



USG Election Candidates

by **Joey Gottlieb** | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | THEY/THEM/THEIRS | jvg18001@uconn.edu and **Patrick Boots** | STAFF WRITER | HE/HIM/HIS | patrick.boots@uconn.edu

NICHOLAS KAFKA

Nicholas Kafka and Smith Bernard are both transfer students at the University of Connecticut. Their campaign centers on their unique perspectives coming from student government at community colleges.

“One of the biggest things that motivate us to run is that Smith and I both come from community college. When we both got into power, we had this plan to revolutionize our campus to have community in our community college. We both were successfully able to do so,” said Kafka, a junior studying political science.

According to Kafka, he sees a barrier between the student body and the elected officials who represent them.

“When we got elected to the student government here, we noticed that USG [Undergraduate Student Government] has been lacking in situations like that. They always say day after day that they need to work on the barrier between students and the USG, but it seems they fail to do so at every step of the way,” he added. Kafka is currently a residential senator for North Campus.

The candidates said that their ticket is unique from others on the ballot this year because they have made plans to implement the promises made on the campaign trail prior to being elected to office.

“We have laid out our policy and how we’re going to do it. Because we know that if we were to win, we don’t want to start on day zero figuring out how we’re going to implement the stuff we want to do,” said Bernard, a junior studying economics with a minor in accounting and political science. “We want to figure that out before we announce it and have a plan set in stone, so students know how we’re going to do it and what we want to do before we even get in if we were to get elected.” Bernard is also a senator in USG.

The candidates articulated concerns about the referendum brought before USG calling for UConn to divest from the military industrial complex, specifically regarding the referendum violating a specific bylaw in USG’s constitution.

“As Smith and I did mention in the debate we believe that the referendum violated Bylaw 5, Section A of the USG bylaws, which directly says the questions of a referendum should be written clearly and concisely to make the questions as neutral as possible,” said Kafka. “So that is why at the senate meeting, Smith was the one to initiate a committee to actually have all these different student voices involved to have a referendum that hopefully all sides can agree on. We were concerned because we believed that [if] it did violate the bylaws that it would be harmful to students on campus because if the questions are directly biased towards one side than another, that’s not a correct referendum question.”

Kafka continued, criticizing USG executives for not recognizing the error sooner.

“I’ll go a step further and say that the executive branch for the

AHMAD AL ZOUABI

Ahmad N. Al Zouabi and Nina Lemash have both been involved in USG for most of their college careers.

“I’ve been a part of USG for the past three years, coming up on my fourth, and I just wanted to continue that initiative in a bigger, much more impactful role as president,” said Al Zouabi, a junior studying chemical engineering.

Lemash had a similar response but elaborated more on how the pair would have such an impact.

“I also started [at USG] in the very beginning of my college career. Quoting our last vice president, Peter Spinelli ... he was running on this idea of momentum. And I feel like Ahmad and I are in a really good spot right now where we have enough institutional knowledge and the two of us could make a really good team with that knowledge and momentum that we already have to perse the initiatives that we’re starting now and for next year,” she said.

The two argued that the relationships they have fostered with UConn administration and within USG itself set them apart from the other tickets on the ballot.

“We’ve created a lot of relationships with admin, which take a lot of time to create. Having solidified that relationship right now gives us the ability to hit the ground running. We’re going to get on initiatives much faster than other candidates would be able to,” said Al Zouabi.

The candidates communicated some pride regarding how involved the student body has become regarding the referendum.

“I think that the purpose of USG, a representative body, is to give students a voice. And I think that this conversation should be a lot less about the content of the referendum and more about the fact that we gave over 250-300 students an opportunity to come and speak and address the public,” said Lemash. “I said this during the debate too, but I am incredibly proud that this organization is able to provide that voice. Similarly with the committee, some people expressed their voice and expressed that they thought the referendum wasn’t written properly so the senators who represent the student body made a decision to kind of rewrite it and I think this committee can do really good things.”

JOHN GUTHRIE

John Guthrie and Isabelle Cola have both been outspoken in their commitment to make USG a more transparent body, and to streamline processes like securing funding for Tier II organizations.

“I have been actively involved on campus since my first semester, taking on leadership roles that have given me firsthand experience in advocacy, club funding and community engagement ... My biggest motivation comes from recognizing the urgent need for change,” said Guthrie, who was the president of the EcoHusky club at UConn Avery Point and currently represents the Hilltop Apartments as a USG senator. He also founded the Surf Club at Avery Point from-the-ground up.

“USG is forced to navigate an increasingly difficult balancing act to secure funding for Tier II organizations, making it harder to support the diverse student groups that define UConn’s campus life. This isn’t sustainable,” he said. “When I talk to students who aren’t actively involved, most of them don’t even know what USG does or how it impacts them ... [my prior] roles taught me how to navigate leadership challenges, secure funding and build organizations from the ground up. I balanced these responsibilities while commuting to school and working full-time as a personal trainer in my local community.”

They’re both committed to increasing the campus’ environmental outlook, and one of their campaign promises is to create an email bulletin that USG will send to the entire student body and ensure “every Husky has a voice.” The two candidates expressed that they want to increase engagement.

“As an undergraduate myself, I felt like I was under-informed and un-active as a student as I rarely heard of USG policies and plans. I want to make sure no other students feel as if they aren’t heard and I want to be the leader that doesn’t just talk about change but acts on change, making real progress with real results,” Cola said.

She is new to the world of USG, but has been involved with numerous clubs, including HuskyTHON and the student-run Law Society Journal.

“I work with students daily whether it is at the USM dining market, Law Society meetings or attending HuskyTHON events. I represent all students and the community that feels they don’t belong in government decisions; because the truth is, everyone deserves to have a voice and have a leader who cares about people on an individual level. Compassion, empathy, respect and transparency are all things I can guarantee as a candidate,” Cola added.

As a current senator, candidate Guthrie expressed concerns regarding a USG referendum surrounding UConn’s involvement in the defense industry. He says it’s a bigger issue than USG should be handling, but that there is a responsible way to serve the student body when it comes to controversial issues.

“I struggled to justify its purpose. As a Hilltop Senator, my

ANDY ZHANG

Andy Zhang and Haritha Subramanian both want to ensure USG operates proactively, and to make sure the bridge between students and UConn administration is structurally sound.

“We decided to run for USG president and vice president because we believe in a student government that works for every student — not just in name, but in action. Too often, student organizations struggle with funding barriers, and university policies don’t reflect student needs,” the two said.

“We believe leadership is about bringing people together, listening to student voices and ensuring that every decision we make is guided by the needs of the community. To do so, we have made it a priority to rebuild trust between USG and the larger student body,” they added.

Both candidates have prior experience with student groups and have made an effort to support different student populations and needs. Zhang, currently a leader of the Plant Futures club and an intern in the university’s Office of Sustainability, wants to leverage his prior experience to create a guideline USG can follow to make UConn a better campus.

“We don’t just talk about making changes — we’ve already been doing the work. From expanding food accessibility on campus to creating safe spaces for marginalized communities through the Pan Asian Council & Women in Politics, we have a proven track record of delivering results, both on campus and across the state in various political and activist roles,” the two said.

Vice presidential candidate Subramanian also serves as a publicly-elected official in the Connecticut town of Farmington, and wants to address UConn’s housing crisis with programs USG can sponsor to help students.

“On the state level, we have been involved in advocating for housing and land use policy reform that allows for more affordable housing and public transportation, while also fighting for and implementing the Asian American and Pacific Islander Studies mandate bill,” they said.

“Both of us are incredibly involved individuals on campus, so we have also had valuable conversations with numerous student organizations and have already built close relationships with the cultural centers — all of which is step one to connecting students to their government. Our administration will be transparent, accountable and focused on making tangible improvements to student life,” they added.

In running for office, the two candidates recognize that they should be representing student issues but would like to see all types of voices at the table.

“We believe that USG’s role is to provide a platform for student voices and to facilitate open discussions on issues that impact our community. The referendum process is one of the ways students can engage in these conver-

Stories continued on next page.

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THE DAILY CAMPUS NEWSLETTER

News

USG should have noticed it was biased and then have the judicial branch check to see if it indeed does violate it [the bylaws] in any way but they have not," he said.

That is not to say that the candidates were not in support of the referendum per se.

"During the internal affairs committee there was a movement to table the referendum. We do not believe in tabling this, this issue definitely has to come up to the students and that is why we held this committee, to keep the conversation going," Bernard said. "If the referendum was passed in the original way it was written, it potentially could have been struck down by the judiciary and then there would be no referendum. We want to make sure when the referendum goes out there for all 20,000 students to vote on that we have a good understanding of what students want on campus."

responsibility is to represent the diverse and unique student body of Hilltop, ensuring that our actions serve their best interests. The referendum called for UConn to divest from the military-industrial complex — an issue far beyond the jurisdiction or influence of student government," Guthrie remarked.

