A night of mask making and 'Bridgerton' at AsACC

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The University of Connecticut's Asian American Cultural Center (AsACC) hosted a mask-making session and "Bridgerton" watch party on Thursday, March 12.

Members of the UConn community gathered in the evening at the AsACC programming room, located on the fourth floor of the Student Union. The dim lighting and provided fresh-baked chocolate chip cookies created a cozy atmosphere before the mask-making began.

There were a variety of mask designs to choose from, each with their own unique shapes to cover the wearer's face. Paint, markers, stickers and colorful rhinestones were available for attendees to make use of.

When the decorating began, the programmers started a recently released episode of "Bridgerton" — an alternative history romance drama that focuses on a royal English family in the early 1800s. The characters were participating in a masquerade ball, creating some continuity between the activity and the show.

Bonnibel Lilith Rampertab, a sixth-semester English and history major and a campus correspondent at the Daily Campus, attended the event to support cultural center events on campus. She said she works with the Influencing Readiness, Inspiring Success program, ran by UConn's LGBTQ+ cultural center, the Rainbow Center, and came with the student she was mentoring.

"We want to support other cultural centers and their events and their programming," Rampertab said. "So me and my mentee decided that since we could make it to this, we were gonna go. The masks were a plus."

Rampertab said she picked out a mask that reminded her of the masks featured in Team Cherry's indie video game "Hollow Knight." She designed the mask with the game characters as inspiration but added elements of Hindi culture as well, she said.

"I thought that it would be cool to implement parts of my culture with other interests I have and be passionate about who I am and how I exist," Rampertab said.

The event was put together by AsACC programmers Shar Bista, Raisa Yousuf and Lea Wakefield.

Bista, a sixth-semester allied health major, said the programmers went with the Bridgerton theme because new episodes had just been released. She said they were also inspired by a similar event held by the Rainbow Center earlier in the semester.

"I went to a different event in the Rainbow Center a few months ago where they had a watch party and so many people showed up and everyone was visibly having a great time, so I thought it would be a good event for the programmers to hold as well," Bista said.

After the event, Bista said she thought it ran well, even though there were not specific instructions or structure for the activity.

"I feel like a lot of our events, they're not very structured," Bista said. "It's more people come in, they take their time to get ready, and then we kind of just let them start on the activity. I would say this one went well, at least what I heard, people were laughing and making masks and everything."

Yousuf, a fourth-semester nursing major, said the mask-making activity was one of many events being held by AsAAC this semester. They hosted events for lantern-making and vision board creation earlier in the semester, and she said the center tries hosting at least one event per month.

"We program these types of events, and we focus on belonging, advocacy and education, and we try and implement at least two of those themes whenever we hold events," Yousuf said. "So just making sure people are having a good time, we're able to make a good welcoming environment and have fun and maybe learn something too."

Yousuf said the center's next event will be a celebration for Eid al-Fitr, the Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan. She said the event will take place on Monday, March 23.

A calendar that lists AsAAC's April events can be found on the AsAAC website.



People posing for a group photo at the 98th annual Academy Awards, commonly known as the Oscars. The Oscars took place last Sunday on March 15, 2026.

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UConn celebrates diversity with 'International' Night

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Students, faculty and cultural groups flooded the Rome Commons Ballroom to attend International Night, a diversity event hosted by the Honors Council and Honors for Diversity, on Thursday, March 12.

The ballroom blossomed with decorations that symbolized a variety of heritages. The walls were painted with flag pennant strings that showcased dozens of countries' flags. Paper globe lanterns filled the windowsills, and each table had pens and notebooks with maps etched in them.

Besides decorations, the ballroom had five international food stations. One station served Mexican meals such as nachos and layered dip. Another station had edamame dumplings, chicken skewers, grilled Korean bulgogi, naan and vegetable korma, giving attendees East and South Asian cuisines. A third station had Middle Eastern food such as grilled chicken and hummus. The final food station had cheese lasagna and desserts, including cannoli and croissants. There were also drinks like iced water and mango lassi.

International Night began with a welcome message from Alexandra Salem, the president of Honors for Diversity, and Johanna Rivera, the president of the Honors Council.

Salem is an eighth-semester student double majoring in structural biology and biophysics and molecular and cellular biology, and Rivera is a fourth-semester pre-dental student majoring in allied health sciences.

After the welcome message, attendees left their seats and began getting food. While everyone ate, Honors Student Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Specialists Daniel Heumann and Rebecca Drouillard gave a presentation about the significance of unity and social identities at UConn.

Heumann is a fourth-semester student double majoring in human rights and women's, gender and sexuality Studies, and Drouillard is a sixth-semester pre-med student majoring in molecular and cellular biology.

In the presentation, Drouillard mentioned the numerous opportunities attendees have to embrace multiculturalism at the event.

"You have so many chances to learn about each other, learn about different cultures and specific things different cultures do," Drouillard said.

At the end of the presentation, Heumann and Drouillard shared four different questions surrounding the backgrounds and identities of the attendees present at the event. Each question was discussed, promoting discussion of diversity and inclusion.

While discussing one of the questions with her peers, Ishfiah Ahmed-Syed, a second-semester student majoring in political science, mentioned the importance of acknowledging each other's differences and cultures.

"It's important to respect each other's differences and backgrounds," Ahmed-Syed said.

After five cultural groups from UConn performed dances.

The first group was Husky Bhangra, a competitive dance team that represents bhangra, a high-energy folk dance from India. Every dancer on the team wore unique outfits comprised of long colorful skirts and long-sleeved shirts with jewels. The group's performance was spectacular. Each dance move they performed was flawless, and their performance was symbolic of India's harvesting culture.

The second group to perform was Afrobina, a dance group representing an array of African cultures. Like Husky Bhangra, the performance was amazing. As a mixture of rap and pop music pierced the air, the dancers lit the ballroom with energetic moves that made the audience clap with them.

Next was UConn Bringing Awareness into Latino Ethnicities (B.A.I.L.E.), a dance group associated with the Puerto Rican and Latin American Cultural Center. The performance UConn B.A.I.L.E. brought to the stage honored a myriad of Latino nations, including Cuba and Puerto Rico. Overall, it was beautiful. The waltzes were in synchronization with each other, and the twirls were cohesive.

The fourth group to perform was the UConn Irish Dance Team, which gave three separate dance performances. In each performance, different pairs of tap shoes were used. In the first, soft shoes were worn. In the second performance, the dancers wore heart shoes. In the third performance, both soft and heart shoes were worn. The Irish Dance Team was marvelous. The tap dancing was outstanding, and hearing the different sounds produced by the soft shoes and the heart shoes was fascinating.

The last group to perform was the Ecuadorian Student Association. The organization was very passionate about its culture. All the dancers wore unique outfits; the women wore dresses that shimmered in various patterns, and the men wore top hats, furry pants and black capes that glowed with purple and yellow stripes. Not only did the dancers wear outfits representing their culture, but they continuously waved Ecuadorian flags at the audience as they made their graceful performance.

After all five cultural groups gave their dazzling dance performances, the majority of attendees played a Kahoot involving trivia questions about different cultures and nations. After the game, Salem and Rivera made closing remarks and thanked everyone for attending.



The Honors Community hosts International Night (I-Night) in Rome Ballroom on March 12, 2026. Attendees listened to presentations, ate, played games and watched performances from cultural groups such as Husky Bhangra.

PHOTOS BY NORA MARIANO, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS.