



Health Center reviewing hospital affiliation proposals

BY KRISTINA GOODNOUGH

University officials are reviewing proposals from area hospitals to form affiliations with the Health Center to update its clinical facilities and strengthen its education and research programs.

Four proposals were submitted Aug. 1 in response to a solicitation of interest the Health Center issued in June. The proposals are from Hartford Hospital and The Hospital of Central Connecticut; St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center; Connecticut Children's Medical Center; and Bristol Hospital.

"The hospitals' interest in partnering with the Health Center is gratifying," says University President Michael J. Hogan. "It highlights the significant benefits of such a partnership to quality health care in the region and to the state's long-term economic development by attracting biomedical research funding and developing new patents, technologies, and partnerships with business and industry."

Dr. John W. Rowe, chairman of the Board of Trustees, says, "High quality medical and dental schools are essential to educate the

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PHOTO BY LANNY NAGLER

Dr. Cato T. Laurencin, left, who joined the Health Center as vice president for health affairs and dean of the School of Medicine in August, speaks with Timothy Hla, director of the Center for Vascular Biology, during a reception Aug. 20.

CHEFA director named to UConn's top finance post

BY KAREN A. GRAVA

Richard Gray, executive director of the Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA), has been appointed UConn's vice president and chief financial officer. He will join the University on Aug. 29.

Gray, a 1972 graduate of UConn who also holds a master's of business administration from the University of New Haven, will serve as the University's chief financial officer for both the Storrs-based and the Health Center programs. He succeeds Lorraine M. Aronson.

"This appointment is central to UConn's ability to manage its finances," said University President Michael J. Hogan in announcing the appointment. "Mr. Gray is a highly skilled professional, with a comprehensive background in commercial finance, health

care finance, and public finance, who understands how higher education and Connecticut government work."

The VP-CFO reports directly to the president and is also responsible for developing financial policy and serving as a point of contact for external agencies and partners on financial matters.

Gray has been the executive director of CHEFA for the past 12 years and has had a 36-year career in public finance, commercial lending, health care financial management, and banking. CHEFA provides Connecticut's non-profit institutions – including institutions of higher education, hospitals, independent schools, child care providers, cultural institutions, and human service pro-

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New fund to help students cope with crisis situations

BY KAREN A. GRAVA

When an out-of-state UConn student learned that his parent unexpectedly died, he was faced not only with coping with his grief but also with the financial challenge of trying to fund an unplanned trip home.

A new program started by the Division of Student Affairs will help students cope with the unexpected when they are confronted with a personal or financial crisis such as this.

The program, the Students First Fund, will enable the University to reach out to students in need, using private contributions made by members of the UConn community.

"The fund is necessary because we are

prohibited from using state funds to personally benefit an individual student," said Denielle Burl, director of risk management in the Division of Student Affairs. "This fund will allow us to reach out to students through the donation of funds or gift certificates when they need it the most."

The fund, administered by the UConn Foundation, will permit Student Affairs to contribute to students who have had apartment fires, car accidents, or other crises, and need transportation, books, clothing, or even food.

So far, the fund has collected more than \$12,000 in donations.

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PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Adam Pender, a worker at the UConn Co-op, puts bags in order on the shelves ready for pick-up. More than 2,000 students have ordered their books through the Co-op's online purchasing program, Textbooks To Go.

Psychology emeritus dies at 83

BY SHERRY FISHER

Victor Denenberg, an emeritus professor of psychology, died July 19 at 83.

He lived in Issaquah, Wash.

After graduating from high school, Denenberg served in the U.S. Army in the 95th Infantry. He was wounded in action during World War II, after which he attended college on the GI Bill. He graduated from Bucknell University in 1949, and earned his master's, and a Ph.D. in experimental psychology from Purdue University.

In 1969, as a tenured professor at Purdue, he was recruited to a newly created program in biobehavioral sciences at UConn, where he served as professor and acting head/coordinator, from 1984 to 2000.

Benson Ginsburg, professor emeritus of psychology, says Denenberg was a pioneer in his field.

"Vic's teaching and research attracted many able graduate and postdoctoral students to the biobehavioral sciences, and later, the psychology department," Ginsburg says. "He considered his students

to be part of his extended family, and maintained close personal and professional contact with them for the remainder of his career."

Stephen Maxson, professor of psychology, says Denenberg had a "boyish enthusiasm for living and enjoying all of life. Professionally, he was a very exceptional and highly productive experimental psychologist."

Maxson recalls a conversation he had with Denenberg about differences between humans and animals: "I said that humans had language and animals did not. Vic responded that he thought there might be a quantitative but not qualitative difference in this between ourselves and some animals. This conversation may have been part of his incentive to develop an animal model for some aspects of human dyslexia, which is a dysfunction in human language."

Denenberg enjoyed teaching and conducting research. He referred to his students as one of his major accomplishments, as they represented the future and would carry on the teaching and research.

His students say they loved his

wit and intelligence and his willingness to work with them.

He published some 400 scholarly papers and chapters, including several statistical texts. He served on various national committees relating to early development, and spoke nationally and internationally at many conferences. He was a reviewer for scholarly journals, and received substantial funding to support his ongoing research on the early development of the brain and behavior. He was a founding member of the Society for Neuroscience.

Denenberg retired from UConn in 2000, and accepted a position as visiting professor at the University of Washington.

He loved to ski and enjoyed cooking Chinese meals.

He is survived by his wife Evelyn Thoman, also an emeritus professor of psychology, three daughters, six stepchildren, and grandchildren. He was predeceased by an infant son, and a daughter. Memorial contributions may be made to the Obama campaign or the Democratic Party.

Emeritus engineering professor dies

BY ALEXA BUCKWOLD

Victor Scottron, an emeritus professor of civil engineering, died June 17. He was 93.

Scottron, who lived in Storrs, received his doctorate in environmental engineering science from Johns Hopkins University.

A specialist in water resources, Scottron was a member of UConn's engineering faculty for 37 years. He was a highly respected teacher, researcher, and administrator. Following his retirement in 1985, he continued to pursue his interest in history and technology.

"As one of his former students, I remember him as an inspiring teacher, dedicated to his students and very effective in getting his students to think for themselves,"

says Peter McFadden, emeritus professor and a former dean of the School of Engineering.

Scottron authored many technical publications and books on hydraulics and fluid mechanics. He was particularly knowledgeable about canals in Europe. He was director of both the Institute of Water Resources and the Sea Grant Program at UConn, and a longtime member and leader of the University Senate. He was also president of the national Civil Engineering Honor Society, Chi Epsilon, and an active member of the historical society.

During his career, Scottron received many awards, including the Distinguished Public Service Award from the UConn Alumni

Association, and the Benjamin Wright Award, named in recognition of the founder of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

"He was a key member of the University community as well as the faculty of the School of Engineering," says McFadden, "He brought credit to public higher education."

