

"UConn has given me the support network  
I always needed. From faculty members to my closest friends,  
I know this place is my home because of them."

# DIVERSITY



*Even though we didn't get to graduate "together" there is always a reason to keep smiling!!*

*The sunrises/sunsets on top of Horsebarn Hill are underrated; make sure you see one!*

*Successful people are not gifted; they just work hard and succeed on purpose.*

*No matter the weather, no matter the strife, NEVER. GIVE. UP.*

*I have no idea what I'm doing, but I think I'm doing it really well.*

*It was always interesting and there was always something new*

*Always try to find a little sunshine or good lighting*

*Never thought I'd get this far, it feels pretty good*

*Don't raise your voice, improve your arguments.*

*A lot of work, but equally as rewarding*

*At Uconn, friends turn into family*

*Soop doop babyyyyyyy*

*Huskies Forever!!*

*Be yourself.*

*Thank you*

*Husky forever  
C is for saxophone!*

*Anything is possible!*

*Senior year is so much fun!*

*2020 could have been worse*

*Things will always even out*

*She believed she could. So she did!*

*Be happy in the moment! That's enough.*

*You know what? Because I personally don't*

*Proud owner of a UConn gym membership.*

*The end of an adventure, is only the beginning of another.*

*Before becoming extraordinary you must become a fighter*

*The stars in Storrs look better from the top of Horsebarn.*

*Be the change that you wish to see in the world. —Mahatma Gandhi*

*We need difficult days so we can appreciate the good days even more.*

*Shout out to my fellow Bachelor-purr colleague Cappy, who is always on deck to cuddle and has faithfully attended both webinars and online events with me! We did it as a team!*

*We're notes in this beautiful concert of existence. If we don't play ourselves, nobody'll*

*People who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.*

*— Rob Siltanen*

# &

# INCLUSION



# Editors Note

Why should we have a diversity magazine? Initially, when I first thought about the question I thought the answer was simple: to showcase people from all different backgrounds and to give them a platform to express their initiatives and ideas. However, as I started to discuss this concept with more people, I think I realized that although one diversity and inclusion magazine will not make a dramatic difference, Nutmeg wants to be a platform for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color), but we do not want to take over; we simply want to document and report the feelings and current perspectives of BIPOC UConn students to our readers. Keeping this edition genuine was one of my main goals as editor. Although being affiliated with UConn, I will not simply pat UConn on the back for doing what most would believe is the bare minimum for diversity and inclusion. As UConn students, we have to admit that there is so much underlying racism in our community that many like to ignore, and numerous incidents like the Charter Oak incident of last year, the repainting of the Black Lives Matter rock, and so many others are a testament to that. This being said, UConn has come a long way in terms of initiatives related to

diversity and inclusion. Most, if not all, of these have been started by students who are pushing and want to change this predominantly white institution for the better. The initiatives and ideas that are included in this magazine such as the creation of the @Black.at.uconn Instagram page or numerous organizations pushing for a required anti-racism course are actively developing and will continue to progress long after this magazine is published. Activism that reaches outside of the sphere of UConn will continue, and it's our responsibility to keep lighting that fire and to keep fighting for what we believe in. It's also our responsibility to educate our family and friends about the systemic racism within our country and the racism that exists within the UConn community. I hope that you as a reader will understand these sentiments and educate yourself further on these issues as you read this edition on diversity and inclusion.

-Meira Tompkins

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...ing to send threatening text messages about the black student and even though it was reported he did not get impeached from student government and the university in general has not done anything.  
2021

derogatory comments about the asian population at school. She would always talk about how they were so loud and obnoxious. I as an Asian American student felt very uncomfortable and was confused on why she was saying this to me.

and other non-black students. A song came on with the n-word. Everyone was having a good time until that part. Of course, the boys sing along. I jokingly yell, "hold up, hold up," because as a black woman I am hyper aware of being perceived as angry.

So I am a proud black and west African woman. I came to UConn for pre-med because I've always wanted to be a doctor. I went to talk to the premed advisor about applying to medical schools and I asked for a recommendation. This was literally told me that I won't get into medical school because I didn't find a doctor...  
2021

I came back from break with a new hairdo. One of my managers, a woman who holds a doctorate, asked me if I "uncut my hair." I know she didn't mean anything negative, but throughout training all I could think of was how she'd be ever frowning at me for being so foolish. I cut it by a thousand cuts.  
2021

I had a black woman professor (who has terrible ratings btw) who seemed to be openly colorist among other major issues. There were many small examples in class that compounded throughout the semester. Sad because her course is one of the few that centers on black womanhood. How are you going to have such a course if you don't address such a painful issue? Black women, particularly those of a darker hue, face?  
2021

I will never forget the day that Lucian Wintrich came to UConn to speak. It's one thing to live in an environment where racism exist in a population of the ignorant and uninformed— that's life. To know that this man, a neo-nazi, "alt-right" who SHOULD be known as a neo-nazi, was INVITED to this campus... that hurt more than anything.

As a non-black BIPOC student, I noticed a noticeable difference in how the students around me would react to me. I went to meet him, he looked at my transcript and told me "you're just not ready." He didn't give me advice or try to understand my situation. He didn't care. He told me I should do better and at this point I should understand how to study and what to expect in my classes. That was the first and last time I ever met with him.  
Alumni, 2018

In the School of Engineering you get a professor starting from your junior year. The professor is a professor within your major. I was CSE. They're supposed to help guide you in your final two years since they have experience within your field of study. I went to meet him, he looked at my transcript and told me "you're just not ready." He didn't give me advice or try to understand my situation. He didn't care. He told me I should do better and at this point I should understand how to study and what to expect in my classes. That was the first and last time I ever met with him.  
Alumni, 2018

LOL there have been times where Storrs and Regional professors have accused of plagiarism with no evidence or receipts to back up the allegations. I remember getting a 0 on a take home final my sophomore year and I was furious. I stomped to the professor's office to see what was up. My professor said that she gave me a 0 because she thought I plagiarized.

We need to talk about the lack of resources and support that Storrs has on regional campuses. And remember that I had had a significant number of transfer students. As a Hartford student transferring to Storrs, they took away my resources to help you transfer. I kept in touch with SSS student services. Student Services is created to help underprivileged students but it does not quite do the job. I heard a story about a student who had to transfer to Storrs.