Over the years, some student activists have expressed concern regarding UConn's relationships with military contractors and related industries, with some students taking to protest and other adverse actions online and on-campus. Some groups attach UConn's tangential relationship with these larger corporations as meaning that they are taking an apparent stance on worldwide political issues, such as the ongoing situation in the Middle East.

"While activism has its place, I believe student government should focus on tangible issues that directly impact our campus

community ... My focus would be on real, impactful change — addressing tuition costs, campus life and student well-being — rather than symbolic gestures that distract from our core mission," Guthrie said.

"I strongly believe that it is important to discuss controversial topics as leaders but to do so in a manner that reflects a respect for all communities on campus. As leaders, we are there to advocate for not just the 'majority' but also the 'minority' and implement policies that equitably benefit and protect all," added Cola.

Guthrie and Cola say that they're armed with the ability to make USG a more valuable resource for students.

"Since [becoming a senator], I've gained valuable insight into how USG operates, and I've seen firsthand both its potential and its shortcomings. At the end of the day, I'm just like all of you — a student who wants real

change, not just promises. From this campaign, I have pledged myself to continuous encouragement of initiative, responsibility and energy in serving the public interest. I hope that is there for all to see," Guthrie stated.

"When leaders care about their communities on a personal level, that is when the real collaboration and action begins. I will make change happen, I act on what I say and I have proven so through my previous initiatives on-campus and off," Cola said.

sations, and our priority is ensuring that it is conducted in a way that is fair, inclusive and representative of the diverse perspectives on campus. It is our responsibility as USG to have a pulse on what matters to the students and one of the best ways to do that is by collecting accurate data, which is why we were

strong supporters of passing this referendum," Zhang and Subramanian said.

Even though military-related concerns are shared by a number of students, they support that the proposed referendum is in need of an adjustment: one that frames USG's position as an advisory body on behalf of students.

"We recognize that the current referendum is biased as written, but we have also been involved in the process of amending the language, so it is more neutral in nature. Still, we are committed to working with the committee to reach an agreement that upholds the data-driven integrity of the process ... It is also important to note that with the strong need for a referendum to gauge student perspectives, this is just the first step to representation and action, which is what we plan to take on if elected into office," they added.

Three Tier IIIs request fee increases in this year's joint ballot

by **Aiza Shaikh**
NEWS EDITOR
SHE/HER/HERS
aiza.shaikh@uconn.edu

Editor's Note: Naiiya Patel is the business manager of The Daily Campus

Three Tier III organizations at the University of Connecticut, the Undergraduate Student Government, Nutmeg Publishing and The Daily Campus, are requesting a fee increase. Students will have the opportunity to vote on each request in the referenda on the joint elections ballot from noon on Tuesday, March 4 to noon on Thursday, March 6.

According to the UConn website, the referenda is one piece of information that the Student Activity and Service Fee Advisory Committee (SASFAC) considers when making recommendations to the administration. If approved, the increase would take effect no earlier than the Fall 2025 semester.

Each of the six Tier III undergraduate organizations at Storrs is supported by the Student Activity Fee that appears on the semester fee bill. Currently, the fee is \$96, providing \$45 to USG, \$23 to the Student Union Board of Governors (SUBOG), \$10 to The Daily Campus, \$9 to WHUS Radio, \$5 to UConn Student Television (UCTV) and \$4 to Nutmeg.

This year, USG is requesting a \$5 increase from \$45 to \$50 per semester, Nutmeg is requesting a \$3 increase from \$4 to \$7 per semester and The

Daily Campus is requesting a \$2 increase from \$10 to \$12 per semester.

All active Tier II undergraduate organizations on the Storrs campus are eligible for funding through USG. According to USG Comptroller Sydney Whittaker, this year's club funding balance is \$1,050,000, and about \$960,000 has been used as of Friday.

"The demand has definitely gone up every year, and we're really seeing that," Whittaker said. "I think this year was the first year we're recognizing we've reached a capacity with serving student organizations."

Whittaker added that USG has had to deny requests from Tier II organizations that do not meet their policies due to the high demand.

"I feel so bad denying requests and all this stuff, especially things that fall under people's RSO missions, but we've just been getting people on specific policies, which just feels inequitable and wrong to me," Whittaker said. "So just because we physically don't have the money to get everybody their funding ... having to get people on specific policies and denying based on those things is just what we've had to do, and it has really sucked."

Nutmeg Publishing sends free copies of the yearbook to graduating fee-paying Storrs students. Yearbooks are meant to be delivered in November so that the organization has time to finish content collection and because most graduates are at their address on file around

Thanksgiving, according to Editor-in-Chief Josie Simon.

Simon explained that Nutmeg finished producing the 2024 yearbook last fall and has already begun designing the 2025 yearbook, the first time in years that Nutmeg has caught up on production. In past years, Nutmeg has had to print the class yearbook a year after graduation.

"Using the 2023 yearbook as an example — the content (writing, photos) was collected during the 2022-2023 school year, and then the spreads were designed during the whole 2024 school year. The yearbook was then printed during the summer of 2024, and 2023 graduates received their yearbooks around July/August of 2024," Simon wrote in an email.

According to Simon, yearbooks have been behind in printing because the organization does not have enough money.

"Nutmeg has been unable to 'catch up' on printing because we only bring in \$144,000/year," Simon said. "However, printing the yearbook is around \$95,000 since we print a copy for each graduating senior, around 4700 for 2023 grads, and now around 4800 for 2024 grads. This year we already paid for the printing of the 2023 yearbook, which does not leave us enough money to also print the 2024 yearbook."

USG recently approved a motion to sponsor the 2024 yearbook, which has helped Nutmeg catch up, according to Simon. However, Nutmeg is

still requesting a fee increase to improve the quality of printing.

"USG senate and internal affairs board recently approved the motion to sponsor the 2024 Nutmeg yearbook, which everyone at Nutmeg is so excited about. We have now not only caught up on producing the yearbook, but we will be able to print the yearbook earlier than anticipated, and thus 'catch up' on printing starting with the 2025 yearbook," Simon added. "The fee increase is still very important to Nutmeg though. The fee instead will go towards printing a better-quality yearbook."

Simon emphasized that financial constraints have limited the number of pages and events that Nutmeg can cover in the yearbook.

"Due to our financial constraints, we print a bare bones yearbook. It is only 232 pages, with roughly 60 pages being senior portraits. More pages [equals] more money that Nutmeg has to spend on printing, which we just don't have in our budget. In the past, Nutmeg has printed yearbooks that are closer to 400 pages, and we would love to be able to do that again. With a fee increase, we can increase our yearbook contract, thus increasing the quality of the yearbook. This would include covering more events, organizations and clubs and a better-quality yearbook cover," Simon said.

The Daily Campus, according to Business Manager Naiiya Patel, has had to downsize each year due to rising costs of printing the paper.

"With the cost of printing going up and then all these costs increasing, like the minimum wage etc., The Daily Campus has just been forced to downsize every year versus stay consistent like we want to," Patel said. "And especially with printing getting more expensive ... It's evident that people do enjoy a physical presence, because physical media, you know, you're faced with it [...And] there are a multitude of reasons why we want to keep printing, even though it's getting expensive, but also with payroll, which is not in our control, minimum wage keeps going up, and we have to pay for it."

According to Patel, The Daily Campus has had to reduce staff and implement wage limits due to limited amounts of money. This is also the third consecutive year that The Daily Campus is requesting a fee increase.

"When reviewing our documents, we've made cuts everywhere we could, by reducing staff, by putting wage limits on like sections for staff, writers, photographers and artists, we've done a lot of what we're allowed to do before we kind of start decreasing what The Daily Campus really is, which is why we've chosen to continue with the fee increase," Patel explained.

Patel and Whittaker are both also on the SASFAC committee. Whittaker serves as the USG representative and Patel serves as an undergraduate student.

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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Monday, March 3, 2025

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Circulation Manager
Valley Publishing Company
Derby, Conn.

