



PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Provost Peter J. Nicholls, left, receives a list of new students from M. Dolan Evanovich, right, vice president of enrollment management, planning, and institutional research, during Convocation, as Lee Melvin, director of undergraduate admissions, looks on.

Create your own vision, Hogan tells freshmen at Convocation

BY SHERRY FISHER

"We're looking for students who will bring a sense of wonder to their classrooms and will inspire their teachers as much as their teachers inspire them," President Michael J. Hogan told the Class of 2012 during Convocation in Gampel Pavilion Aug. 22.

"I was surprised to learn that members of the Class of 2012 did not know that IBM once made typewriters," he said, "and that, for this class, *The Tonight Show* has always been hosted by Jay Leno, caller ID has always been available on phones, and the nurse has always taken your temperature by putting a thermometer in your ear."

Hogan told the audience in the nearly full pavilion that he understood how parents might be feeling.

"I know exactly how your parents feel right now, because my wife Virginia and I have four kids of our own – all college graduates," he said. "I've been where you're sitting four times. It's a fantastic feeling of pride in our children but also a bit nerve-racking at the same time.

"We'll try as hard as we can to take care of your children," he told the parents. "We want to be there when they need help; we want to protect them, educate them, and keep them safe."

Hogan told students they would be working hard.

"With a full schedule of classes ahead of you, it's safe to say you're going to be reading a lot of books, taking a lot of notes, attending a lot of lectures, and cramming a lot of information into your heads," he said. "It might even make you dizzy at times, but you and I both know that with your talent, energy, and a whole lot of discipline, you should be able to handle the workload, graduate with distinction, and go on to very exciting careers that will make us all proud of you."

He said, "College isn't just a place where young people read the books and accept the views of those who came before them. It's a place where they form their own visions and invent the world all over again."

Hogan told students to "live a little" during their college days.

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School reform organization moves to UConn

BY ROBERT FRAHM

A nationally recognized school reform organization has moved its headquarters to the Neag School of Education, the latest step in making UConn a prominent center for urban school reform.

ATLAS Learning Communities, which operates in about 60 schools across the nation, joins Neag's Institute for Urban School Improvement with a 16-year track record that includes promising results in places such as New York City and Detroit.

The partnership will allow educational researchers from UConn and ATLAS to test ideas on school reform by working with teachers and principals in real classrooms.

"How do you really bring research and practice together?" says Linda Gerstle, executive director of ATLAS. "My hope is UConn will be a long-term home for these

ideas. Having a university in back of you helps ensure that school innovation and transformation can be sustained."

Formerly based in Cambridge, Mass., ATLAS becomes the second major school reform group to affiliate with UConn, making the Neag School the home of two of the largest reform models in the nation, says Eugene Chasin, director of the Institute for Urban School Improvement. Accelerated Schools plus, a comprehensive school reform model based at Stanford University, moved to the Neag School eight years ago.

The addition of ATLAS bolsters UConn's role in turning around struggling elementary and secondary schools and helping close the achievement gap that finds many low-income and minority children lagging in reading, mathematics, and other subjects.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for us

because the ATLAS program is one of the top school reform programs in the country," says Richard Schwab, dean of the Neag School. "It has proven you can have schools of high achievement regardless of where they are located and regardless of the entry-level skills of students."

The Neag School's role in urban school reform will expand significantly this year, as UConn leads a new coalition of educational organizations working to reform eight of Connecticut's lowest-performing public elementary schools. The coalition, known as CommPACT, not only will tap the expertise of Neag School faculty but will use ideas based on the work of ATLAS and Accelerated Schools, Schwab says.

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PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

University President Michael J. Hogan, second from left, and his wife Virginia, left, pose for a photo with Melina Mascaro, a freshman, and her parents Sally and Rocco of Farmington, during the President's Picnic Aug. 22.

Suicide Prevention Week activities designed to raise awareness

BY RICHARD VEILLEUX

This year – like every year – thousands of college students across the country will attempt suicide, according to Barry Schreier, director of Counseling and Mental Health Services. Unfortunately, many will succeed. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among college students, after accidents, he says.

UConn is not immune. “We have to do a better job of communicating to students that they’re not alone, that help is available if they’re troubled or depressed,” says Schreier. “And we – faculty, staff, and students – have to do a better job of identifying those who are struggling and are in danger.”

To that end, Schreier and a committee that includes representatives from more than two dozen departments have created a program for Suicide Prevention Week, Sept. 7-13, that includes movies, a keynote speaker, memorial service, information tables, T-shirts and, most importantly, suicide prevention training sessions that will help teach the UConn community how to recognize students who need help.

The training sessions will be offered Monday, Sept. 7 through Friday, Sept. 13, from 10-11:30 a.m. and 1:30-3 p.m. in Room 304C at the Student Union.

