



Rebecca Lobo tell graduates to dream big

BY SHERRY FISHER AND ELIZABETH OMARA-OTUNNU

"I'm a living testament to the power of delusional thinking," Rebecca Lobo told graduating students during undergraduate commencement exercises in Gampel Pavilion on May 11.

"When I was a kid, I was foolish enough to think that I could play professional basketball in the U.S.," she said. "Silly enough to think I could participate in the Olympics. Sufficiently delusional to believe I might one day broadcast ballgames for a living."

Lobo, a UConn trustee and the forward/center on UConn's undefeated and national champion 1995 women's basketball team, gave the Commencement address to some 2,400 undergraduates in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

The ceremony started late as an unprecedented number of students attended the event and filled just about every seat.

Lobo told the crowd that she missed her own graduation because she was trying out for the Olympic basketball team. "I feel like an honorary member of the Class of '08," said Lobo, who was gold medalist in the 1996 Olympics and is a women's basketball analyst, working on broadcasts for CBS and ESPN.

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PHOTO BY FRANK DAHLMAYER

Rebecca Lobo, a member of the Board of Trustees, television commentator and member of the championship 1995 basketball team, shares a laugh with Dr. John W. Rowe, chairman of the Board of Trustees at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Commencement ceremony.

Prominent surgeon named Health Center vice president, dean

BY MAUREEN MCGUIRE AND KRISTINA GOODNOUGH

A nationally prominent orthopaedic surgeon and administrator from the University of Virginia was appointed vice president for health affairs at the Health Center. He starts his new position Aug. 11.

Cato T. Laurencin, M.D., Ph.D will become the seventh dean of the School of Medicine. He will hold the Van Dusen Chair in Academic Medicine and a professorship in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.

"I couldn't be more thrilled to make this appointment," says University President Michael J. Hogan. "Dr. Laurencin is an exceptionally accomplished scientist, doctor, and community leader with outstanding administrative skills."

Laurencin is currently the Lillian T. Pratt Distinguished Professor and chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of Virginia, as well as the Orthopaedic Surgeon-in-Chief at the University

of Virginia Health System. In addition, he was designated a University Professor at the University of Virginia, holding one of the university's most prestigious titles, and has professorships in biomedical engineering and chemical engineering.

Laurencin is an expert in shoulder and knee surgery and an international leader in tissue engineering research. He is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and the American College of Orthopaedic Surgeons, is widely published in scholarly journals, and holds more than 20 U.S. patents. Among his numerous awards and accolades, he was recently honored by *Scientific American* Magazine as one of the top 50 innovators for his groundbreaking technological work in the regeneration of knee tissue.

"The University of Connecticut is a wonderful institution with an outstanding young medical school," Laurencin says. "I am excited about leading this great medical

center."

His selection follows a comprehensive national search to find a successor to Peter J.



PHOTO BY UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Cato T. Laurencin, who has been named the new vice president for health affairs at the Health Center and the dean of the School of Medicine, will begin August 11.

Deckers, M.D., who is leaving his position Aug. 10, after 13 years as dean, eight years as executive vice president and more than 20 years of service to the UConn Health Center. Deckers will take a one-year leave and will formally retire in 2009. During his retirement, however, Deckers, an accomplished surgical oncologist, will remain involved with the Health Center and will see patients, teach, and assist with philanthropic and outreach efforts.

"I'm grateful that Peter Deckers has agreed to continue in his role and assist with the leadership transition until Dr. Laurencin begins his appointment on August 11," says President Hogan. "Throughout my transition here, Peter has provided not only assistance and advice, but also personal friendship that I deeply value."

The search committee for Deckers' successor was led by Richard Garibaldi, M.D.,

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Funding expected for Storrs Center garage

BY RICHARD VEILLEUX

Connecticut Gov. M. Jodi Rell on May 14 said \$10 million to fund a parking garage for the Storrs Center is expected to gain approval when the state Bond Commission meets on May 30.

The nearly \$220 million, 50-acre village, complete with restaurants, retail outlets, housing, offices and 35 acres of open space, will be built on Rte. 195 near the School of Fine Arts and E.O. Smith High School.

The bonding will cover about 70 percent of the cost of the garage. Other funding for the downtown project includes approximately \$190 million from the developers, Leyland Alliance of New York and \$6 million from federal and other state grants.

"This is our opportunity to shape a college town," Rell

said. "UConn has become truly a world class institution and we are so proud of how far our flagship university has come in so short a time. Still, I think we would all agree that one key ingredient is missing at UConn – a town center that would provide Mansfield with a 'college town' look and feel."

UConn, Mansfield and Downtown Partnership officials have been laying the groundwork for the project since 2002. Officials are waiting for three final permits, including two from the state.

"It's another step forward," Cynthia van Zelm, director of the Downtown Partnership, said shortly after Rell's announcement. "We continue to make progress, and it's great to see the state step up again."

UConn President Michael J. Hogan thanked Gov. Rell and praised Senate President Pro Tem Donald Williams, D-Brooklyn, and Rep. Denise Merrill, D-Mansfield, for their efforts in impressing Rell with the importance of the project.

"They worked very hard to move this project to the bonding committee's agenda so we can move things forward."

"The support we've received from the governor and Sen. Williams and Rep. Merrill, and the assistance of state agencies has been extraordinary," Hogan said. "They understand what a necessary advantage Storrs Center will be, not only to the University – where the impact will be huge – but to the Town of Mansfield, Eastern Connecticut and the state itself."



PHOTO BY GAIL MERRILL

The Garden Veggie Wrap, one of the Spa Foods selections available at the campus cafés and convenience stores.

Dining Services recognized for new healthy food line

BY ASHLEY SPORLEDER, CLAS '08

The Department of Dining Services has earned a national award for its new line of healthy foods known as Spa Foods.

Staff of the department will receive the Menu Master's "Healthful Innovations" award on May 17, during the organization's award ceremony in Chicago. This is the first time a college or university will receive a Menu Masters award. The awards are sponsored by Nation's Restaurant News and Ventura Foods LLC, and are generally given to chain restaurants.

According to Menu Masters, UConn received the award "for setting new standards of excellence and creativity, which significantly impact and benefit the food service industry."

"It's really nice that we have the ability to do this," says Dennis Pierce, director of dining services. "It's been very successful."

Pierce said he came up with the idea while washing dishes. As he looked out the window, he began to think about the concept of spas and their reputation as a place for relaxation and healthy eating.

He then pitched the idea to Rob Landophi, manager of culinary development, and Amy Pumantz,

the university dietician, last spring and the three put their heads together and created a dozen recipes that meet specific criteria for fat and calories.

"We were listening to students," says Pierce. "They said there was a lack of healthier, portable options."

After a successful trial run held at Wilbur Cross during the summer, the line became available in two convenience stores and six university cafes in the fall.

"The student response has been phenomenal," Pierce said. "We can't make enough."

Spa Foods offerings include a variety of wraps such as the Fruity Tuna Wrap and Thai Shrimp Wrap, as well as salads including the Citrus Bean Salad.

All items are made fresh daily.