I choose to block this professor's name out you can. I would like to remain anonymous. I took a class in Shea's English class and I had previously taken AP English in high school and Aced it, and 2 English classes at UConn and I got a 4.0. I knew My work was being racially discriminated against. I received one of the lowest grades in the class. Rate My Professor gave him a 4.0 so I knew he would do well in the beginning.

i'm a POC and i understand that my black students but i would still like to submit this it's up to you if you post it or not. Last year when

I want to be clear and say I am NOT a Black UConn student- just thought I would submit this if it seemed like a relevant post!  
I went into a "dorm party" freshman year that was a room filled with white boys. A song came on and the guys

Back in Fall 2018, I was walking back from subway around midnight back to Werth Tower on a Friday night. As I was walking, a group of white males in a car

WRITER: SARVEEN RAD | DESIGNER: LEYLA ARICI

# Black @ UConn

Many might find themselves exhausted from the perils of the year 2020. Amidst the global coronavirus pandemic, multiple curveballs have made this year unique and transformative. From wildfires raging throughout Australia to adjusting to virtual school and work, we have experienced a roller coaster of events and emotions. Most notably, the death of George Floyd has led to social outrage and a call to attention to address racism within all levels of society. This tragic event has been met with responses in the forms of protest, social media campaigning, and public petitions. An acknowledgement that has become relevant at UConn is the creation of an Instagram page, @black.at.uconn. Third semester physiology and neurobiology major Winta Mekonnen and fifth semester linguistics and philosophy major Adrienne Bruce are two UConn students who have been crucial players in developing and maintaining the voice of BIPOC students through numerous social media outlets. The goal of the page is to uplift the voices of UConn students who have been subject to microaggressions or acts of racism. Over 100 current and former students have shared personal anecdotes of their struggles during their time at UConn. The creators viewed the formation of the page as a necessary platform amidst this time of racial turbulence. Winta stated, "The bottom line is racism still exists in America and, for a lot of Americans, this was not something they were aware of. We are truly tired of seeing video after video of Black men and women being ruthlessly murdered by the police...

it was at that time Adrienne reached out to me with the idea to start the page." By sharing these posts, this exhibit yearns to emphasize the voices of the BIPOC community on campus while enlightening those who may be unaware of the current social climate. This dynamic has given victims a platform to safely voice their concerns while the UConn community as a whole can reflect on their role in either preventing or perpetuating racial discrimination at UConn. Furthermore, Mekonnen and Bruce believe their page played a role in pushing the university to add an anti-racism course and would like to see the university mandate the course to be required for all students. They also want to highlight other resources such as the cultural and diversity centers that facilitate engagement and discussion between individuals with a myriad of experiences. The year 2020. Who would have known this year would bring such friction and division. In trying times like these, it is imperative to simplify our understanding of ourselves. Locally, we are all Huskies. Nationally, we are all members of a greater society with pursuits and aspirations. Regardless, movements like @black.at.uconn are attempts to restore a familial attitude amongst our community. Perseverance in the present will dictate the future. This story remains unwritten and we are the authors that dictate its ending, so it is imperative that we band in pursuit of a society where all are treated equally.

Designed

Designed



Designed

Black



Black

Black

WRITER: RACHEL GRELLA | DESIGNER: LEYLA ARICI

DesignedBlack is a student-run organization founded in the summer of 2019 that works to promote art created by Black artists within the UConn community across various platforms. Such outlets currently include an Instagram page, podcasts, and an official website. The organization provides artists with the tools and resources they need to express themselves and be heard in the artistic community. The platform is open to all Black artists regardless of major or experience level. According to the president, seventh semester digital media and applied communications major Solange Wearing, “We have a lot of engineers and a lot of non-fine arts majors who want to learn how to do that stuff so we host a lot of workshops.”

Wearing explained that “it all started with an Instagram post” aiming to promote a “collective of Black digital creators at UConn.” From there, Wearing met future vice president seventh semester digital media & design major Isaiah Edwards and shared her proposal. The idea was greeted with immense support and excitement and, in the words of Edwards, “We just ran with it.” Together, they used networking tools such as LinkedIn and Instagram to grow the organization. Due to the pandemic, the organization was established without the help of faculty or staff, and was subsequently created solely by UConn students.

“What prompted me to start it was that I would take

digital media & design classes and would notice that I was the only Black person there,” Wearing stated. A goal of DesignBlack is to create a sense of unity, representation, and support for Black artists on campus. “There [were] only like 30 Black students in the School of Fine Arts last year,” Edwards emphasized. “I thought it would be so cool if those 30 students [could] meet.”

In a little over a year the organization has grown immensely and has partnered with both the Department of Digital Media & Design and the Department of Fine Arts. They have additionally cosigned with the School of Engineering and School of Business. DesignBlack has gone to achieve recognition

and support beyond the UConn community, and has even caught the attention of professional designers.

This year’s theme is Afrofuturism which, according to Wearing, means to examine “what issues plague the Black community and what the future of Black identity mean[s].” Wearing said, “We wanted to make all of our projects centered around that intersection of technology and the African Diaspora aesthetics.”

Featured artwork can be multimedia and represents diverse mediums such as music, poetry, and film. The organization is the first of its kind and helps promote the representation of Black artists in the UConn community and beyond.

# UConn ANTI-BLACK RACISM COURSE

WRITER: CHRISTIE WANG | DESIGNER: JARED POULSEN

PHOTOS:  
@LIFE MATTERS ON PEXELS.COM  
CLIPART-LIBRARY.COM

*“More needs to be done to remedy the false narratives that have been told for decades.”*

With over 1,500 students and 500 staff and faculty enrolled, the U.S. Anti-Black Racism course is the most popular course in UConn’s history. Newly offered this semester, the course introduced students and faculty to the foundational history and concepts of systemic and anti-Black racism.

Aiming to center the voices and lived experiences of Black students within the context of racism, the course provided students and faculty the resources to potentially disrupt anti-Black racism for the collective good. Delivered entirely online, the optional one-credit course was offered to all undergraduate students. An additional non-credit course was offered but not required for all graduate students, staff, and faculty.

