declared for this season's NFL draft.

**Jordan Wright:**

The Huskies acquired Jordan Wright over the 2024 off-season, and he impacted UConn's defense. The senior racked up 46 total tackles, one sack and one fumble recovery. In his time with Kansas State University from 2022-2023, the defensive back struggled to get playing time. The Tennessee native performed in six matches, combining for eight total tackles between 2022 and 2023 seasons. Compared to the 2024-2025 campaign, Wright participated in every contest and made game-changing plays. For example, in this season's, Wright scooped up a goal line fumble and returned it for a 96-yard touchdown to secure the victory. The transfer put on a breakout year performance that draft stock.

**Malik Dixon-Williams:**

Unlike Wright, Malik Dixon-Williams spent all four years with the Huskies. The defensive back racked up 255 tackles, two forced fumbles and seven interceptions for 68 yards. In 2024, the Orlando native had a career-high of three interceptions for a combined total of 31 yards. The senior suffered a broken hand prior to the beginning of this, forcing him to miss the first two contests, per The Hartford Courant. Dixon-Williams returned in week three against Duke and led the defense for the rest of the season. The safety is currently projected to get picked up in the late rounds, according to NFL spin zone.

**TJ Sheffield:**

TJ Sheffield transferred from Purdue to Connecticut over the 2024 offseason. The wide receiver hauled in 54 throws, averaging about nine and a half yards for a total of 505 yards and three touchdowns. Receiving was not the only job for the senior, as he gained 241 yards off punt returns.

**Brett Buckman:**

UConn picked up Brett Buckman from Delaware after

the 2022 season, adding more depth to the 2023 offense. The wideout caught 46 passes for a career-high 488 yards and two touchdowns. Fast forward to 2024, the senior's production declined, as he only appeared in four matches. The senior snagged a combined total of seven balls for 91 yards.

**Jayden McDonald:**

Jayden McDonald became a Husky in 2024 after spending four years with Troy. The linebacker put on a stellar performance and led Connecticut in total tackles this year. McDonald took down 125 opponents, sacked the quarterback three and a half times and snatched one interception. The redshirt senior nearly broke the UConn FBS school record against UMass after posting 20 tackles, but came up one short. The star defender earned a spot on the 2024 G5 Second Team Defense with these stats.

**Tui Faumuina-Brown:**

Tui Faumuina-Brown stayed with the Huskies all four years. The linebacker increased his numbers each season, and 2024 was no different. The senior put on a career-high showing with 91 total tackles, four and a half sacks, one forced fumble and even an interception. By the end of the season, Faumuina-Brown achieved All-New England status.

**Christopher Fortin:**

Christopher Fortin joined Connecticut in 2021 and only participated in six games. The offensive lineman saw an increase in playing time over the next three years. Fortin participated in all 13 matches in the 2024 campaign and added one tackle to his resumé.

**Valentin Senn:**

Before coming to UConn, Valentin Senn started at Colorado as a second-team offensive tackle in 2020. Heading into 2021, like Fortin, he barely saw action on the field, with only three competitions recorded. The script flipped starting in 2022, as Senn took the starting role and participated in every contest. Prior to the 2024 season, the senior sat on the 2025 East-West Shrine Bowl 1000 watchlist.

**Chase**

**Lundt:**

Unlike Fortin and Senn, Chase Lundt got put into the lineup right away in 2021 after redshirting in 2019. Within four years, the senior engaged in all but one game. On the brink of the 2024 season, the offensive lineman was named to the 2025 Reese's Senior Bowl and 2025 East-West Shrine Bowl 1000 watch lists. By the end of the year, Lundt received 2024 All-New England, 2024 G5 First Team All-American and got invited to the 2025 Reese's Senior Bowl.

**Jack Barton:**

Jack Barton joined the program in 2024 after spending two seasons with Furman. The senior provided more depth in the defensive lineman position as he participated in nine games. Barton racked up 24 total tackles, a sack and one fumble recovery. The defensive player earned an invite to the 2025 FBS All-Americans Tropical Bowl after a solid college career.

