Photo of the Day | Goodluck on midterms ^_^



Students on their way to class cutting through the bottom of the Student Union Mall on a 42 degree October morning. The temperature will only get worse from here on out! PHOTO MARCO DIAS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS

OP-ED

CELL PHONES AREN'T ENOUGH: WHY UCONN MUST STOP THE BLUE LIGHT PHASE-OUT

by Arun Jose
UCONN PARENT

As the parent of a current UConn student, I was deeply disturbed to learn that the university is beginning to phase out the blue light emergency phone system across campus. During our initial campus tours, UConn proudly showcased these lights as proof of its commitment to student well-being. Removing them now feels like a broken promise, driven by an effort to save $70,000 a year in maintenance costs.

The UConn Police Department has defended this decision by stating the community no longer needs the system because of widespread cell phone ownership, noting only two real emergency calls in five years. But low usage is not proof of obsolescence. We don't remove fire extinguishers from dorms just because there hasn't been a fire in five years. The blue lights are a fail-safe, an insurance policy and a highly visible deterrent to crime.

Assuming a cell phone can replace a dedicated emergency kiosk ignores the reality of a crisis. If you are being mugged, your phone is the target. If you are running from a threat, your phone might be dropped or left behind. We all know the frustration of a dead battery at the end of a long day or spotty cell service on parts of the campus. Furthermore, in a moment of sheer panic or intoxication, dialing a phone and explaining your exact location to a dispatcher takes precious time. A blue light requires one push of a button to instantly geolocate you for the police.

UConn administration points to other universities that have removed their blue lights, but they are ignoring a massive difference: Many of those schools offer dedicated "Safe Ride" transportation programs to help students get home at night. UConn does not have this infrastructure, leaving students walking alone in the dark with one less safety net.

Student safety should not be compromised to save on maintenance. Instead of tearing these poles down, the university should be upgrading them with modern technology like integrated security cameras. I urge the student body and the Student Government to push back against this decision and demand that UConn keeps its campus truly safe.



A blue emergency phone sits in the shade covered up on Monday, September 21st, 2026. UConn is removing most emergency phones from campus.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL JEFFERS, GRAB PHOTOGRAPHER/THE DAILY CAMPUS