

Presidential candidates' lack of transparency worries students

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UNC Asheville students expressed their concern about the lack of openness to the press from presidential nominees Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump.

"For both candidates to be closing off their media outlets, I think that's worrying because without openness, it sort of takes away some of their credibility," said Matthew Wilson, freshman new media student at UNCA.

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump began last year to ban certain news organizations from covering his campaign rallies. Among those organizations banned are Univision, BuzzFeed, Politico, The Daily Beast, The Huffington Post and the Des Moines Register.

It has been 275 days since Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton last held a press conference as of Sept. 5. She has held numerous one-on-one interviews.

However, one-on-one interviews and press conferences have significant differences. In interviews, campaigns often control the topics covered, including the interviewer's questions. Press conferences allow for unpredictability and a wider range of questions.



Photo courtesy of Flickr user DonkeyHotey

Caricatures of Clinton and Trump are popular throughout election season.

Mary Bolch, a junior creative writing student, said she does not trust either candidate.

"I think Trump is vying for and advertising this totalitarian kind of regime and that scares me because we're supposed to be a democracy," Bolch said. "So I think it's really worrisome that he's banned all of those from covering him. As far as Hillary goes, I also think she's

worrisome because in a presidential situation, you can't control everything that's going to happen."

Bolch said presidential nominees should be open to the public.

"I think they should be willing to work with the people and the people's expectations as far as giving information forth because we need to be informed and they should be willing to work with us

on that," Bolch said.

Blake Hollar, a sophomore political science student, said Clinton's lack of press conferences indicates her untrustworthiness.

"I'm a pretty liberal guy, but as for Hillary Clinton, I don't trust her. I think she's very corrupt," Hollar said. "The fact that she won't give a press conference says something about her and how honest she is. If she didn't have anything to hide, she would go ahead and give a press conference."

Hollar said presidential candidates should be as transparent as possible.

On Sept. 2, Clinton's lead press secretary Brian Fallon said if Clinton is elected, she will hold press conferences.

"I feel like she's using that as an excuse because she doesn't want people to know things that may or may not get her elected," Hollar said. "If she's not willing to do that until she's president it's kind of saying she has something to hide."

Throughout the election, each campaign has its own travelling press corps reporting on their respective candidate's day-to-day activities. Trump's press corps currently does not travel with him on the same plane.

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Self-harm remains a prevalent issue on college campuses

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College campuses are known havens of drinking, drug use and casual sex, but one of the most insidious issues plaguing students is rarely discussed.

Skylar Vanblarcom, a freshman environmental studies student from Charlotte, said people disregard self-injury in secondary education.

"I feel like more people think that more people self-harm in high school, but I feel like in college it's probably a high percentage," Vanblarcom said.

According to a study published in *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 14.3 percent of students have self-harmed in the past year of their college career.

Acts of self-harm are not just limited methods prominent in media such as cutting. Burning, interfering with wound healing, punching objects and surfaces,

starvation and denying sleep on purpose also fall under the definition of self-harm.

The study reported behaviors such as smoking cigarettes, having depression, eating disorders, gambling problems and identifying as LGBTQ+ increase the chance of a student struggling with self-harm.

Emily Donovan, a freshman psychology student from Nashville, said self-harm acts as a symptom and its own issue.

"I think there's a lot of different contributing factors to that. Mental disorders, bullying, not feeling like you fit in, obviously LGBTQ+, racism, there's so many different contributing factors in self-harm," Donovan said. "It's just become its own thing that attaches to a bunch of different and separate things."

Some students, such as sophomore Bennett Lloyd, said social media websites like Tumblr help create an environ-

ment for self-harm to flourish because of blogs created to incubate those behaviors.

"People who promote that kind of stuff I don't think have very much care for other people's well-being. I mean, bulimic and anorexic blogs are like, 'oh yeah, self-help, you're gonna look really good', but you're not helping yourself, you're hurting yourself and I'd say that goes hand-in-hand with self-harm," Lloyd said.

According to a study in *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health*, most NSSI experiences discussed online include graphic descriptions of self-harm focusing on emotional pain and suffering, without hope for recovery.

Lloyd agrees, adding many users post images of scars or fresh cuts, which possibly triggers those who already struggle with self-harm.

The study published in *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors* found many cam-

pus have outreaches for behaviors like binge drinking or drug use, such as UNC Asheville's substance abuse counselor and substance abuse evaluation. However, many lacked in resources targeting self-harm specifically even though these behaviors often coincide and the study recommends adding specific programming to combat self-harm.

Vanblarcom said creating more conversations about the topic of self-harm can be a crucial, but small step to begin decreasing the number of college students hurting themselves.

"I feel like definitely destigmatizing self-harm in general because I feel like right now it definitely is one of those things that's still brushed over and that people don't talk about it as much," Vanblarcom said. "Just becoming more educated and not making it, like, 'oh someone self-harms, oh God stay away from them.'"