**Dal'Mont Gourdine:**

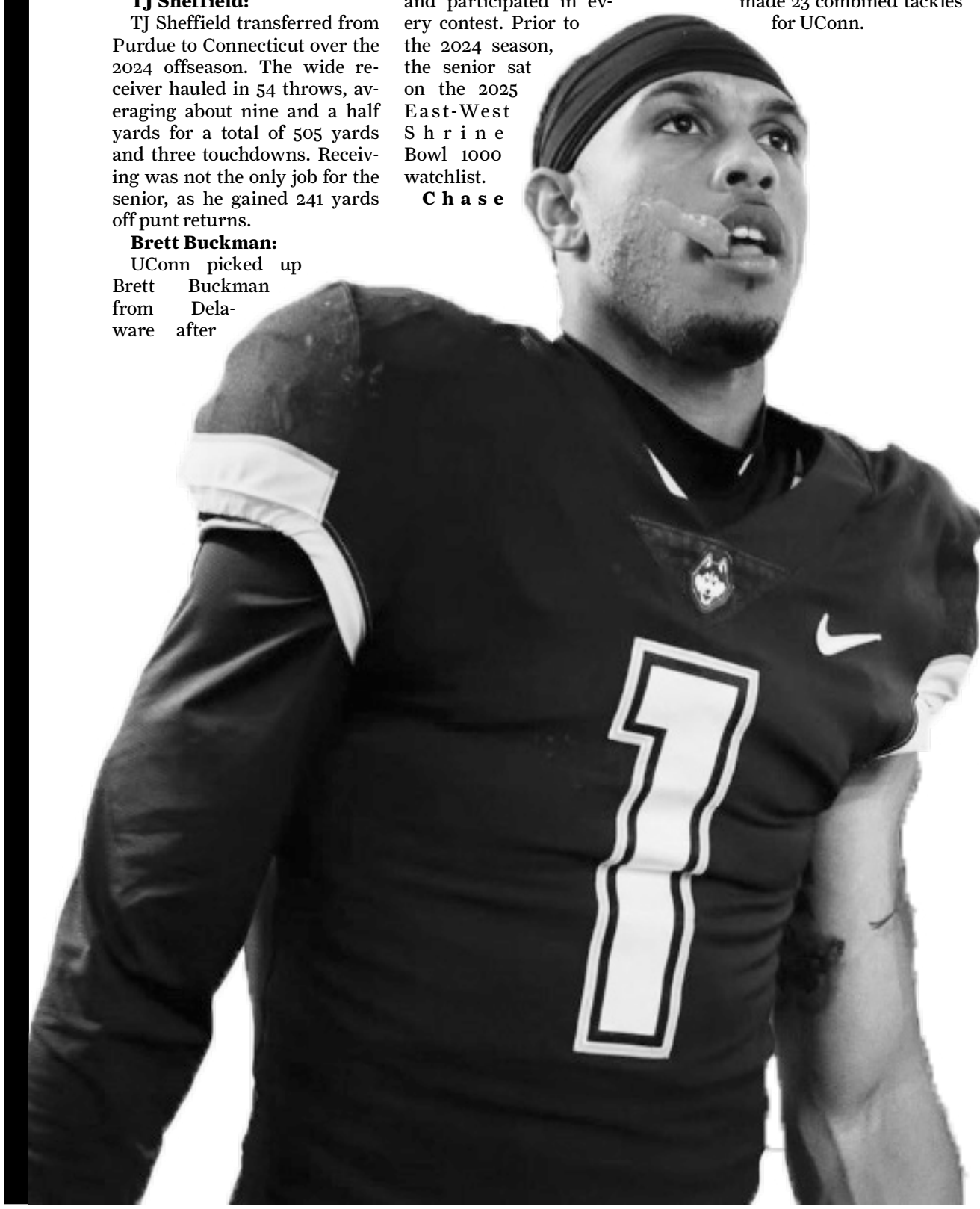
Dal'Mont Gourdine committed to the Huskies in 2019 but became a redshirt. Each season, the senior put up double-digit tackles. This past season, the defensive lineman took down 27 players and got to the quarterback once.

**Jelani Stafford:**

Jelani Stafford came over from Youngstown in 2022 after struggling to get playing time. The senior made a jump at UConn in 2022 and never looked back. The defensive lineman totaled 39 tackles in the 2024 season and performed in all 13 matchups. With the season on the horizon, Stafford was listed as a player to watch for the 2025 East-West Shrine Bowl 1000.

