News

UCONN REC, cont. from p. 01

"I believe that the title of a club sport draws a lot of people in and it's good for recruiting," Haitsch said. "The club sports came with a certain level of prestige and it put us on the map and got something that I would consider a niche sport to get out there."

> **"I know our team, I know we're strong, I know we can get through it, but I just want to leave it better than I found it and this is making it a bit hard."**
>
> CHASE HAITSCH

As a veteran member, Haitsch stated the team's growth over the past two years has been monumental, seeing larger incoming classes participating in the wood-based sport.

"I know our team, I know we're strong, I know we can get through it, but I just want to leave it better than I found it and this is making it a bit hard," Haitsch said.

The UConn Club Running team practices on the track located behind Gampel Pavilion, typically at the same time as the field hockey team and among the many sports that lost their status.

There are 120 members on the team roster that participated this fall, with about 50 individuals continuing to race in the spring semester. Forty-nine of these members travel to compete at nationals which can be located anywhere from Pennsylvania, Virginia, or in the Midwest.

"We were considered a Tier V club by the Rec, that's like the lowest tier, which meant the least funding," Colin Slavin, the team treasurer, said. "We were only getting $1,000 a year from the Rec and then our cap from USG was $15,000, so we would usually use the $1,000 from the Rec to contribute towards our league dues."

The contribution from the Rec directly covers the team's $1,500 fee to the National Intercollegiate Running Club Association, with the remaining $500 of the cost being pulled from the team's Student Activities Business Services' account, according to Salvin.

Even though the team requires minimal support from the Rec, the loss of that support has left the team asking what guidelines influenced the retention of some teams over others, team members said.

"I feel like they're just kind of cutting the lower-class sports that aren't getting that much funding and I don't see the point of that," Jacob Gilson, the team's event coordinator, said. "I guess, if we're only $1,000 a year, but we have other clubs who are definitely getting a lot more than us and spending a lot more... if they're gonna just keep clubs who are getting $10,000 and cut the ones who get $1,000 it doesn't seem fair."

The club has faced numerous fee increases within the past few semesters due to changes in funding allocation.

"A couple years ago, USG used to fund everybody going on trips, but they recently capped it at 16 [people]... We take 49 people each season so that's 33 people that we have to pay for now," Salvin said. "As a result, we had to increase our club dues each semester, which sucks because everyone's already paying so much in fees... I've definitely heard some questions about, 'why am I paying this if I'm not going to be represented by that organization?'"

With the loss of funding from UConn Recreation and now the changes in status, the team now must manage their practice reservation requests through UConn Athletics, which may take more time to organize than the team is accustomed to, according to Salvin.

"But even with the Rec, there's been multiple times where we've had to email four or five reminders [regarding practices]," Salvin said. "There's been times where we don't know what days we have practice...We show up to the track ... and we're not allowed on the track and it wasn't communicated with us, or is communicated 15 minutes prior to practice. So, yeah, I don't think communication is their strong suit."

Looking forward, the team is unsure of what opportunities will be available to them as a general RSO organization.

"I won't be here next school year, so I'm not sure exactly what their plan is, but they're gonna have to either fundraise increase dues, try to get USG to fund it," Salvin said. "There's a couple different avenues you could go down, but all in all, it does definitely hurt to not have that money available to us anymore."

There have already been internal conversations about cutting down the team's competition schedule, potentially not making it to nationals, Salvin said.

Corpse flower to bloom at UConn Botanical Conservatory

by Kevin Guinan
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The University of Connecticut Botanical Conservatory is preparing to host large audiences for the rare bloom of a pungent corpse flower in their collection, according to the collection managers.

Matthew Opel, a research laboratory aide who has worked at UConn for over 20 years, said the last bloom in the conservatory happened in 2013. He added how the first corpse flower to bloom in New England happened at the UConn Botanical Conservatory in 2004 and drew over 20,000 visitors.

"This is the first flower we've had during the semester," Opel said. "All of the other ones happened during the summer."



Cole Geissler, a tropical horticulturist at the UConn Botanical Conservatory on Thursday. He stands next to an over 4-foot tall corpse flower that is about to bud. PHOTO BY KEVIN GUINAN/STAFF WRITER

Cole Geissler, a tropical horticulturist at the conservatory, has been one of the primary caretakers monitoring the corpse flowers. He said the horticulturists work to mimic the corpse flower's natural environment, the tropical rainforests of western Sumatra, as much as possible.

The bloom of a corpse flower, scientifically known as amorphophallus titanium, could've been negatively affected by recent temperature extremes like last week's heat wave, Geissler said.

"Last week was rough because of the heat wave," Geissler said, noting how employees had to open vents in the greenhouse and place a screen above the corpse flower to filter out some of the excess sun. He added how the heat may have caused the flower's earlier bloom and some of the rapid growth rates observed.

"Having a heat wave like that last week was very early for us," Geissler said. "I think it sped up the development of growth."

The bud on the corpse flower grew the most rapidly around one week ago, with the bud growing 4.5 inches, Geissler said. He added how the bud's growth slowed down to about 1.5 inches on Wednesday.

Geissler has worked as a tropical horticulturalist for over two years and said the current bud was the first specimen he got to flower. The corpse flower cycles through different stages of foliage, changing between growing leaves or the flowers famous for their foul odor.

Corpse flower growth isn't only impacted by warm temperatures. Geissler said cold conditions could also change its budding behavior.

"A big temperature drop wouldn't be bad for the plant, but bad for the bloom we've been working so hard for," Geissler said. He added that the buds flowering under his care has been a point of pride for him.

The corpse flower is only days away from blooming, Geissler said, and most of the work happening at the UConn Botanical Garden recently comes from planning for the large audience.

"The corpse flower doesn't really care that it has visitors," Geissler said about the risks a crowd could have on the plant.

Geissler added that some of the crowds will be repeat visitors, noting how two visitors who saw the plant bloom in 2004 came in to show their children the corpse flower.

"It does have this kind of fame, maybe even notoriety, with how stinky it is," Geissler said.

Employees at the conservatory have been fixated on preparing for the large audience. Meghan Moriarty, a plant growth facilities manager at the conservatory, said they have been lining up grad student volunteers and are in contact with the UConn Police and Fire Departments for crowd control.

"People are definitely excited, and they remember past blooms and come in with their families," Moriarty said. The conservatory employees are currently working on plans for the bloom, including a route through the greenhouse and an Instagram livestream of the bloom.

Moriarty said the conservatory's Instagram had gained over 100 followers in one day after posting about the corpse flower blooming.

Large crowds and interest around the corpse flower blooming stems from its short time frame. Olivia Delello, a student plant care specialist for the conservatory, said the flower only takes about two hours to fully open once it's mature.

The strongest smell for the flower occurs the evening after it opens, with the bloom beginning to shrivel and the smell fading the morning after, according to a fact sheet Delello sent.

"It will definitely be a busy night, but it's only one night," Delello said.

Hours for the conservatory will change from the normal 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. public hours the day of the corpse flower's bloom. Delello said the greenhouse will stay open until 2 a.m. for the bloom with free admission to the public.

The Daily Campus

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Thursday, April 23, 2026

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