Scottron is survived by his wife Kathryn Jan, a daughter, four grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

Donations in his memory may be made to The UConn Foundation for the Victor E. Scottron Scholarship Fund, and sent to 2390 Alumni Drive, U-3206, Storrs, CT 06269.

2009 Provost's Scholarship Development Awards

The recipients of the Provost's Scholarship Development Awards for 2009 were announced recently.

The Provost's Scholarship Development Awards, previously known as the Provost's Research Fellowships, offer an opportunity for release time from teaching for one semester to eligible faculty engaged in long-term research projects. This competitive program is designed to support and promote long-term research projects that cannot be funded via other, more traditional avenues. Recipients of a Provost's Scholarship Development Award are able to undertake long-term and/or especially demanding projects with a surer sense that the projects can be completed, resulting in publication or exhibition, or the award of important extramural funding, in a timely fashion.

The 2009 award recipients are:

Peter Baldwin, associate professor, history

The Watches of the Night: Transforming the Nocturnal City, 1820-1930, Spring 2009

Daniel Caner, associate professor, history

Completion of book manuscript, History & Fiction on the Late

Antique Sinai, Spring 2009

Patricia Cramer, associate professor, English
Virginia Woolf: The Lesbian Years – The Sexual Politics of Sapphic Modernism, Spring 2009

Martha Cutter, associate professor, English
Passing: The Strange Cultural and Historical Meaning of a Word, Spring 2009

Diane Lillo-Martin, professor, linguistics
Development of Bimodal Bilingualism: Preliminary Studies, Spring 2009

Laurietz Seda Ramirez, associate professor, modern & classical languages
Trans/Action the Nation: Globalization and National Identity in Mexico and Puerto Rico, Spring 2009

Richard Ashby Wilson, professor, anthropology
Judging History: Accounting for Mass Atrocities at International Criminal Tribunals, Spring 2009

Library to open earlier on weekdays

Starting Sept. 2, the Homer Babbidge Library will open at 7:30 a.m. instead of 8 a.m., Monday through Friday during the academic year. The opening time on Saturday and Sunday during the academic year will continue to be 10 a.m.

The change comes in response to requests from students who frequently need documents printed for early classes, and from faculty who need access to library materials, such as videos, for classes that meet at 8 a.m.

"Our user surveys have indicated that students want access to printers and photocopiers before

8 a.m.," says Brinley Franklin, vice provost for University Libraries. "Likewise, faculty members may need to pick up library materials for their early classes. Despite a budget cut, we are re-deploying some of our remaining staff resources to serve these important needs our users have related to us."

Closing hours will remain the same: 2 a.m., Monday through Thursday and Sunday; 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. The 24-hour room in Babbidge Library was also enlarged over the summer. For a complete schedule, go to www.lib.uconn.edu/campuses/storrs/hours.html.

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT Advance

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Administrators take on new responsibilities

BY SHERRY FISHER

Several administrators at the University have been promoted or have temporarily taken on new duties.

Dana McGee, formerly the director of the Office of Diversity and Equity, has been promoted to associate vice president for diversity and equity; M. Dolan Evanovich, formerly vice provost for enrollment management, has been promoted to vice president for enrollment planning, management, and institutional research. Suman Singha, vice provost for academic administration, will serve as interim vice president for research and dean of the Graduate School, and senior vice provost; and Nancy Bull, associate dean of outreach and public service and associate director of the Cooperative Extension System in the College of Agriculture, has been appointed to a temporary three-quarter time position as vice provost for academic administration.

McGee is now responsible for promoting diversity across all levels and campuses of the University. As UConn's chief affirmative action officer, she oversees the Office of Diversity and Equity at Storrs and the Health Center.

Evanovich, in his expanded role, will continue to oversee efforts to recruit top undergraduates, while ensuring accessibility. In addition to overseeing the Office of Institutional Research and the Office of Enrollment Management, he will advise the president and provost on UConn's strategic progress to enhance its stature as a top public

research university.

Provost Peter J. Nicholls says the promotions of McGee and Evanovich "reflect the priority we are placing on diversity and continued strategic analysis and assessment, as well as our continuing efforts to unify our Storrs and Health Center campuses and programs."

Nicholls says that his office has taken on significantly increased responsibilities relating to academic oversight of the University including the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine. These new responsibilities include oversight of academic budgets; the development and implementation of consistent procedures for hiring, promotion, and development of faculty and staff, and a greater level of interaction with the Health Center's Board of Directors.

"These new responsibilities impact all of us in the Provost's office, but especially entail a greater level of oversight from Vice Provost Suman Singha," Nicholls says. "In light of this fact and the fact that I wish Dr. Singha to serve as deputy provost in my absence, I have decided to promote him to the position of senior vice provost."

Nicholls says the budget rescission and the new responsibility his office is assuming for the Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine have also led to an increased workload with regard to fiscal administration. He says Bull's temporary position as vice provost for academic administration fills the increased need for assistance in the development of collegiate budgets.

Campus readied for new academic year

BY SHERRY FISHER

As students gear up for classes, UConn's landscaping group and contractors have been sprucing up the campus for their return.

Beautification and maintenance projects have included clean-up work on Mirror Lake, in the center of campus, and Swan Lake, near the Chemistry Building on North Eagleville Road.

The University has been trimming and pruning trees and plants on the island in Mirror Lake, and has removed dead and diseased trees and underbrush.

Colorful rhododendrons and mountain laurel will be planted there later this fall.

The lake, which in the past has been treated with copper sulfate for algae and is now host to inva-

sive plants, was recently cleaned using a new technology. A different treatment was needed because the copper sulfate became less effective over time, says Thomas Callahan, associate vice president for operations. The work was done by All Habitat Inc.

Callahan describes the technology as the equivalent of an "underwater lawnmower" that cuts weeds off at the lake's bottom. It then sucks the water, weeds, and algae through a vacuum pump and deposits it elsewhere – in this case, on the west side of the lake.

Silt fences hold the residue so it doesn't wash back out, and water filters through the silt fence back into the lake. The residue that remains dries relatively quickly, and can be moved into dumpsters.

Callahan says the process is an interim solution to cleaning up the algae and invasive plants. Other alternatives that provide long-term solutions are under discussion.

Swan Lake had been shrouded by an infestation of an invasive plant called phragmites. The plant, which can grow to between 12 and 15 feet, had taken over the east side of the lake, and moved to the south side. The plants were cut down at the water line and removed as a short-term solution.

Callahan says the work around Swan Lake and the Chemistry Building is intended to add to the aesthetics of the campus.



PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Workers from All Habitat Inc. clean the bottom of Mirror Lake.

Library offers new program to manage citations, bibliographies

The process of managing citations for research papers or journal articles is now easier with UConn's new web-based bibliographic management program "RefWorks."