**Jayden Simon:**

Connecticut acquired Jayden Simon over the 2024 offseason with one season of eligibility left. The defensive lineman jumped from Colorado in 2021 to Tulsa in 2022 and 2023 to becoming a Husky. The senior made an appearance in nine clashes and made 23 combined tackles for UConn.



CUTOUT COURTESY OF @MWilliams7\_

## Sports

## Photo of the Day | Triple digits



UConn women's basketball takes on Villanova at Gampel Pavilion on Jan 22, 2025. UConn is currently ranked number 6 nationally and enters the game with a 17-2 record. PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

# Sargeant's Orders: Ranking the best NBA rappers

by Connor Sargeant

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We are nearly four months into the 2024-2025 NBA season and there is much to discuss. Will the Cleveland Cavaliers win over 70 games this season? Will Shai Gilgeous-Alexander finally get the nod as the regular season MVP after many believed he was snubbed a year prior? Of course, ESPN talk shows are routinely chugging out content comparing LeBron James to Patrick Mahomes, since that is clearly the most pertinent sports news in an exciting season of basketball. However, what these sports shows are not talking about enough is the latest hit single from LiAngelo "Gelo" Ball. In case you missed it, Ball released a new hit single, "Tweaker," which, despite its high debut on the Billboard Hot 100, is not the most pleasing on the ears. Unbeknownst to some, professional basketball players releasing music is anything but new, with even Shaquille O'Neal releasing music starting in 1993 with "Shaq Diesel." Considering that I am a self-proclaimed music expert, logging approximately 100,000 minutes on Spotify this past year, I am going to rank the top four active NBA rappers in terms of listenability and skill in this week's edition of Sargeant's Orders.

#### 4. Andre Drummond, Drummxnd

Former UConn center, Andre Drummond, whose rapper name is Drummxnd, takes the fourth spot in this competitive space. The former Connecticut big man has a deep bag when it comes to his music game. In some songs, like "Change," Drummxnd's music features the ever-growing loverboy melodic rap genre that emcees such as Iann Dior and Juice WRLD demonstrated with their music. Drummond's lyrics are powerful in such songs and give the listener exactly what they want without sacrificing quality. However, the rapper-ballplayer is far from a one-trick pony. With songs like "Gf," Drummond employs numerous hooks in his music in a unique, upbeat and energetic manner that empowers the listener as an alternative to the sadder music he releases.

#### 3. Lonzo Ball, Zo

While some only know of Lonzo Ball, aka Zo, for his hit, catchy single "Zo2," it does not distract from the fact that Ball does pos-



Damian Lillard, NBA player and rapper, posing for a photo with his golden watch. Lillard has won the All-Star Game MVP award once. PHOTO COURTESY OF @DAMIANLILLARD ON INSTAGRAM

Andre Drummond walking down a hallway in designer clothing. He is a center for the Philadelphia 76ers, and was drafted to the Pistons in 2012. PHOTO COURTESY OF @DRUMMOND ON INSTAGRAM



sess some real talent. Perhaps it comes from his rapper "brother" LilDicky Ball, aka Lil Dicky. Despite not being biologically related, Lonzo does share some similarities to his fake brother. Ball demonstrates an ability to command the mic at all times at a high level without depending on the beat. An argument could be made to place him higher on the list for this reason alone. Pleasing to the ears, the former UCLA

guard demonstrates he is not dependent on his melodies, which is best demonstrated in his song "Melo Ball 1." However, even when he does depend on them,

such as in "Zo2," he makes his songs the perfect time length, where redundancy doesn't become an issue.

#### 2. Marvin Bagley III, MB-3Five

Not only has Marvin Bagley III put together a solid seven-year career so far, but his rap game is far and few between. The former Duke Blue Devil has it all: high profile features, excellent lyricism and uniqueness. In terms of features, it's end-

less. Tory Lanez, YBN Nahmir and even Lil Durk have joined Bagley on a track. However, the most important factor of evaluating rappers' ability is how they perform with these competing forces on their songs. Despite working alongside these industry names, Bagley holds his own and even shines in some regards. His ability to command a beat and not be reliant upon a melody or autotune is more than some other professional rappers can say. Songs like "CROSS MY HEART" and "PATIENCE II" demonstrate these abilities and provide listeners with a song that is short, sweet and repeatable. Of course, a major evaluating factor is how relevant and recent their music is. MB3Five keeps his fans saturated with music, releasing an album just this past summer despite playing basketball full time. Considering his vast and ever-growing discography, there is no reason to believe that new music isn't on the horizon, which fans can expect to be his best product yet.

