Opinion

Photo of the Day |



University of Connecticut students wait in line for a basketball game against Army on Sunday, Oct. 25, 2026. The Huskies won 86-50 over the Black Knights. PHOTO BY EMMANUEL DEFFOR, CONTRIBUTOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

OCTOBER DOESN'T FEEL PINK ANYMORE

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Back in my day (says the 19-year-old), October and the color pink were a married couple. One did not exist without the other; there were pink T-shirts, pink fundraisers and pink lights in the lampposts.

Breast cancer awareness was championed in the fall, and the days leading up to glorious Halloween night were filled with reminders to help make a change. For a time in the year known for chilly, demoralizing weather, and for a cause not particularly fun in nature, it seemed like the neighborhoods of America rallied together to create joy around breast cancer awareness. October, truly, just does not seem pink anymore

And so now that I'm older, hopefully wiser and a little more observant, I can see that October isn't as pink as I once remember it being. Quite frankly, this makes me rather sad. It's strange because local organizations such as the Pink Pledge are still fighting strong, championing the effort in local towns in Connecticut.

But if you're not actively looking, it's not as obvious as it once was. Pink ribbon pins are a lovely gesture, and pink shirts worn by coaches on the sidelines of football games are admirable, but the fact that breast cancer awareness feels discrete, and sometimes simply a stylistic choice, is disappointing.

The NFL is honestly one of the biggest changemakers when it comes to raising money for cancer support through its "Crucial Catch" program. Yet now more than ever, the league's support seems like a shell of what once was. The NFL used to seem like the sponsor of pink, as every game was focused on breast cancer awareness. Sunday nights on the couch and immersing yourself in quality time with pops, watching Tom Brady chef up and seeing a whole 'lotta pink. It was standard. Simply put.

On Thursday, Oct. 8, the NFL made a post on their Instagram account with the caption "George Pickens and Ceedee Lamb rocking pink tonight." They're spotlighting a great thing, but why are they showcasing two players wearing pink when really, everyone should be? Since that post and the time I am writing this, the NFL has posted a sum of 839 posts and a grand total of three of them have been related to Crucial Catch or breast cancer awareness. Three.

Since 2016, the NFL has dropped the iconic pink ribbon for a multicolored logo to "represent the multiple cancers that can be detected early." This, of course, is a worthy action from the NFL, but taking away the pink takes away the power that the pink brought: widespread, almost ubiquitous marketing and noise.

I'm harping on the NFL here, but this really is just representative of a larger problem at hand: our fear to rally behind a cause. In the fast-paced, internet-driven world we find ourselves in today, having everyone on the same page is nearly impossible. It's a monumental task for everyone to focus on one topic for more than a doomscroll, and even if they do, it seems the deep partisan divide that plagues the nation stunts any unity anyway. Have we, as a country, dropped the pink because we've forgotten in the wake of seemingly more forward and contemporary issues? Or did we stop fighting together because we, in a rather lame fashion, fail to care? If it's the former, I'm upset; the latter, disheartened. October was our test of showing love towards our brothers and sisters struggling and we've failed them. Showing your support cannot exist solely in an event or game when it is being broadcast. As Coach John Wooden famously put it, "The true test of a man's character is what he does when no one is watching."

So do I give up hope? Well of course not! My faith in locality stands, as it's the town 5ks and the marches down main street where community is built and where the movement will start strong again. If communities as small as neighborhoods are torn so far apart by partisan opinion that they cannot stand together for a cause as just as breast cancer awareness, then we may all just need to look in the mirror and evaluate our stance as humans.

It's up to us, the people, to make October pink again. Make a cause rooted in a disease so cruel back into a cause focused on joy, hope and love. Be loud, but more importantly, be unafraid to fight. Fight when nobody's watching, show out even if you're not getting paid or monetized for it. Altruism cannot be a forgotten concept, and I look forward to the year when October is pink again.

Here's how to prevent academic dishonesty

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College students are told the moment they step into a classroom that cheating is wrong. Academic dishonesty clauses are written into every syllabus and Code of Conduct, and anti-artificial intelligence policies are drilled into our heads. Despite this, for some college students, academic dishonesty has become a way of life and just another strategy to get ahead — or rather, just to keep up.

From AI-enabled calculators to Meta glasses, college students will always find a new and innovative way to cheat on an exam. In many courses, a closed-note, in-person, proctored and on-paper exam is not enough most of the time to prevent some students from getting an unfair advantage. As technology continues to advance, it's time to re-evaluate how we evaluate our students.

While studies disagree on how many and how often students cheat, a 2024 Wiley study showed that both students and professors feel cheating is on the rise and will continue to increase. Over 60% of students cited pressure and a large workload as the reason for their cheating.

Grade inflation, a perceived higher cost of college and a tough job market for recent graduates all contribute to the pressure students feel to outperform. College students, especially those in highly competitive fields like medicine and law, are in direct competition with each other for internships, post-graduate jobs and doctorate programs.

As Hall of Fame quarterback Joe Montana says, "If you ain't cheating, you ain't trying." Despite being made in a football context, this mentality is all too familiar in classrooms. It's easy to condemn those who cheat, but it's much harder to resist when their dishonesty puts you at a disadvantage. Among students at the University of Connecticut, I have heard many justify their cheating with the idea that if they do not cheat, someone else will. If they choose the moral high ground, they'll take the hit on their transcript, especially if there is a curve involved.

To battle the cheating epidemic, many professors at UConn have moved toward much stricter testing policies. Some of them require backpacks and devices to be left at the front of the room, and others demand the use of video LockDown Browser monitoring while in class. Despite the great care that professors take to create an equal testing environment, students will still find a way to cheat.

Rather than continuing to increase security measures around testing, professors and departments should consider how they assess students in the first place. Well-designed open-note exams can maintain academic rigor while reducing instances of cheating. When notes and reference materials are available to the whole class, cheating is disincentivized because students no longer have the temptation to sneak in formulas and definitions to compete with their classmates. Professors can spend less time policing exam policies and more time distinguishing who really gets it and who does not.

Open-note policies do not necessarily make exams easier. While closed-book exams test students on their ability to memorize information and formulas, an application-centered open-note exam encourages students to review materials to make effective notes. Then, it tests them on the depth of their understanding and their critical thinking skills. Giving students access to basic information allows professors to ask more challenging questions that require analysis and a true understanding.

Application-heavy exams more accurately reflect the demands of life after graduation. In the workplace, professionals consult resources, collaborate with teammates and use all available information to solve problems. Instead of testing students on memorization, learning can be better reflected by their ability to find information and use it.

Ultimately, the purpose of an exam is to gauge students' ability and knowledge level, not their willingness and methods to break the rules.

Grades are important distinguishers between students, and we should still be expected to work hard to earn an A, but the way that the testing system is currently designed does not yield the data points it's built to measure.

If universities really want to create a fair testing environment and a meritocracy that rewards the right things, stricter testing policies will not suffice. Testing policies need to keep up with the times, and it's time to start making changes.

GRAPHIC BY JAMES CARLTON, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