This will be the first year the University is a participant in the Menu Masters ceremony, although UConn representatives have attended the past three years.

Pierce, Landophi, and three chefs will travel to the event, where they will showcase and prepare the Spa Foods items for attendees.

Dining Services plans to introduce new items next fall.

Teaching award winners announced

This year's winners of awards for excellence in teaching and advising were announced on April 24, during a recognition dinner held in Rome Ballroom. The event was hosted by Provost Peter J. Nicholls, Veronica Makowsky, vice provost, and Keith Barker, associate vice provost.

The award recipients are:

First Year Experience

Joseph Briody, Student Development & Learning
Outstanding First Year Experience Teaching Award

Carl Dean Jr., Center for Academic Programs
Outstanding First Year Experience Teaching Award

Advising

Jennifer Murphy, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology
Outstanding Student Advisement and Advocacy Award

Morty Ortega, Natural Resources Management & Engineering
Outstanding Faculty Advisor Award

2008 Teaching Fellows

Robin Bogner, Pharmaceutical Sciences
Joseph Madaus, Educational Psychology

2008-09 Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award

Steven Todd, Philosophy
Jason Schmink, Chemistry

The John T. Szarlan Memorial Outstanding FYE Mentor Award

Robert Gendreau, Health Care Management
Benjamin Gruenbaum, Psychology
Additional faculty members who have been recognized for excellence were acknowledged during the event.

Honors Program

Steven Wisensale, Human Development & Family Studies
Honors Council Faculty Member of the Year, 2008

College of Agriculture & Natural Resources

Robert Milvae, Animal Science
UCANRAA Excellence in Teaching Award

Robert Johnston, Agricultural & Resource Economics
Donald M. Kinsman Award for Excellence in CANR/RHSA

Daniel Civco, Natural Resources Management & Engineering
National Food & Agricultural Sciences Excellence in College & University Teaching Award

School of Business

Andrew Rosman, Accounting
Outstanding MSA Professor, 2007

David Papandria, Accounting
Outstanding Undergraduate Accounting Professor, 2007

John Phillips, Accounting
Graduate Teaching Award

Sulin Ba, Operations & Information Management
Undergraduate Teaching Award

Jan Stallaert, Operations & Information Management
Undergraduate Teaching Award

Narasimhan Srinivasan, Marketing
Teaching Innovation Award

School of Engineering

Robert Magnusson, Electrical & Computer Engineering
ECE Outstanding Teaching Award

Robert McCartney, Computer Science & Engineering
CSE Outstanding Teaching Award

Michael Renfro, Mechanical Engineering
ME Outstanding Teaching Award

Norman Garrick, Civil & Environmental Engineering
C.R. Klewin Inc. Award for Excellence in Teaching

Howard Epstein, Civil & Environmental Engineering
C.R. Klewin Inc. Award for Excellence in Teaching

School of Fine Arts

Kathryn Myers, Art & Art History
Outstanding Faculty Award

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Olivier Morand, Economics
Grillo Family Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching

Richard Hiskes, Political Science
Alumni Association Excellence in Undergraduate

Teaching Award, 2007

Michelle Williams, Psychology
Alumni Association Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award, 2007

Juliet Lee, Molecular & Cell Biology
Blue Skye Foundation TNE Fellow Award

Matthew Cecil, Mathematics
UConn Alpha Lambda Delta Chapter, Post Doctoral Fellow Instructor of the Year, 2007-08

School of Nursing

Cheryl Beck, Nursing
Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor, 2007

School of Pharmacy

Gerald Gianutsos, Pharmaceutical Sciences
Teacher of the Year

School of Medicine

Yvonne Grimm-Jorgensen
2007 Charles N. Loeser Award

Robert Bona
2007 Kaiser Permanente Award

Joseph Grasso
Bruce Koeppen
Dale Matheson
Christine Niekraash
Richard Zeff
Outstanding Teaching Award, 2007, First Year Basic Science Courses

Glenn Affleck
Robert Bona
Dale Matheson
Richard Zeff
Outstanding Teaching Award, 2007, Second Year Basic Science Courses

AAUP

Joseph Madaus, Educational Psychology
AAUP Teaching Promise Award, 2007

Evelyn Simien, Political Science
AAUP Teaching Promise Award, 2007

Joseph Madaus, Educational Psychology
AAUP Teaching Innovation Award, 2007

Pamela Bedore, English
AAUP Teaching Promise Award, 2008

Thomas DeFranco, Mathematics
AAUP Teaching Innovation Award, 2008

Publication Notice

The *Advance* is now on a reduced publication schedule for the summer. The next issue will be published on June 2. Additional summer issues will be published monthly, and we resume weekly publication at the start of the fall semester.

Advance

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

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The *Advance* is published weekly during the academic year, except during breaks. It is distributed free to faculty, staff, and students at the University of Connecticut. Published by University Communications, 34 North Eagleville Road, Storrs, CT 06269-3144. Phone: 860.486.3530. Periodical permit (ISSN 0746-3170, USPS 703-730) at Storrs, CT. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the *Advance* at the above address.

Advance website: <http://www.advance.uconn.edu>
E-mail: advance@uconn.edu

Pediatric dentistry specialist receives Health Center's faculty award

BY KRISTINA GOODNOUGH

Dr. Mina Mina, professor and chair of the Division of Pediatric Dentistry in the Department of Craniofacial Sciences, is this year's recipient of the Faculty Recognition Award from the Health Center's board of directors. She received the award at the Health Center commencement ceremonies May 18.

An internationally renowned researcher in the field of craniofacial biology, Mina received her DMD degree from the University of Iran. After a brief stint in private practice in that country, Mina decided to focus on research and education. "My parents were educators," she says, "and I always wanted to teach."

She came to the United States for residency training in pediatric dentistry and a master of dental science at Case Western Reserve University. After completing those programs, she joined the Ph.D. program in biomedical sciences at the Health Center. She graduated in 1989 and joined the faculty in pediatric dentistry.

One afternoon a week, she serves as preceptor to third- and fourth-year students at the Burgdorf Community Clinic in Hartford. She has also served as mentor for summer research projects for more than 50 dental and medical students and has been the major research advisor or co-advisor for more than 20 pediatric dentistry residents, 15 master's of dental science students, and 12 Ph.D. students, many of whom now hold academic positions at universities across the country and around the world.

Since 2002, Mina has served as chair of the dental school's division of pediatric dentistry. "The division's pediatric dentistry residency program is considered among the best in the country by peer institutions and prospective applicants," says Dr. Monty MacNeil, dean of the dental school.

In the laboratory, the focus of her research has been understanding the molecular mechanisms regulating the growth and differentiation of the skeletal tissues in the lower jaw and tooth forma-

tion, and identifying stem cells for tissue engineering a human tooth. In 2006, she was awarded the Distinguished Scientist Award for Craniofacial Biology Research from the International Association for Dental Research.

"We're delighted the board of directors recognized Mina with this award," says Dr. Richard Skinner, director of clinical operations for pediatric dentistry. "She is extremely demanding of herself and of others, but she is also very supportive of her faculty and students. She is very skilled at rallying members of our large, diverse division to work well together to accomplish our educational and clinical goals."