#### 1. Damian Lillard, Dame D.O.L.L.A

Perhaps the most well-known rapper on this list, and by far the most talented, is Milwaukee Bucks guard Damian Lillard, also known as Dame D.O.L.L.A. Lillard not only features elite vocals that stack up to any big-time rapper in the industry, but his discography is diversified, large and features some high-profile features. Snoop Dogg, Lil Wayne and Polo G are just a few A-list rappers that the seven-time NBA All-Star has collaborated with. Even though Lillard regularly collaborates with some of the biggest names in rap, he constantly holds his own, and that is evident in most of his tracks. However, he demonstrates lyricism and voice control on another level on his track "Kobe."

Featuring creative, catchy lyrics that all hoopers can bump, such as, "Ton even touch the rim, when I pull up it's just swish. Backboard, what? Only thing I know is swish." Lillard explores a niche area of music that mainstream rap and hip-hop have not done much with. Lillard raps with a swagger and confidence that he is a top-flight point guard, and this energy is palpable throughout his song. As talented as the other NBA rappers are on this list, they do not compare to Dame D.O.L.L.A., who is truly in a league of his own, both on the court and in the studio.



FILE LOGO

# Brayden's Breakdown: 2025 MLB Hall of Fame election recap

by **Brayden Gorski**  
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Ichiro Suzuki became the first player born in Japan to be inducted into the Major League Baseball Hall of Fame on Tuesday night. Falling just one vote shy of a unanimous induction, Ichiro is a distinctive player whose name will fill MLB record books for decades to come. To sum up Ichiro's aptitude with just one statistic, he came over to the United States to play Major League Baseball from Japan at age 27 and still managed to reach the 3,000-hit plateau. To put it into perspective, the next oldest player to debut and reach 3,000 hits was Wade Boggs, who debuted at age 23 in 1982.

Suzuki is joined by two pitchers who took completely different routes on their way to

Hall of Fame induction in Cooperstown.

Sabathia, a career-long starter, will be one of the final pitchers to accumulate over 250 wins and 3,000 strikeouts. The left-handed pitcher finished with 86.8% of the votes in his first year of induction eligibility. The near-300 pounder's longevity and athleticism is a testament to his work ethic, which will be honored this summer.

Wagner, who was born a 5-foot-10 lefty and learned to throw over 100 miles per hour with his right hand, ranks eighth in saves throughout the history of the MLB. The closer held batters to a career .187 batting average, the lowest average against any pitcher with a minimum of 900 innings pitched. The former Atlanta Braves and Astros pitcher finally got over the 75% hump in his tenth and final year of eligibility,

ending with 82.5% of the induction votes.

Carlos Beltran was the closest non-eligible this ballot season, ending with 70.3% in his third year on the ballot. The 1999 AL Rookie of the Year gained almost 10% in votes this year, growing from 60.9% in 2024. Some voters still seem to be hesitant to vote for the outfielder after his involvement in the 2017 Astros cheating scandal. The nine-time all-star and two-time silver slugger has almost identical numbers as outfielder Andre Dawson, who entered the Hall of Fame in his ninth year on the ballot. Beltran will be the top candidate on next year's ballot and should have the votes in his favor, barring any further controversies.

Andruw Jones continues to inch his way to Cooperstown, ending with 66.2% of the votes in year number eight. Jones' offensive and defensive peaks are some of the best in the history of the game. However, his fall-off after the 2007 season derailed his counting stats, as he retired after his 2012 campaign. There are also off-the-field issues with Jones that some voters consider because of the infamous character clause the MLB Hall of Fame holds players to. The native of Curacao has two years left to scrap together another 9% of votes.

Chase Utley saw his votes jump up to nearly 40% in his sophomore year on the ballot. The six-time all-star was an essential part of the late 2000s Phillies dominance. Utley hit a batting average of .292 in the Phillies 2008 World Series

winning season. Utley's middle infield counterpart, Jimmy Rollins, moved from 14.5% to 18% in his fourth year on the ballot. If Rollins can gain more traction in the next few years, his case will become a heavy topic of debate.