“QPR [Question, Persuade, Refer] training is a proven program that can save lives,” Schreier says. “The training sessions are brief and powerful, and if people can’t make the scheduled sessions during Suicide Prevention Week, then we can bring a session to them. If any department is

interested, we will gladly offer a session at their office.”

Schreier says it is vital that members of the University community help identify troubled students because, nationally, very few of the college students who contemplate suicide will visit a counselor on their own initiative.

“Too many people think suicide is something for counseling to handle, but it’s not a counseling problem only. It’s a community problem, so there has to be a community solution,” Schreier says.

He expects the 23 people who have already been trained in QPR to continue training others year-round.

“We can keep running events all year, but it’s friends, teachers, colleagues who are our first responders who can make the difference. That’s why they’re so important,” he says. “Prevention has to go on all year, not just next week, and QPR is the way for us to do this.”

Adopting the theme “Be Aware, Show You Care,” the committee has scheduled a number of other events throughout the week, including a talk at the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts on Tuesday, Sept. 9, at 7 p.m. by Ross Szabo, director of youth outreach for the National Mental Health Awareness Campaign and co-author of *Behind Happy Faces*. Szabo regularly speaks at high schools and colleges and at national conferences about mental health issues.

Additionally, there will be five movies shown during the week, each led by a discussant, including *Wristcutters: A Love Story*, on

Sept. 11 at 6 p.m. in the Student Union Theatre; *The Virgin Suicide*, Sept. 12 at 10 p.m., also in the Student Union Theatre; *Girl, Interrupted*, Sept. 8 at 6:30 in the Women’s Center; *The Sea Inside*, Sept. 11 at 6:30 p.m. at the Puerto Rican and Latin American Cultural Center; and *Love and Suicide* Sept. 12 at 2 p.m. at the Rainbow Center.

Also scheduled is a student panel discussion, “What Can We Do to Help?” Sept. 11 at 5:30 p.m. at the African American Cultural Center; a concert by the a cappella group Take Note! on Sept. 13 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Mark’s Episcopal Church; and a service for anyone who has been impacted by suicide or would like to participate will be held on the front steps of the Wilbur Cross Building on Sept. 10 at 7:30 p.m.

The committee also has planned an interactive web application through HuskyCT where participants will be able to test their knowledge of suicide prevention while learning about available resources and what to do to help themselves or others who may be considering suicide.

The group also has established a web site – www.suicideprevention.uconn.edu – that will remain active even after prevention week. The site has dozens of links, has culturally specific options, and a list of resources for suicide prevention.

Members of the University community can also register for one of the QPR session at the site.

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“I know your parents told you they spent their entire college years in the library, and I don’t want to contradict them,” he said, “but sometimes we need to put the books down and take a good look at the world around us.”

Provost Peter J. Nicholls, in his welcoming address, said education is more than passing tests or memorizing information. “Learning is for life,” he said, “so our general education curriculum provides opportunities and challenges, just as life does.”

Regina Barreca, professor of English, told students, “Don’t call your parents every time you need to make a decision – not even the really huge decisions like what socks to wear on the first day of class.”

“Try to make those big choices on your own,” she added.

Barreca encouraged students to have conversations with each other, which is something of a lost art.

“If your roommate’s iPod is too loud, gesture to your roommate to remove the ear bud and have a conversation,” she said. “Conversations are when two people speak to each other when they’re not texting or on the phone with other people.”

She suggested that students try something new.

“Don’t just keep doing what you’ve done before,” she said. “If you’ve been brilliant in the sciences, take courses in humanities. If you’ve always done well in English, try something in astronomy. Take a film course, an art history course.”

“At UConn you’re going to earn your diploma in the same way you’re going to earn your grades,” Barreca said. “Nobody is going to give you a grade, you will earn it. Your successes are up to you.”

The ceremony was followed by a campus-wide picnic.

Dodd Center honored by national archivists society

The Thomas J. Dodd Research Center has received the 2008 Distinguished Service Award of the Society of American Archivists.

Director Thomas Wilsted accepted the award on behalf of the center, during the society’s annual meeting in San Francisco Aug. 29.

Established in 1995, the Dodd Center has become “a center of campus intellectual life by linking collection development and preservation to public programming and the academic curriculum in a vital and exciting way,” the award selection committee said.

The center, named for the late Connecticut Sen. Thomas J. Dodd, houses the University’s archives, and focuses on building research collections that document the U.S. Congress, human rights, and public policy. It provided assistance to the African National Congress, South Africa’s leading anti-apartheid organization and now its ruling political party, by helping

collect and preserve records documenting its activities during the apartheid era.