For more information about getting involved as an editorial, business or digital employee:

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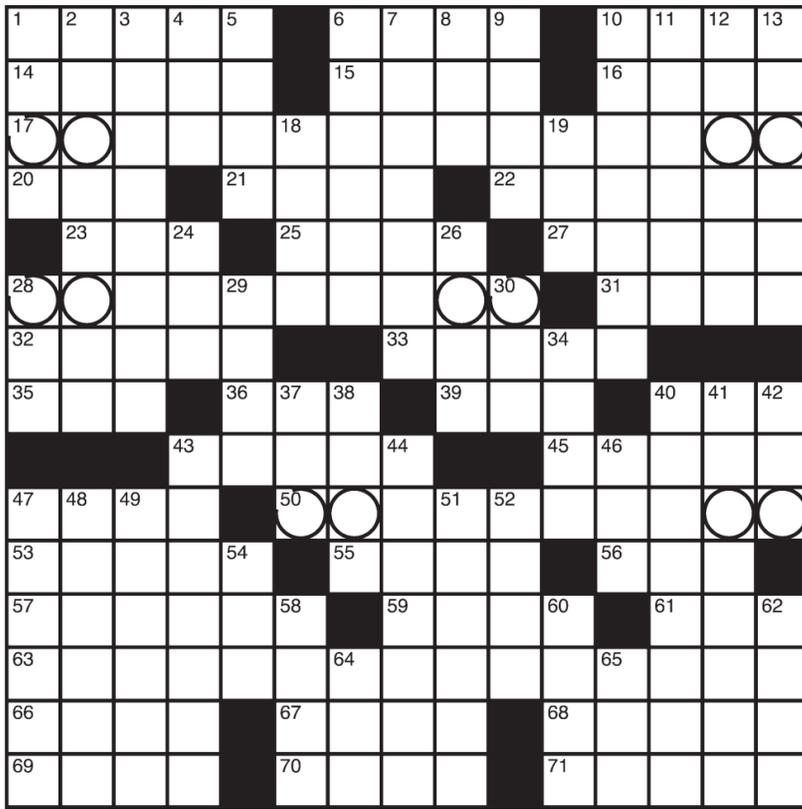
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The Daily Campus welcomes writers, photographers and artists of all backgrounds, interests, majors and levels of experience. To get involved, it's as easy as attending section meetings on Sunday nights, all at the Daily Campus building, (1266 Storrs Road) or reaching out to an email below:

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The Daily Campus **CROSSWORD and Sudoku**

- ACROSS**
- 1 Stops on a suburban commuter train
 - 6 "Beat it!"
 - 10 Intend
 - 14 Silly
 - 15 "Pipe down!"
 - 16 Lhasa __: small dog
 - 17 *Know what's going on at all times
 - 20 Taproom brew
 - 21 Crooked
 - 22 Capital of Taiwan
 - 23 Irritate
 - 25 Cat call
 - 27 Without a break
 - 28 *Trained canine in an airport, say
 - 31 Terro trap insects
 - 32 Therefore
 - 33 "Sincerely __": letter ender
 - 35 Unit of work
 - 36 Spot for a seaweed wrap
 - 39 Chain letters?
 - 40 Victoria's Secret purchase
 - 43 Crock-Pot concoctions
 - 45 Lawn-wrecking diggers
 - 47 Chuck wagon fare
 - 50 *Literature Nobelist who wrote "The Good Earth"
 - 53 Puts a curse on
 - 55 __ gin fizz
 - 56 Anger
 - 57 Prime minister between Churchill's two terms
 - 59 "__ in your shirt!"
 - 61 Sugar amt.
 - 63 Love letter message often accompanied by a lipstick mark, and what the answers to the starred clues are, thanks to their circled letters
 - 66 Cleveland's lake
 - 67 Vanished
 - 68 Gets the lead out?
 - 69 Auction cry
 - 70 Pitcher with a big mouth
 - 71 Inner turmoil



By Roger Miller

3/4/25

- DOWN**
- 1 Turner in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame
 - 2 Zinger
 - 3 Having doubts
 - 4 Tampa-to-Jacksonville dir.
 - 5 Croat neighbor
 - 6 Black eye
 - 7 Guardianship
 - 8 Burro
 - 9 "Don't be like __!"
 - 10 Mooring spots for small boats
 - 11 Injector for allergic emergencies
 - 12 Mountaineer's climb
 - 13 Adult party invitation request
 - 18 Widely shared social media post
 - 19 East Asian principle
 - 24 Fast-food chain with buckets
 - 26 Bonfire fuel
 - 28 Pronoun that precedes "sells seashells" in a classic tongue twister
 - 29 End of Oktober?

Monday's Puzzle Solved

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3/4/25

- 30 Rev, as an engine
- 34 Dodge trucks
- 37 Get-up-and-go
- 38 Blows away
- 40 Saying impulsively, with "out"
- 41 School playtimes
- 42 Request
- 43 Grew larger
- 44 Soup cracker
- 46 __-Wan Kenobi
- 47 Runs after
- 48 Straight
- 49 Beefy soup ingredient
- 51 Wireless network device
- 52 Solidarity leader Walesa
- 54 "Get it?"
- 58 Barely beat
- 60 __ Sutra
- 62 Furtive summons
- 64 Blow away
- 65 Family

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BALLAD OF THE PAPER AND INK: MAXIMIZING YOUR PRINTING EFFICIENCY

by Patrick Boots | CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT | HE/HIM/HIS | patrick.boots@uconn.edu

Did you know that printer ink is purportedly one of the most expensive liquids on the planet? Luckily, University of Connecticut students have access to printing resources on campus through multiple easy to access WEPA stations. But printing costs can quickly add-up, especially for students on a budget. Fortunately, there are several tools that can help you print smarter, saving both paper and ink. Here's some tips to get the most out of your printing experience while minimizing waste.

Print Only What You Need

Before hitting "Print," take a moment to review the document. Most programs, including web browsers, offer a print preview to ensure you're not printing unnecessary pages. You can also usually choose a range of pages to print — separated by commas or using a dash for a range. For example, if I wanted pages 1, 3, 4 and 5, I could type "1,3-5" in that field. If you're printing a webpage, consider highlighting only the portion you need and choose "Selection" under the "Print" options.

Adjust Layout and Scale

Printing in landscape mode or reducing the scale can help fit more content on a single page. Use the scale setting in the "Print" menu to shrink content — it's usually a percentage, so don't make it too small for yourself! This can reduce total pages without compromising clarity in many cases. You can usually also adjust the margins here — because some printers cut off the edges. You don't want to have margins less than about half an inch.

Change Color and Quality Settings

For non-essential prints, switch to "black and white" mode instead of color. Not only is it cheaper; if the text or images don't have color, the printer won't use any color. Yeah, even if it's all black, they still use color ink! Additionally, selecting "draft" or "eco" mode in your settings, if it's offered, will use less ink while keeping text legible.

Save as PDF Instead of Printing

If what you need doesn't need to exist on paper, opt for "Save as PDF" instead of actually printing. Every computer now has this cool feature — it may appear to be a printer, but once you click "Print," it will open a "Save As" window. This allows you to keep a digital copy, especially as a way to archive things more efficiently than screenshots or photographs of your screen. You can also annotate PDFs digitally using apps like Adobe Acrobat or Microsoft Office. If I am printing a "perishable" type resource, I will often save a PDF first and then print that copy to paper.

Printing Extensions

Chrome extensions like "Print Friendly and PDF" can help format web pages for efficient printing by removing ads and unnecessary images. You can delete individual items and text, adjust the font size and edit the print preview. Using extensions can ensure you print only the most important content, reducing paper and ink usage.

We've all been there: The printer spits out a blank page, or the "footer" of a webpage with those unnecessary copyright notices and social media icons. When it comes at a cost, like at UConn, it can add up. But printing efficiently isn't just about saving money — it's also an environmentally responsible habit. By using these printing tips and strategies, you can significantly reduce waste while still getting the hard copies you need for studying. Next time you hit "Print," take a moment to optimize your settings and make the most of your resources! Thanks for reading — until next week, I'm going back "Under the Rock".

SHYGIRL INVITES US TO HER SECOND SET AT CLUB SHY: “CLUB SHY ROOM 2” EP REVIEW



Blane Muise, better known as Shygirl, is an English singer, DJ, rapper, songwriter and co-head/founder of record label and collective NUXXE. Her music incorporates elements of hip-hop, experimental pop, grime and deconstructed club.

IMAGE COURTESY OF @0800SHYGIRL ON INSTAGRAM

by Sebastian Munera
 CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
 HE/HIM/HIS
 sebastian.munera@uconn.edu

Shygirl is an English singer, songwriter and DJ that started getting attention in 2020 when she was featured on Arca’s critically acclaimed “KiCk i,” and later the same year when she released her second EP “ALIAS.” Since then, Shygirl has collaborated with legends, including but not limited to FKA Twigs, Lady Gaga, SOPHIE and Charli XCX, becoming one of the staple figures of the deconstructed club and contemporary house scene in the process.

“Club Shy Room 2” is a follow up to last year’s “Club Shy” which saw her focus on the house sound and collaborations with numerous vocalists and producers. With all of these elements, Shygirl was able to craft a project that felt like an electric DJ set in a raunchy underground club. “Club Shy Room 2” keeps this same atmosphere and tone while upping the star power with notable features from Saweetie, Jorja Smith, PinkPantheress and even

some production credits from Mura Masa.

While this project retains the club atmosphere of its predecessor, it strays from its dance-pop elements in, preferring to delve more into a hip-house sound. This deviation works for me in tracks like “Flex,” a full-on sexy drill track with Shygirl and Bambii, a fellow DJ and producer, trading sensual verses over deep bass patterns. On the third track, “Immaculate,” grimy production underscores Shygirl’s and Saweetie’s unapologetically raunchy lyrics and an addictive and repetitive chorus.

However, tracks like the introduction, “Je M’appelle,” contains production and rapping that is simply too mediocre to justify its deviation from these dance-pop elements that I feel Shygirl tends to thrive in more.

The last three tracks bring back the enigmatic house production and even catchier choruses. “F*Me,” featuring Yseult, a French singer-songwriter, simultaneously has the most repetitive and raunchy lyrics on the whole project. Matched with super star producer Mura Masa’s bouncy drums and house synths

culminate in this being the most exciting track so far.

“Wifey Riddim” employs Jorja Smith to deliver perfect club vocals over sparkly textures and a dirty bassline beat. Not to be outshone, Shygirl and SadBoi deliver some solid verses in between. The last track of the EP, “True Religion,” brings together an all-star cast of Isabella Lovestory and PinkPantheress.

This track contains, hands-down, my favorite chorus of the whole project delivered by Shygirl herself. The structure of the track is a perfect three-hit combo of Shygirl’s infectious chorus, followed by a Spanish verse by Isabella Lovestory and a final bridge with some bubbly vocals by PinkPantheress.

“Club Shy Room 2” deviates from its predecessor in a way that is a little hit or miss for me. While some of the more hip-house elements are serviceable and occasionally stand out, I find myself missing the poppier vocals that I can see work really well on the tail end of this project. However, no matter how short or repetitive a Shygirl project might be, she never fails to deliver a collection of bangers within an immersive club atmosphere.

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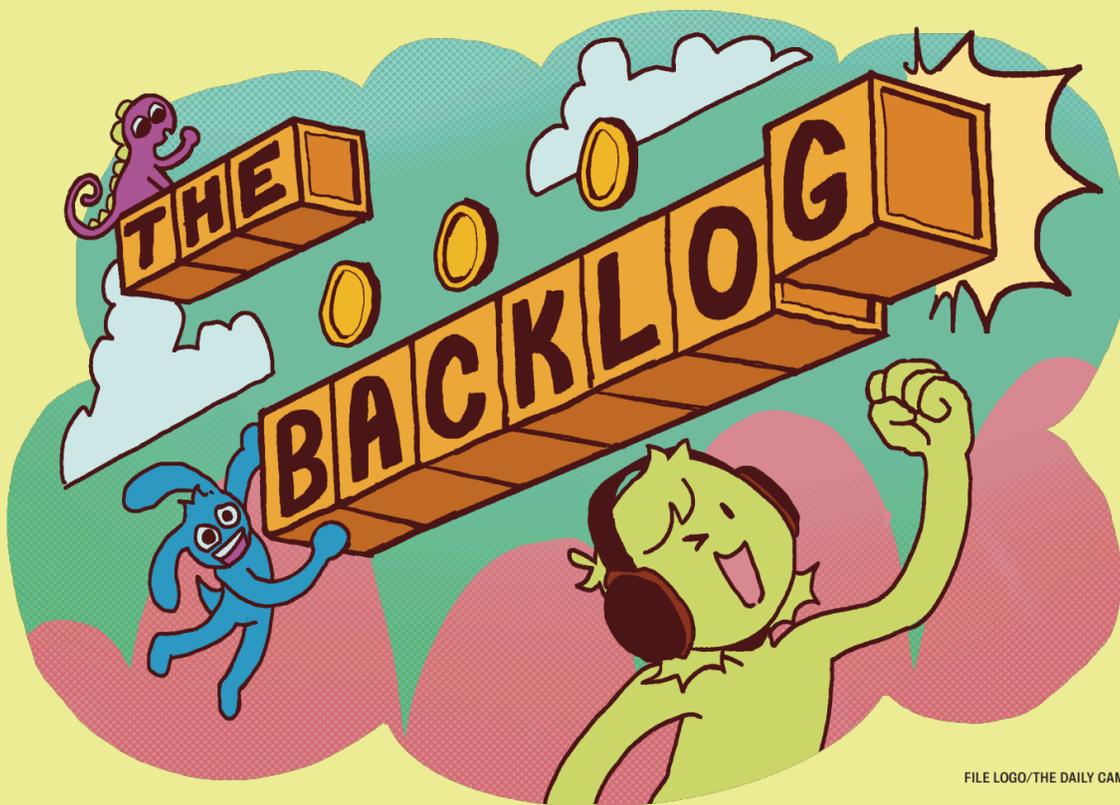


Life

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The Backlog

COOKING IS A FORM OF LOVE IN 'VENBA'



FILE LOGO/THE DAILY CAMPUS

by Desirae Sin
 CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
 SHE/HER/HERS
 desirae.sin@uconn.edu

Hello and welcome back to The Backlog, the weekly column where I review video games each month. This is our first edition for March, and I wanted to shake things up a bit by looking at video games that I consider works of art. Whether it's gameplay, graphics, storytelling or aesthetics, the games for this month take on an artistic approach. First up is the beautifully told story of "Venba."

"Venba" was developed and published by Visai Games in July 2023. It's available on PlayStation 5, Nintendo Switch, Xbox Series X and S, Microsoft Windows and Xbox One. "Venba" received various nominations and won Best Debut and the Social Impact Award in the 24th Game Developers Choice Awards in 2024. It also won the Seumas McNally Grand Prize in the Independent Games Festival that same year, along with the award for Debut Game in the 20th British Academy Games Awards.

Visai Games created a short but gorgeous experience filled with detailed storytelling. The plot of "Venba" begins in 1988 following the story of an Indian couple who recently migrated to Toronto, Canada. From the beginning, it becomes clear that they are struggling in their new envi-

ronment. Our titular character, Venba, is ill in the first level, and we're introduced to her husband Paavalan. Although she doesn't feel well, we come to see how important food and cooking is to her and their lifestyle.

Throughout the game, there are various dialogue options to choose as Venba, but the primary form of gameplay is in the kitchen where Venba decides to use her mother's recipe book to cook various South Indian dishes. Venba and her family are Tamil, and this aspect of culture comes into play a lot throughout the game.

Spoilers for "Venba" beyond this point!

After players decipher the incomplete recipe for idlis, Venba and Paavalan leave their home for the day. Venba goes to the doctor's office while Paavalan goes to work, after which Venba discovers she's pregnant and tells Paavalan through her cooking. She makes three idlis, each one with a face.

The first level ends with Venba and Paavalan talking about their child and the future while lying in bed. Paavalan worries that they won't be able to bring up their child with wealth or comfort in Canada and considers moving back to India to raise them. Meanwhile, Venba is optimistic about the future. She's excited for their child and believes that no matter what they can raise them well.

After their conversation, the second level skips forward in time a few years, as do many of the levels throughout the game. We're introduced to their son, Kavin, and begin to see into their lives. Paavalan is struggling to find work as an immigrant, where employers want those with Canadian experience and a stronger grasp of English.

For most of the levels, we play as Venba and go through her life, but we eventually play as Kavin through both dialogue options and cooking segments. Venba is continuously fixing the recipes in her mother's recipe book as many of the pages are torn or indecipherable.

One thing that "Venba" does well is capture the immigrant experience in a way that everyone can digest it. It becomes clear to players that Venba primarily speaks in Tamil and doesn't understand English as well as her husband and son. We can see this through her dialogue with Kavin. Although the text is in English for players, the white text is inferred to be Tamil for our characters, while yellow text is English for them. There are also times when Kavin speaks English and the speech bubbles are blotchy, indicating that Venba is having a hard time understanding him.

Small design choices like this make the art in "Venba" pleasing, and players pick up on it. We also see that their

home gains new items or furniture in each level, indicating that their family has put down roots that still contain remnants of India and Tamil culture.

"Venba" isn't a long game, but I feel like this doesn't detract from the experience. Each level is powerful and contains something many immigrants or children of immigrants understand well. In the second level, it's revealed that Kavin prefers Western cuisine and doesn't want to let other children see his lunches at school. He even lets them call him Kevin instead of Kavin.

Chapter three sticks to players the most, as Venba and Kavin go out to the park in search of Paavalan, who hadn't come home after work. This is the only level that doesn't involve any cooking but instead comes with dialogue options for Venba and Kavin. They have a conversation, and it reveals more about Venba and Paavalan's past. After a bit of walking, they find Paavalan sitting on a bench smoking a cigarette, his briefcase and papers are scattered, his glasses broken and he has a bleeding cut on his face.

The game doesn't overtly tell us what happened, but we as the player can deduce that Paavalan was assaulted in some way. Unfortunately, this isn't uncommon for immigrants or people of color in general. The chapter ends

somberly with Paavalan writing at his desk, where we know that he only writes when he is agitated, or something is bothering him.

I couldn't go through every level step-by-step, but the story evolves from just Venba's perspective into Kavin's as well. When we're in Venba's shoes, it can seem like Kavin resents his parents or his heritage, but as Kavin, we can see that it's a bit more complicated than that.

