Daily

Life

PolitiFact Editor-in-Chief Gives Fact-Checking Tips at UConn

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Katie Sanders, who is the editor in chief of PolitiFact, shared her tips on deciphering AI and fact-checking this election year to University of Connecticut students at the Wilbur Cross Building North Reading Room on Wednesday, April 1.

In her presentation, "Don't Be Fooled by Disinfo!" Sanders discussed the work PolitiFact publishes, their processes and how people can fact-check on their own. PolitiFact is an online nonprofit fact-checking source that was established in 2007 and operates under six key principles to offer audiences a "Truth-O-Meter" rating for claims and statements made publicly, typically by politicians.

"It's very hard to tell what's real and what's not," Sanders said.

The principles PolitiFact follow when fact-checking are using transparent sources, providing rabid nonpartisanship, correcting mistakes publicly, rigorously editing, always asking sources for evidence and checking for consistency.

On providing transparent sources, Sanders said, "giving readers the tools to recreate the conclusions for themselves; it builds trust."

Sanders said PolitiFact runs an annual "Lie of the Year" report, but with the onset of lies about tariffs, immigration, deportation and many other topics, 2025 was deemed "The Year of Lies."

"It was very hard to single out one talking point as more impactful, more significant," Sanders said.

Sanders expressed her discontent for lies and said they matter during her presentation.

"Lies hurt people," she said. "Lies have consequences."

In 2025, PolitiFact lost their partnership with Meta, a technology company that owns social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Threads, Sanders said. But there are still ways for social media users to decipher the truth behind posts they see on social media.

Sanders ran through a series of interactive examples with the audience of about 55 members, presenting different false posts, explaining the steps she recommends to factcheck them.

The first was a fake "X" post a user made, pretending to be President Donald Trump. Sanders suggested viewing the account who posted or shared the "message," searching for related key terms in another search engine or completing a reverse image search.

The second fake post was an AI generated video of a toddler and his mother that Sanders called "hyper realistic." Detecting emotional manipulation, catching visual anomalies and again, examining the account that posted the video, were three more suggestions Sanders made.

She said the three golden rules of factchecking are asking: "Who is behind it; what is the evidence; and what do other sources say?"



Editor-in-Chief of PolitiFact Katie Sanders talks with a University of Connecticut student. Sanders visited the Storrs, Conn. campus on Wednesday, April 1 to give a talk on political disinformation.

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"Misinformation, things like that, is a scary thing for a lot of journalists, like myself, going into the field," Sara Bedigian, who is the president of UConn's Society of Professional Journalists, said. "I think just knowing that there are still factcheckers out there; there are people out there doing the work to ensure that the information that's out there is truthful — it was honestly, at least for me, nice to hear that people are really doing this work."

Bedigian is a staff writer for and former editor-in-chief of The Daily Campus.

PolitiFact factchecks beyond politics, however. Sanders said they are debunking health misconceptions in a more inviting way.

She said the method is less of "they're right they're wrong" and more about "what's right."

In 2026, PolitiFact will cover the midterm elections by focusing on what Sanders said are races in key states.

"I'm trying to take all this information and take it into my writing and work in the future," Jennifer Nevill, a fourth semester journalism major in the audience, said.

The event was sponsored by UConn, PolitiFact, the Connecticut Foundation for Open Government and co-sponsored by UConn's Department of Journalism, Department of Political Science, Humanities Institute, Alan R. Bennett Political Science Honors Fund and Student Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. A discussion after Sanders' presentation was hosted by Amanda Crawford, who is an assistant professor of journalism at UConn and political reporter.



Journalist and Editor-in-Chief of PolitiFact Katie Sanders, right, discusses political disinformation with Amanda J. Crawford, left, an associate professor of journalism at the University of Connecticut. Sanders visited the university at Storrs, Conn. on Wednesday, April 1.

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