Manny Ramirez and Alex Rodriguez's cases are still stuck in the mud with the performance-enhancing drug suspensions tainting their resumes. Both gained about 2% of votes, though neither has surpassed 40% of the vote on any ballot cycle. If players like Bonds and Clemens could not break into the Hall of Fame with their alleged PED usage, two confirmed steroid users will have major difficulty getting inducted.

With the first ballot induction of CC Sabathia, voters seemed to reconsider the Hall of Fame case of Andy Pettitte. Pettitte more than doubled his vote percentage from last year, landing at 27.9%. The five-time World Series champion admitted to using HGH while recovering from surgery, so the chance of entering Cooperstown is still slim for Pettitte. However, Pettitte has three years remaining to gain traction.

Now that Billy Wagner is elected, voters will turn their attention to closer Francisco Rodriguez. K-Rod went from 7.3% to 10.2% in only his third year on the ballot. The right-handed pitcher's 437 saves, including 62 in 2008, bring an interesting debate to the table. Expect his votes to skyrocket next year, as he will be the only

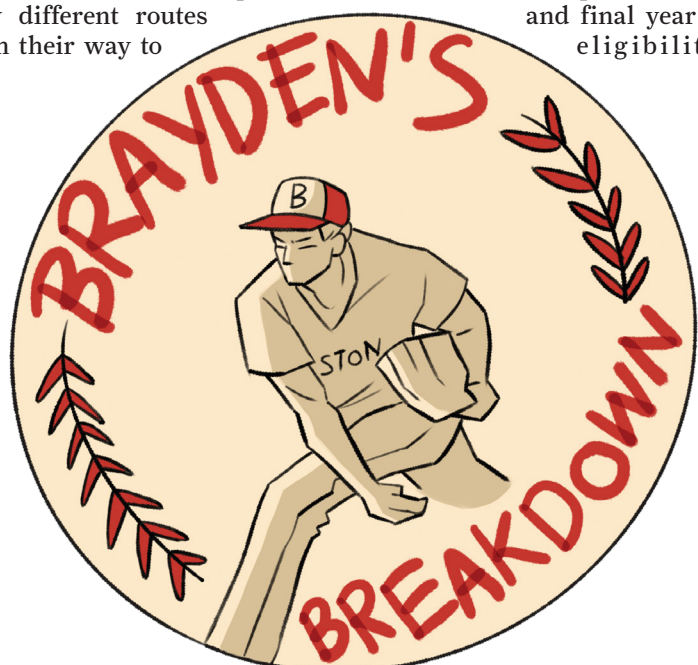
Hall of Fame-worthy closer to grace the ballot for the foreseeable future. Kenley Jansen and Craig Kimbrel's Hall of Fame cases will greatly be impacted by the election of Wagner as well, whenever they decide to hang up the cleats.

Only two first-time candidates reached the five percent threshold to remain on the ballot for 2026: Felix Hernandez and Dustin Pedroia. King Felix ended with 20.6%, while Pedroia totaled 11.9% in year one. This is promising news for both candidates as we have recently seen players like Scott Rolen, Todd Helton and the newly enshrined Billy Wagner debut with similar, if not worse, percentages than the two newcomers and still matriculate their way into the hall.

The remaining ten newcomers failed to reach the five percent threshold. It was one and done for Ian Kinsler, Brian McCann, Russell Martin, Troy Tulowitzki, Adam Jones, Carlos Gonzalez, Curtis Granderson, Ben Zobrist, Fernando Rodney and Hanley Ramirez.

Looking ahead to next year's newcomers to the ballot, Ryan Braun and Cole Hamels are the only truly interesting cases. Braun's PED suspension will be a cause for conversation from voters. Hamels, on the other hand, will be a similar conversation to Hernandez's case this year, as he was dominant for a good stretch of time.

Next year's induction class should see two outfielders inducted into the Hall of Fame, but in the Baseball Hall of Fame, anything is possible.



LOGO BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

# Sam's Section: What you missed in college basketball over winter break

by **Sam Calhoun**  
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Students left in December for winter break and are now back on campus for the Spring 2025 semester. The college basketball season continued through the break, with some teams rising and some falling. In the first Sam's Section of 2025, we will go over the big stories in college basketball.