The center contains Sen. Thomas Dodd’s papers, including his service as chief trial counsel at the Nuremberg Trials, and holds the Alternative Press Collection, and the papers of naturalist Edwin Way Teale and children’s author Tomie dePaola. It is also known for its collection of Connecticut business history, and the creation and development of Connecticut History Online.

The Dodd Center is a founding member of the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress, an independent alliance of institutions that promotes programs and research opportunities related to the U.S. Congress.

The Society of American Archivists is North America’s oldest and largest national archival professional association.

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT Advance

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Former Huskies Sue Bird, left, and Diana Taurasi of the U.S. women's basketball team celebrate after winning the gold medal against Australia during the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, China.

Former Huskies achieve success at Olympics

Six UConn athletes – four alumni, one current player, and a soon-to-be UConn athlete – represented their countries in the recent Olympic Games. They took home three medals, including two gold.

Diana Taurasi and Sue Bird helped the U.S. women's basketball team finish on top, beating Australia 92-65 for the gold medal. Taurasi had seven points and three rebounds in the final game, while Bird contributed four points and two rebounds. The two also earned gold medals playing for the US team at the 2004 Olympics.

Svetlana Abrosimova, who like Bird and Taurasi helped lead UConn to an NCAA championship, helped lead the Russian women's basketball team to the medal round, where they defeated China 94-81 for the bronze medal. Abrosimova had seven points and five rebounds in the contest.

A fourth women's basketball player, Jessica McCormack, who has enrolled at UConn but will sit out the upcoming season as a transfer student from the University of Washington, held her own for the undermanned New Zealand Olympic squad, which failed to reach the quarterfinals after losses to Spain, China, and the Czech Republic.

Also in China was Stephanie Labbe, a goalkeeper for UConn's highly ranked women's soccer team. Labbe, from Alberta, Canada, was an alternate for the Canadian national team.

On the men's side, Dudley Dorival, a former UConn track and field star, was in the Olympics for the fourth time. Dorival, competing for Haiti, ran in the 110 meter hurdles and qualified for the second round, where he finished out of the running.

Incubator start-ups receive funds from state

BY DAVID BAUMAN

Eight start-up companies in UConn's Technology Incubation Program recently received a financial boost totaling nearly \$400,000 from the Connecticut Small Business Incubator Program, through the state Department of Economic and Community Development.

"This is an investment that will leverage federal and private research dollars by creating new technology products and companies," said Gov. M. Jodi Rell, who announced the grants Aug. 22. "Technology-based small businesses are vital to the growth of Connecticut's economy, both now and in the future. They offer high wage, high value opportunities to our workers and communities."

The Technology Incubation Program provides space and services to enhance the success of early-stage firms that have a link to the University. It is part of the University's Office of Technology Commercialization, which also includes the Center for Science and Technology Commercialization and the UConn R&D Corp.

The program currently houses 15 start-ups, six at Storrs, seven at the Health Center in Farmington, and two at Avery Point.

"The start-up companies are evidence of an evolving economic landscape in Connecticut and the critical role UConn is playing in that transformation," says Bruce Carlson, managing director of the Office of Technology Commercialization. "These companies are transforming University discoveries into products that benefit us all."

In addition to providing start-up companies with the support they need to grow, business incubation also provides a boost to other businesses in the community, he adds.

Carlson notes that the national success rate for companies that graduate from incubators is more than 80 percent, and 87 percent stay

in the region of their incubator.

The grant recipients are:

- New Ortho Polymers of Farmington, which designs and develops novel polymer orthodontic appliances based on patented, proprietary materials. The \$50,000 grant will be used to evaluate archwire in laboratory clinical trials.
- LifePharms is a natural product drug discovery company at Avery Point that works with field-collected mushrooms. The company will use the \$50,000 grant to patent and market its technology.
- Evergen, a biotech company at Storrs that has expertise in animal cloning, transgenesis, in vitro fertilization, embryo cryopreservation, and embryo transfer. The company will use the \$50,000 grant to purchase new equipment.
- MakScientific, a Connecticut-based drug research, design, and development company. MakScientific will use its \$50,000 grant to file new patents.
- Conversion Energy Enterprises of Farmington, which develops laser products and biomaterials for medical applications. The company will use its \$50,000 grant toward obtaining FDA approval for one of its products.
- MysticMD, a company based at Avery Point that is working to reduce the weight and cost of materials in lithium-ion batteries. The company will use the \$50,000 grant for equipment to demonstrate the technology's feasibility.
- Biorasis of Storrs, a company that is developing implantable wireless glucose sensors 100 times smaller than current sensors for continuous monitoring. The company will use its \$45,000 grant to create a prototype sensor unit.
- Agrivida, which is developing improved corn varieties that will be used to produce environmentally-friendly fuels and chemicals. The \$34,000 grant will be used to purchase equipment.