RefWorks functions as a personal bibliographic database, storing the information on books, book chapters, journal articles, or other bibliographic references.

In addition to organizing an unlimited number of references, the program operates in conjunction with Microsoft Word to

automatically arrange, italicize, underline, and otherwise punctuate the bibliographic information into endnotes that comply with the rules of the APA, MLA, or many other bibliographic styles.

The Babbidge Library is offering workshops on how to use the new program. Any current UConn student, staff person, or faculty member at any campus may sign up for a free RefWorks account and register to attend a workshop. Go to <http://refworks.uconn.edu>.

Photocopying goes self-service at Babbidge

Photocopying and printing at Homer Babbidge Library is now self-service.

Members of the University community now need to use a Husky One card or department card to copy or print a document, instead of paying in cash.

Library users unaffiliated with the University may purchase a new library service card for \$5 from the self-service One Card machine on Level 1 of the Library. This card, which comes with \$2 of credit on it at the time of purchase, entitles users to the same 10 cents per page cost for copying and printing that members of the campus commu-

nity currently enjoy.

The Library's IT Services Desk has been relocated to Level 1. There users will find new, faster copiers, which will send black-and-white scans of documents to any e-mail address free of charge. Free color scanning will also be available. In addition, the Library now has the ability to print large format documents of 36" x 48" and 36" x 56".

Fax service will be available in the Student Union.

For more information, go to: <http://learningcommons.uconn.edu>.

Grant renewed for recruitment, retention of minority students

BY RICHARD VEILLEUX

The state Department of Higher Education has renewed and increased a grant to help UConn continue its efforts to recruit and retain undergraduate minority students.

"These grants aim to reward and support these institutions' efforts to achieve their student diversity goals," Gov. M. Jodi Rell said in announcing the grants to UConn and other state public colleges. "The funds will be put toward mentoring, peer counseling, job fairs, and outreach programs."

UConn will receive nearly \$165,000 per year for the next five years, says Lee Melvin, director of admissions. The grant is more than \$40,000 higher per year than the previous five-year grant, he says. It also is more than twice the amount any other state school received.

The amount of each institution's grant was based upon its performance in the enrollment and graduation of Latino, African American, Asian American, and

Native American students. Since 1995, UConn's minority population has increased by more than 100 percent, more than 90 percent of whom return for their sophomore year. Nearly 70 percent of the underrepresented students who enroll at UConn graduate within six years, placing the University in the top 20 of 58 public research institutions.

"We are a template in the state for minority recruitment and retention," says M. Dolan Evanovich, vice president for enrollment planning, management, and institutional research. "The continuation of this grant and the increase in funding recognize those efforts."

Roughly half of the grant, which will be matched by the University, will be used to support undergraduate admissions, says Melvin, and the rest will be applied to programs designed to keep those students on campus.

The percentage of undergraduate minorities at the University has increased from 13.4 percent in 1995 to 18 percent in 2007. The

new freshman class also is expected to feature about 20 percent minority representation.

Melvin says efforts include college life days in the spring, when more than 1,600 low income high school students who would become first-generation college students should they enroll in college are brought to campus for tours and discussions of the college experience; college recruitment days in the fall, when high school juniors ranked in the top 25 percent of their class come to Storrs to discuss residential life, financial aid, and other aspects of the University; several informational receptions; open houses for admitted minority students and their parents; and multiple informational sessions with high school guidance counselors.

Programs designed to retain minority students include a summer program known as ConnCAS, First Year Experience, mentoring, and tutoring services in the Center for Undergraduate Education.

Researchers study impact of healthy food program in Hartford

BY COLIN POITRAS

Inside the Williams Market on Hartford's Sigourney Street, low-fat milk, fresh orange juice, and crisp green pears share cooler space with bacon, whole milk, and sweet drinks.

At the checkout counter, a basket of fresh bananas sits in front of the racks of cigarettes and single pieces of candy that have been customer staples for years.

The presence of fresh vegetables and fruit at Williams Market is not a seasonal fluke. Over the past year, the market and 39 other small corner stores in Hartford have, on average, shifted 8 percent of their junk food inventories to healthier foods, as part of the Hartford Food System's Healthy Food Retailer Initiative.

This year, Ann Ferris and Katie Martin from the Department of Medicine and the Center for Public Health and Health Policy at UConn, with help from undergraduate students in the Husky Connections Program, are investigating the impact of the healthy food retailer program, in order to help grocers determine what kinds of healthy foods sell best among local consumers. The project is funded by a two-year, \$240,000 grant from the Ethel Donaghue Foundation.

"Limited access to healthy food in Hartford goes hand-in-hand with chronic health problems such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease," says Martin, a research associate.

"The goal of the initiative is to shift 5 percent of the stores' inventory each year from unhealthy snack foods to healthier food items," she says. "Our hope is that

this will bring about real long-term changes that are sustainable in the market, and real change in demand."

Health statistics show that the prevalence of diabetes in Hartford is 120 percent higher than the rest of the state and the rate of hypertension is 29 percent higher. More than half (51 percent) of Hartford's adults are obese and almost one-third (32 percent) of their children are overweight, according to a recent study authored by Martin and Ferris, co-director of the Center for Public Health and Health Policy.

Part of the problem is economic. Hartford has the fourth lowest median household income

among major cities nationwide. That limited income often leads families to purchase low-cost items like macaroni and cheese, sugary drinks, and other highly-processed foods, according to a February 2007 program report issued by the Hartford Food System.

A lack of available supermarkets selling fresh, healthy foods is also a factor, according to Jerry Jones, executive director of the Hartford Food System. In 1968, Hartford had 13 large supermarkets, he says. By 1983, the number had dropped to three. Today, there is only one large supermarket chain in Hartford, and there is no major supermarket within city limits north of I-84.

While much attention has been focused in recent years on the need for affordable and accessible health insurance in Connecticut, Jones says the Healthy Food Retailer program tries to intervene where people shop so they will ultimately lead healthier lives, reduce their risk of illness, and save themselves trips to the doctor.

UConn's researchers have helped analyze the stores' current food inventories and surveyed local consumers to determine their shopping habits when it comes to healthy foods.

"This program will only become a model in other places if we can document that it works," Jones says. "Partnering with UConn lets

us document what is working and what's not."

Many local shop owners have been reluctant to carry fresh fruits and vegetables because they go bad faster than processed snack food, are less profitable, and take up valuable shelf space, Jones says. But the owner of Williams Market, Antonia Helena, says her customers are responding to the change.

"I've seen customers buying more healthy foods," she says. "They ask me a lot for 1 percent milk."

The Hartford Food System is one of the nation's oldest organizations dedicated to fighting hunger and improving nutrition for Connecticut's lower-income and elderly residents. The private, nonprofit organization advocates for healthier school meals, oversees a 24-acre nonprofit farm, and does extensive outreach and advocacy in the Hartford community.