Now, three UConn students are on a mission to further expand the reach of the course by making it a requirement for all first-year students and restructuring general education requirements to create lasting institutional change. After reading the comments made by two UConn students on the @Black.at.uconn Instagram page about the limitations of the current anti-Black racism course, third semester history major Katherine Spinnato, fifth semester political science and human rights double major Brittany Diaz, and third semester political science major Mason Holland began to think about further steps that could be taken by the university to incorporate the ideas suggested by these comments.

Posted on the Instagram page in the fall, anonymous students expressed their sentiments toward UConn’s new anti-Black racism course, stating UConn already had “plenty of anti-racism courses” and “courses like this should be required to graduate.” “Something about it being a quick little one-credit course doesn’t sit right with me,” read one post. “More needs to be done to remedy the false narratives that have been told for decades.”

Spinnato, Undergraduate Student Government Academic Affairs Advocacy Director, credited the idea of requiring the anti-racism course for all first-year students to these posts. “The idea came from those two students who posted on @Black.at.uconn.,” said Spinnato. “That’s where I began that conversation with Mason and Brittany.”

Spinnato also explained how the idea to restructure general education requirements for all students came to fruition. “We thought, ‘What do we currently have [in place at the university] that is [promoting] some sort of society and cultural literacy?’ The closest thing we have to this is Content Area Four.”

The Content Area Four requirement mandates that students take six credits worth of courses addressing issues of diversity and multiculturalism, with one international component and another component focusing on the U.S. “It sort of dips its toe into the water of cultural education, but students can complete courses under Content Area Four without realizing that they’re fulfilling that content area,” said Spinnato. “It’s not focused enough on cultural education and the issues of race.”

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The proposal requiring the anti-Black racism course for all first-year students and restructuring Content Area Four was passed by the USG Senate. The next step is to circulate a petition among students, alumni, and faculty to raise awareness and garner attention. “We want to reach as many people as possible and partner with organizations at UConn, get departments to endorse it, and get faculty to endorse it,” said Spinnato. “And then [we can] take it to the University Senate who will make this policy change.”

Spinnato said that, in enforcing this plan, USG hopes to promote empathy. She said these classes are designed to familiarize students with different experiences they normally are not exposed to or do not usually have the opportunity to learn about.

Third semester political science major Neha Kataria, USG Parliamentarian, emphasized that exposure is one of the best ways to educate people about race. “It is so important for students coming to UConn to understand how to be anti-racist,” she said. “History is normally being taught from a white European lens. With this Content Area Four change and anti-racism course requirement, we are finally getting the education we need from a Black and brown lens, which we often don’t see.”

If passed by the University Senate, the class of 2025 will be the first to experience these changes. “Education is the solution and now is the time to be proactive,” said Kataria. “We expect to see institutional change very soon.”



*“History is normally being taught from a white European lens.”*

*With this Content Area Four change and anti-racism course requirement, we are finally getting the education we need from a Black and brown lens, which we often don’t see.”*

# Rainbow Center Art Show

WRITER: EILEEN SHOLOMICKY  
DESIGNER: EMILY KARAM

This year, the Rainbow Center's Annual Art Gala did not take place in the cozy room on the fourth floor of the Student Union. Instead, in the age of COVID-19 where social distancing reigns, the Rainbow Center hosted the event over Zoom. This led to a more intimate gathering, with the organization hosting about 15 people over video chat to appreciate a cumulative 18 pieces of art between six artists.

Digital art dominated the night's presentation, ranging from fan art to speculative and emotionally-charged pieces. Seventh semester civil engineering major M. Mottolese, while not present for the event, submitted an art piece of their original Pokémon

character with their Pokémon companions at their side and a Pokéball in hand.

Wren Halpern, a third semester digital media & design major, presented a two-panel comic about self-forgiveness, which was representative of their anxiety. "For someone like me who has anxiety, I get stuck in circles of thought a lot, and this exemplified how you have to deal with that," Halpern said.

Meanwhile, third semester psychological sciences and human development & family studies double major Cal Benitex offered three pieces focused on distinct subjects: fan art from Madeline Miller's *The Song of Achilles* of Achilles and Patroclus, a piece titled "Dark Side of the Moon" ironically portraying a person standing in a desert with a blazing sun, and a piece inspired by both *The Phantom of the Opera* as well as his own original story.

Benitex used "Dark Side of the Moon" to play with texture in order to represent his manic state of mind at the time of drawing. Additionally, he admitted to receiving backlash for his "Achilles and Patroclus" piece for depicting Achilles as a black man, even though that may well have been how Homer had envisioned him, as some scholars point to its historical plausibility. "We think of [the time in which the Iliad took place] as . . . very Eurocentric, but I liked this scholar's idea [in an article Benitex had read] that it's the complete opposite," Benitex voiced.

In addition to digital art, the gala featured four pieces of traditional art, all from artist Cassandra Calabrese, a seventh semester art history major. These pictures included a redraw of a photograph of a storm rolling in over the countryside, a naked woman lounging on a couch from a figure-drawing class, a sepia-tinted shed, and a tree with bark

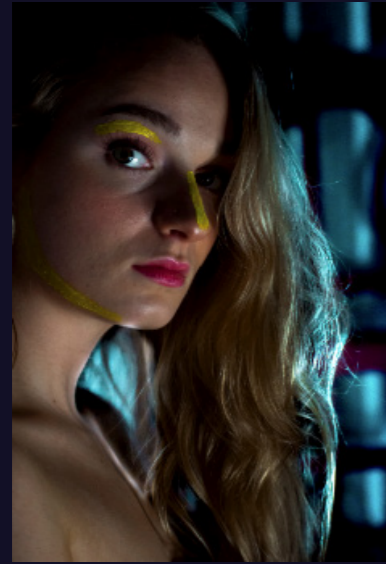
like human skin. Calabrese received praise for her use of texture, especially on the tree piece titled "Jasna." She was inspired by a tree she had seen "that looked like it had skin . . . and it was folding and creasing in ways [she] had never seen before." The gala also included nine photographs. The first five came from photographer Alex Leo, a fifth semester journalism major who could not be present, and featured a model in bold yellow makeup which stood out against the dark, shadowy background of the photos. The final four photographs closed out the main presentation and were submitted at the last minute by third semester psychology major Kallan Doyon, who was "fascinated by [the] different shapes and colors represented by flowers" and took pleasure in playing around with the macro setting on their camera. The photos came from four different places in Connecticut and New York, and were inspired in part by Doyon's calculus class. "[We were learning] . . . about the mathematical patterns that flowers tend to follow, and that's why the flower drew my eye, like, 'Oh my god, this is literally what I learned about,'" said Doyon.

