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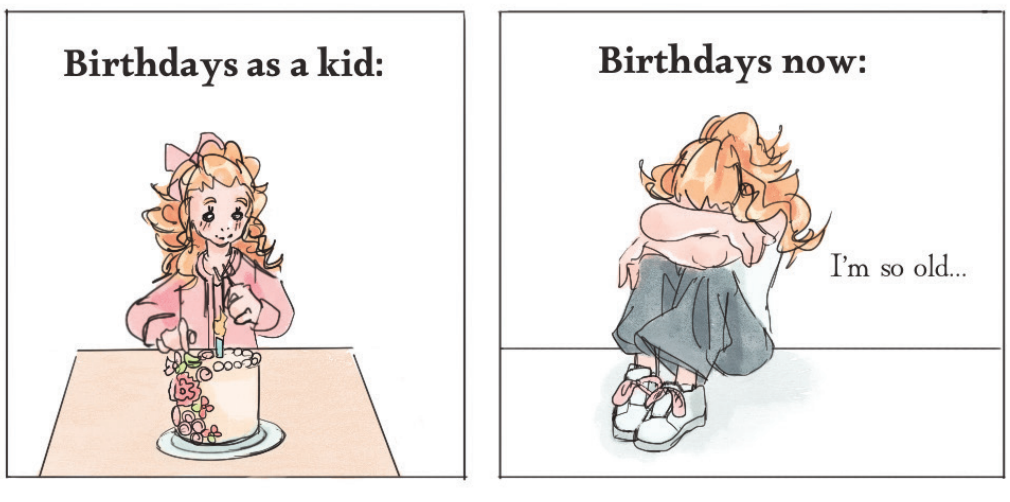
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Daily OPINION

HERE'S HOW TO HEAR STUDENT OPINIONS

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This Thursday, administrators at the University of Connecticut hosted a town hall to discuss and gather input on proposed fees for the 2027-28 school year. Town hall meetings open to students typically occur a few times per year, most notably when budgeting, tuition and fees must be adjusted.

Student attendance and participation at events like these are important. They provide students an opportunity to share feedback with administrators and join a process that is usually opaque and highly consequential. Despite this, student awareness is limited, and participation during town halls is poor. In the most recent meeting, despite the announcement of a $1,000 fee and living cost increase, there was only one question from attendees posed during the virtual meeting time.

Low attendance doesn't mean that students and faculty lack interest or concern. Students care about where money is being allocated and how it affects their finances, but they aren't being approached in the right way. Instead of continuing to make decisions with limited student input, UConn's leaders should reevaluate how they solicit feedback, shifting the focus away from methods that require students to seek out opportunities and integrating it into daily activities instead.

Freshmen and sophomores are the students both most impacted by university decisions and the least aware of them. Many have no concept of who makes decisions or how they are made. Establishing forums for feedback in residence halls would encourage involvement from UConn's youngest constituents. During meetings with the resident assistant and residence hall events, students could be encouraged to fill out a survey or share insights with the resident assistant to be passed on to leadership. This forum doesn't have to be limited to feedback on residence hall conditions; rather, it can be used to understand the overall goals and concerns of the students who have the most time ahead of them.

One of the biggest hindrances to collecting student feedback is the expectation that students will take time out of their day to respond to surveys or show up to meetings. Students already frustrated with the university, especially, might feel unmotivated to participate. Instead of requiring students to come to the questions, bring the questions to the students. Placing feedback stations in dining halls, the Student Union and the library would create forums where the students find themselves most often. These stations could ask students a few questions about proposed university policies without requiring a serious commitment of their time.

Gathering feedback also requires effective communication of opportunities to students. Town hall invites and surveys hidden in the Daily Digest don't reach as many students as intended. Instead, advertising on channels like Instagram, TikTok and HuskyCT could increase visibility and make students feel like their opinions are genuinely valued.

Making it easy to opine is just one part of the picture. When UConn receives feedback, it has to demonstrate that it will take that feedback seriously. If students are repeatedly asked for their thoughts on housing, food, facility hours and coursework but see no tangible results, then they will begin to question the purpose of participating at all. When decisions are made by leadership, it is important for them to explain how student opinions were implemented. If student opinions could not be implemented, then it's important to explain why that is and how the alternative decision was in the best interest of the students. Only with a reinforcing feedback loop can a sustainable relationship between students and leadership be created.