Kavin felt that he was too foreign as Tamil for those around him and just wanted to fit in, especially after witnessing his father's incident in the park. But as he gets older, he realizes that he can't appropriate his own culture for his job without feeling conflicted and eventually rejoins his mother in India to spend time with her and cook oohappams.

The visuals of "Venba" aren't the only thing that makes it a work of art. The story, characters and the choices they make connect with players in a way that can be new, nostalgic and familiar all at once.

We often don't know everything about our parents and how they grew up, or who their parents were. But the journey of discovery through cooking within "Venba" perfectly captures the immigrant experience. Using food as a form of expression was genius on Visai Games' part because any child of immigrants understands how food is their way of showing love.

Rating: 5/5



Opinion

The Daily Campus

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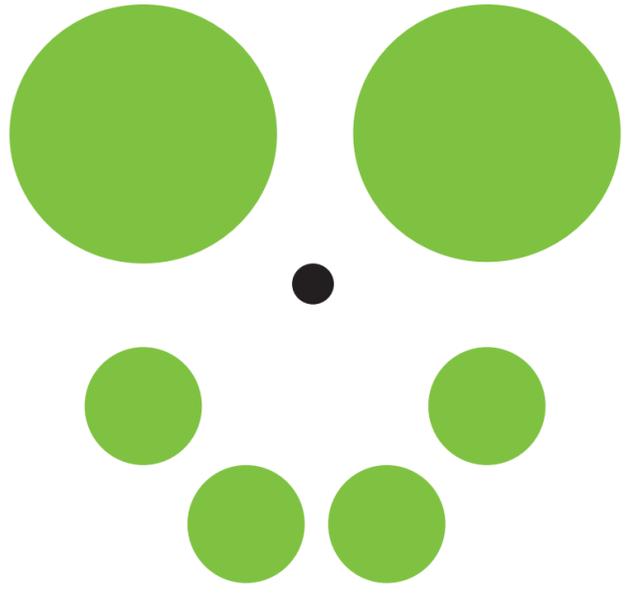
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► Editorial

Vote YES to support The Daily Campus

Voting will be open to students this week from Tuesday, March 4 to Thursday, March 6 on the Spring 2025 Joint Elections Ballot. This ballot includes Undergraduate Student Government positions, as well as a student fee referendum, including a \$2 fee increase for The Daily Campus. This does not mean that students would have to pay more money. It just means the increase that is already approved for the Student Activity Fee would be redistributed.

The Daily Campus is classified as a Tier-III organization, meaning that we are funded primarily by student fees. These fees are currently \$10 per semester or \$20 per academic year from each undergraduate student — already included within the Student Activity Fee on your undergraduate fee bill.

As a Tier-III organization, we also must present our annual budget, and any fee increase requests to the Student Activity and Service Fee Advisory Committee (SASFAC). As a part of this request and petition, we must provide all undergraduate students with the opportunity to vote either for or against this fee increase. The referendum this year will ask students if they support a \$2 fee increase per semester, changing funding for The Daily Campus to \$12 per semester per student.

Funding from student fees is crucial to the operations of The Daily Campus and helps us pursue our mission — “to provide the UConn community with fair, accurate, relevant and editorially independent content,” as well as to represent student interests. We publish a print and digital paper five days per week filled with the news, sports and events as well as student voices that you care about most. We are one of the only sources of UConn specific

news. Without the additional funds, we will not be able to produce the amount or quality of content that the students and staff at this university demand.

The Editorial Board understands that funding a college education is difficult and that every dollar matters, but it is important to note that voting “yes” on this proposal would not create an additional cost for you beyond what has been previously decided. UConn has already approved an increase to the Student Activity Fee; we are only asking that some of that increase be distributed to The Daily Campus. Additionally, this vote is not the final step in the implementation of the increase. The budget review process has multiple parts.

As politics on campus and around the world become increasingly tense, it is more important than ever to have a strong and independent free press. The Daily Campus is editorially independent from the university and serves to represent the entire student body. We strive to represent the voices and the interests of you, the students. We work to keep you informed of events on campus so that you can be an involved and educated member of the community. As students, we are all dependent on the state and university to act in our best interest, but sometimes they don't. That is what The Daily Campus is here for — to advocate for students' best interest and provide a platform for every student's voice to be heard.

This campus election season, please choose to vote “yes” for The Daily Campus fee increase. With the rise of printing costs and wages, this vote will allow us to continue printing a newspaper five days a week and fulfill our mission of advocating for students and informing our community.

No Suit, No Shoes, No Service: Rethinking professional attire

by Evelyn Pazan | ASSOCIATE OPINION EDITOR | SHE/HER/HERS | evelyn.pazan@uconn.edu

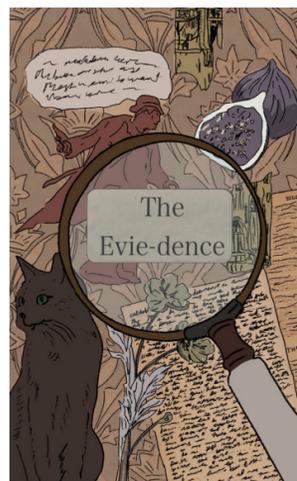
Last Friday's meeting between President Donald Trump, Vice President JD Vance and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine was one of the most sensational pieces of news to come out of February. Originally organized to help foster peace three years into the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the meeting turned into a dogfight — all three leaders raising their voices and trading snarky comments.

Despite the tense discussions about military aid, one of the things that stood out most was something unrelated to the war at all. During question and answer with members of the media, Brian Glenn asked Zelenskyy, “Why don't you wear a suit? You are the highest level in this country's office, and you refuse to wear a suit.” In his typical blunt manner, Zelenskyy responds by asserting that he will wear the suit when the war is over, and his suit may indeed be better than Glenn's. This was met with a few chuckles, but it wasn't the first time that day that Zelenskyy's wardrobe choices were questioned. Trump himself made a comment when Zelenskyy arrived at the White House, saying that Zelenskyy is “all dressed up today.” While this interaction has been meme-fied, it brings up an interesting point. Why do we expect politicians, businesspeople and all professionals to wear suits? Maybe we shouldn't.

The history of the suit can be traced back as far as the Regency era, beginning in 1795 with Beau Brummell. Frustrated by the “feminine” tailcoats, frilly shirts and silk stockings, Brummell advocated for simpler menswear with dark coats and plain trousers, laying the groundwork for the development of the modern suit. In the Victorian era, the modern suit became popular with simple trousers, a short jacket and tie. Throughout this time, suits were only accessible to high and middle-to-high-class people, thus giving them the air of professionalism and class, not to mention masculinity.

Since this time, the expectations for “professional” dress have changed. No longer do we expect people to wear suits to every event in every career. Usually, they are reserved for special occasions or important conversations, but we still expect men to wear a button up shirt and slacks. Why? I think it needs to change.

When I am watching a politician, I am looking for someone relatable and someone who represents the American people well. This is not an isolated phenomenon. Recent studies have found that the personality and values of a candidate are more important than their actual policies. That being said, wouldn't it make more sense to have candidates and profession-



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

als dressed in a way that represents their constituents? I am not saying that we should allow our president to walk around in a matching Nike Tech sweatsuit, but I am saying that I would feel much more trusting of a government official if I saw them in jeans and a nice sweater.

Similarly, when working with someone or electing them to office, I want to understand their personality and how they express themselves. Most people do this through how they dress, but when they are constricted to beige pants and neutral-colored jackets, their creativity and expression are stifled. Companies like Microsoft and Apple have begun shifting away from the business casual dress code and encouraging employees to wear something comfortable but appropriate. This includes blue jeans and sneakers. The goal is to give employees space to be themselves and lean into their creative side. Freeing them from the dress code might also mean encouraging more innovation.

Beyond how someone dresses, we should be evaluating someone's professionalism based on how they conduct themselves, both when they know they are being watched and when they are acting alone. It is easy to put on a suit and a show, demonstrating composure and poise. You can hide a lot behind a suit. It is harder to be in your natural form and maintain integrity and grace, but that is what I want to see in a leader, boss or coworker. I want to work with someone who acts with honor in all aspects of their life, both when they feel comfortable and when they are under pressure.

Professionalism isn't defined by whether your suit comes from Nautica, Hugo Boss or Versace; it is decided by the quality of your work, honesty in your words and most importantly the values that you uphold. Money can't buy class, and a suit can't make you a professional. Therefore, we need to move past proving professionalism, as it should be self-evident. A true professional has no one to convince, not even themselves.

The Evie-dence!



Opinion

Photo of the Day | Dunking on week whatever it is right now



The sun sets over Storrs, seen from the Alumni basketball court on Monday, March 3. The sunsets continue to creep into later hours as spring approaches.

PHOTO BY MADISON HENDRICKS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

COMIC BY CONNOR LAFFERTY, MANAGING EDITOR



Big East Baller Update No. 11:

St. John's locked in at No. 1 seed

by Sam Calhoun | STAFF WRITER | HE/HIM/HIS | samuel.calhoun@uconn.edu

There's one more week left of the regular season.