Trays eliminated from dining halls

BY RICHARD VEILLEUX

Spurred by the discovery last spring that eliminating trays from the University's smallest dining facility also eliminated hundreds of pounds of food waste, Dining Services this fall has removed trays from all but one of the nine dining halls on the Storrs campus.

"This is not a production decision but a consumer decision," says Dennis Pierce, director of dining services. "There's a trayless movement sweeping the nation. We have to change our culture."

UConn officials tested the idea in March, when they teamed up with the Office of Environmental Policy and ran a three-week experiment at Whitney and Northwest dining facilities. During the first week of the experiment, dining hall staff weighed food waste, as students continued using trays. Two weeks later – the middle week was used for education – the trays were removed during dinner, and staff again weighed the waste. The result? About 760 pounds less food waste. Kitchen staff also ran

the dishwasher about 150 fewer times, saving 913 gallons of water and 30.8 kilowatts an hour of energy.

Spread across eight dining facilities for an entire academic year, rather than only a week, that should add up to some significant savings, says Pierce.

"Our tipping fees will also be lower because we won't dispose of as much waste, and we'll save money on food because we'll order less," he adds.

During the academic year, the dining halls serve 130,000 meals per week.

Pierce and his staff had long suspected that letting students use trays led to waste, because the students tended to pile the trays with food, often far more than they could possibly eat.

"Our staff complained about the waste all the time," says Pierce. "Then at a conference, I heard about other schools trying to do without trays, so I decided we'd try it here too. It was a great success."

Pierce actually eliminated trays

at the dining halls this summer, when conferences and sports camps keep dining staff busy. Since most visitors didn't know that trays had been available previously, they didn't seem to mind that there were none. Pierce suspects the reaction may be slightly different as the semester gets underway.

"The freshmen won't know the difference, but I suspect there will be a healthy discussion upon the return of our juniors and seniors," he says. "I hope they'll soon see that their efforts make a difference. I think the majority of them will appreciate what we're doing to help the environment."

The only dining hall that will have trays will be at South Campus, Pierce says. South will be allowed to use trays – albeit smaller trays than in the past – because of the size of the dining hall and because more conferences are held in South than other facilities with dining halls.

National food service giant Aramark, which has more than 500 campus partners, recently conducted two nationwide studies and found that taking away trays resulted in a 25 to 30 percent reduction in food waste per person, according to a recent story in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. The study also found that 79 percent of the 92,000 students, faculty, and staff surveyed said they would support "trayless dining." Aramark officials expect more than half of their campuses will go without trays this school year.

Another food service company, Sodexo, partners with more than 200 campuses that have dispensed with trays.

"A report issued by the National Association of College and University Food Services that looks at trends mentioned trayless dining this year," says Pierce. "This year, it said trayless dining is no longer a trend – it's a given."



PHOTO BY JESSICA TOMMASSELLI

Tyler Bennett, a freshman marketing major, holds his plate instead of a tray in the Northwest dining hall.

Researcher studies rates of cesarean sections, malpractice suits

BY KRISTINA GOODNOUGH

There may be a relationship between cesarean delivery rates and medical malpractice rates, according to research by Dr. Jeffrey Spencer, a fellow in maternal fetal medicine at the Health Center.

As the state's medical malpractice premiums increased, the number of cesarean deliveries also rose, according to Spencer, who reviewed the deliveries at Hartford Hospital from 1991 to 2005. During that time, there were 64,767 deliveries, of which 15,021 (23 percent) were cesarean deliveries. Of the 15,021 cesarean deliveries, 8,045 (59.5 percent) were primary or first-time cesarean deliveries, while 6,076 (40.5 percent) were repeat cesarean deliveries.

During the same time period, medical malpractice rates increased substantially. Spencer obtained mean malpractice premiums for obstetricians from the hospital's major medical malpractice provider and adjusted them for inflation.

The mean premiums for medical malpractice insurance for obstetricians increased from less than \$80,000 for an individual physician to more than \$120,000.

"When I compared the malpractice rates to cesarean delivery rates prior to 1999, both were declining at a similar rate," says Spencer.

From 1999 to 2005, however, both were increasing. "I can't say one led to the other or visa versa," he says, but he speculates that rising medical malpractice rates are driving up cesarean delivery rates.

Normal vaginal delivery is considered safer than a cesarean delivery for both mother and baby if the birth is uncomplicated. Cesarean deliveries are recommended for complications, such as slow or long labor or indications of fetal distress during labor.

"Most of the large malpractice cases result from a poor fetal outcome, that is, an expected 'normal' baby is born with health problems or has a bad outcome for whatever reason," says Spencer. "The MDs get sued because they didn't do all that was possible for the baby – meaning perform a cesarean."