The award, which carries a \$10,000 prize, was established in 2003 by the board of directors to recognize and celebrate excellent faculty members.

Mina's name and photo will be on permanent display at the Health Center.



PHOTO BY AL FERREIRA

Dr. Mina Mina in her lab at the Health Center.

University student teams excel in statewide business plan contest

BY DAVID BAUMAN

Two teams from the School of Business captured first place in a recent statewide business plan competition that lets students apply their entrepreneurial skills to create and launch new businesses in Connecticut. And two more were finalists in the contest. Two of the teams were awarded start-up grants.

The competition was sponsored by the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development in partnership with the Connecticut Venture Group (CVG) – a non-profit group of venture capitalists that seeks to connect members with high-growth emerging companies.

Eighteen teams, including those from UConn, were selected as finalists out of more than 100 entries from eight colleges and universities in the state.

Each of the finalists gave a four-minute presentation that was evaluated based on criteria including definition of the proposed business product/service, definition of the market, competitive advantage, financing structure, and funding source.

There were four categories in the competition: undergraduate personal business, undergraduate venture enterprise, graduate personal business, and graduate venture enterprise.

UConn teams won first place in the two graduate business plan categories.

MBA students Kevin Precht and Owen Opena won the graduate new venture enterprise category with their plan for "Optimal Software Solutions," which would offer businesses automated scheduling and communication service for temporary staffing.

Both Precht and Opena, who have taken the business school's new courses in venture consulting and were among the first group of students to intern at UConn's Innovation Accelerator, captured the Connecticut Innovations Technology Award of \$10,000, as well as the grand prize start-up grant of \$25,000.

In the personal business graduate-level category, Margaret Feeney edged out another competitor with her plan for "ETG Hardware," a proposal to create hardware outlets selling environmentally friendly products. Feeney is finishing her first year in the Storrs MBA program and is currently participating in the Innovation Accelerator.

Richard Dino, faculty advisor for both winning graduate teams and executive director of University's Connecticut Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, says the UConn teams faced some tough competition. The awards are "the sort of real world endorse-

ment that tells us that matching our venture consulting curriculum with bright business students is a winning combination for growing new entrepreneurs for the state," he says.

Business students Mary Barker and Priscilla Borges at the Stamford campus won a \$5,000 start-up grant in the undergraduate new personal business category with "Mommie2Mommie," an exchange web site for mothers and mothers-to-be.

Sam Brewczynski, a business student at Storrs seeking a dual degree in mechanical engineering and management/entrepreneurship, was the fourth UConn finalist with "Boquin," a media center product that would share music, movies, and TV throughout the home.

All the winners will be invited to present their ideas at a future CVG Angel Investor Forum's before investors who fund start-up companies, says Mike Roer, executive director of CVG.

"This is a unique opportunity for students first to take their idea through the business plan and funding process, and then to also give them monies towards their business ideas and exposure to investors who may fund their plan as well," he says. "The competition is meant to foster the development of business."

Roper Center to hold Mexican polling archives

BY MICHAEL KIRK

UConn's Roper Center for Public Opinion Research has cemented a partnership with the largest repository of poll and survey data in Latin America. Mark Abrahamson, the director of the Roper Center, and the head of Mexico's Centro de Investigacion y Docencia Economicas (CIDE), signed the agreement in Mexico City on May 8.

CIDE is the official repository of all the Mexican government's polling data, as well as an elite graduate school in social science. Under the agreement, the Roper Center will archive CIDE data, jointly acquire more data from throughout Latin America, and prepare a joint catalog of all the survey data for Mexico and Latin America held in either CIDE or the Roper Center.

"This is a tremendous opportunity for us," says Abrahamson. "Roper is already the largest holder of public opinion data in the U.S., and this agreement will greatly expand our holdings from Mexico and Latin America. Eventually, we want to be the archive with the largest collection of international surveys as well as

those conducted in the U.S."

The Roper Center's archives of public opinion polling data go back to the 1940s. The Center recently fulfilled several agreements with the major conductors of surveys to provide special online access to data on shared web pages. The data include diverse surveys focusing on everything from presidential approval ratings to attitudes toward health care. These agreements include CBS News and all projects of the Pew Research Center. The web pages also bring thousands of visitors to the UConn home page.

The Roper Center's Latin American faculty advisory board includes 10 faculty from departments across the University. Their research focuses on topics including migration, democratization, and other developments in and related to Latin America.

"As Roper expands its Latin American database, these faculty, among others, will be the beneficiaries," says Abrahamson. "Our highest priority is always to add new collections that will benefit the research interests of UConn faculty."

Two graduates attribute success to Student Support Services

BY ELIZABETH OMARA-OTUNNU

Jeffrey Ambrose almost stayed back a year in elementary school. Growing up in a household speaking mostly Haitian Creole, he struggled to keep up with classes in English. Now he's graduating from UConn with a degree in psychology and will go to graduate school in the fall.

Ambrose, a first-generation college student, grew up in public housing in Stamford. The oldest son in his family, he resolved to set a good example for his younger siblings and, as he says, "create a future." He studied hard, brought up his grades, and set his heart on attending a "big-time" college. When the time came, he applied only to UConn.

Ambrose spent his first six weeks on the Storrs campus attending a seven-credit summer program through Student Support Services (SSS), and has been part of SSS ever since.

Carlton Jones of Stamford had hoped to attend Central Connecticut State University. But when the admissions tour he planned to take was full, he took a tour of UConn instead. He "fell in love with the campus," he says, and wrote his application essay the same week. The letter of admission to the University included a recommendation that he join the SSS program.



PHOTO BY FRANK DAHLMAYER

Jeffrey Ambrose, of the SSS program, outside the CUE Building.

SSS, part of UConn's Center for Academic Programs, helps low-income and first-generation students adjust to college life, beginning the summer before freshman year and continuing until graduation. Services offered include academic advising, peer tutoring, financial aid advice, short-term loans for books or other emergencies, and career counseling.

Jones and Ambrose, who each have a GPA of about a 3.0, say SSS not only helped them succeed academically, it provided community

within the UConn community and helped them identify their career paths.

"It's a good way to meet a lot of people," says Jones. "You get to know about 100 people by being part of SSS."

"If not for SSS," he adds, "I wouldn't be at UConn, I wouldn't have become a peer advisor, and I wouldn't have found my career path."

Through SSS, in his freshman year he was paired with a peer advisor who was president of SUBOG at the time. Jones also became active with the organization. After a couple of years assisting with SUBOG activities, Jones was selected as SUBOG president for his senior year. A sociology major, he plans to pursue a career in student affairs, starting with a master's program at Central.

"SUBOG has been a great experience," he says. "It has honed my leadership skills."

Two summers ago, Jones and Ambrose took part in a Study Abroad program in Liverpool, England, organized through SSS.

The three-week program focuses on the history of black settlement in the United Kingdom and the role Liverpool played in the African slave trade. The SSS group also traveled to London, Wales, and Germany.

The experience had a profound impact on both students.

