

Hello all, my name is Priyanka Thakkar and I am the current Student Body President for the undergraduate population at UConn. Although, speaking as one person, I represent almost 24,000 undergraduates who come from 35 countries, 42 states, and come from all 169 CT cities and towns.

Our wonderful students on campus are part of our 700+ clubs and organizations, they are leaders in and outside the classroom, and engaging in cutting-edge academics and research. These students are becoming active citizens by participating in activities that push themselves out of their comfort zone, representing every community from around the state and beyond. Our students vote, our students speak out, we care about our state and those that represent us. UConn has supported us in various ways to develop ourselves and truly find our identity and voice on campus. Personally, UConn has helped me develop my own voice as a woman of color in business. Being continuously inspired by my classes, professors, and peers, I have found multiple spaces where my identity is not only appreciated but celebrated. I have discovered that I am passionate about a variety of things, specifically human rights and technology, two very different areas of interest, but yet I have had opportunities to combine them both together. I have been inspired to represent our student body and not sit idly but to be vocal and present in the campus community. And what is so special about our UConn community, that many can attest to, is that we are able to lift each other up no matter our differences in size, gender, race, religion, sexuality, or income status. No matter who you are, there is a home and place for you at UConn where your voice and presence is welcomed and valued.

When we look around campus, we see each other as fellow Huskies, united as OneUConn. But there are still students who are suffering and those that need additional support on this campus. As a student and leader in this community, we need more diverse staff and faculty to relate to our students, who look like them and understand their experience. We need more resources given to students who are struggling with their mental health and are afraid to ask for help. We need more space for our campus organizations including our cultural centers. We need your help with the assistance of UConn's state funding to ensure the fulfillment, potential, and professional and personal success of our Huskies. These are the students that are fueling this state and they deserve access to these resources. UConn students need to be acknowledged, remembered, and taken care of so that we can maximize the future of this state, together.