After the main slideshow, in a demonstration of one of the benefits of a Zoom gathering, the Rainbow Center invited audience members to share the Instagram profiles of their favorite artists, which staff members then displayed over Zoom's screen-sharing feature. Finally, the night closed with students shouting out their own accounts, including Halpern (@ebbilayart), Benitex (@bokutana), Calabrese (@cur.ated), Doyon (@photosbykallan), and audience member Adrienne Bruce (@adriebee\_).

VIEW GALLERY



ALEX LEO



IZZY



IZZY



IZZY



IZZY



IZZY

WREN HALPERN



FORGIVE COMIC PG 1



FORGIVE COMIC PG 2

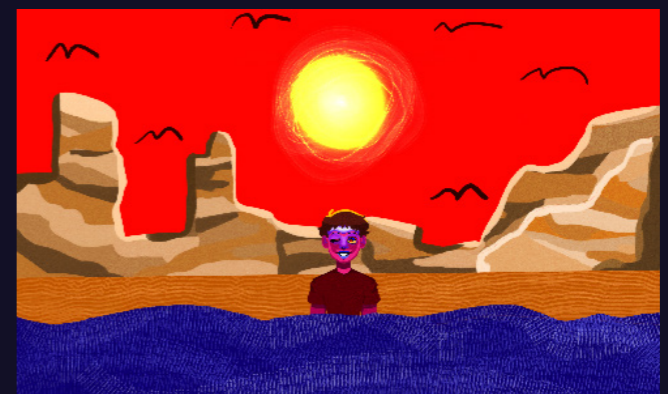
CAL BENITEX



ACHILLES AND PATROCLUS 1



THE DUEL



THE DARK SIDE OF THE MOON



CASSANDRA CALABRESE



JASNA

MARISSA MOTTOLESE



RT ANNI 1-100



WATCHING THE POT BOIL

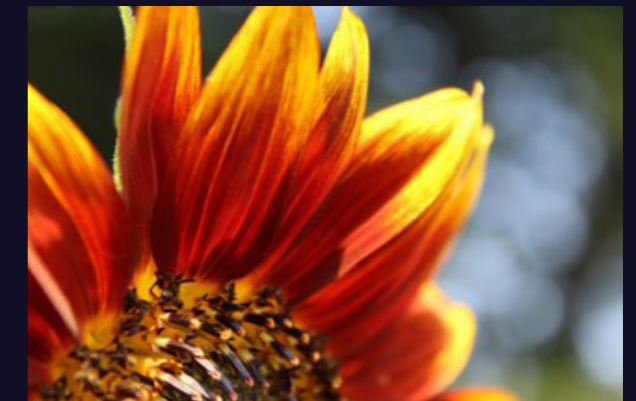


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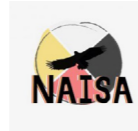


THE SHED

KALLAN DOYON



# NAISA



NATIVE AMERICAN AND INDIGENOUS STUDENTS ASSOCIATION



This fall, Nutmeg Magazine sat down to interview Sage Phillips about UConn's Native American and Indigenous Students Association, a brand new student organization whose focus is uplifting the voices of Native and Indigenous students on campus. Phillips, both the president and founder of NAISA, is a fifth semester political science and human rights double major with a minor in Native and Indigenous studies.

PHOTOS:  
NACP.UCONN.EDU  
@UCONN\_NAISA ON INSTAGRAM

**Nutmeg Magazine:** What pushed you to create NAISA? Was there any event or instance in particular, or was it something that you had been thinking about for a while?

**Sage Phillips:** Before I “inherited” NACP [Native American Cultural Programs], there was a student organization, but it was pretty much caput. We couldn't really find any information or records on it. In my first year with NACP, I noticed that we weren't really getting the Indigenous crowd. A lot of Natives identify as Indigenous; North American tribes identify as Native or Indigenous, but if you're coming from South America, you don't necessarily identify as Native — only Indigenous. So the reason I started NAISA was to create a space where these students could come together and feel like they belong. Obviously, we welcome Indigenous students at NACP, but that Indigenous component is missing from our name. NAISA was really about making sure that these students could come together and have their voices heard, share their stories, and reclaim their roots.

**NM:** What did you want to get out of NAISA? What's the most important thing for students to understand and to cultivate from it?

**SP:** There's kind of two sides of that. Mostly, the biggest priority and the outcome I wanted to see was that these students know they have a place to feel valid and belong. NACP operates out of a storage closet in the Student Union, so we don't really have physical space.

NACP also isn't a student organization, so having NAISA brings in more of the “club” aspect, letting these students join and be a part of it. On the other side of things, we wanted to be able to welcome other students who don't necessarily identify [as Native or Indigenous]. We wanted to make sure that the UConn community could have a place where they could come to learn about Native and Indigenous cultures, histories, traditions, current events — you name it. We have a lot of members that don't identify as Native or Indigenous, but they come and they share their own cultures too.

**“NAISA was really about making sure that these students could come together and have their voices heard, share their stories, and reclaim their roots.”**

# UConn Collaborative Organizing

WRITER: NIDHI NAIR | DESIGNER: MEIRA TOMPKINS

UConn Collaborative Organizing, or UCCO, is one the biggest and fastest growing clubs at UConn that campaigns, mobilizes, and organizes for social justice on campus. In an interview with two prominent members of the club Brittany Diaz, a fifth semester political science and human rights major, and Mason Holland, a third semester political science and women's, gender, and sexuality studies major, we were able to discuss the founding principles of UCCO, its projects and events for the coming year, as well as the continuation of social justice advocacy among college students.

Nutmeg Magazine: If you had to summarize the mission statement of UCCO in a couple of sentences, what would they be?

Brittany Diaz and Mason Holland: Our goal is to mobilize and come together for social justice and social justice advocacy, and we want to create solidarity towards creating a culture of change on campus. We are passionate about advocating and including everyone, regardless of what they look like, in our efforts for justice. We are a very inclusive community and I hope we will continue to remain so.

NM: UCCO is a very young organization as it was founded just one year ago by Katherine Morris, a recent graduate of UConn. What would you say are its founding principles? What do you attribute the organization's success to?

BD and MH: UCCO is known for being the first club on campus that incorporated everyone's identities and I think that remains one of its very first founding principles. Throughout the pandemic, the racial injustice and police violence that rocked our nation has further invigorated our efforts to provide a platform to students to take the Black Lives Matter movement seriously. Through our strident inclusivity and educational approach to viewing society with an intersectional lens, we have worked really hard to create a space where BIPOC folks can advocate for issues that matter to them.

NM: What have your recent events focused on? The Black Liberation Night School series seems particularly interesting and transformative to college students.

BD and MH: Yes! The Black Liberation Night School has been one of our most popular events. We wanted it to include education that we don't stereotypically find in our classrooms. Our first collaboration was with Steve Nunez which was very exciting. The next installment of the Black Liberation Night School is actually a collaboration with UConn Fridays For Future, and we're talking about race, capitalism, colonialism, and climate collapse — and like I mentioned before, we are including elements of education that are usually not discussed or [are] whitewashed. In addition to that, we also hold poetry and spoken word open mic nights.

NM: What are some of the most prominent issues you have worked on with UCCO? How have you been influenced by the Combahee River Collective?

BD and MH: We have been very passionate about defunding the UConn Police Department, food insecurity, race relations on campus, environmental racism, and UConn's role in perpetuating environmental colonialism. Many of us in UCCO also strive to raise awareness about other organizations that try to improve social activism on campus, like the NAACP and Power Up UConn. And like the Combahee River Collective, UCCO has also tried to address needs in the movements for justice right now that don't address the needs of Black people, especially Black women. We are fully committed to educating people about the intersectional nature of society and systems of oppression.

NM: How has the UCCO come to advocate for academic justice? For example, one of the most prevailing issues BIPOC face is the lack of mentors available to them on college campuses whereas white students don't often face the same challenges.

BD and MH: We have been working with the Undergraduate Student Government to create a one-credit anti-racism course that incorporates elements of a typical liberal arts education that are typically left out. We have also been reforming the Content Area 4 courses of our general education requirements to involve more anti-racist

elements.

NM: Do you feel like most of these measures are temporary band aids instead of real structural change? We know that many measures suggested by social justice activists to increase inclusion and diversity on college campuses can backfire and have a lot of unintended consequences.

BD and MH: Yes, definitely. I know that wanting to increase the number of Black tenured professors might sound good on face value but, in reality, it is just a form of tokenization that questions these scholar's abilities. And other measures implemented by the university, like bias training, have not been implemented well because they are usually held by people who have not undergone the same experiences or have the appropriate frame of reference. As student activists, we are fully aware that we could use the time we spend protesting and organizing for other things like studying or finding internships and jobs. But we want to use our time to fight this battle because we believe that the university, and society at large, is capable of real change.

NM: What are UCCO's goals for the future?

BD and MH: In the future, we want to move on from instituting our one credit anti-racism course as the foundation for change at the University of Connecticut. It might not be perfect, but we are convinced to make this the start of real structural change in our local communities.

***“We have worked really hard to create a space where BIPOC folks can advocate for issues that matter to them.”***

PHOTO: [HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/COLLABORATIVEORGANIZING/](https://www.facebook.com/collaborativeorganizing/)

PHOTOS:  
UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, ARCHIVES &  
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS, UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT LIBRARY



# Black student sit-in, 1974

WRITER: EILEEN SHOLOMICKY | DESIGNER: EMILY KARAM

Nutmeg Magazine sat down with Graham Stinnett, an archivist for the UConn Library, to talk to him about a collection regarding the Black student sit-in in 1974. The sit-in took place in the Wilbur Cross building, which had originally served as UConn's main library.



Nutmeg Magazine: Can you tell us a little bit about the work you've done as an archivist at UConn?

Graham Stinnett: I oversee the Alternative Press and Human Rights collections at the Archives & Special Collections, which is a part of the UConn Library in the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center. Due to the pandemic, a lot of our work has gone online — we've really had to rely on digitized collections. Of course, with all of the political activities going on this year, this specific set of photographs that we have in the collection from the Black student sit-in from 1974 draws a lot of comparisons to the militancy of grassroots movements seeking social justice around long-held anti-Black racist perspectives in the United States. One of my jobs is to show people this kind of stuff if they haven't heard of these incidents, or historical moments, specifically on our campus. Students tend not to have a connection to this kind of activism that they can draw a lot of positive examples from. Another element of that is that I bring these digitized photographs into the teaching that I do. I made this short video that's part of an anniversary virtual exhibition that we put together. It's our 25th year of being in the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, so we're highlighting 25 sets of archival collections. The video was also used for President Katsouleas' initiative for the anti-Black racism class.

NM: How did you come across the materials for the sit-in? Was it something you had found, or did you go looking for it in specific?

GS: I definitely went looking for it. It is a pretty well-known set of documents for those who have been in the library, but not so much for folks who are on campus who haven't been here since the seventies. We digitized this whole set specifically in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the African American Cultural Center. This is one of the last sets of photos of activism on campus, so it really demonstrates a high watermark of student activism at UConn as far as analog photography is concerned. There have been a lot of digital photographs that have been taken over the last 20 years or so, but in terms of a historical collection that we have quite a few of, this is one of the largest and one of the last of the analog.

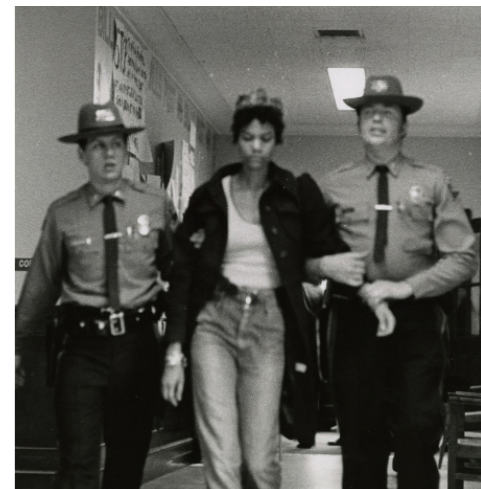
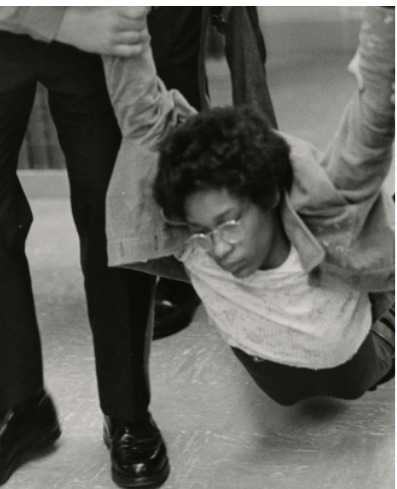
NM: What sparked your interest in the sit-in specifically?

GS: When you look at the collection of what's called the Alternative Press, which is kind of the basis of collecting materials around social justice just generally, that stuff largely starts in the mid-1960s. And especially at a university like UConn in that period, it's overwhelmingly white [and] it's

ally student sit-in, and there were something like 30 organizations from the Women's Movement... Women's Liberation, Puerto Rican Liberation, LGBT... I'd say, if anything, that demonstrates how much more organizing was going on on campus. Whether these were the same students in all of the groups is possible, but seeing that you could at least make a list of 30 organizations with social justice causes and that they were willing to put their bodies into an illegal space for the demands of others who are also part of their movement is a really strong statement. I don't think there has been as much building occupation. And [law-breaking] is just one of the larger topics about activism in general. Laws are established because they're supposed to protect an average part of society. But in democracy...you start to have a real scale of... how justice actually works. In this case, breaking the law is a really strong element in trying to get demands across, or at least push what maybe some view as a liberal agenda to maybe becoming a bit more of a progressive agenda... Students actually being driven to support each other is a big beacon of what can be learned from that period.

NM: Do you think that the collection as a whole factually represents what happened, or do you think that there may be some sort of bias within the collection?

GS: The collection...using that phrase broadly...is everything that we have in the archives. [It's] not just the Alternative Press, the African American Cultural Center Newsletter, the photographs — the collection also has the papers of the president, President Ferguson, as well as his other administrators, who [were] very much involved in trying to get these students either dealt with by the dean for disciplinary action, or attempting to negotiate but not really give in to any of the... demands by the students. We have both sides...a whole gamut of information that you could really interrogate, and I would say it's the closest thing you're going to get to a historical fact and a verifiable beat-by-beat account of the events. We have a blog post...one of our graduate student researchers did a bit of this digging between the sets of documents that really relate to this issue, and a lot of people sent letters to the president. One side of it was, "I can't believe you arrested these students [when] all they did was occupy the library because they clearly don't have access to things that the other students usually do." The other side was letters supporting the president, saying... super racist stuff that ends up kind of creeping through this hegemonic support of an institution that doesn't want to change as fast as its students do. It's just an interesting amount of information... The problem is there's too much of it to really sit



down and gather a complete account...in an hour. You need a couple weeks to really get a sense of it.

NM: You were talking earlier about the anti-Black racism course. Your archive work for the Black student sit-in was a module for that course. Can you talk a little about what that process was like, being a part of that course?

GS: Yeah. I definitely want to reiterate that the course was entirely taught by faculty of color, and that I was approached by Milagros Castillo-Montoya [a professor in NEAG] about providing some of the materials that we have that really highlight the strong historical demonstrative work of Black students on our campus around issues that affect them — from the faculty, from the top of the administration, all the way down. It was more an attempt for me to be a conveyor of the information that we have in that archive that students usually don't know about. They basically approached me with the idea that this was something that could be seen by not just hundreds of UConn students, but could eventually become a funded, massive online course to be accessed anywhere in the world. That really gives us a chance to reveal a lot more in the archives. Our job is to get as many eyes on this material in the collection as possible. The chance to be able to show as many people as possible,

even though in a virtual environment, gave me a chance to facilitate not just what the archives look like through this little video that I made, but also highlight some of the contextual information about why 1974 matters and why students had certain issues that they wanted to really press for.

NM: As a UConn archivist, how do you think UConn student protestors or activists have changed their protesting methods over the years from the seventies to now?

GS: The general mode of communication is part of it. The collection from the Alternative Press was entirely paper; this was a pre-internet period. This was back when students were way more interested in getting together to make a copy club with a photocopier machine to make their own newsletters and mimeograph them and then distribute them physically on campus. We're not in that place anymore. One of the last sort of vestiges from that period is the UConn Free Press. I'm the advisor of that organization, and even their magazine has [added] an entirely digital element to where it's not even delivered in the same way anymore. The way that students today organize themselves is no longer in the traditional sense where you're looking for the flier about the meetup. You're finding this information out on private servers or social media

accounts where the information is not really owned by the person who makes it. The archive's problem now is to try and pull this stuff down and add it to the collection even though we may never have the right to redistribute it... It's become entirely more disparate in terms of trying to capture it, collect it, and organize it, whereas in the past you could just go to these meetings and gather the fliers and handbills and newspapers and newsletters that are being passed around and have a pretty accurate sense of when people got together, what their issues were. Now it's far more of an "in the know" scenario and it's harder to break in.

NM: A lot of the grievances regarding racism that started the Black student sit-in in 1974 are still relevant today. Do you think we've made progress towards racial equality and equity at UConn? What more needs to be changed?

GS: I think there's definitely been progress, and this anti-Black racism class is a strong element of that; if for nothing else, the aesthetics of being able to use those words and have people accept them. Titling a course like that is no longer a "radical" thing to have on the course registry catalog. The representation of faculty and staff, which was one of the demands of the 1974 students, has largely changed. There is a large contingent of folks who

represent those demands and the students of color on campus. It's probably nowhere near where it needs to be to actually make a university a sort of flexible, amorphous learning space that can turn quickly and really represent issues that change in a fast way... But I think the university is a place that needs to be protected from some of the inroads that we can see in these more radical swings of perspective because this is one of the places where we can have these kinds of conversations. We can at least state that the principle of learning is a democratic principle and from there students can express themselves and have it be an incubator for what's going on outside... So yeah, I think some things have changed on one element, others not so much from a higher-up level. It's a large question and difficult to answer, but that's my crack at it.