"It was a great experience," says Jones. "I'd travel again if I had the opportunity."

Ambrose did travel again. Later that summer, he made a trip to Haiti. The poverty he encountered was an eye-opener. For his Study Abroad essay, he wrote a comparison of four capital cities he had visited: London, Berlin, Washington, D.C., and Port-au-Prince.

"I wanted to write about the

differences," he says, "why one city was so successful and one struggles to survive."

The next year, he went back for a three-month paid internship through an agreement between Liverpool University and SSS, working with a program there that helps low-income students go to college. Ambrose developed a curriculum and taught at eight area middle schools.

Ambrose, who has served as a peer advisor and assistant counselor with SSS, plans a career as a professional counselor. Like Jones, he will go to Central in the fall to earn a master's degree.

"I love what counselors stand for, what they do for kids," he says. "They're unappreciated but they do so much. I want to help out my community. As I grew up, I saw so many people that needed help, and didn't know how to get it."

Ambrose credits SSS with providing the academic and social support he needed to succeed in college.

"SSS really looked out for me," he says. "I've been through so many situations. I wouldn't be what I am without them. They're technically my second family."



PHOTO BY FRANK DAHLMAYER

Carlton Jones, graduate of the SSS program and President of SUBOG, outside of the Student Union.

Undergrads in pre-dental society reach out to local schools



PHOTO BY FRANK DAHLMAYER

Pamela Karkut, a pre-dental student, demonstrates to children at Natchaug School in Willimantic how to brush their teeth.

BY SHERRY FISHER

Mr. Chompers put on his best smile, as his teeth were brushed in front of about 100 elementary school children.

Chompers, a dinosaur hand puppet with larger-than-life pearly whites, took center stage recently in the gymnasium at Natchaug School in Willimantic, during a program called "Your Mouth, Your Health."

Four UConn undergraduates who are members of the pre-dental society gave a 40-minute presentation that taught the basics of oral health.

"Brush your outside teeth in a circular motion," Wen Sun told the audience, demonstrating the technique on the puppet. "Use an up-and-down motion for the insides of your teeth."

Sun, a freshman with an individualized major in public health, developed the program during winter break. "I wanted to do some volunteer activities," she says, "and my idea was to teach kids, especially minorities, about oral health. I wanted to reach children who don't have access to health care and may never get to the dentist."

Since the program started in February, more than 1,000 children in schools around the area have seen the presentation.

"It's been very successful," says

Sun, noting that the schools have asked for repeat visits.

The children are taught the basics, says Sun, who developed the presentation that includes information on how to brush, how long to brush, and what kinds of foods are good or bad for teeth. A PowerPoint presentation illustrate these and other facts, and several small hand puppets are also used.

Sun told the children that at the dentist's office, patients sit in a "relaxing, comfy chair" while a dental hygienist looks for germs in their mouths.

"Does anyone know what germs are?" she asked. One of the children shouted, "A germ is something that can stop your body from working."

Sun added, "Germs like to hide in the back of your mouth and on your tongue. They like to hide everywhere, so brush your tongue and roof of your mouth."

"How long should you brush?" Sun asked. Hands darted in the air as children called out everything from one to 20 minutes. When Sun gave the answer, "two minutes," a child called out, "I was going to say that."

After a lesson in proper brushing, large cartoon images of foods appeared on a screen. The children were asked whether particular foods are good or bad for their

teeth. The UConn students provided some answers.

"Milk has calcium and keeps teeth strong," Sun said.

Ralph Riello, a freshman presenter majoring in epistemology and biochemical theory, talked about healthy foods. "Vegetables are good for your teeth," he said. "They give you strong bones."

Pamela Karkut, a junior majoring in molecular and cell biology, held up a hard-boiled egg that had been soaked in dark soda pop. She showed the audience how it compared to a normal white egg. "To keep your teeth white and strong, don't drink soda," she advised.

Linda Thomas, the school nurse at Natchaug School, later said the program was beneficial to the children: "Many don't have access to dental care, so knowing the basics is one step in the right direction."

Jacqueline Luginbuhl, a freshman majoring in biology, said that presenting the program was fun. "It was also a learning experience for us and the children. We'll be teaching the same kinds of things to our patients some day."

Riello said he wants to return as a presenter in the fall. "I think this is a great program, because it promotes good oral health at a young age," he says. "Some of the kids didn't know soda was bad for them. That shocked me."

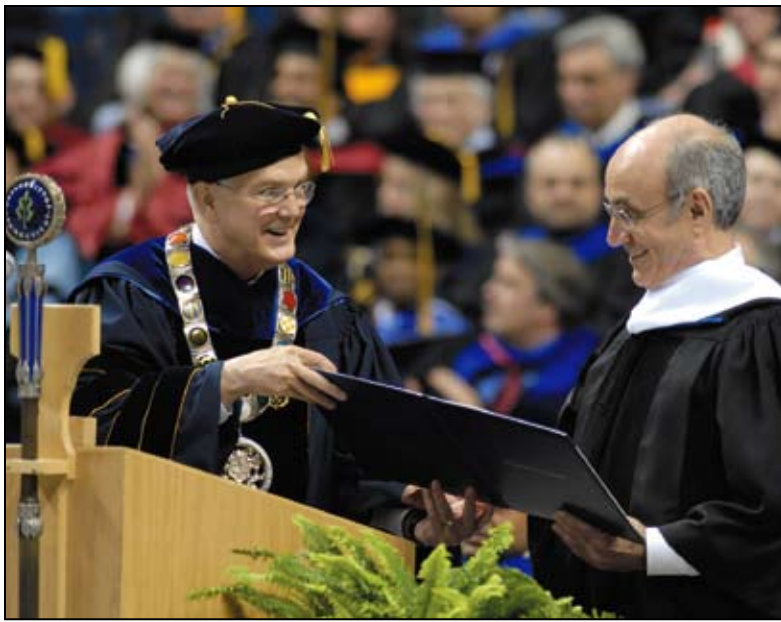


PHOTO BY FRANK DAHLMAYER

President Hogan hands Gary Gladstein an honorary degree during the Graduate Commencement ceremony held at Gampel Pavilion.



PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Amanda Morris helps Amy Kriwitsky before the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources ceremony at the Field House.

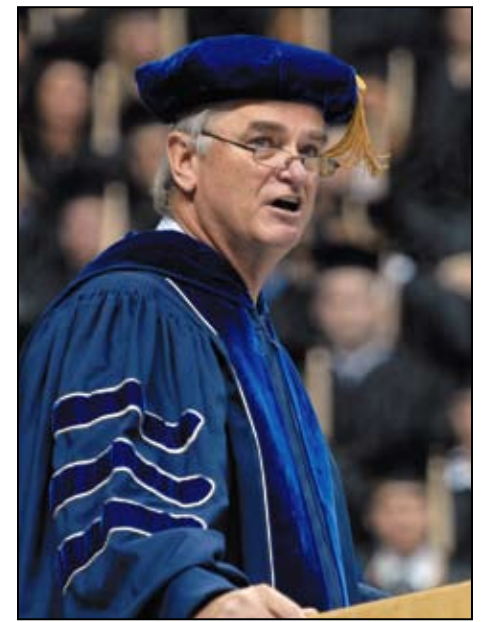


PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Denis Nayden '76 CLAS, '77 BUS and a member of the Board of Trustees, addresses School of Business graduates.