The Hartford Food System's Healthy Food Retailer Initiative is one of many service-learning experiences in which undergraduate and graduate students participate at UConn. The Center for Public Health and Health Policy operates health and nutrition service-learning programs in more than 25 agencies in Hartford, six days a week, year round.

UConn students involved in the programs spend a portion of their school year teaching nutrition to school-age children, reading books to preschoolers, and engaging in physical activities with city kids. Medical students also run migrant farm worker health clinics in the summer and fall, with the assistance of the Health Center's Dr. Bruce Gould and the Area Health Education Centers.



PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Antonia Helena, owner of Williams Market in Hartford, displays some of the healthy foods available at her store.

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viders – with low-cost financing in the public municipal markets. Formed in 1965, CHEFA has more than \$6.3 billion in bonds outstanding.

"I am honored to be given the opportunity to join President Hogan's administrative team," says Gray. "I look forward with great anticipation and enthusiasm to serving at one of the country's pre-

miere public institutions of higher education."

Gray has accepted several gubernatorial assignments, including completion of the financial analysis and reorganization of the Connecticut Resources Recovery Authority in the wake of the Enron bankruptcy and the development of the successful legislative proposal on Adriaen's Landing and

Rentschler Field. He also served as a member of the Governor's Task Force on the Future of Connecticut Hospitals.

A member of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Forum and the Connecticut Council for Philanthropy, he has also been involved with the Connecticut Science Center under construction in Hartford, respectively serving as chair, treasurer, and secretary of these organizations.

Gray's appointment follows a national search to find a successor to Aronson, who is retiring after 13 years of service to the University, including eight as vice president. She also served in state posts under Govs. William A. O'Neill, Lowell P. Weicker Jr., and John G. Rowland.

Aronson will remain at UConn in an advisory capacity.

"Ms. Aronson has been a tremendous resource for me throughout my first year as president," says Hogan, "I'm pleased we will continue to have her advice and expertise on hand as Mr. Gray transitions to UConn."

Gray resides in Cheshire with his wife Dianne. They met in 1971 while attending UConn.



PHOTO BY SEAN FLYNN

Richard Gray, the University's new chief financial officer, outside Gully Hall.

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next generation of doctors and dentists and to attract and retain high quality healthcare professionals in our state."

Evaluating the proposals is a top priority for Dr. Cato T. Laurencin, the Health Center's new vice president for health affairs and dean of the School of Medicine.

In seeking collaborations, the University is adhering to the process set out in legislation enacted during the 2008 legislative session and signed by the governor. The two-step process was originally recommended by the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering (CASE) in a report to the General Assembly last March.

In the first phase, the Health Center and the regional hospitals developed a mutual vision for establishing affiliation agreements. In the second phase, one or more hospitals would propose an affiliation agreement that would improve clinical care in the region and support excellence in education at UConn's medical school. The process is being monitored by CASE, with progress reports to the General Assembly.

"This is the mid-point in a pro-

cess of regional consultation that has been open, transparent, and productive," says Hogan, noting the good relationships the process is developing among officials of the hospitals in the area.

The review will include consultation with internal and external constituencies, including the Board of Trustees, the Health Center Board of Directors, and Health Center leaders, faculty, and staff.

"Our hope is to go as far as possible to harmonize all viable proposals into a regional healthcare system that benefits each partner, provides the highest quality healthcare, and serves as an economic engine for the region and state," Hogan said.

CASE envisioned something similar in its report. While not ruling out new or renovated facilities at the Health Center, it clearly thought the best alternative was a regional relationship between UConn's hospital and one or more regional affiliates. Such a course, according to CASE, would serve the state's best interests and "the General Assembly's goal of the Health Center achieving excellence in academic medicine."

Chemistry professor receives NSF award for polymer research

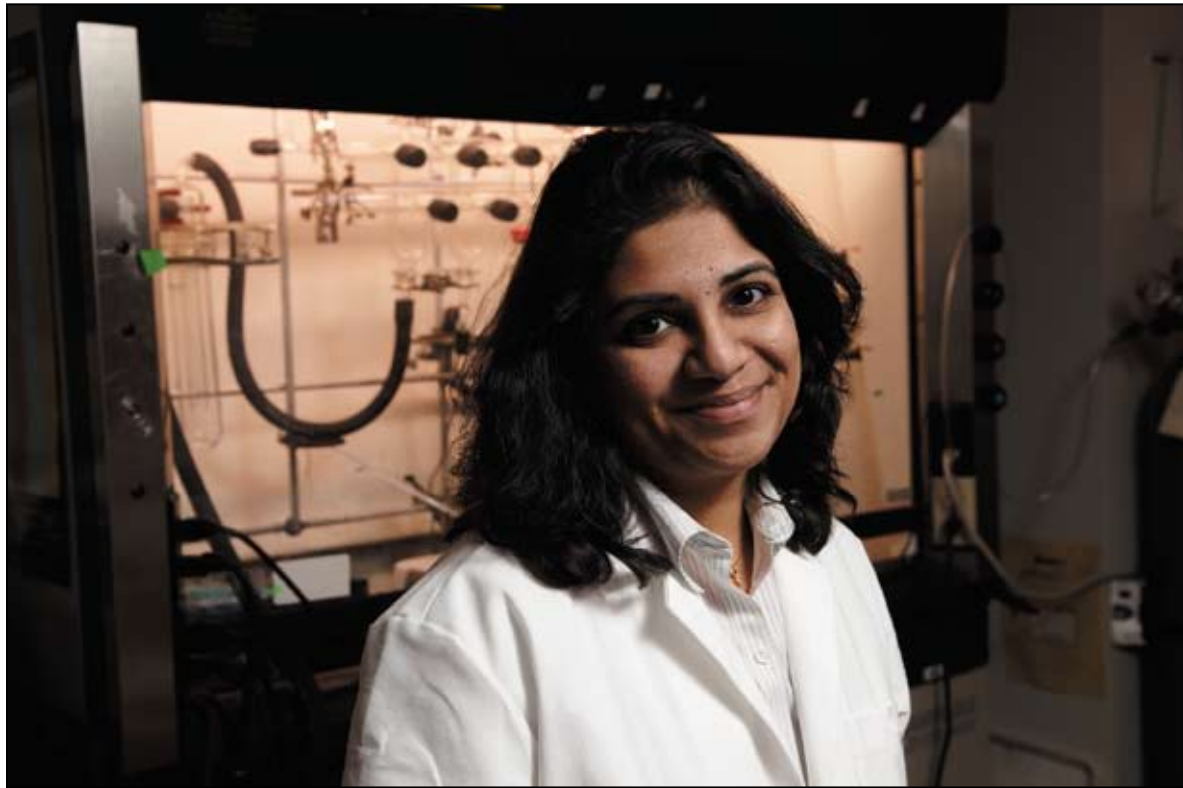


PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Rajeswari Kasi, assistant professor of chemistry, in her lab.