Archives & Special Collections  
Black Student Sit-In, 1974, Resources

COLLECTIONS  
[African American Cultural Center Records](#)  
[Connecticut Daily Campus 04/24/1974](#)  
[Contac: Afro American Cultural Center Newsletter 05/01/1974](#)  
[Louise B. Simmons Papers](#)  
[Nutmeg Yearbook, 1974](#)  
[University of Connecticut Photograph Collection, Digitized Student Unrest Series](#)

RESEARCH  
[d'Archive Podcast: EP 26 - Black Student Sit-in @ Wilbur Cross, via WHUS UConn Archives Blog](#)

# Intercultural Greek Council

WRITER: CHRISTIE WANG | DESIGNER: MEIRA TOMPKINS

Founded in 2002, the Intercultural Greek Council (IGC) is one of four Greek councils within the Center for Fraternity and Sorority Development at the University of Connecticut. As the governing council for all culturally-based and multicultural fraternities and sororities represented and recognized at UConn, the IGC positively represents the underrepresented student community. The IGC works to promote diversity and inclusion not only among its member organizations but within the university itself, providing leadership opportunities to people of color who may not be able to find them elsewhere.

The council meets biweekly with representatives from each organization to discuss current and upcoming objectives, goals, and events. During these meetings, the executive board allocates a period of time to give students a chance to talk about any topic of their choice. “We provide a space that encourages people to share their diversity of thought, political stance... anything really,” said seventh semester allied health major and IGC Vice President Kyle Rodriguez. “This is to give everyone an opportunity to speak and have that civil discourse.”

The IGC also makes an effort to highlight the work that members are doing, building their leadership and presentation skills in hopes to recruit new leaders on campus who want to represent and see change. “It’s important that our members see people who look like them within positions of power on campus,” said seventh semester allied health major and IGC President Emily Fong. “We are always looking for ways to provide opportunities and spaces to grow, both individually and as chapters.”

Their efforts to promote diversity and inclusion on campus can be summarized by a simple metaphor. “Diversity is inviting everyone to the party; inclusion is us inviting them to dance,” said Fong. “Culture is not just about race or ethnicity. We celebrate and acknowledge people from all backgrounds, whether it be [in regards to] sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, or more. We really try to bring an inclusive worldview into everything we do.”

As Greek members of their own respective organizations, the IGC helps organize events and initiatives that focus on diversity and inclusion. For example, Sigma Lambda Upsilon hosts a series

of events during Raíces (Roots) Week each year in September that revolve around a nationally chosen theme. “Our theme this year was centered on literacy, our philanthropy,” said seventh semester global health major and IGC Secretary Siara Maldonado. “We hosted events that talked about the history of the BIPOC vote, educated the community on protest and policy, and encouraged people to register to vote.”

Some events are also hosted in collaboration with other councils and other cultural centers on campus like Masoquista, an event presented by Lambda Upsilon Lambda and the Rainbow Center. Individuals came together to discuss the impact of BIPOC voices throughout queer history, touching upon topics such as the importance of pronouns, contributions of the transgender community, and how people can be better allies for the gay rights movement. “Cultural enrichment is something that we are all very passionate about,” said Rodriguez. “It’s great to see cross-council and cross-cultural experience and open up the door for other organizations.”

Above all, the IGC is supportive of all organizations and encourages council members to step up as leaders in any capacity. “Many people choose to join culturally-based organizations to feel more visible, more seen, [and] to learn about their own cultures,” said Fong. “Although [the] IGC is one small council, we’re doing our best to make the biggest campus impact we can.”

**“Many people choose to join culturally-based organizations to feel more visible, more seen, [and] to learn about their own cultures.”**

**“We provide a space that encourages people to share their diversity of thought, political stance...anything really.”**

# UConn Survive

WRITER: RACHEL GRELLA | DESIGNER: LEYLA ARICI

UConn Survive is an Instagram page that was created over the summer with the purpose of spreading awareness about assault and abuse within the UConn community. They use their platform to share the stories of survivors as well as provide support and promote accountability within organizations and the student body. One of their goals is to assure survivors that they are heard, believed, and supported. “No matter what anyone tells you, your story and voice matters and what happened is not your fault,” the organization stressed.

Additionally, they focus on education of the student body and pushing for action against all perpetrators, whether it be organizations, students, or faculty. According to UConn Survive, “It’s given exposure to a whole new perspective on what happens on campus. We’d like to hope that it has made students more careful of who they interact with and more mindful in what they say to survivors.”

The page has already had a major impact on the UConn community, with the organization stating, “We think that this page has educated over a thousand people, students and faculty included, on what is

considered abuse, assault, and harassment and that any shape or form of this is completely unacceptable.” The organization urges the student body to hold others accountable for their actions and to speak up against perpetrators even though it is difficult to do, reiterating, “If you know of someone who has perpetrated, please encourage that person to be responsible for their actions.”

UConn Survive emphasizes and discloses problems on campus in addition to assault and abuse, such as exploitation. For example, the page discusses the spreading of intimate or nude photos without consent. They use their platform to uncover flaws and inadequacies in systems of accountability on campus. “Concealing misconduct does more harm than good,” UConn Survive said. “The perpetrator will continue to do the same multiple times because they think there is nothing wrong with their actions while the survivor has been traumatized for life.” Furthermore, UConn Survive stated, “We believe that severe actions must be taken [against those who commit such acts], [such as] reporting them to the police and, in the case of sexual assault, encouraging the survivor to report and



file the appropriate title if the survivor wishes to. The organization should support the survivor and believe his/her story.”

UConn Survive promotes ways in which members of the student body can make a difference. “We think that if students are concerned due to the pandemic with being active in person, such as attending rallies, protesting in person, etcetera, they can always show their support virtually. Sharing or reposting content is a huge contribution by itself.”

For students that are interested in promoting social change, UConn Survive often posts opportunities on their Instagram story and collaborates with fellow organizations such as Black at UConn and BIPOC at UConn. In the organization’s words, “We encourage students to keep learning more about what is happening in the world and take initiative in making the world a better place.”

“We listen, believe, and stand by our survivors.”



# Chief Diversity

# Officer



University of Connecticut Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Franklin A. Tuitt has an extensive history of work experience in advancing diversity and inclusion to create equitable learning environments. According to Tuitt, his journey began during his own years as a student at Randolph High School in Massachusetts, where he helped lead an initiative to form the Afro-American Club in attempts to provide opportunities for cultural engagement to people of color. “That was my introduction to diversity work,” he said. “That’s where the interest began.”