Dream *continued from page 1*

She said she owed much of her success to “the University of Connecticut, whose reach, you will discover, is infinite.”

Lobo told the audience that several months after graduating from UConn, she was invited to Washington to jog with President Clinton. “When we were done running, two other sweaty joggers and I rode back to the White House with the President in his limousine,” she said. “Halfway through the 15-minute ride, I realized that this didn’t look too good. We’re all sweaty and all the windows were fogged up.”

Lobo also recalled the concerns of one of her grade school teachers.

“When I was in fifth grade, a teacher told me, ‘Rebecca, I’m really worried about you. Your grades are fine, but you need to act more like a girl. You need to dress more like a girl! I was the only girl who played with the boys at recess and ate with the boys at lunch, because they were my friends. Looking back, I was just way ahead of my time.’”

She said she hoped to raise her daughters “to believe they can be anything they want to be – anything except a Yankees fan.”

Her comment elicited some boos, which made Lobo laugh. She said she had a bet with her husband that it was possible for her to have people boo at her on her home court of Gampel Pavilion.

Lobo told the audience “never mistake what you do for who you are. I understand that people will always associate me with basketball. ‘I’m 6-foot-4 – with the funny hat, 6-foot-5. And I cherish my four years at UConn. But I’m happiest watching my daughters dancing in their diapers in the kitchen.’”

“People say college is the best four years of your life,” she said. “But I can tell you on this Mother’s Day, they are not. The best years of your life are still ahead of you. That’s why they call this commencement.”

She added, “It’s time to realize your dreams. It’s time to change the world.”

Graduate ceremony

Garry Wills, scholar and journalist, had similar advice for the graduate students at a ceremony on Saturday, May 10 in Gampel Pavilion.

Don’t regard your degrees as a closed chapter but go on learning, Wills told graduate degree candidates.

Wills addressed master’s and doctoral students and their families and friends, during the graduate commencement ceremony.

“Surely when you have a graduate degree, you have a right to say your education is finished, but it isn’t,” he said. “Knowing is not a lump of accumulated data. It is a process. ... It must always be renewed and expanded in order to exist at all.”

“Your teachers have failed you, and you have failed yourselves,” he added, “if you think the education process is ended, if you do not go on learning, testing what you know, expanding what you know.”

Wills has written more than two dozen books on theology, U.S. political history, and 20th cen-

tury popular culture. He won the National Medal for the Humanities in 1998.

“Ask yourself who are the most interesting people you know,” he said. “Odds are that they are the ones still learning, still curious, still seeking.”

Wills, who holds an MA and Ph.D. in classics as well as a master’s in philosophy, recalled that when he was arrested during a demonstration against the Vietnam War, he took a copy of the Greek New Testament to jail. He said learning Greek is the most economical intellectual investment that can be made, because so many of the world’s great thinkers were trained in the study of ancient civilization.

While not advocating that everyone learn Greek, he said, “To stay intellectually alive you must keep learning something. ... This is not an assignment. It’s an enticement. It’s fun.”

Wills received an honorary doctorate of letters degree during the ceremony, as did women’s rights activist Charlotte Bunch and

alumnus and philanthropist Gary Gladstein. Also recognized were math professor Evarist Giné-Masdeu, University Research Fellow; Board of Trustees Distinguished Professors Richard Bass, professor of math, Cheryl Beck, professor of nursing, and Dipak Dey, professor of statistics; and University Medal-winner Samuel Kalmanowitz, an alumnus and founder of the award-winning Kay’s Pharmacy.

Other ceremonies

Ten other schools and colleges held separate graduation ceremonies during the weekend. Additionally, the Army and Air Force ROTC programs held commissioning ceremonies.

The remaining schools – law and medicine and dental medicine— celebrated their graduations May 18.



PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Lauren Grimley at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences undergraduate Commencement ceremony.

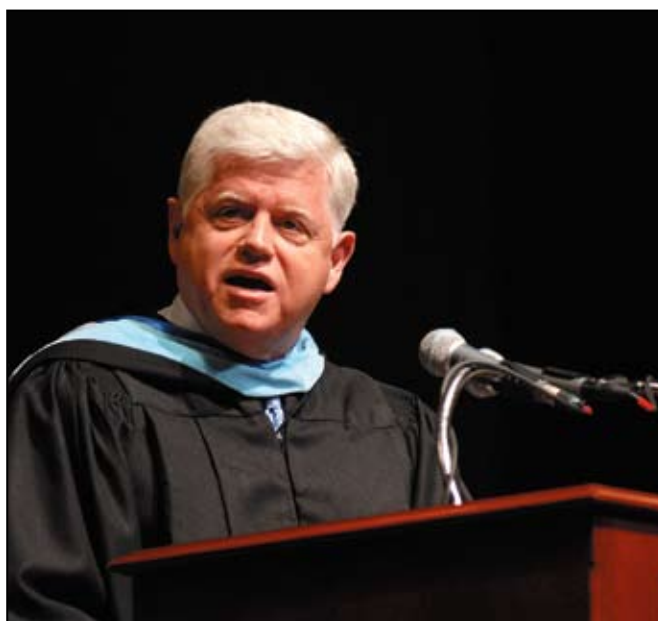


PHOTO BY FRANK DAHLMAYER

U.S. Congressman John Larson gives the Commencement address at the Neag School of Education undergraduate at Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts.



PHOTO BY FRANK DAHLMAYER

A view of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Commencement ceremony held at Gampel Pavilion on Sunday.



Just hours after a 100-level calculus exam in May, Thomas DeFranco, associate dean in the Neag School of Education and professor of mathematics, and a dozen math teaching assistants gather at the Gentry Building to grade the 275 papers. The group works as a team, with each instructor grading two or three answers on a paper and then passing it along to the next scorer.

PHOTO BY JANICE PALMER

GRANTS

The following grants were received through the Office for Sponsored Programs (OSP) in March 2008. The list represents only new proposals awarded, and excludes continuations. The list is supplied to the *Advance* by OSP. Additional grants received in March were published in the May 5 issue.