The Big East regular season ends on Saturday, with the Big East Tournament beginning a week from Wednesday. The road to Manhattan is almost over, but the bracket is not set.

According to Matt Hackman, three teams are still in contention for the No. 2 seed in the tournament. Those teams are Creighton, Marquette and UConn, the latter two facing each other on Wednesday night.

Creighton and Marquette have clinched first-round byes. The Bluejays can be as low as No. 4, while the Golden Eagles can be as low as No. 5.

UConn has a 3% chance to fall out of the top 5, but anything can happen in March. Xavier is a game behind the Huskies and will be in the 4-6 seed range. The same can be said for Villanova, but they are more likely to fall in the 5-6 spot.

Georgetown has an 89% chance to finish seventh in the conference, but without Thomas Sorber, they could find themselves as low as ninth. Butler and Providence are in the same range and look to be virtual locks for the 8-9 game in the first round.

Lastly, Seton Hall and DePaul are battling one another in the standings to avoid finishing dead last.

This week's Big East Baller Update will look at the final week of the regular season, as well as some incredible performances in the past week.

Weekly Awards

Player of the Week: Eric Dixon, F, Villanova (33 ppg, 8.5 rpg, 2.5 apg, 60.5 FG%, 53.3 3P%, 80 FT% in two games)

Dixon is quickly running away with the Division I scoring title for the 2024-25 season, with a week that could see him become the national player of the week. His most impressive effort came in a road win over Seton Hall on Wednesday, Feb. 26, where he scored 32 points including 18 straight in the second half. Along with grabbing 10 rebounds, it is hard to find a better game from Villanova's star forward. On Saturday, the 6-foot-8 senior was incredible yet again, scoring 34 points in a 10-point win at home against Butler.

Freshman of the Week: Liam McNeeley, F, UConn (15.5 ppg, 3.5 apg, 3 rpg, 1 spg, 50 FG%, 45.5 3P%, 85.7 3P% in two games)

In a 2-0 week for UConn, McNeeley helped out the Huskies as they turned the calendar to March. His best performance came in the XL Center season finale against Georgetown, scoring 17 points in what was the most comfortable win for Connecticut in months. He followed that with a 14-point outing at Providence on Saturday afternoon. He should be everyone's pick for Big East Freshman of the Year.

Best game in the past week

No. 7 St. John's clinches No. 1 seed in Big East Tournament, defeating Seton Hall 71-61

For the first time in 40 years, the St. John's Red Storm are the outright Big East regular season champions. It has been a long road, but in head coach Rick Pitino's second season with the Johnnies, he has led them to the top of the conference. Even though Seton Hall is a bottom-feeder team this season, the game was knotted up at 49 points with 10:01 left. However, St. John's proved why they are one of the best defensive teams in the country, outscoring the Pirates, 22-



Liam McNeeley throwing down a dunk against Texas A&M. The game took place on Nov. 11, 2024, with the Huskies winning 81-46. PHOTOS BY SIHAM NEDLOUSSI, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

12, from that point on.

Best games of the week (excluding No. 20 Marquette at UConn)

Villanova at Georgetown (8 p.m., Peacock)

These two Big East rivals go way back. This edition of the rivalry can determine each team's seeding in the Big East Tournament. With Dixon red-hot, he can take advantage of the Sorber-less Hoyas. The highest seed Georgetown can be is No. 7, while Villanova has a 9% chance to claim the No. 4 seed. Georgetown's backcourt must carry the load as they avoid finishing as low as No. 9 in the conference (2% chance).

No. 6 St. John's at No. 20 Marquette (Saturday, noon, FOX)

Despite having the No. 1 seed in the Big East Tournament, St. John's can still improve its seeding for the NCAA Tournament. They will travel to Milwaukee, Wisconsin to take on a dangerous Marquette team, including Big East Player of the Year candidate Kam Jones. This could very well be the game that decides who wins that award.



Sports

Photo of the Day | Thank you, Paige



The UConn Huskies defeat Marquette 92-57 at Gampel Pavillion on March 2, 2025. Following the game, UConn honored the seniors on the team and inducted Paige Bueckers into the Huskies of Honor. PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Men's Club Lacrosse: BSU at UConn

by Jake Loomis
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
HE/HIM/HIS
jloomis415@gmail.com

The UConn men's club lacrosse team got their season underway on Saturday with a home matchup versus Bridgewater State on the rec turf. This year marked a new year for the program as they ushered in a new head coach and got an overload of freshman talent to add to the mix. Last season, the Huskies went 6-8 overall, and this year, the team looks to improve upon that mark and become a staple in the MCLA world. The Bridgewater Bears came into the contest off a pretty successful season, leading them to the Tournament where they eventually lost to URI and Air Force.

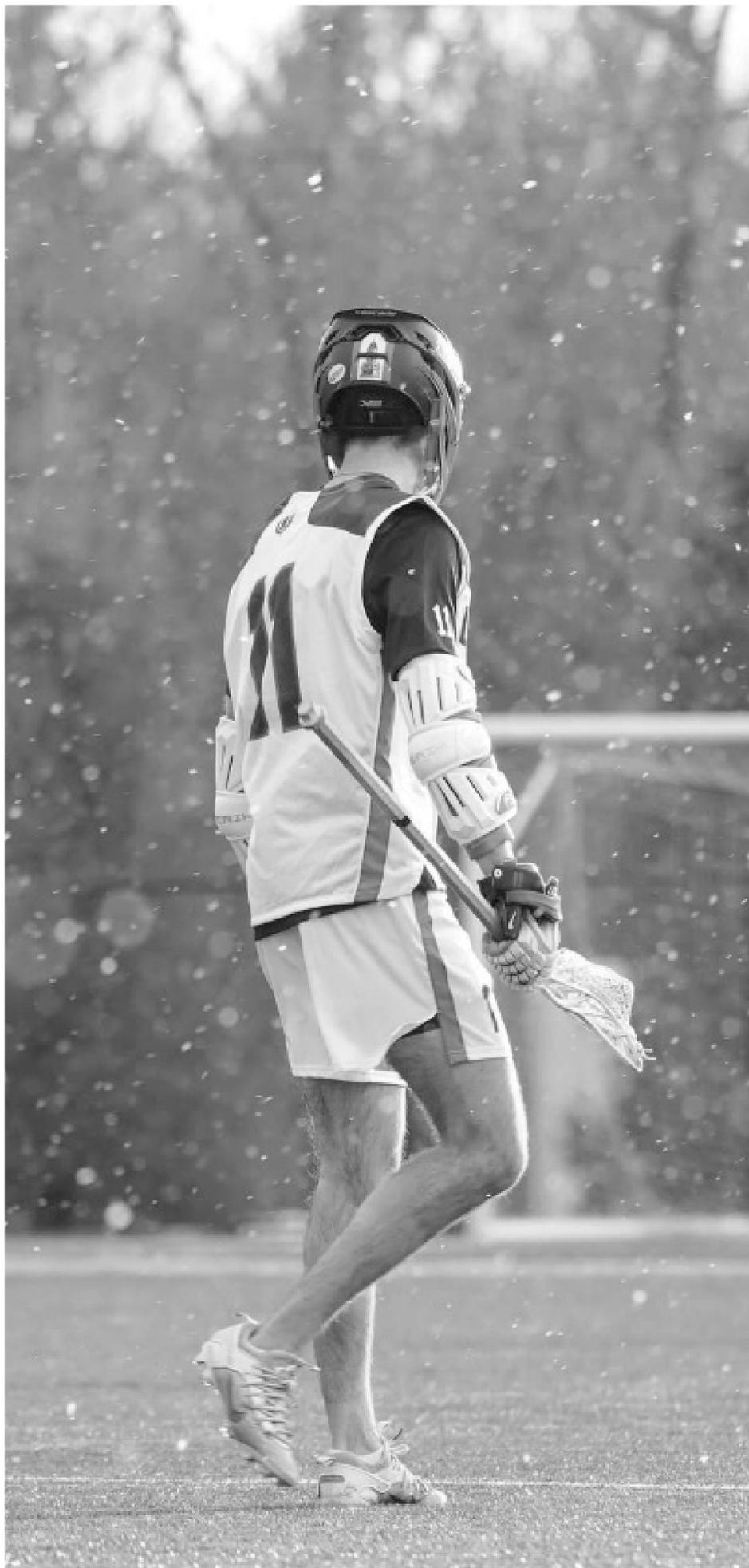
The Huskies and Bears both came onto the field on Saturday with things to prove, and both did that as this was a tightly contested game. In quarter one, Connecticut got off to a hot start as the offense was firing on all cylinders. This all started with Fogos Ben Gottsche, Will Riley and Evan Morrow who won 16 out of 23 faceoffs on the day to give the Huskies possession. This translated, along with stellar play on the offensive end, to five goals in the first for the Huskies as they pulled out to a commanding lead in quarter number one. In the second, the Huskies gained even more steam as they packed on six more goals to further increase their lead. Bridgewater got one goal to go in the second, however, this was most of what they could muster for the game.

Going into the second half, the Huskies held a commanding 11-1 lead, and it looked like that lead would only grow for the rest of the game. Bridgewater had other ideas, however, as their offense got three goals to go against Huskies' goalie Harrison Slade in the second. UConn

would net another in the third as they pushed their goal total to 12 in the game. In the fourth, the Huskies' offense got back on track as they poured down four more goals to put the finishing touches on this one. Bridgewater would add on their final two goals in the game in the quarter as well.

The Huskies were led on the offensive end by junior Jake Saldutti who had four key goals in this one. Senior Jack McInerney also netted three goals and two assists as he was a main catalyst for the Huskies offense. Colin Hersom would also net two goals in the victory. In net Slade was great as he had 13 saves on 19 shots marking a 68.4 save percentage for the game. This is a good sight to see as the coaches will look to break the freshman into MCLA action. For BSU, they were led by Nick Bucella who had three goals, and Peter Joseph who tossed in two assists. The BSU goalie Jonah Varallo faced 20 shots and allowed in 12 to mark a 62.5 save percentage on the day.

After the game, UConn freshman Jayden Ginsberg said this about his team's win "We came out of the game strong, but we didn't play our game as much in the second half. Our team chemistry is really good, we play as a team where the guys love each other. We have a big week of practice with us going to Georgia this weekend to play two top 20 teams." The Huskies will now shift their focus to two top twenty teams as Ginsburg said as they will have two daunting tests over the weekend. They will take on Powerhouse Tennessee on the eighth and Georgia Tech on the ninth as they head down to Georgia. The Huskies will look to win both of the games and prove they are the MCLA powerhouse in the northeast.



UConn men's lacrosse team playing in winter time conditions. The team went 6-8 last season. PHOTOS COURTESY OF @DYN.FX AND @UCCONMLAX ON INSTAGRAM

Point-Counterpoint:

vs.

Cam Ward

by Tyler Lato
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
HE/HIM/HIS
tyler.lato@uconn.edu

There is no doubt that Miami's Cam Ward and Colorado's Shedeur Sanders are among the two best quarterbacks in the upcoming 2025 NFL Draft. Despite failing to lead their teams to championship glory, both produced wildly impressive and were undoubtedly the batteries in their teams' respective high-octane offenses. Here's the catch: Ward certainly has a better chance of becoming a franchise than Sanders. This argument is based on the premises that Ward possesses superior athleticism and demonstrates greater composure off the field.

For one, Ward is far more athletic than Sanders. Though both quarterbacks measure in at 6-foot-2, Ward's ability to be elusive in the pocket and make plays with his legs is unlike Sanders or any quarterback in this draft class. His elusiveness, in terms, allows him to avoid sacks at a very high rate, which is very much evident in both films and score sheets. While both quarterbacks were backed by very poor offensive line play, Sanders was sacked 94 times between the 2023 and 2024 seasons, whereas Ward was only sacked 60 times. While Sanders is known to hold onto the ball for too long and take huge numbers of sacks, Ward's ability to use his legs to avoid pressure and make incredible plays will surely give him an edge over Sanders.

In 2023, before the Oregon Ducks faced the undefeated Colorado Buffaloes, Ducks head coach Dan Lanning told his team, "They're playing for clicks, we're playing for wins." Well, that's exactly what comes to mind when I think about Shedeur Sanders. Whether it be through his hit rap "Perfect Timing" — which I think is a pretty good song — his high-profile NIL deals or even TV shows, Sanders has developed quite an image for himself off the field, becoming more of a media icon. On the other hand, we don't hear much about Cam Ward off the field, and his public profile is far more subtle. After a win, Ward handles himself calmly and maturely, displaying remarkable poise for a young quarterback. I believe an important intangible of an NFL quarterback is the ability to block out distractions, stay humble and focus solely on football. While Sanders may possess those attributes, they can be harder to recognize due to the image he has built off the field. However, it's more evident that Ward embodies those traits, giving himself yet another edge over Sanders.

Lastly, I believe that Ward's play style is a better fit for the future of the NFL than Sanders.

Patrick Mahomes, Josh Allen, Lamar Jackson and Jalen Hurts. What do all four of these NFL star quarterbacks have in common?

They all possess the ability to run, scramble and make crazy plays with their legs. Ward just has this ability. He remains cool and collected in the pocket, evades pressure and uncorks bombs to his receivers. Sanders does not possess this ability. While he does possess legitimate arm strength to be a franchise quarterback, Sanders' mere immobility just does not fit in with how the quarterback position is currently being played in the NFL. More and more NFL teams are utilizing quarterbacks as runners, and Ward's dual-threat ability aligns perfectly with this evolving trend. Although becoming a franchise quarterback in the league is quite a challenge, I believe that Ward, for these reasons, has a far better chance of becoming a franchise quarterback than Sanders.

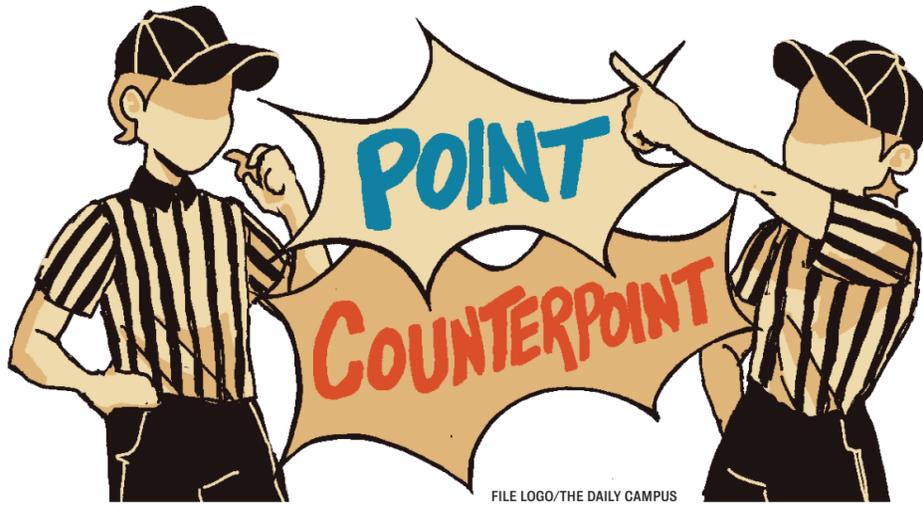
Shedeur Sanders

by Thomas Buckley
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
HE/HIM/HIS
thomas.2.buckley@uconn.edu

When looking at both FBS quarterbacks, it's clear that they've established themselves as some of the best players in college football last season, and heading into the combine, they're both projected to be first round picks in the upcoming draft. However, if you were to pick the better of the two prospects, it would have to be Shedeur Sanders. In his last season at Colorado, Sanders finished with 4,134 passing yards and 37 touchdowns, finished eighth in voting for the Heisman and led Colorado to a 9-3 record. Despite losing their bowl game to BYU, Sanders showed out with some incredible performances. In the last game of the regular season, Colorado dismantled and shutout Oklahoma State 52-0, with Sanders finishing the game with 438 yards, five touchdowns while completing over 80% of his passes. His potential to be an elite starting quarterback increases tenfold when you remember that his father, now coach and mentor, was one of the greatest defensive players in NFL history. Since he got hired as head coach in 2023, Deion Sanders has completely shifted the culture at Colorado and turned the Buffaloes from a subpar team in 2023 to one of the most exciting stories in college football in 2024.

With this kind of pedigree and level of knowledge, Sanders can benefit a lot from learning under an NFL Hall of Famer and someone who was dominant on the defensive side of the ball and who can pass that knowledge down to his son. Sanders was already one of the best and most accurate passers in college football last season, completing an incredible 74% of his passes, and with his father there to help him understand the complexity and unpredictability of NFL defenses, it'll make him more "pro ready" than any other QB prospect in his draft class.