His time as an undergraduate at Connecticut College only reinforced the pressing need to bring more resources and support to students, faculty, and staff in the form of equity and inclusion at an institutional level. As only one of three African American males and one of 10 people of color in his class, Tuitt found himself in an environment that was culturally, socially, and politically isolating. “I remember the students of color in my class getting together and talking about how much we were struggling,” stated Tuitt. “We decided we had a choice. We could either leave, or get involved.” Together, Tuitt said he and his friends ran for

positions in various student organizations. By sophomore year, Tuitt became the president of the Black Student Union, which allowed him to engage with administrators to discuss diversity issues such as resources for multicultural programming and the adoption of a curriculum with a more inclusive worldview.

Many of the issues Tuitt tackled during his undergraduate career are still prevalent in the lives of undergraduate students at UConn today. For example, students are currently asking for the restructuring of general education requirements for improved global and cultural engagement. In addition, the Undergraduate Student Government is also working on a policy to require all students to take an anti-racism course during their freshman year. In response, Tuitt said he was “very optimistic” about the current conversations happening in the Office for Diversity and Inclusion towards making these efforts a reality. “We had over 500 faculty and staff and over 1,500 students enroll in the university-wide anti-Black racism course, and we are one of only two institutions in the nation to create such a course,” said Tuitt. “We also have some efforts on the way to look at our general education requirements to ensure that students are engaging with learning opportunities that introduce them to social justice content in a significant way.”

# Dr. Franklin A. Tuitt

*“Higher institutions are not separated from the real world.”*

Ultimately, Tuitt described the climate of diversity at UConn as a “work in progress.” He said UConn had a head start compared to other institutions in taking the initiative to create an anti-Black racism course, but there was still work to be done. One thing Tuitt said he would like to see UConn explore is mandatory training for people in management or leadership positions. “We don’t have anti-racism training that is required,” Tuitt stressed. “All employees are required to go through a series of trainings that address issues related to microaggressions and implicit bias, but they are introductory trainings and, in my opinion, are not enough to ensure that everyone has those resources and skills to enact those concepts and principles.”

The goal for UConn, and higher institutions in general, is to build the capacity necessary to lift diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the entire school system. This includes implementing a variety of programming to raise awareness and provide support for students, staff, and faculty — a task that is especially relevant given the current events happening both on and off campus. “Higher institutions are not separated from the real world,” said Tuitt. “The current external context and how challenging it has been, particularly around matters related to racial justice and racial equity — those concerns exist within UConn.”

Ultimately, Tuitt says he has been encouraged by the striking amount of engagement by those who have reached out to the Office for Diversity and Inclusion to collaborate and help advance efforts to create an equitable and transformative learning environment at UConn. “If anyone experiences something that tells them they don’t belong at UConn, that is one incident too many,” he said.

*“The current external context and how challenging it has been, particularly around matters related to racial justice and racial equity — those concerns exist within UConn.”*

WRITER: CHRISTIE WANG | DESIGNER: MEIRA TOMPKINS

PHOTO: [HTTPS://EDUCATION.UCONN.EDU/PERSON/FRANKLIN-TUITT/](https://education.uconn.edu/person/franklin-tuitt/)

# Breonna Taylor Vigil

OCTOBER 23, 2020

On a beautiful fall evening, a solemn group of students and community leaders gathered on the Student Union lawn to mourn the tragic death of Breonna Taylor, and to express their grief and frustration over the continued use of state-sanctioned violence on BIPOC communities. The vigil was held in collaboration with the UConn chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Power Up UConn, and UConn Collaborative Organizing. Some of the speakers included Power Up Manchester founder Keren Prescott, third semester political science major Michael Christy, fifth semester political science and communications major Damani Douglas, and many more.



Prescott opened with a moving speech about the importance of having young people run for office to increase representation in local governments. “Am I going to ask you to vote, and repeat that tired old spiel?” she asked spiritedly. “Hell no. Am I going to ask you to run for office and to increase your political engagement so as to create real lasting change? Hell yes.” Her rousing speech included calls to action among white students where she reiterated that “white silence is violence.” She talked about Breonna Taylor’s story as a metaphor for the importance of the upliftment, empowerment, and protection of Black women across America. Her inspiring speech was followed by a reading of a poem by Mason Holland, a third semester political science and women’s, gender, and sexuality major. He dedicated the poem to the students who repainted Spirit Rock on campus and re-instituted the Black Lives Matter sign on it after it was vandalized early this fall.

Brittany Diaz, a fifth semester political science and human rights major and the president of UConn Collaborative Organizing, spoke about the importance of recognizing the significance of Taylor’s life and her successes. “Taylor was known to be a woman who did everything perfectly,” she stated. “She was loving and caring, and deserved so much more.”

This sentiment was further emphasized by Douglas, when he expressed his indignation. “The system worked exactly as intended, and it continues to protect those in power and endanger the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable populations,” he said. Attendees of the vigil expressed their shared sentiments and continued to voice their anger at the precarious situation of Black women in America.

**“Remember, until Black women are free, no one is free.”**

As Prescott mentioned, Black women “have given life to our communities and societies” and America would not be what it is today without the thriving, strong, and resilient communities of Black women in our midst.

Angelica Sistrunk, a seventh semester linguistics and psychology major, remarked that she is passionate about honoring and uplifting Breonna Taylor’s voice even after her death. She mentioned her reluctance to view Taylor and other Black women as “victims,” but rather saw them as women who endure more struggles than most Americans and deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. This sentiment was echoed in Christy’s speech and his emphasis on the exclusivity of our current political system, and the dissociation of our top political leaders from the daily lives of most BIPOC. He talked about recognizing the importance of being there for the Black women in our own local communities, and encouraged people to join advocacy groups on campus like NAACP, Power Up UConn, and UCCO.

As Brittany Diaz and Keren Prescott mentioned, “We are here to mourn the loss of Breonna Taylor but also to move on from our grief and create actionable change. Remember, until Black women are free, no one is free.”



WRITER: NIDHI NAIR | DESIGNER: JARED POULSEN

PHOTOS: ERIN WU, VOX.COM

NM