Alphabetical, by Principal Investigator

Prin. Investigator	Department	Sponsor	Amount	Award Period
Mack, F.	Dramatic Arts	Conn. Commission on Culture & Tourism	\$17,820	2/08-12/08
<i>Billboard Advertising: Jorgensen Production of the Threepenny Opera</i>				
Magnuson, J.	Psychology	National Science Foundation	\$400,004	3/08-2/13
<i>CAREER: The Time Course of Bottom-Up and Top-Down Integration in Language Understanding</i>				
Mahoney, J.	Connecticut Transportation Institute	Dept. of Transportation/Federal Highway Admin./New England Transportation Consortium	\$82,751	8/07-11/08
<i>New England Transportation Consortium (NETC) Project 04-1, Recycling Asphalt Pavements Containing Modified Binders (Phase 2)</i>				
Mahoney, J.	Connecticut Transportation Institute	Dept. of Transportation/Federal Highway Admin./New England Transportation Consortium	\$109,787	7/08-12/09
<i>Establishing Default Dynamic Modulus Values for New England</i>				
Mahoney, J.	Connecticut Transportation Institute	Dept. of Transportation/Federal Highway Admin./Conn. Dept. of Transportation	\$160,738	7/07-6/08
<i>Establishment of a Connecticut Advanced Pavement Laboratory (CAP Lab) – FY08</i>				
Maresh, C.	Kinesiology	Gloucester	\$114,453	3/08-10/08
<i>Comparison of Fluid Uptake During Rehydration Following an Acute Dehydrating Exercise Bout and Overnight Fast</i>				

McManus, G.	Marine Sciences	National Science Foundation	\$426,294	2/08-1/11
<i>Carbon and Nitrogen Acquisition and Cycling in Heterotrophic and Mixotrophic Ciliates</i>				
Pérez-Escamilla, R.	Nutritional Sciences	Nat'l. Assoc. of State Universities & Land Grant Colleges	\$6,000	10/07-9/08
<i>C. Peter Magrath / W.K. Kellogg Foundation Engagement Award for the Center for the Elimination of Health Disparities Among Latinos</i>				
Perusse, R.	Educational Psychology	Bloomfield Public Schools	\$26,000	8/07-5/08
<i>Counseling Internship – D. Peters</i>				
Polifroni, E.	Nursing Instruction & Research	Conn. Dept. of Higher Education	\$99,999	2/08-12/08
<i>Health and Education Initiatives</i>				
Rajasekaran, S.	Computer Science & Engineering	Univ. of Conn. Health Center	\$47,000	1/08-6/08
<i>Data Integration Techniques</i>				
Robinson, J.	Human Development/Family Studies	Conn. Dept. of Higher Education	\$14,638	3/08-7/08
<i>Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Assessment of Early Childhood Teachers</i>				
Settlage, J.	Curriculum & Instruction	Connecticut Pre-Engineering Program	\$13,000	5/08-6/08
<i>Urban Science: Bioacoustics Curriculum</i>				
Sotzing, G.	Institute of Materials Science	Sekisui Integrated Research Inc.	\$144,306	2/08-11/08
<i>Novel Polythienothiophenes</i>				
Sternberg-Ennis, M.	Student Health Services	Schachtel Associates	\$37,125	2/08-5/08
<i>Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Proof-of Concept Study to Detect the Effects on Standard Analgesics when Combined with Different Antihistamines</i>				
Westa, S.	Dept. of Extension	Rhode Island Economic Policy Council	\$30,000	1/08-12/08
<i>A Cooperative Agreement Between the Rhode Island Economic Policy Council and the University of Connecticut Dept. of Extension</i>				

Vice President *continued from page 1*

who is the Health Center's former chairman of the Department of Medicine.

"Dr. Laurencin is inspirational; an outstanding candidate," Garibaldi says. "The search was a great team effort; everyone approached the task in good faith with the best interests of the Health Center in mind. It was a great job of really pulling together to get a great new leader."

"The opportunities for the Health Center and for the university are enormous," Laurencin says. "I look forward to working with faculty, students, staff, and the community."

Laurencin, who has been with the University of Virginia and its Health System for five years, was also at Drexel University, Drexel University School of Medicine and Hahnemann Hospital in Philadelphia where he served as the Helen I. Moorehead Distinguished Professor of Chemical Engi-

neering, Vice Chairman of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Clinical Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery and Director of Shoulder Surgery.

Raised in North Philadelphia, Laurencin earned his undergraduate degree in chemical engineering from Princeton University and his medical degree from Harvard Medical School, where he was a Magna Cum Laude graduate and the recipient of the Robinson Award for Excellence in Surgery. During medical school, he also earned his Ph.D. in biochemical engineering/biotechnology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was a Hugh Hampton Young Scholar.

Upon completing both of his doctoral degrees, Laurencin joined the Harvard University Orthopaedic Surgery program, ultimately becoming the chief orthopaedic

surgery resident at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston. He also completed a fellowship in sports medicine and shoulder surgery at Cornell University Medical Center and the prestigious Hospital for Special Surgery, where he worked with the team physicians for the New York Mets and St. John's University in New York.

Laurencin has served as Speaker of the House of the National Medical Association, and serves as Chair of the Board of the National Medical Association's W. Montague Cobb Health Institute. He has been a member of the National Institutes of Health National Advisory Council for Arthritis, Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases and the National Science Advisory Board for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. He sits on the National Science Foundation's Engineering Directorate Advisory Committee.

Laurencin has been named to America's Top Doctors and America's Top Surgeons for his clinical achievements and is profiled in the current edition of *Black Enterprise* magazine which features "America's Leading Doctors." His research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, NASA, and the Department of Defense.

He has won the prestigious Nicolas Andry Award from the Association of Bone and Joint Surgeons for his work in musculoskeletal regeneration and he is a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences.

CALENDAR

Monday, May 19, through Monday, June 2

Items for the weekly Advance Calendar are downloaded from the University's online Events Calendar. Please enter your Calendar items at: <http://events.uconn.edu/> Items must be in the database by 4 p.m. on Monday for inclusion in the issue published the following Monday. Note: The next Calendar will include events taking place from Monday, June 2, through Monday, June 23. Those items must be in the database by 4 p.m. on Monday, May 5. If you need special accommodations to participate in events, call 860-486-2943 (Storrs), or 860-679-3563 (Farmington), or 860-570-5130 (Law School).

Academics

Thursday, 5/22 - Last day to convert courses on Pass/Fail option to letter grade.

Thursday, 5/29 - Last day to drop a course.

Libraries

Homer Babbidge Library. Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, noon-5 p.m.
Dodd Center. Reading Room hours: Monday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday, noon-4 p.m.; Sunday, closed. Research Center hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; closed weekends.
Pharmacy Library. Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-10 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 1-9 p.m.

Health Center Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m.-11 p.m.; Friday, 7 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, noon-10 p.m.

Law Library. Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-11 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-9 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 1-9 p.m.

Avery Point Campus Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed weekends.

Greater Hartford Campus Library. Hours: Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., closed weekends.

Stamford Campus Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-9 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday, closed.

Torrington Campus Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; Friday-Sunday, closed.

Waterbury Campus Library. Hours: Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; closed weekends.

University ITS

Help Desk Hours: Call 860-486-4357, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Meetings

Tuesday, 5/20 - Parking Advisory Committee. 2-3 p.m., Room 321, School of Business.

Ph.D. Defenses

Monday, 5/19 - **Regenerative Biology.** *Murine Embryonic Stem Cell Fusion-Mediated Reprogramming of Primary Mouse Embryonic Fibroblast*, by Dominic Ambrosi (adv.: Horvith) 11 a.m., Room 109, Advance Technology

Laboratory.