"Malpractice premiums are a huge expense for physicians," says Spencer. "It's difficult for them not to practice defensive medicine. But although cesarean deliveries are less risky for the baby, they are more risky for the mom, with longer recovery times, generally, than vaginal deliveries. It's important to consider whether every cesarean delivery is truly necessary."

It's possible that there are other factors that may also account for the association," says Spencer, who presented his research at the



PHOTO BY LANNY NAGLER

Maternal fetal medicine specialist Dr. Jeffrey Spencer of the UConn Health Center performs an ultrasound.

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists annual meeting last spring. "With our data, we cannot prove a causation but only suggest an association."

Nationwide, cesarean deliveries accounted for 30.2 percent of all deliveries in 2005, compared to 20.7 percent of deliveries in 1996. The rising rate of cesarean

deliveries has triggered a debate over whether the increase can be attributed to medical necessity.

Correctional facility served by Health Center receives health care award



PHOTO BY ANDRIUS BANEVICIUS, CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

From left, clinical director Steven Lazrove, nursing supervisors Dianne Carter and Jane Hall, and administrator Ron Labonte, at York Correctional Institution.

BY CAROLYN PENNINGTON

The National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) has selected York Correctional Institution in Niantic to receive this year's NCCHC Facility of the Year Award.

This prestigious award is pre-

sented each year to only one facility selected from among the 500 prisons, jails, and juvenile detention and confinement facilities that participate in the commission's nationwide accreditation program.

Health care at York is offered through Correctional Managed

Health Care (CMHC), a partnership between the Health Center and the Department of Correction to deliver comprehensive health care to inmates in all of the state's 18 correctional facilities.

"We are delighted that NCCHC is recognizing the dedication

to patient care, the hard work, the consistency, and the creativity of our staff and of the custody personnel," says Dr. Robert Trestman, professor of medicine and psychiatry at the Health Center and executive director of CMHC. "It's our vision to become national leaders in correctional healthcare. This is a wonderful milestone along that path."

York is Connecticut's only correctional institution for women. It has more than 1,300 inmates ranging from teenagers to senior citizens. The medical unit consists of 64 sub-acute beds, divided into 32 medical beds and 32 mental health beds. Approximately 140 full and part-time employees staff the unit.

Health services are available to inmates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. "It's like a mini-hospital inside the prison," says Connie Weiskopf, director of nursing and patient care services with CMHC.

Weiskopf says the NCCHC surveyors were impressed with how the York staff consistently demonstrated excellence in health service delivery and professionalism. They also noted the variety of positive programs available to the population, she says. Those programs include perinatal as well as hospice services and chronic

care clinics for hypertension and diabetes. Specialty clinics include infectious disease, ob-gyn, surgical, ophthalmology, dentistry, and oral surgery.

The York Correctional Institution voluntarily applied for and was initially awarded NCCHC accreditation in 2002; it has been continuously accredited since. There are 72 essential and important standards that correctional institutions strive to comply with, and York is compliant with virtually all of them.

The NCCHC health services accreditation is a voluntary program for prisons that strive for national recognition by adhering to benchmark health care standards initially set by the American Medical Association.

The NCCHC's surveyors include certified correctional health administrators, nurses, and other medical professionals. During the re-accreditation process, they conducted more than 65 interviews with inmates, correctional officers, and CMHC staff.

The Facility of the Year Award will be presented at a ceremony Oct. 20 in Chicago, during the NCCHC's National Conference on Correctional Health Care.

Endangered language is topic of Humanities Fellow's research

BY ELIZABETH OMARA-OTUNNU

Some 250 years ago, the Itelmen language spoken on the Kamchatka Peninsula in the Russian far east was in decline and expected to survive no more than a generation. It proved more tenacious than predicted, but it is now on the verge of extinction.

Jonathan Bobaljik, professor of linguistics, has spent a decade and a half studying Itelmen. This academic year, thanks to a Humanities Institute fellowship, he hopes to develop a grammatical description of the language and explore related theoretical issues.

"The general philosophy of generative linguistics," says Bobaljik, "is that there are certain limitations on how languages work. There's a common core to human language, and there's variation. One way to find out what the limits are on variation is to examine 'exotic' languages, looking for patterns of similarity and difference."

Itelmen, he adds, is well suited to such study because it is related to almost no other language.

"Even in the remotest corners of the globe," says Bobaljik, "where languages seem at first blush very different from known languages such as European languages or Japanese, core patterns of human language and grammar are there when you know how to look for them."

A remote population

Bobaljik first became involved with Itelmen in 1993, while still a graduate student at MIT. Putting his Ph.D. temporarily on hold, he joined an anthropological expedition to the remote Kamchatka Peninsula.