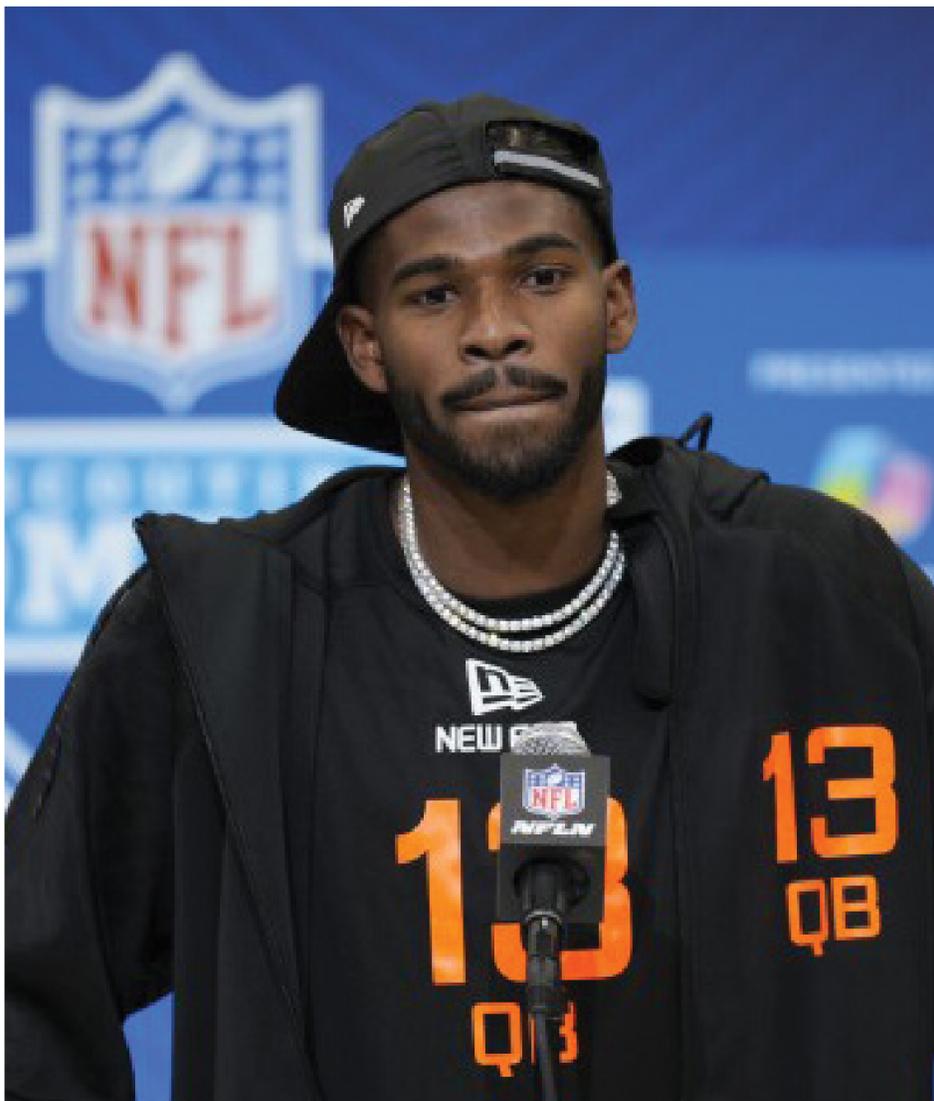
Sanders already has the ideal mold for a starting NFL quarterback, standing at 6-foot-2 and 215 pounds, he's big enough to where he can absorb contact without getting severely injured and small enough to where he can escape defenses when needed. With the proper mentor, he's destined to be a first-round pick and drafted to a team that could benefit a lot from his talents. There were many college quarterbacks who had stellar seasons last year, but with the amount of potential, mentorship and raw talent coming from Sanders and his playstyle, it's hard to argue that any other quarterback stands above him heading into the 2025 draft.



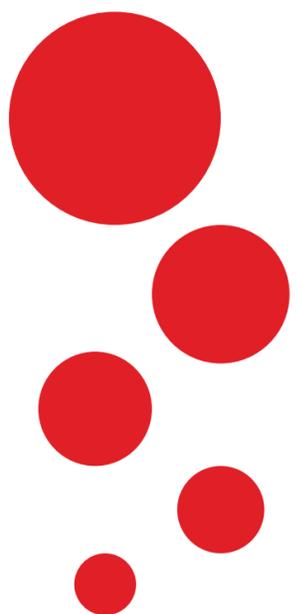
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Heisman Trophy finalist Cam Ward, of Miami, speaks at a college football press conference, Saturday Dec. 14, 2024. PHOTO COURTESY OF AP



Colorado quarterback Shedeur Sanders speaks during a press conference at the NFL football scouting combine Friday, Feb. 28, 2025. PHOTO COURTESY OF AP





Sports

The Lockerroom: Red Sox report part one

by Jake Loomis
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
HE/HIM/HIS
jloomis415@gmail.com

The Boston Red Sox will come into 2025 fresh off a mediocre season with them dancing around a .500 record. This play along with previous years of not spending to win, anguished Sox fans and put immense pressure on the organization to go out and get talent. New General Manager Craig Breslow went to work immediately and made the Red Sox a true contender in a couple of complex and simple moves. In this part of the article, we will review my projection for Boston's 2025 lineup.

Lineup Projection
LF - Jarren Duran

Jarren Duran projects as the Sox leadoff hitter and best overall player after a breakout season, leading him to his very first all-star appearance, which was cultivated with an MVP in the game. Duran had 14 triples last season while batting .285 and leading the team in WAR at 8.7 by a wide margin. The Sox star will also move to left field this year as he will now play in front of the Green Monster. Look for Duran to raise his average a little this year and make a run at the MVP.

DH - Rafael Devers

Devers comes into the year with a lot of ques-

tions surrounding his name, especially after the recent signing of Alex Bregman to the roster. This could pull Devers off third base and put him in a DH role if the Sox decide to go that way. Devers is a great power bat, and the Sox will need him down the stretch as he slugged 28 home runs on the season to come in second on the team. Questions regarding his defense have been raised for years, and now that the team has someone who can play outstanding defense at the corner, they might decide to go that way.

3B - Alex Bregman

The Sox's latest addition, Alex Bregman, also has some question marks surrounding him going into this year. He will hold an infield slot this year, however, the question is where. Many see Bregman as a second baseman, allowing Devers to remain put at third. With the bat, Bregman is an all-around hitter who will play to his advantage at Fenway Park using the green monster to his advantage.

1B - Triston Casas

Triston Casas comes into 2025 with a chip on his shoulder. After a breakout campaign in 2023, Casas was injured for long periods last season, begging the question if he belongs in Boston. Casas, however, will prove the doubters wrong as he owns one of the most powerful bats in baseball, and in limited action, slugged 13 long balls last year. Casas was also a trade topic this offseason, as the Sox looked to add pitch-

ing; however, it seems those talks have stalled. Casas will have another breakout season this year and look for him to hover around the 35-home run mark as he hits cleanup in the Sox lineup.

C - Connor Wong

Connor Wong will come into 2025 as an experienced player having caught in the big leagues for many seasons now. Wong has good defense and a strong arm behind the plate and should be on runners' radars. He ranked in the top five in runners caught stealing last season. He was also second among catchers with bases stolen, proving that he can earn extra bases for his team. His spot is secured as the catcher of the future as Teel was shipped off to Chicago. Wong will have a very important role in managing games with new pitchers, and it will be crucial that they are all on the same page come April.

SS - Trevor Story

Veteran Trevor Story is back for another campaign with the Red Sox after having back-to-back seasons with devastating injuries. Story is healthy and will look to get back to an All-

at times. His defense was also great as he could slide to different positions. However, in the bigs, he projects as either a Second Baseman or Left Fielder for the time being.

CF - Cedanne Rafaela

Cedanne Rafaela will hit last as he will provide a spark to the lineup at times. As a super utility player, his hitting is not his best attribute. However, if he can hit the ball like he did last season, he should have no problem staying on the field. Rafaela is also here to stay after signing a \$50 million deal to keep him in Boston for eight years. With 15 home runs and 75 RBIs, Rafaela will look to add 15 more to both those totals and become a true star in Boston on a team-friendly deal.

Schedule Outlook

The Red Sox will look to get back to the playoffs in 2025 and they will do that by dominating their opponents and stealing wins. The team will start the season in Texas on March 27th, playing a four-game stretch before heading to Baltimore for three more. The Fenway home opener will be much awaited and will be played on April 4 versus St. Louis.

Boston's two major series over the first half will include a homestead versus the Yankees and the Mets. In the second half, they will play two great back-to-back series,

hosting Philadelphia and then shipping off to Los Angeles to play the Dodgers in July. They will also take a trip to San Diego to play the Padres. This five series will be a great test for the team as they will look to make noise come October.

Postseason and Record Prediction: 93-69 — Loss in AL Championship Series

If everything goes to plan, the Red Sox should find themselves with a good enough record at the end of the season to make the playoffs. They will likely enter as a high-end wild card team and should be either the fourth or fifth seed. This will probably draw the Yankees depending on who wins the division, and this would be a great first-round matchup that Boston would ultimately win. In round two, the Sox would face another AL East team: the Orioles, in another series that would go down to the wire. However, the Red Sox would pull through in the end. In the Championship series, they would likely face either the Astros or the Rangers, both very good teams in their rights.

The Sox would go to seven with either team, though Texas would have great pitching performances down the stretch, especially from former Red Sox Nathan Eovaldi, which would ultimately be too much for the Red Sox offense. Boston would be eliminated, capping off a great season that saw the franchise's resurgence and a lot of promise and hope for the future.



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