Tuesday, 5/20 - **Finance.** *Essays on Real Estate Investment Trusts, Corporate Governance, Institutional Investment, and Corporate Exit Strategies*, by Lisa Frank (adv.: Sirmans) 10 a.m.-Noon, Room 204, School of Business.



PHOTO BY ZACH DOREN

John Bell, director of the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry, with a puppet from the new exhibition, *Puppets Through the Lens*. See Exhibits.

Wednesday, 5/28 - **Computer Science & Engineering.** *Advanced Algorithm for Information Extraction*, by Mingjun Song (adv.: Rajasekaran) 10 a.m.-Noon, Room 336, ITE Building.

Lectures & Seminars

Thursday, 5/29 - CHIP Brown Bag Lecture. "Health Attitude Formation as a Function of One's Media Environment: A U.S. - Dutch

Comparison," by Marco Yzer, University of Minnesota. 12:30-1:30 p.m., Room 204, Ryan Building.

Exhibits

Tuesday, 5/27 through Friday, 8/15 - **Babbidge Library.** *In Plain Sight*, paintings by Janice Trecker, Stevens Gallery; also, *She Sells Sea Shells*, re-creations of sailors' Valentines by Lynda Susan Hennigan, Gallery on the Plaza. For hours, see Libraries section.

Tuesday, 5/27 through Friday, 8/15 - **Dodd Center.** *The Ethnic American Press*, Gallery. For hours, see Libraries section.

Through Wednesday, 6/11 - **Celeste Le Witt Gallery.** *In the Moment*, paintings by Rita Bond; also, *Pubs/Structures/Large and Small*, paintings by Arthur Bredefeld. Daily, 8 a.m.-9 p.m.

Through Wednesday, 7/9 - **Health Center.** *Landscapes and Seascapes*, photographs by Rick Popham. Main and Mezzanine Lobbies.

Through Sunday, 11/30 - **Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry.** *Puppets Through the Lens*, an exhibition of puppets on film, television, and the Internet from across the United States, from the 1930s to the present. Hours: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, noon-5 p.m., Depot Campus. Free admission, donations accepted.

Ongoing. **State Museum of Natural History & Connecticut Archaeology Center.** *Human's Nature: Looking Closer at the Relationships between People and the Environment.* Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday & Monday, closed. Free admission, donations welcome.

Walking tour showcases 40 rare trees

BY SHERRY FISHER

A new self-guided walking tour showcases 40 of the University's most unusual trees.

The guide includes a map and descriptions of the plants.

"We picked trees that are impressive because of their size and grandeur, or because they are rare, bear a special flower or fruit, or have a particularly interesting leaves or bark," says Mark Brand, professor of plant science and co-chair of the University's Arboretum Committee.

"Some of the trees have been here since 1895 such as the jumbo-sized Camperdown Elm," says Brand, who wrote the guide with input from other members of the committee. "When we know certain facts of interest, we've included them."

The guide was designed by graphic artist Virge Kask.

One of the trees included on the tour is a Giant Sequoia, located in the Torrey Life Sciences courtyard.

"They're the largest trees on earth and it's unusual to find them on the East Coast," Brand says. "They're native to California and better adapted to the Pacific Coast environments. The courtyard here protects the UConn specimen from the drying winter winds."

Another noteworthy tree is a Japanese Pagodatree, located near von der Mehden Recital Hall.

"It's very old and the largest in Connecticut," Brand says. "It has green-barked, cascading branches, and is rare to begin with. To find one as large and robust as the

one we have on campus is really unusual."

The tour begins at the Lodewick Visitors Center and takes about an hour to complete.

"We tried to select trees at different locations across campus, so visitors could also get to see a good bit of the campus," Brand says. "But visitors can start the tour anywhere."

He says he hopes visitors will take the tour when they come to campus: "We want people to know that the University of Connecticut

Campus Arboretum has many wonderful plants that should be appreciated. We have highlighted some of the more special ones."

Beyond the obvious - a beautiful campus - the trees, shrubs, and collections are used for classes in plant science and ecology and evolutionary biology.

The guide is available at the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Lodewick Visitors Center and the Biology Greenhouses or online at www.hort.uconn.edu/arboretum/walk.pdf



PHOTO BY SEAN FLYNN

Standing in front of a weeping maple are Gregory J. Anderson, vice provost and dean of the graduate school, President Michael J. Hogan, Virge Kask, designer, and Mark Brand, professor of plant science.

General Assembly makes no revision to 2009 budget

BY RICHARD VEILLEUX

Their hands tied by a projected \$80 million deficit in the current fiscal year, the General Assembly concluded its 2008 session without making adjustments to the fiscal 2009 budget.

This leaves the University and its Health Center with current service budgets that were approved in 2007.

"We understand the position the legislature is in as the state and national economies continue to struggle, and we're grateful that we can proceed with a current services budget," says University President Michael Hogan.

The lack of action on the state budget means UConn will not receive the \$1 million in extra funding officials requested to bolster faculty ranks and decrease the faculty/student ratio. However, the \$1 million added to the University's budget in the 2008 fiscal year for additional faculty remains in the University's base budget, and the Eminent Faculty Program and Center for Entrepreneurship remain funded at \$2 million each for fiscal 2009.

At the UConn Health Center, the legislature did not act on the request for nearly \$22 million to cover a shortfall at the Health Center, more than \$20 million of which is attributed to John Dempsey Hospital. The deficiency bill adopted by the Appropriations Committee, but not acted on by the General Assembly before its adjournment on May 7, contained

the requested funding for the Health Center.

Legislators also did not address a deficiency in the budget for the Department of Corrections, holding up \$6.5 million slated for inmate medical services, which are provided by the Health Center's Correctional Managed Care Health program. That deficit was driven by a surging inmate population, and the funding was intended to meet the actual cost of inmate services at Dempsey Hospital.

"We remain hopeful that the General Assembly and the governor will address the deficiency at our Health Center in coming weeks" when a special session that is being scheduled convenes, says Lorraine Aronson, UConn's chief financial officer.

The legislature did approve \$6.9 million in funding for the Health Center to cover the so-called "academic gap," the difference between what it costs to run the academic and research operations at the Health Center and the state appropriation. Until recently, the gap had been covered by clinical revenues from the John Dempsey Hospital.

For the fiscal year that begins July 1, the Storrs-based programs will receive a state appropriation of \$229.4 million. The Health Center will receive an appropriation of \$101.9 million. The Health Center also receives funding through the state Department of Corrections to provide medical services for inmates.

Class of '08 Outstanding Students

Tim Levine



PHOTO BY AL FERREIRA

Tim Levine, dental medicine

BY CAROLYN PENNINGTON

As an undergraduate at the College of Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass., Timothy Levine was torn between medical and dental school to further his education.

Levine had always thought he would be a pulmonologist "when he grew up." He suffers from asthma and yearned to help others with the same problem. But he also spent a lot of time in the dentist's chair.

"Asthma medication tends to dry out your mouth and leads to increased rates of decay," he says.

What sealed the deal for dental school was Levine's love of art.

"Aesthetics are involved in dentistry," he says. "Even medically necessary dental procedures are centered on aesthetics. People want their smile to look good."