The peninsula is accessible only by plane, boat, or dogsled; there are no roads or trains. Officially part of Russia, it was closed to out-

siders until 1990. Bobaljik and the anthropologist he accompanied were the first foreigners many of the local people had met.

The Itelmen people traditionally engage mostly in subsistence hunting and fishing. After several centuries of assimilation, their daily language is now Russian, and the number of Itelmen-speakers has dwindled to just 30, the youngest being in his mid-60s. Those who speak the language are dispersed in different villages, rarely getting together, and phone communication is sporadic, Bobaljik says.

The researchers spent a year in the field recording the language for further study. They brought the native speakers together for weekly tea gatherings, and taped and transcribed narratives and traditional stories as well as the people's answers to specific questions about the language.

Language and politics

Bobaljik says the survival of a particular language is not related to its intrinsic characteristics.

"Whether or not a language survives has nothing to do with language, and everything to do with politics and economy," he says.

Under the Soviets, Russian became the primary language and the Itelmen language was repressed for 50 years. "It almost directly parallels what happened to indigenous communities in the U.S.," says Bobaljik. "There was forced assimilation. Children were beaten for speaking their native language."

Only in the 1980s, did it begin to be legitimate to embrace the native culture, he adds.

Bobaljik says Itelmen history offers broader lessons for endangered languages.

"When you look carefully at both the decline and the surprising tenacity of Itelmen, you can

begin to discern some factors that work in both directions," he says.

"Whether or not a language survives has nothing to do with language, and everything to do with politics and economy."

Jonathan Bobaljik,
professor of linguistics

"The fate of the language is almost exclusively about politics, but it also partly, in communities this small, comes down to particular individuals and their views."

Traditionally, the Itelmen lived in tiny, scattered settlements, but the Soviet government created larger communities. In two villages, the language died out almost immediately after collectivization; in another two, it survived much longer.

The difference was the village teachers, Bobaljik says.

Although the language of instruction in all the villages was Russian, if the school teacher spoke Itelmen outside the classroom, the language persisted – an illustration, he says, of how "in a small community, the culture can be shaped by the values of an individual who has prestige."

Preserving the language

There is currently some local interest in preserving the language, and it is still taught in schools to a handful of children. But Bobaljik says most people are struggling to survive economically, and for them, the indigenous language is not a priority.

The ability to speak Itelmen carries implications for both political and cultural identity. Indigenous



PHOTO BY FRANK DAHLMAYER

Jonathan Bobaljik, professor of linguistics, is conducting research on a language known as Itelmen, which is on the verge of extinction.

people – identified primarily by language – have certain legal rights not accorded to other residents. Some in the government, says Bobaljik, would prefer to believe the indigenous community no longer exists and do away with those rights.

He predicts that fragments of the language will persist in ceremonial contexts, fostered by the growth of ethnotourism.

This fall, Bobaljik will immerse himself in the study of Itelmen, working with more than a hundred hours of audio recordings he made in the 1990s with collaborator Susanne Wurmbrand, who is

also now at UConn. It's painstaking work that requires listening to particular segments over and over.

He wants to make his work available to the Itelmen people. He has already sent copies of some of the texts he recorded, and helped produce educational materials in collaboration with two teachers there. Without museums, he says, "schools are the closest thing to a repository."

Electronic materials are not practical, however, since some of the villages don't have electricity. "What are you going to do?" he says. "Send a CD-ROM?"



PHOTO BY FRANK DAHLMAYER

Linda Gerstle, executive director of ATLAS Learning Communities, a school reform organization, in her office in Gentry Building.

ATLAS schools *continued from page 1*

sought new ways to address the achievement gap, especially since the creation in 2002 of the No Child Left Behind Act, the centerpiece of President Bush's school reform agenda.

Unlike some school reform efforts, neither ATLAS nor Accelerated Schools imposes a specific curriculum or governance model. Instead, both models focus on strengthening schools from within by promoting collaborations among teachers, principals, parents, unions, local businesses, and others.

"The effort to bring people together creates a certain culture within a school and district," Gerstle says. Unlike most schools where teachers work mostly in isolation, ATLAS schools bring teachers together regularly to collaborate on teaching and share their students' work, she adds.

ATLAS seeks to create a

pathway of schools, allowing children to move from kindergarten through high school under a model that creates "a classroom and school culture of thinking," she says. ATLAS schools, she adds, are "places of learning, places of developing intellectual character – not just getting the work done."

In addition, ATLAS emphasizes developing principals not just as managers, but as leaders, Gerstle says. ATLAS also places a premium on assessing student learning not only on tests but on the quality of regular schoolwork, including formal student exhibitions.