BY CINDY WEISS

A polymer and materials chemist who started her faculty career at UConn two years ago has won a National Science Foundation early career development award.

Rajeswari Kasi, assistant professor of chemistry in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, won the five-year, \$475,000 award for research into new polymer-based organic and hybrid materials that can be tailored for a particular function.

Her work focuses on materials that respond to physical or chemical stimuli – heat, light, electrical or magnetic fields, for example. She looks for a fundamental understanding of the materials and applications for them, such as encapsulating a drug in a polymer that responds to a magnetic field so that it can be used in an MRI scan to find cancer.

The award she won, Faculty Early Career Development (CA-REER), is the NSF's most pres-

tigious award in support of the career development of promising teacher-scholars who integrate research and education.

Kasi's research group includes five Ph.D. students, three of whom will receive support from the grant.

The research is a big change from her postdoctoral work, Kasi says. At the University of Minnesota, where she was a postdoctoral fellow for two years, she studied block copolymers, in which one molecule includes long sequences of two different chemical units that usually do not mix. They can form structures at the nano-scopic level and have biomedical and electronic applications.

Kasi received her Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts in 2004 and her master's degree from the Indian Institute of Technology in Madras in 1998. She is a member of the interdisciplinary Polymer Program at UConn.

Minority students conduct research, prepare for graduate work

BY SHERRY FISHER

Undergraduate minority students from colleges and universities across the United States conducted research at UConn this summer and were introduced to the world of graduate studies.

Thirty-six students participated in the Northeast Alliance Summer Research Program for Minority Undergraduates from June 2 to Aug. 9. The NSF-sponsored program is designed to encourage and prepare underrepresented students for doctoral studies. The program, now in its third year at UConn, is directed by Ruth Washington and Lee Aggison, a married couple who are associate professors-in-residence in the molecular and cell biology department. Aggison is also associate dean of the Graduate School.

The program has grown from six students during the first year, to 36, this summer.

Students in the program are juniors and rising seniors who have shown a strong interest in research at their home institutions. They are paired for the summer with a UConn faculty researcher and a graduate student mentor, and conduct research under their supervision.

In addition to research, students participate in seminars and workshops on issues related to their academic, personal, and professional growth. Each student makes a poster presentation on their research at the end of the program.

Aggison and Washington say the program is an excellent opportunity to expose underrepresented students to graduate studies in the sciences.

"Increasing diversity in the sciences and engineering is very important," Aggison says. "More qualified minority faculty are needed in these areas, and this program puts us a step closer to

meeting that goal.

"Also, there are very few positive images of professors and scientists in our society and that has had a negative impact on the field," Aggison says. "This program offers students an opportunity to see the passion of their faculty and graduate mentors."

Jim Henkel, associate vice provost for graduate education and research, says the program offers an opportunity for students to get ready for and learn more about graduate school.

"UConn, as a member of the Northeast Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (NEAGEP), seeks to broaden the base of people going into faculty positions in the sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics," Henkel says. "We want to attract first-generation underrepresented groups who might otherwise be shut out of the process, and offer

them an opportunity to prepare for graduate school."

He adds, "In order to succeed in academia, students have to prepare early on. They need to find a niche, find something to study that they are passionate about, and build their research expertise. Hopefully, the program will inspire them to go to graduate school and give them a head start."

The program is working, Aggison says: Five students who participated in the program will be attending graduate school at UConn this fall.

Kofi Adomako-Ayisi, a UConn senior with a double major in molecular and cell biology and ecology and evolutionary biology, has participated in the program for two summers.

Last year he studied invasive ants. This summer, he worked on research conducted by David Knecht, professor of molecular

and cell biology, and graduate student Charito Romeo. He studied how certain amoeba engulf extra cellular fluid, using fluorescent live-cell imaging.

"I cherish this summer and last summer," he says. "I've found my purpose in life: learning. I love doing research. I love the fact that you are constantly learning. You might solve one problem, but in doing so, five or six more questions will pop up."

After graduation, Adomako-Ayisi plans to take a year off to focus on his GREs, and then go on to graduate school.

LaTondra Kincaid, a student at Wiley College in Marshall, Texas, worked with John Salamone, a professor of psychology. She conducted research on the motor effects of caffeine in laboratory rats.

"The experience was exciting," she says "and Professor Salamone is amazing. I come from a small

school, and there's not much research going on. This program really introduced me to graduate school."

Abdiel Rivera, a senior from the University of Turabo in Puerto Rico, worked with Helena Silva, an assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering. He worked on building a laser spy microphone and studied the modeling of electronic and heat transport in silicon wires.

Rivera says in addition to the research, the program offered him an opportunity to improve his English, and meet new people. "I realized after being with all the students, that even though we have different cultures, we're equal and similar in many ways."

He says Aggison and Washington "work hard and want us to succeed. And I'm grateful to Dr. Silva, who is a great mentor."

Rivera is finalizing plans to attend graduate school at UConn in the fall.

Also from Puerto Rico, Cristina Tatis, who attends Universidad Metropolitana, worked for two summers on a research project run by Jose Manautou, associate professor of toxicology in the School of Pharmacy. The project involved the response of the liver to toxins in the popular painkiller acetaminophen.

Last fall, Tatis presented her work at a national conference and received several awards. She also co-authored a research publication on the subject. "That's unusual for an undergraduate," Manautou says.

He adds, "Many talented underrepresented students, when they're very good in math and science, are pushed to go to medical school. The summer program opens their eyes to other opportunities. They learn that they can do exciting things and use their talents in other ways."



PHOTO BY SEAN FLYNN

Students attend a presentation during a summer program designed to encourage and prepare minority undergraduates for graduate studies in the sciences, math, and engineering.



PHOTO BY DANIEL BUTTREY

Doug Erickson, a technician, installs equipment in a new tech-ready classroom, one of 35 completed by the Institute for Teaching and Learning this summer. These will bring the University's technology-enabled classrooms to a total of about 175.