Levine graduated with a minor in art, and believes he has "a good eye" and the fine

motor skills necessary to make an excellent dentist.

During the past four years, however, he hasn't had much time to enjoy his love of painting and drawing. In addition to his course work, Levine has been active on both the local and national levels in the American Student Dental Association, a national student-run organization for students pursuing careers in dentistry. Levine was elected Speaker of the House this year by delegates representing the 56 dental schools nationwide. He has made six trips in the past year to Chicago where the board meetings are held.

His work with the Association also led him to Washington, D.C., where he lobbied legislators on a variety of issues important to the dental profession.

"I have a keen interest in politics and legislation," he says. "Many people don't realize just how much legislation can impact our occupation."

Some of the issues he's been involved in are declining Medicaid reimbursement rates; increases in student loan funding; and greater education concerning "meth mouth" – methamphetamine addicts often have serious oral health problems.

Levine's penchant for public policy-making likely won't end with graduation. He plans to specialize in orthodontics or oral pathology after completing his general practice residency at St. Barnabus Hospital in the Bronx, N.Y. But he's also not ruling out pursuing another degree – perhaps a master's in public policy, or a law degree.

"I'm too much of a policy wonk to be a political officer holder," he says, "but working on and influencing legislation is definitely something I could see myself doing."

Rasy Mar



PHOTO BY AL FERREIRA

Rasy Mar, public health

BY CAROLYN PENNINGTON

When Rasy Mar celebrated her master's of public health degree during the Health Center's Commencement, she made sure her husband and sons had front row seats.

"I am living the American dream," says Mar, who arrived in this country from a Cambodian refugee camp in Thailand at the age of 13. She and her family were relocated to Bristol, and Mar was placed in the 4th grade, unable to read or write in either the Khmer language or English.

Ten years later, she graduated with a bachelor's degree from Western Connecticut State University, and applied to UConn to study for a master's of public health (MPH). She completed the four-year MPH program in three years, while working full-time in the medical dean's office.

"To have a job, a family, and the opportunity to get an education, that is a dream," says

Mar, who plans to continue her education.

Mar says her experience helped foster her interest in public health.

She remembers her sense of isolation and confusion upon her arrival in this country. "I struggled with both cultures, my native culture where girls were not given the same opportunities as boys, and the culture in this country that tells girls they can be anything they want to be," says Mar.

Many Cambodians in the U.S. struggle with the aftermath of the chaos they experienced as refugees of the civil war and genocide unleashed by the Khmer Rouge in the late 1970s. They often suffer from depression and infectious and chronic diseases, as well as experiencing problems related to cultural barriers in this country. Mar has direct experience with this, because she often accompanies fellow Cambodians to medical appointments to help as an interpreter.

To gather research for her thesis, last year Mar spent six weeks in Cambodia, assessing the health needs of residents of six villages near Phnom Penh. Working out of a small clinic staffed with one nurse and two midwives, she asked villagers about their health concerns and their access to health care. The information she gathered will be used by the community and the organization that funds the clinic to develop programs to address the most common health problems and to educate the population on sanitation and preventive health care techniques.

Mar hopes to use the skills she gained through the MPH program to work on improving health in Cambodian and other Southeast Asian communities.

Mar was an active member of the MPH student community, organizing workshops on topics such as how to pick an advisor, ways to get involved in international health, and public health career opportunities.

Sarah Jane Borch

BY CAROLYN PENNINGTON

Sarah Jane Borch says she had barely uttered her first word when her grandmother made two prophecies: her granddaughter would be tall, and would become a doctor.

While Borch was growing up, her grandmother's predictions seemed way off the mark. Borch was always one of the shortest kids in her class and she was more attracted to language arts than to science. She earned her bachelor's degree in English, and went on to work as a high school English teacher, an architectural marketing assistant, and an assistant in a New York City photo gallery.

When she heard from an old friend about the post-baccalaureate program at UConn, which provides an alternative route to medical school for students who have already earned a bachelor's degree, she knew immediately that it was what she wanted to do.

After two years in the program, she was accepted into UConn's medical school, where she eventually chose to pursue family medicine. She will begin a residency at Tufts University, starting in June.

On her path to becoming a doctor, three programs had a major impact on her.

Before entering medical school, Borch worked at a camp in California for children with life-threatening illnesses. "The kids are really inspiring," she says.

During medical school, she volunteered for the Pick Your Path to Health project, where she mentored female prisoners at York Correctional Institute and coached them in journal writing as therapy.

And recently, Borch participated in the Humanistic Elective in Alternative Medi-



PHOTO BY AL FERREIRA

Sarah Jane Borch, medicine

cine, Activism, and Reflective Transformation, a month-long program sponsored by the American Medical Student Association. "I lived in a Quaker center in the middle of the Redwood forests in California and learned ways to bring more humanism into medicine," she says. "I love teaching simple mind/body techniques to help people feel better. There are so many different ways to be a healer – medicine is so vast, there's a place for everything."

As this year's Medical School class commencement speaker, Borch says she hopes to represent the variety of people that make up the class. "Everybody brings something unique and valuable to medicine," she says.

If her grandmother were alive today, she would no doubt take pleasure not only in Borch's accomplishments but also that her predictions came true – her 5'7" granddaughter is now a medical doctor.

Amy Kokoski

BY SHERRY FISHER

Amy Kokoski studied mechanical and aeronautical engineering in college, then worked as an engineer at Pratt & Whitney, a division of United Technologies Corp., for several years.

"I enjoyed my job," she says, "but knew that ultimately I wanted a career in patent law."

In 2004, while working at Pratt & Whitney designing turbine blades, she started to attend the UConn School of Law as an evening division student. On May 18, she graduated with a law degree with a concentration in intellectual property (IP) law. She also received a certificate from the IP Program.

"I've always liked the thought process and the analysis required behind a technical field, and I also enjoy communicating with people," she says. "Patent law is a good fit for me, because I utilize my technical background, but also get to employ other skills, such as communication and writing." Kokoski has been a patent law clerk at McCarter & English LLP in Hartford for eight months, and will become an associate upon passing the Connecticut bar exam this fall.

She says the best part of her law school experience was working at the IP Clinic. There, she worked with small startup companies and individual inventors and dealt with patents, trademarks, and copyrights.

"I was thrilled when they started the clinic," she says. "Evening division students don't have much flexibility in their schedules for summer internships, and the clinic gave me an opportunity to gain some of the experience I had missed."



PHOTO BY MICHELLE HELMIN

Amy Kokoski, law

She adds, "When you're just taking classes, you don't get a chance to actually experience what it's going to be like to be a lawyer. Working at the clinic was my first real lawyerly experience, and I was relieved to find out how much I liked it. There's a real difference between book learning and experience."

She says her experience as an engineer has been beneficial to her career.

"It's been a wonderful combination," she says. "It gave me a better perspective about the inventions that I'm working on, because I understand the technologies behind them. And when inventors find out that I'm also an engineer, it puts a different perspective on things. Book learning is certainly valuable, but the actual work I did as an engineer is probably the portion of my technical background that I utilize more than anything day to day."