"We know kids understand [schoolwork] when they are using evidence, when they are making connections," says Louis Delgado, principal of Vanguard High School in New York City. Now in its third year at Vanguard, ATLAS has helped promote intellectual curiosity and rigor, he says. "In terms

of student engagement, it's been phenomenal."

A nationwide study issued in 2006 by the American Institutes for Research cited both ATLAS and Accelerated Schools as leading examples of reform efforts that promote collaboration and collegial interaction among educators – a factor the study said is associated with student achievement.

ATLAS began as a research project in 1992 in school districts in Maine, Virginia, and Maryland. Its founders included some of the biggest names in education: Howard Gardner of Harvard University's Project Zero; James Comer at Yale University's School Development Center; Theodore Sizer, founder of the Coalition of Essential Schools; and Janet Whitla, head of the Education Development Center, a leading education research organization.



Elizabeth Lucchesi, School of Dental Medicine Class of 2012, accepts her white coat from Dr. Arthur Hand, assistant dean for medical and graduate education. Forty-three dental students and 85 medical students received their white coats, symbolizing their induction into the health care professions, during a ceremony at the Health Center on Aug. 15.

PHOTO BY CHRIS DEFRANCESCO

GRANTS

The following grants were received through the UConn Health Center's Office of Grants and Contracts in May 2008. The list represents new awards as well as continuations. The list of grants is supplied to the *Advance* by the Office of Grants and Contracts.

Principal Investigator	Department	Sponsor	Amount	Award Period
Federal Grants				
Babor, T.	Community Medicine & Health	Nat'l. Institute of Alcohol & Alcoholism	\$64,669	01/06-11/08
<i>Delphi Evaluation of Alcohol Advertising Codes</i>				
Barbarese, E.	Neuroscience	Nat'l. Institute of Neurological Disorders & Stroke	\$323,750	05/07-04/09
<i>Oligodendrocyte Ontogeny and Differentiation</i>				
Carmichael, G.	Genetics & Developmental Biology	Nat'l. Cancer Institute	\$309,430	06/05-04/09
<i>Processing and Function of Polyoma RNA</i>				
Cone, R.	Immunology	Nat'l. Eye Institute	\$352,085	05/06-04/09
<i>Thymic Influence on Ocular Immunoregulation</i>				
Drissi, H.	Orthopedics	Nat'l. Institute of Arthritis & Musculoskeletal & Skin Diseases	\$126,277	03/08-07/08
<i>Runx-Mediated Regulation of Endochondrial Ossification</i>				
Graveley, B.	Genetics & Developmental Biology	General Medical Sciences	\$310,800	05/07-04/09
<i>Alternative Splicing of the Drosophila dsx Pre-DRNA</i>				
Harrison, J.	Craniofacial Sciences	Nat'l. Institute of Dental Craniofacial Research	\$222,000	04/08-03/09
<i>C/EBP Regulation of Dentinogenesis</i>				
Hewett, S.	Neuroscience	Nat'l. Institute of Neurological Disorders & Stroke	\$291,009	07/06-04/09
<i>IL1 and Hypoxic-Ischemic Insults</i>				
Kadden, R.	Psychiatry	Nat'l. Institute on Drug Abuse	\$524,914	09/06-04/09
<i>Contingency Management for Marijuana Dependence</i>				
Mayer, B.	Genetics & Developmental Biology	Nat'l. Cancer Institute	\$309,344	07/04-04/09
<i>Functional Role of NCK and CRK Binding Interactions</i>				
McElhaney, J.	Immunology	Nat'l. Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases	\$405,725	07/05-03/09
<i>T-Cell Responses Predict Influenza Risk in Older Adults</i>				
Mehlmann, L.	Cell Biology	Nat'l. Institute of Child Health & Human Development	\$256,838	8/07-4/09
<i>Signaling Mechanisms that Regulate Meiosis in Mammalian Oocytes</i>				
Papermaster, D.	Neuroscience	Nat'l. Eye Institute	\$444,424	02/05-01/09
<i>Membrane Biosynthesis in Normal and Dystrophic Retina</i>				
Rosenberg, D.	Molecular Medicine	Nat'l. Cancer Institute	\$243,043	05/04-04/09
<i>Molecular Characterization of ACF Aberrant Crypt Foci</i>				
Schiller, M.	Molecular, Microbial & Structural Biology	Nat'l. Institute of General Medical Sciences	\$280,033	05/07-04/09
<i>Building Motif Lexicons</i>				
Secor, E.	Immunology	Nat'l. Center for Complementary & Alternative Medicine	\$134,568	05/08-04/09
<i>The Effect of Bromelain on CD4+T-Cell Function in Asthma</i>				
Setlow, P.	Molecular, Microbial & Structural Biology	United States Army	\$78,657	09/06-11/08
<i>Mechanisms of the Killing and Development of Spores of Bacillus Species</i>				