GRANTS

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

Prin. Investigator	Department	Sponsor	Amount	Award Period
Anderson, A.	Pharmaceutical Sciences	National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases	\$1,681,281	6/08-5/13
<i>Targeting Bacillus DHFR: Structural Studies and Synthesis of Inhibitors</i>				
Best, S.	Center for Survey Research & Analysis	Workers Compensation Research Institute	\$56,250	3/08-12/08
<i>Michigan Workers Compensation Survey</i>				
Bucklin, A.	Marine Sciences	Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences	\$17,400	4/08-4/08
<i>Charter of RV Connecticut by Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences</i>				
Deguisse, S.	Sea Grant College Program	Dept. of Commerce/National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration	\$1,691	2/08-1/09
<i>Offshore Aquaculture Farm Tour</i>				
Fernandez, M.	Nutritional Sciences	American Egg Board	\$67,184	1/08-4/09
<i>Eggs: Potential for Dual Protection. Age Related Macular Degeneration and Cardio Vascular Disease</i>				
Ferris, A.	Center for Public Health & Health Policy	Donaghue Medical Research Foundation/Univ. of Conn. Health Center	\$25,445	4/08-10/08
<i>Evaluating Changes to the Local Food Environment</i>				
Ghosh, C.	Finance	Conn. Dept. of Higher Education	\$405,000	4/08-8/09
<i>Financial Literacy Curriculum</i>				
Gould, P.	Physics	Dept. of Commerce/National Institute of Standards & Technology	\$5,000	6/08-5/09
<i>21st International Conference on Atomic Physics – ICAP 2008</i>				
Harkness, S.	Human Development/Family Studies	Society for Research in Child Development/Univ. of Conn. Health Center	\$5,000	7/07-6/08
<i>Colloquia, Proposals and Research in the Center for the Study of Culture, Health and Human Development</i>				
Havens, C.	School of Social Work Instruction & Research	U.S. Department of Education/Hartford Public Schools	\$349,598	5/08-4/10
<i>Implementation of Student and Family Assistance Center (SFAC)</i>				

Jarvi, S.	Academic Center for Entering Students	Univ. of Conn. Health Center	\$19,200	5/08-7/08
<i>College Enrichment Program</i>				
Jarvi, S.	Academic Center for Entering Students	Univ. of Conn. Health Center	\$68,122	6/08-8/08
<i>Pre-College Enrichment Program and Pre-College Research Program</i>				
Karan, O.	Educational Psychology	Western Conn. Regional Adult & Continuing Education	\$9,988	3/08-6/08
<i>Post-Doc Internship – D. Ballard</i>				
Kazerounian, K.	Mechanical Engineering	New Dimension Technologies Corp.	\$157,329	1/08-1/11
<i>Developing a Robotic Conformance Grinding System</i>				
Kraus, C.	Center for Survey Research & Analysis	Creative Fuel LLC	\$13,000	5/08-12/08
<i>Mercy Community Health Survey</i>				
Kraus, C.	Center for Survey Research & Analysis	The Hartford Courant	\$10,000	4/08-12/08
<i>Public Opinion Polls</i>				
Leek, F.	Institute of Materials Science	Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI)	\$75,000	5/08-4/09
<i>Evaluation of Aged "o" Rings, Phase II</i>				
Los, L.	Plant Science	Environmental Protection Agency/Conn. Dept. of Environmental Protection	\$70,000	4/08-12/09
<i>Integrated Pest Management and Nutrient Management Demonstration Project</i>				
Loturco, J.	Physiology & Neurobiology	National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Neurological Disorders & Stroke	\$366,661	5/08-4/10
<i>Reversibility of Neocortical Malformation</i>				
Marsh, K.	Psychology – Center for Health, Intervention, & Prevention	National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Mental Health	\$2,086,312	5/08-4/13
<i>Implicit Attitudes and HIV Risk Behavior in Virtual Environments</i>				
Munro, N.	Anthropology	National Science Foundation	\$14,983	5/08-4/09
<i>Dissertation Improvement Grant: Micromorphological Analysis of Activity Areas at the Early Bronze Age Site of T.A.V. Afragola, Southern Italy</i>				
Pattipati, K.	Electrical & Computer Engineering	DOD/Air Force/National Security Innovations Inc.	\$36,500	3/08-12/08
<i>Machine Learning Techniques to Identify Patterns in Sparse Data</i>				
Polifroni, E.	Nursing Instruction & Research	Hartford Hospital	\$28,457	1/08-1/09
<i>Cost Share of APRN between UConn and Hartford Hospital</i>				
Ross, S.	Economics	Ford Foundation	\$198,567	4/08-9/09
<i>Assessing Racial, Ethnic & Neighborhood Differences in Loan Pricing and Performance: An Experian-Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Data Match Project</i>				
Rubega, M.	Ecology & Evolutionary Biology	Conn. Dept. of Environmental Protection	\$61,968	1/08-1/09
<i>Chimney Swift Critical Habitat Needs and Design of Artificial Nesting Structures</i>				
Schultz, E.	Ecology & Evolutionary Biology	Conn. Dept. of Environmental Protection	\$19,422	3/08-5/09
<i>Integrating Fluvial Geomorphology and Stream Ecology: Processes Shaping the Distribution of Freshwater Mussels in Connecticut</i>				
Singer, M.	Center for Health, Intervention & Prevention	Conn. Office for Workforce Competitiveness	\$75,000	4/08-12/08
<i>Youth Work and Learn</i>				
Staples, M.	Curriculum & Instruction	Conn. Dept. of Higher Education	\$112,873	4/08-8/09
<i>ACCESS (Academic Content and Communication Equals Student Success)</i>				
Valiquette, E.	Department of Extension	Danbury Public Schools, Danbury, Conn.	\$530	4/08-5/08
<i>4-H After-school Drama</i>				
Wagner, D.	Ecology & Evolutionary Biology	Conn. Dept. of Environmental Protection	\$69,300	4/08-4/09
<i>Field Support for the Mapping of Key Habitats for Species of Greatest Conservation Need</i>				

Student Fund continued from page 1

"University employees, who often are the first to hear about or witness these circumstances, can contribute through cash, credit card, or payroll deduction," Burl says. "Alumni who may remember what it is like to be a student without a lot of resources may also want to contribute to this fund."

Individuals wishing to contribute to Students First can do so through a single payment or a payroll deduction.

"Gifts may be given in honor of a person, entity, or group," adds Burl, "and because this is managed through the Foundation, gifts may be given without implicating our

state ethics code."

The fund will be administered by the Students First Fund Committee, which has established a procedure by which students can be nominated or apply for assistance.

"Gifts of any size make a difference," Burl says. "We are able to reach out and connect with our students and in most cases, even the smallest amount is a tremendous help. This is a great opportunity for the UConn family to reach out to students in need."

More information is at the Students First Fund web site http://studentaffairs.uconn.edu/students_first_fund.html.

CALENDAR Monday, August 25, to Tuesday, September 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 Tuesday, Sept. 2 through Monday, Sept. 8. Those items must be in the database by 4 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 25.

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

Monday, 8/25 – Fall semester classes begin.

Monday, 9/1 – Labor Day, no classes.

Tuesday, 9/2 – Last day to file petitions for course credit by examination.

Libraries

Homer Babbidge Library. Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-9 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, noon-5 p.m.; Monday, 9/1, 5-10 p.m.

Dodd Center. Reading Room and Research Center hours: Monday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday, noon-4 p.m.; closed Sunday.

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. Closed 9/1.