While no data collection method will be a fit for all students and represent the breadth of opinions, varying and consistently applied methods will create the best results. Students should not have to seek out or plan around opportunities to feel heard, especially when decisions made directly affect their social, academic and financial well-being. If UConn wants to hear from us, more work needs to be done to make it feel that way.

The internet couldn't care less about Jay-Z



Jay Z poses for a poster photo. He has been announced as the official Super Bowl halftime show for Super Bowl LXI, set for February 2027.

PHOTO COURTESY OF @ESTILODF ON INSTAGRAM

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The Super Bowl halftime show is one of the biggest and most prestigious stages an artist can take in their career. Recently, the NFL announced that Jay-Z will be headlining the show at Super Bowl LXI. Since then, fans have made it clear they don't want to see Jay perform at the Big Game. Memes from Po the Panda picking himself to be the Dragon Warrior to Obama awarding Obama the Presidential Medal of Freedom have flooded the internet, satirizing the situation. Presidential Medal of Freedom have flooded the internet, satirizing the situation.

To understand the backlash, it's important to know that Jay-Z and his entertainment company, Roc Nation, are the NFL's live music strategists and have selected the halftime performer each year since 2019. So, technically, Jay-Z selected Jay-Z. Although the league explained they always wanted him to perform when the time was right, people rightfully insisted that it was undeserved.

A Super Bowl halftime performer must be inescapable — an artist you can't go a day without hearing on the radio or seeing on social media. That level of cultural relevance is exactly what Jay is missing.

In 2024, amidst the vicious rap battle between Drake and Kendrick Lamar, Jay selected Kendrick to perform at the Super Bowl. When questioned by GQ whether he was choosing sides, Jay responded, "I chose the guy that was having a monster year." In 2024, Kendrick's diss track, "Not Like Us," went six times platinum, and his album, "GNX," which debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 200, had sold over 300,000 album-equivalent units in its first week. His "monster year" puts Jay's 2026 to shame.

So far, Jay has not released any new music. To manufacture hype, he re-released more than 15 of his most popular songs on streaming, sold album anniversary vinyl records and CDs and directed a documentary about his career called "JAŸ-Z in 8." Unfortunately for the 56-year-old rapper, he is just no longer relevant, and it's apparent he's milking his former years to stay in the limelight.

Some might argue that Dr. Dre was in the same situation when he headlined Super Bowl LVI in 2022. At the time, Dre hadn't released music in 7 years. His halftime performance, however, was dedicated to the city of Compton and west coast hip-hop. It was performed at SoFi Stadium, which is a 20-minute drive from his hometown of Compton. Jay's performance might similarly redeem itself with a broader message or theme, but it doesn't seem that way so far.

Looking at Jay's Super Bowl halftime trailer for clues, we see the slogan, "Goat's out of the bag," as well as 10 black goats surrounding the artist, hinting at more of a celebration of his own career than anything else. Although it's only speculation, it does feel rather shallow, especially following Bad Bunny's incredible tribute to Puerto Rican culture and history earlier this year. So why is Jay trying to reclaim G.O.A.T. status all of a sudden? Well, I believe it has — at least in part — to do with Drake and the "monster year" he's been having so far in 2026.

This year, Drake dropped three albums in one night for a combined 680,000 first week sales and dethroned Jay-Z for the most No. 1 albums for a male artist. Whether the projects are of "high quality" is debatable, but their success and social media presence is undeniable. Songs like "Shabang," "National Treasures" and "Janice STFU" have all gone viral on social media and have hundreds of millions of streams on Spotify. Drake at the halftime Show makes sense especially considering the massive hits he's had in the past.

Beef between Jay-Z and Drake is nothing new, but Drake's new music fanned the flames recently. On "Whisper My Name," Drake references the hypothetical question of a dinner with Jay-Z or $500,000, arguing that Jay's advice isn't worth anything to him. Additionally, "Janice STFU" has the line, "We know how you OGs rockin' already... the jig is up," calling out Jay for acting neutral towards Drake's battles yet always seeming to play a role in how they pan out.

Jay-Z responded to these disses at the 2026 Roots Picnic, where he credited himself as being an early influence for Drake and flexed his own net worth as being far beyond Drake's. Jay selecting himself to perform at the Super Bowl seems to be another way to assert his dominance over the Canadian rapper in their long-standing feud. Either way, it still takes the opportunity away from other worthy artists who have been working hard in the past few years and deserve the spot at the Big Game far more than Jay himself.