

Daily

Opinion

The Daily Campus

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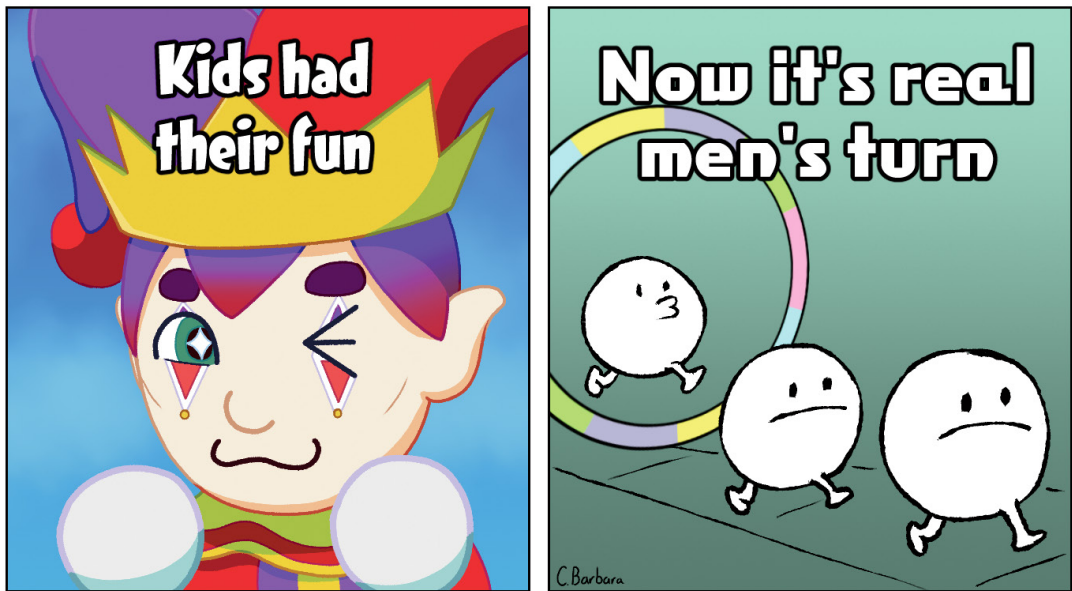
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COMIC BY CHRISTIAN BARBARA, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Continuing to analyze UConn’s regional campus development plan

EDITORIAL

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On Feb. 25, the University of Connecticut’s Board of Trustees began considering new development plans for the each of the four branch campuses, according to The Daily Campus. As part of the 10-year Strategic Plan, originally laid down in the spring of 2024, the University is interested in “setting the [branch] campuses on a path to be recognized as destinations in their own right,” according to UConn Today.

While The Daily Campus Editorial Board has already addressed this plan as it is intended to function, demonstrating the shortcomings of an educational focus centered solely on market alignment, there is lots more to dig into for a plan of such magnitude. As stated in the last editorial, “There are questions concerning the validity of the vision itself, but also whether UConn will be able to execute it well.” For today, we turn to the latter.

An important theme hanging over the entirety of this report is the “financial constraint” placed upon the branch campuses by a mix of declining state and federal funding and UConn-specific budget deficits. Despite these pressing issues, the university is pushing for growth in a way that attempts to prioritize new measures that will create as little extra cost for UConn as possible. Instead, according to the university, new practices should either be absorbed into the workload of existing staff or funded by philanthropic and corporate partners.

For the former option, the idea of added responsibilities amid continuous and drastic budget cuts — a reality the development plan acknowledges frequently — appears burdensome to the staff meant to carry out these plans. Any attempt to provide more for students without giving more support to the staff executing those plans threatens to lose out on actual

effectiveness, as professors have been warning for years regarding the current budget cuts.

For the latter, this neoliberal approach to privatizing support for educational programs presents ethical issues, as the Editorial Board previously discussed. It also presents risks in, again, execution. There are few guarantees that the branch campuses, even with the support of the UConn Foundation and other marketing boosts, will be able to secure this type of funding regularly. The fact that so much of the expansion of each campus seems reliant on this funding presents room for skepticism.

Another distinct option that the administration seems keen to use is the individualized major program, which it views as a “a targeted growth area” for almost all campuses. Still, every mention of the program is followed by the phrase affirming that it will “[require] no new resources,” making it seem more like a cost-effective scapegoat than a genuine attempt to allow students to experiment with their class interests. While freedom in academic pursuit is important and can be beneficial to some, implementing it as a widespread policy for these campuses will not provide the support necessary for students. In the same way that thinning resources places increased stress for programmatic upkeep onto staff, it appears that this tactic will function the same toward students. They will be left to do more to figure out their education without the community and support of majors and academic departments.

To reiterate our position regarding the development of branch campuses: It is clear that they serve an important purpose for the local communities they are based in and the students who call them home.



The UConn Hartford Campus in December of 2025, decorated for the holidays. The University of Connecticut’s Board of Trustees began considering new development plans for the each of the four branch campuses on Feb. 25, 2026. PHOTO COURTESY OF @UCONNHARTFORD ON INSTAGRAM

However, growth without the support of state-funded initiatives will inherently fall short and place pressure on students, faculty, staff and community members to accommodate it. Economically, this current plan leaves much to be desired and must be reconsidered given that the administration cannot currently commit enough resources to ensure productive growth.



A view of UConn Avery Point from the water. As part of a 10-year plan, UConn is interested in “setting the [branch] campuses on a path to be recognized as destinations in their own right,” according to UConn Today. PHOTO COURTESY OF @UCONNVERYPPOINT ON INSTAGRAM