Health Center Library. Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m.-11 p.m.; Friday, 7 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 2-6 p.m. Closed 9/1.

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. Closed 9/1.

Avery Point Campus Library. Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed weekends. Closed 9/1.

Greater Hartford Campus Library. Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday 10 a.m.-5 p.m.. Closed 8/30-9/1.

Stamford Campus Library. Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-9 p.m.; Friday,

9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; closed Sunday. Closed 9/1.

Torrington Campus Library. Monday-Thursday, 9:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.; closed Friday-Sunday. Closed 9/1.

(adv.: Yiannakis). 6 p.m., Class of '47 Room, Babbidge Library.

Friday, 8/29 – Psychology. *Mental Verb Input and Children's Theory of Mind: A Training Study*, by Alice Howard (adv.: Naigles). 1 p.m., Room



"Sons of the Buddha," a photograph by Sheila Rock from the exhibition *Sera: The Way of the Tibetan Monk*, on display at the William Benton Museum of Art through Dec. 19.

Waterbury Campus Library. Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; closed weekends. Closed 9/1.

University ITS

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

Ph.D. Defenses

Thursday, 8/28 – Kinesiology. *Perceived Effects of Martial Arts Training on Mood*, by Gregory Kane

160, Bousfield Building.
Friday, 8/29 – Psychology. *The Irony of Harmony: A Group Position Perspective on Intergroup Contact*, by Tamar Saguy (adv.: Pratto). 3:30 p.m., Room 160, Bousfield Building.

Lectures & Seminars

Tuesday, 9/02 – Particles, Astrophysics, & Nuclei Physics Seminar. "Aspects of High-Energy QCD Scattering in AdS/CFT," by Javier Albaladejo, Ohio State

University. 2 p.m., Room P121, Gant Science Complex.

Exhibits

Tuesday, 8/26 through Friday, 12/19 – Benton Museum. *Sera: The Way of the Tibetan Monk*; also, *The Photographs of Sheila Rock*. Also, Tuesday, 9/2 through Sunday, 10/12, 43rd annual Art Department faculty exhibition. Tuesday-Friday, 10

by Christopher Zhang. Wednesday-Sunday, noon-4 p.m. Free to members and students, all others \$3 donation. Branford House Mansion, Avery Point Campus.

Through Wednesday, 9/17 – Health Center. *Four Seasons of the Valley*, photography by Carol Lowbeer. Daily, 8 a.m.-9 p.m., Main and Mezzanine Lobbies. Also, through Wednesday, 9/24, *Recent Paintings* by Donald Moss and *Real Tales* by Janice Hechter. Daily, 8 a.m.-9 p.m., Celeste LeWitt Gallery.

Through Friday, 10/10 – Babbidge Library. *Migration Route, a Journey Through Art*, by George Jacobi, Gallery on the Plaza; *4 in Prints* by Claudia Fieo, Margot K. Rocklen, Kim Tester, and Carmela Venti, Stevens Gallery; *A Reason to Remember*, West Alcove. For hours, see Libraries section.

Through Friday, 10/10 – Dodd Center. *Celebrating the Sculptural Book: The Challenge of Structure*. For hours, see Libraries section.

Through Sunday, 11/30 – The Ballard Institute & Museum of Puppetry. *Puppets through the Lens*. Depot Campus, Friday-Sunday, noon-5 p.m. Free admission, donations welcome.

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.

Athletics

Monday, 8/25 – Women's Soccer vs. CCSU. 7 p.m., Morrone Stadium.

Wednesday, 8/27 – Field Hockey vs. Durham University. 4 p.m., Sherman Family Sports Complex.

Thursday, 8/28 – Football vs. Hofstra. 7:30 p.m., Rentschler Field.

Friday, 8/29 – Men's Soccer vs. St. Peter's. 7 p.m., Morrone Stadium.

Saturday, 8/30 – Field Hockey vs. Sacred Heart. Noon, Sherman Family Sports Complex.

Sunday, 8/31 – Men's Soccer vs. Tulsa. 7 p.m., Morrone Stadium.

Monday, 9/1 – Field Hockey vs. Maine. Noon, Sherman Family Sports Complex.

Potpourri

Mondays – Al-Anon. Twelve-step meeting. Noon-12:50 p.m. For more information, call 860-486-9431.

Initiative educates public about lead poisoning prevention

BY KAREN SINGER

Widespread publicity has drawn attention to lead-tainted children's toys from China, but many people don't know that the biggest source of lead poisoning may be lurking in their homes.

A UConn program, the Healthy Environments for Children Initiative, is working to educate the

public about the dangers of lead poisoning and ways to prevent it.

Dangerous levels of lead can be found in paint chips, dust, and debris in houses built before 1978, when the U.S. banned lead-based paint from residential use.

Today more than 300,000 children have lead poisoning, which damages the brain, nervous system

and other systems, and causes lifelong learning, behavior and health problems.

"Sadly, this preventable problem still exists," says Joan Bothell, a writer and curriculum developer for the Healthy Environments for Children Initiative, a collaboration between the University's Cooperative Extension System and the Department of Human Development and Family Studies.

Since the mid 1990s, Bothell has been working with Mary-Margaret Gaudio, extension educator at UConn's Hartford County Extension Center and a co-founder of the program, on educational materials about the dangers of lead poisoning and how to avoid them.

"We try to make people aware that they can prevent lead poisoning, and that it's not difficult," Bothell says.

The work began in 1992, when state Department of Public Health officials asked Gaudio to write some easy-to-understand fact sheets about lead poisoning.

"They liked what we did," Gaudio says.

The next project was a training

manual about lead poisoning.

Since then, the Healthy Environments for Children Initiative has developed educational and outreach programs and materials in English and Spanish for children, childcare providers, teachers, contractors, and do-it-yourselfers, and has partnered with state, regional, and national agencies, as well as non-profits and community-based organizations.

The materials include a Native American-themed curriculum for young children, "How Mother Bear Taught the Children about Lead," that won an award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA), and a video aimed at do-it-yourselfers, "Don't Spread Lead."

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has used some of the program's materials in its National Lead Poisoning Prevention training programs.

In Connecticut, the program's 24 trainers have trained nearly 2,000 people in lead-safe work practices for painting, remodeling, and maintenance.

"Lead dust is usually the major

culprit for any child who lives in a house with lead-based paint that is disturbed or deteriorating," says Bothell, adding that people who live in older houses need to learn ways to deal with lead safety issues. Other sources of lead include old furniture, toys, and jewelry.

Bothell recommends checking lead recalls for consumer products at the state Department of Public Health web site: www.ct.gov/dph/

"Simple good practices" are part of the prevention process, according to Gaudio. "We tell parents to make sure their children wash their hands before meals and snacks, leave their shoes at the door, eat healthy foods, and stay away from paint dust and paint flakes," she says. The educational materials also teach children to do some of these things themselves.

