The Daily Campus

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT SINCE 1896 • VOLUME CXXIX, NO. 82

Thursday, February 12, 2026

Trash cans in offices being removed amidst budget cuts

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Trash cans are being removed from faculty, staff and administrative offices at the University of Connecticut's Storrs campus to aid in cost cutting and sustainability efforts, according to university officials.

The decision was met with skepticism by some faculty and staff members at UConn who don't understand how removing trash cans saves the University a significant amount of money, according to the head of the Department of Mathematics.

University spokesperson Stephanie Reitz said that UConn is following the footsteps of other universities and agencies who've been adopting a system called "centralized waste collection" over the last decade.

Interim Vice President for Finance Reka Wrynn confirmed that changes to trash disposal were made as a cost savings effort. Cutting waste collection from offices was part of a larger restructuring of a contract for custodial services on the Storrs campus which saves $1.57 million annually, according to Reitz.

On Aug. 27, 2025, Vice President of Facility Services and University Planning Eric Kruger sent an email to faculty announcing that custodial services would be focusing on core services as a response to university-wide budget reductions, according to a LISTSERV archive.

The changes Kruger said to expect included reduced cleaning in low-traffic spaces, centralized trash collection, adjusted service levels and scaled-back deep cleaning. He added that public-facing spaces like those used for recruiting and family tours would continue to be maintained to a higher level of cleanliness.

Kruger's email said that two buildings were already using centralized trash collection systems where visitors are responsible for disposing trash and recycling into communal containers.

Kruger did not respond to an interview request.

"The larger receptacles remain in the nearby hallways and common areas for everyone's use," Reitz said. "[This reduces] the potential for odors and insect/ rodent activity to develop if food products are left in the trash cans over time."

Buildings where centralized trash collection were already taking place include the John J. Budds administrative building, public safety complexes and facilities operations, according to Reitz.

Some buildings have exceptions to the no-trash-can rule. Reitz said the buildings which won't be included are the Visitor's Center, Gampel Pavilion and the Jorgensen Center because of their significant foot traffic. She added that residence halls and clinical settings like examination rooms will also get exemptions.

Ambar Sengupta, the head of the Department of Mathematics, said some of his concerns about the removal of trash cans from offices were addressed by a discussion he had with Kruger.

"I do appreciate that [Kruger] spoke with me in a nice way and we came to an understanding," Sengupta said. "But it is a fact that upper administration have a [history of making] decisions that impact individual departments and faculty."

"[Kruger] said [UConn] sends people to clear the offices, but most are clear so there's nothing in the bins," Sengupta said. After the conversation, Sengupta said he understood how office trash cans could be considered "useless spending of money."

Sengupta said he is overall more understanding than most faculty members about the decision to take away trash cans, whom he said are pretty upset. He added that he's heard skepticism from other faculty members about how centralized waste collection could save UConn money.

"To be personally honest, I myself don't use the trash bins, but if people had bins close to their offices it shouldn't be that much of a problem," Sengupta said.

One example that Sengupta said was a flaw in the decision-making process was taking away trash cans in all offices without exceptions.

"I understand most faculty feel that it's insult to injury," Sengupta said. "A little more consultation would have helped."

One example where Sengupta said consultation was needed was within the removal of trash cans in the undergraduate advising office, where he said students may end up crying and needing tissues at the office.

"[UConn's] decision making is always high-minded," Sengupta said. "All that is needed is to do a survey."



The Wilbur cross building which houses many offices and a library is one of the many buildings expecting to have its number of trash cans reduced. The reduction is part of a larger plan to reduce costs and shift to a central trash collection system. PHOTO BY CONNOR SHARP, PHOTO EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS



University administration plans for the removal of trash cans in many buildings and offices to cut down on costs. Push back from the staff has come after a lack of communication.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @WEBSTAURANTSTORE ON PINTEREST

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KATT WILLIAMS | PAGE 6
Delivers some words of advice in his last report

POLITICS | PAGE 7
Why voter suppression is all the rage on the right

WBB | PAGE 12
Uconn women's basketball wins again

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