

Daily

Opinion

The Daily Campus

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Editorial

USG Elections: How to cast your vote, and why you should care

Elections for the University of Connecticut’s Undergraduate Student Government (USG) open today, and will run until noon on Friday, March 5. These elections are a chance for students to choose who will serve as their representative voice for the next year. Between USG and the Board of Trustees, there’s a lot to cover regarding this week’s Joint Elections. This week, the Editorial Board provides the UConn student body with all the information to give students a full understanding of why their vote matters.

According to their mission statement, USG serves two primary functions: representing “the primary voice of students to all audiences” and “funding 600+ student Tier-II organizations.” In addition to voting on referendums, USG allocates funding for Tier-II organizations, which are student groups that hold regular meetings and may require “a larger degree of structure and advisement” than Tier-I organizations, according to the Department of Student Activities. These organizations are not funded by Student Activity fees and must request funding from a USG committee.

On the ballot are four executive positions: President and vice president as a joint ticket, chief diversity officer and comptroller. At the Storrs campus, each position has multiple candidates running. Furthermore, students can elect undergraduate senators representing each school within the university.

Only 3,053 students (approximately 15% of the undergraduate population) voted during the spring 2025 election. USG plays a crucial role in an undergraduate student’s college experience. For members of Tier-II organizations, USG elections could mean the difference between a club they care about receiving funding or not. More importantly, the referendums passed by USG impact UConn as a whole. Although USG does not possess total control over UConn affairs (it cannot require specific policies from the university administration or fund Tier-III organizations), it’s important to get involved in UConn politics and voting is a simple first step in getting involved. The Editorial Board encourages all undergraduate students to exercise their democratic right and select the candidates that they feel best align with their values. Every vote counts, and all students should seize the opportunity to make their voices heard. For more information on individual candidates and their policies, consult the “2026-27 Election Candidates” header on USG’s website or the Daily Campus’ overview.



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Additionally, elections for student trustee positions are currently ongoing. Whereas USG funds Tier-II organizations and serves as a voice for undergraduate students, it is the Board of Trustees which is the highest legislative body in the university. This is the group which makes university wide decisions, based on the recommendations of a variety of committees, such as Institutional Advancement and Student Life. Of the 21 members, there will be one undergraduate student representative and one graduate student representative to the Board of Trustees. Ensuring that students have a competent, active representative on this body is of the utmost importance. For more information on the Board of Trustees candidates, consult the 2026 Joint Elections Ballot Initiative on the UConn Elections website.

Voting for all UConn-related elections can easily be done online by clicking on the link at vote.uconn.edu. Elections are open to all fee-paying undergraduate students. From there, it’s as simple as selecting candidates — don’t miss the opportunity to make your voice heard! Elections for the University of Connecticut’s Undergraduate Student Government (USG) open today, and will run until noon on Friday, March 5. These elections are a chance for students to choose who will serve as their representative voice for the next year. Between USG and the Board of Trustees, there’s a lot to cover regarding this week’s Joint Elections. This week, the Editorial Board provides the UConn student body with all the information to give students a full understanding of why their vote matters.

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A CRITIQUE OF THE OBAMA-ERA NOSTALGIA

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Currently, if you look at America, you see mass deportations that rip families apart, sometimes killing people, foreign wars that very few people support, mass government corruption and opposition incompetence all over the board. Because of all the things people opposed to this administration have seen, there has been a newfound nostalgic feeling for the years of former President Barack Obama. Nostalgic sentiment in general is not some new or unique thing specific to the current moment, but I am fascinated by this iteration coming from many within my generation, Gen Z liberals in particular. This bygone time is described as more optimistic, one where people are thriving and the government works for the people. This nostalgia is mostly connected to the second Trump era and, more generally, the post-COVID era. Many people feel that the world is duller and darker compared to the past. I could go for the obvious criticisms such as Obama’s foreign policy or the deportation efforts, but I want to focus on the fact that behind the perceived happiness was political tensions and dark developments that were brewing under the surface, getting ready to pop.

First, we need to recognize the point in history during this time; Barack Obama was elected as President of the United States and many people were optimistic for an era of hope and change, as the Obama campaign made clear it would bring. After the 2008 recession and the fallout that came from it, people wanted anything as an alternative to George W. Bush’s neoliberal economics & neoconservative warmongering. Therefore, with an Obama victory came an era of dumbfounded optimism; the economic conditions, unemployment and other crises happening were thought to be temporary and soon people would be able to thrive in a new version of more progressive neoliberalism. From this came the sort of millennial-esque hipster optimism that was focused on how the opportunity for society to progress beyond inequality and

bigotry.

There was this idea after Obama’s election that we lived in a post-racial society, or that racism was beyond us since there was a black president. But this was also a delusional belief since, although incarceration rates decreased under Obama, black men were still being disproportionately incarcerated under the Obama administration. The deportation rates under Obama, which are heavily tied to race, were higher than even Trump in his first term, and the first year of Obama’s second term had more deportations than even Trump’s term so far.

The Obama administration’s flaws weren’t the only issues with this period, since the economy was still suffering from the 2008 recession. The early 2010s, and even the 2010s as a whole, was a time of economic stagnation. We also started to see a surge in the wealth inequality that has already been growing for decades, wage stagnation and the bank bailouts that had shocked many people — which would become the catalyst for Occupy Wall Street. The libertarian led Tea Party movement was growing, laying down the groundwork for the fascist rhetoric that we would soon be very familiar with. It was this slow growth and disappointment for standard neoliberal politics and reactionary anger towards social progress that would lead to heavy political division and the far-right rhetoric that is now commonplace in society.

Nostalgia, like mentioned before, is one of those things that is always going to exist for each generation; what’s important to realize is that the past is not the perfect place that we remember it to be. In fact, it is the events of the past that lead to the developments of the present time. It is easy to view the “stomp, clap, hey” indie music and the funny trends of the time and believe nothing was wrong, but you need to remember that when we look to the past it is often through rose-tinted glasses. It does not mean you can’t yearn for anything, in fact, that can be positive. But remember that the world we live in now is created from what has happened in the past. So, instead of looking longingly behind you, look forward.



44th President of the United States, Barack Obama. Obama is the founder and creator of the Obama Foundation, which he founded over 12 years ago. PHOTO COURTESY OF @OBAMAFoundation ON Instagram.