**Auburn is the undisputed No. 1 team in the country.**

Following the Fall 2024 semester, it was clear that Tennessee was the top team in college basketball, with an 8-0 record and 58 first place votes out of 62. Tennessee has fallen off a bit, now ranked No. 6 in the country. Even with injuries sidelining star Johni Broome, the Tigers have emerged as the consensus top team in college basketball. They are on a 10-game winning streak after losing at Duke, with wins over Ohio State, Purdue, Missouri, Texas, Mississippi State and Georgia. Their rotation is deep, which makes for expanded roles for key players that might help them when March comes. They are the top-ranked offensive team according to KenPom.

**Cooper Flagg is not just the best freshman in the country, but the best player in the country.**

Since Broome went down with a sprained ankle, Flagg emerged as the face of college basketball. The projected No. 1 pick in the

NBA Draft averages 19.2 points, 8.1 rebounds and 4.1 assists per game on 48.8% shooting. He is an elite defender, averaging 1.6 steals and 1.2 blocks per game. He turned heads in Duke's win over Notre Dame, dropping 42 points on 11-14 shooting, including four from 3-point range. There is no debate about who the best player in college basketball is.

**Pat Kelsey is the national coach of the year.**

Kelsey's coaching career has been excellent so far. He led Winthrop to four Big South regular season titles and three conference tournament championships. He won the conference's Coach of the Year award in 2021, the season before he left for Charleston. In his short tenure with the Cougars, Kelsey led them to back-to-back sweeps of the Coastal Athletic Association championships. In his final season in the Holy City, he won the CAA Coach of the Year award. In the offseason, Kelsey left to take over at Louisville. The program was a dumpster fire, with just 12 wins in two seasons under Kenny Payne (now the associate head coach at Arkansas). Kelsey has exceeded that win total already and the season is not even close to over. The Cardinals are 15-5, riding on a nine-game winning streak and are ranked for the first time since 2021. Louisville's resumé includes four Quad 1 wins (West Virginia, Florida State, Pittsburgh and SMU). With former Wisconsin Badger Chucky Hepburn leading the way, the ceiling is sky-high for a historic program, now revived after last

making the NCAA Tournament in 2019.

**My favorite teams moving forward:**

**Duke**

I talked already about how Flagg is the best player in college basketball, but the Blue Devils are more than just him. They are the top-ranked team in the country on KenPom, as the No. 5 offense and No. 2 defense in terms of efficiency. They have the nation's longest active winning streak at 12 games, with their last loss coming against Kansas on Nov. 26 on a neutral floor. Since then, they have beat Auburn, Louisville, SMU and Pittsburgh. Outside of Flagg, I have been impressed with Kon Knueppel's effort. He averages 12.7 points, 3.3 rebounds and 2.7 assists per game on 44.3% shooting. While his last game resulted in a 0-5 outing from the floor, he remains one of the Blue Devils' trusty players that will only continue to get better as the season progresses.

**Iowa State**

The Cyclones are having an amazing year, with a 16-2 record and ranking in the top 10 in offensive and defensive efficiency. Their three-guard backcourt is among the best in the country, with Keshon Gilbert, Curtis Jones and Tamin Lipsey considered All-American talent. Before falling at West Virginia on Saturday, Iowa State was on a 12-game winning streak with wins over Marquette, Iowa, Baylor, Texas Tech and Kansas. If people are not talking about T.J. Otzelberger being one of the best coaches in college



LOGO BY SAMANTHA HASS, ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

basketball, they better start now, because he has done an incredible job in Ames.

**Favorite players moving forward:**

**Donovan Dent, New Mexico**

Dent played a key role in leading the Lobos to a Mountain West Tournament title, averaging 14.1 points and 5.4 assists per game last season. This season has Dent playing like an All-American. He averages 18.9 points, 6.9 assists (8th in the country) and 1.6 steals per game on 49.8% shooting. There has not been a single game this season where Dent failed to score 11 points or more. There is something special going on in Albuquerque, and it is thanks to their junior star guard.

**Chaz Lanier, Tennessee**

If you are looking for one of the best transfers in the country, look no further than Lanier. The North Florida transfer has emerged as a sharpshooter, knocking down 42.6% of his 3-point shots. He averages

18.4 points per game and has become the primary shooting guard for the Volunteers, making for a nasty backcourt with him and Zakai Zeigler. Lanier first made his name known in the Baha Mar Hoops title game, drilling seven 3-pointers in the first half alone. Only twice has the Nashville native failed to score 10 points or more this season.

**Koby Brea, Kentucky**

Speaking of sharpshooters, there is not a better perimeter threat on offense than Brea. The Dayton transfer only averages 11.2 points per game but is second in the nation in 3-point percentage at 47.2%, trailing only Missouri's Caleb Grill. He can help Kentucky in top 10 matchups, scoring 23 points on 8-11 shooting against Florida, with seven of those made shots from beyond the arc. He was the premier sharpshooter in the country last year, and he continues to be this season.



# Sports

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL: Bueckers leads Connecticut to 100-57 romp over Villanova

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Storrs, Conn. - "I'm sure there's a few more points in her future," head coach of the sixth-ranked UConn women's basketball team, Geno Auriemma, said to media personnel after redshirt senior Paige Bueckers notched her 2,000th point against Seton Hall.

Little did Auriemma know that he was subtly foreshadowing an assertive game, not only Bueckers' game, but a majority of his roster, as the Huskies took on the Villanova Wildcats on Wednesday night and finished with a 100-57 win.

In the first half alone, the Minnesota native tallied a total of 19 points, five assists and four rebounds, already surpassing the 15 points she scored the last time the Huskies played the Wildcats, where Bueckers after suffered an injury in the third quarter.

Bueckers and her squad dominated and took the reins of the game from tip-off to the end of the second quarter.

"For her to go off like she did today, it's infectious and everybody starts to catch it [...] she has that effect. I'm really excited about where she is right now," Auriemma said about Bueckers' commanding start.

Despite the Wildcats notching the first two points off the game with a layup from Denae Carter, Connecticut went on a 12-0 run, whilst playing small ball.

Auriemma kept redshirt freshman Jana El Alfy in the game for the first few minutes, but eventually swapped the 6-foot-5 center out for 6-foot-2 Morgan Cheli at the center position, as the Wildcats' height would not match up to that of the Huskies.

Auriemma used Cheli and Sarah Strong interchangeably at the five, and it proved to be the common denominator as the Huskies closed out the first quarter with double the points over Villanova, Bueckers was up to 14 points and two rebounds.



UConn women's basketball takes on Villanova at Gampel Pavilion on Jan 22, 2025. UConn is currently ranked number 6 nationally and enters the game with a 17-2 record. PHOTOS BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

History repeated itself in the second frame of the matchup as the Huskies did not take their foot off the gas pedal.

The Huskies forced the Wildcats to make four turnovers with persistent defense while also maintaining their steady, consistent offense they showed in the first quarter.

The "big three" that consists of Bueckers, Strong and Azzi Fudd combined for a total of 39 points and the Huskies finished the first half shooting 70% from the field.

To start the second half, Bueckers and Strong stood out for the Huskies again, along with graduate transfer Kaitlyn Chen.

Chen kicked off the scoring for the Huskies in the second half and never looked back. The California native finished this Big East matchup with a total of 17 points and two assists.

"There's no question in my mind on what she is capable of doing," Auriemma said on the 5-foot-9 guard. "Today she was really, really good in a lot of ways."

The Huskies completed the win against the Wildcats, having played all available 12 players on the roster in back-to-back wins. According to Carl Adamec of CT Insider, it's been six years since Connecticut completed that feat. As the

Huskies look to return to the Final Four in April, this will be the program's secret weapon after only having seven players available to play last season.

"As a competitor, you want to play 40 minutes, you want to play the entire game, but having gone through that and having experienced that, it's a very different situation to where we are today," Bueckers said. "I think that's just what this team is about, everybody being selfless."

Auriemma emphasized to the media that games where all players contribute and make good decisions are the secret recipe for his program to have success.

"By the decisions that we make, that leads to open shots," Auriemma said. "We're making a lot of good decisions right now and that's going to pay off."

Combining this win against the Wildcats and their recent win against Seton Hall, the Huskies have combined a scoring differential of 103 points, per UConn Central on Instagram.

As the Huskies look to continue their unbeaten streak in the Big East conference, they are set to take on the Creighton Blue Jays on Saturday afternoon to battle for the top spot in the conference. Tip-off is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. and Husky fans can tune in on FOX.