HEC also administers the New England Lead Coordinating Committee, a regional consortium of state agencies working to eliminate lead poisoning, especially in children. The group held a conference on new approaches to prevent lead poisoning at the Storrs campus in June.



PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Materials produced by UConn's lead poisoning prevention program.

Young human rights leaders learn about global activism at week-long forum



PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Aida Darzhanova, a student from Kazakhstan, speaks during a session of the intergenerational leadership forum sponsored by the UNESCO Chair in Comparative Human Rights. The forum was held at Storrs in August.

BY COLIN POITRAS

After spending a week participating in the University's fourth annual international forum on human rights and leadership, Abiodun Bakare was full of energy and excitement.

"It's a very good experience, where young leaders are able to network and learn about what others are doing," said Bakare, of Nigeria, who was making his first trip to the United States to attend the forum.

"It is wonderful seeing people of different races, ethnicities, and color talking, laughing, and sharing ideas," Bakare, 29, said.

Bakare already has a few ideas

of his own. In Nigeria, he regularly helps a child welfare organization with fund raising and serves as a consultant to non-profit organizations through his Hum Creativity Point Foundation.

Bakare was one of more than 70 individuals from 55 countries who attended this year's *International Leadership Programme: A Global Intergenerational Forum* sponsored by the University's UNESCO Chair and Institute of Comparative Human Rights.

UNESCO stands for United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Institutions, organizations, and states affiliated with UNESCO seek to

contribute to international peace and security by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science, and culture. The UNESCO human rights chair at UConn is the only one in the United States.

The forum focuses on the intergenerational sharing of knowledge and building leadership skills. One of its primary goals is to nurture and develop young people to prepare them for local and global leadership and to create a network of solidarity in the development of human rights around the world, says Amii Omara-Otunnu, UNESCO Chair in Comparative Human Rights.

Participants in this year's forum were selected from among 700 applicants, based on their prior commitment to human rights work, the strength of their application essay, and their potential contribution to the forum. Organizers tried to select a balanced slate of candidates from diverse regions, backgrounds, genders, and ages.

Those selected came from Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Kenya, Burma, Mexico, France, the Philippines and many other countries. They relied on philanthropy in their native countries, self-funding, and assistance from their embassies or nongovernmental organizations to underwrite the cost of attending the forum.

This year's keynote speaker was Ahmed Kathrada, a South African anti-apartheid activist who served 26 years as a political prisoner with Nelson Mandela. Kathrada spoke about the importance of unity and communication in helping oppressed people.

Another of the forum's guest speakers, Krishna Sondhi, founder of Kumarian Press, said she was impressed by the level of interest on behalf of the participants. Many gathered around her after she spoke, pressing her with questions and seeking her guidance.

"I'm so encouraged to see so many young people who are going to contribute to the fight for human rights," said Sondhi, 72, who has fought sexism and discrimination in Kenya and elsewhere for decades. Kumarian Press, based in Virginia, publishes books on international development and management geared toward developing countries.

In order to foster their leadership skills, participants took part in a ropes challenge course at the Holiday Hill Day Camp in Mansfield. They also toured the

anti-poverty organization Food-Share of Hartford and visited the United Nations headquarters in New York.

Joseph Briody, associate director of student development and learning at UConn, spoke about acquiring leadership skills for social action. Rafael Pérez-Escamilla, a UConn professor of nutritional sciences and public health, spoke about human rights, nutrition, and hunger; and Joyce Ashuntantang, an assistant professor-in-residence in English literature at the Greater Hartford Campus, shared her thoughts on the use of theatre in human rights education.

Charles Prewitt, emeritus professor of physics, captivated his audience with tales about his progression from Manhattan Project chemist during World War II to international scholar and peace activist. The Manhattan Project was a collaboration among the U.S., the U.K., and Canada to produce the first nuclear weapon.

In other sessions of the forum, participants learned about conflict resolution and grassroots organizing.

Elena Mihajlova of Macedonia said she found the sessions invigorating.

"There are a lot of different countries represented here," Mihajlova said. "When you share a room with other countries, you learn."

Aheli Purkayastha, who lives outside Boston and attends Bryn Mawr College in Philadelphia, said she felt fortunate she could attend.

"This is an amazing conference," she said. "I wish it could be replicated across the world. Since coming here, I have met people who have inspired me. I've been inspired by their stories and what they have done."

Health Center staff use green thumbs to beautify courtyards

BY CHRIS DEFRADESCO

This spring, a few dozen Health Center employees made it their mission to beautify the second-floor courtyards.

Before long, what started with some clearing of old branches and unsightly plants turned into a friendly competition. Employees from the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine worked on the south courtyard, while transportation aides and staff from the Dempsey Hospital Cardiac Stepdown Unit tended the north courtyard.

As the plants filled out, each side tried to one-up the other, with decorations, outdoor furniture, and other grounds improvements.

"People were coming in early, staying late, so they could work in the yards, coming out on their breaks," says nursing manager Debra Abromaitis. "It's wonderful to see so much pride in their workplace. They take it very seriously."

They took it so seriously, they called in two master gardeners from the Farmington Garden Club to judge each courtyard.

"The patients love it, they're at peace here," says Maritza Barta,



PHOTO BY CHRIS DEFRADESCO

Master gardener Marjorie Bingham, far right, reviews a courtyard garden with staff at the Health Center.

an administrative program assistant in the Pat and Jim Calhoun Cardiology Center, speaking from the courtyard facing the cardiac stepdown patient rooms. "And as employees, we look forward to coming out here to relax."

Medical technologist Lucy

Nadeau says, "Our jobs are very stressful, so it's nice to have a place you can go to relax, recharge, and rejuvenate. And think of the patients and visitors here. This gives them someplace to go to relax and unwind. The garden has been deliberately designed to be a serene

and tranquil place."

Each "team" has about 20 employees, who take turns watering, pruning, and maintaining the courtyards' appearance.

"Everybody put in a little something," says transportation aide Howard Fairley. "Somebody

watered it one day when a person couldn't be there, somebody did a little weeding when someone couldn't do it. It was about beautifying the garden for the patients, the employees, and the patients' loved ones, and it boosted morale."

Transportation aide Bernadette Serafin says, "I think the project brought people from many departments closer. They seemed excited, closely following the progression of the gardens, noticing even the smallest changes. Many offered to help, and donated plants and time."

The master gardeners, Marjorie Bingham and Margaret Bliss, visited July 11. They studied both courtyards, took notes, deliberated at one of the picnic tables, then joined the green-thumbed employees who had gathered, to announce their findings.

"These are both very beautiful gardens," Bingham said, before declaring the courtyard maintained by transportation and cardiac stepdown staff the winner.

"When you work in the hospital and you see the afflictions and sickness of the patients," says Fairley, "you want to contribute a little something more."