Shapiro, L. Center for Vascular Biology Nat'l. Cancer Institute \$277,154 06/05-04/09
CD13 as a Biomarker for Chemoprevention of Breast Cancer

Wu, G. Medicine Nat'l. Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases \$145,040 05/07-04/09
Novel Model of HCV Infection of Humanized Liver in Immunocompetent Rats

Private Grants

Albertsen, P. Surgery Cancer Therapy & Research Center Research Foundation \$1,350 09/01-05/13
Selenium & Vitamin E Chemoprevention Trial DHHS80003

Briggs-Gowan, M. Psychiatry Univ. of Illinois \$44,692 03/06-01/09
Observe/Measure Preschool Behavior Problems DHHSMH68455

Caron, J. Cell Biology Conn. Breast Health Initiative Inc. \$75,000 08/06-01/09
Identification of a New Anti-Cancer Drug CH46

Felice, K. Neurology Johns Hopkins Univ. \$111 01/93-12/08
MDA-Sponsored Clinic (supplement)

Guha, A. Immunology H. Rauter GmbH & Co., KG \$20,000 01/07-07/09
Ayurveda: The Whole Medical System

Kurtzman, S. Surgery Nat'l. Eye Institute \$3,400 02/97-05/08
NSABP Breast and Bowel Cancer Treatment DHHS BC0107-185

Lieberman, J. Orthopedics UConn Foundation \$5,901 05/06-06/08
Chase Family Skeletal Biology Fund

Nichols, F. Oral Health & Diagnostic Sciences The Forsyth Institute \$39,560 04/07-03/09
Disruption of Innate Immune Function BYP Gingivalis Phosphotidylethanolam

Robison, J. Center on Aging Univ. of Massachusetts \$10,000 10/07-09/08
CMS/Systems Transformation

Salazar, J. Pediatrics Conn. Children's Medical Center \$43,599 01/08-12/08
CCMC CJ Support

Salazar, J. Pediatrics Conn. Children's Medical Center \$34,156 07/07-06/08
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving Social Worker Transitional Funds

Salazar, J. Pediatrics City of Hartford \$146,628 03/08-02/09
Ryan White 1

State Grants

Cole, M. Child & Family Studies Conn. Dept. of Children & Families \$14,505 04/08-06/08
Therapeutic Foster Care Forums

Ferris, A. Center for Public Health & Husky Reads UConn - Storrs Health Policy \$56,789 10/07-06/08

Ferris, A. Center for Public Health & Building Cultural Competencies UConn - Storrs Health Policy \$13,115 10/07-06/08

Pesanti, E. CMHC Administration Conn. Dept. of Public Health \$70,000 01/08-12/09
Correctional Managed Health Care - TB Surveillance, Prevention and Control Program

Rusert, J. School of Social Work Conn. Children's Trust Fund 37,608 05/08-05/09
Shaken Baby Syndrome

Tikoo, M. Community Medicine & Health Conn. Dept. of Mental Health & Addiction Services \$6,562 04/05-06/08
DMHAS MOA UCHC/Tikoo

CALENDAR Tuesday, September 2 to Monday, September 8

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, Sept. 8 through Monday, Sept. 15. Those items must be in the database by 4 p.m. on Monday Sept. 1.

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

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

Monday, 9/8 – Courses dropped after this date will have a "W" for withdrawal recorded on the academic record.

Monday, 9/8 – Add/drop via the Student Administration System closes.

Monday, 9/8 – Last day to add/drop courses without additional signatures.

Monday, 9/8 – Last day to place courses on pass/fail.

Libraries

Homer Babbidge Library. Monday-Thursday, 7:30 a.m.-2 a.m.; Friday, 7:30 a.m.-10 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.-2 a.m.

Dodd Center. Reading Room and Research Center: 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.

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, 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.

Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed weekends.

Greater Hartford Campus Library.



PHOTO BY MARGOT ROCKLEN

"Tract Plan Subverted," part of the Four in Prints exhibition in the Stevens Gallery at Homer Babbidge Library. See Exhibits.

Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m.; Friday & Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed Sunday.

Stamford Campus Library. Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-9 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; closed Sunday.

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

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

University ITS

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

Meetings

Monday, 9/8 – University Senate. 4-6 p.m., Room 7, Bishop Center.

Lectures & Seminars

Tuesday, 9/2 – Particles, Astrophysics, & Nuclei Physics Seminar. "Aspects of High-Energy QCD Scattering in AdS/CFT," by Javier Albacete, 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 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, 1-4:30 p.m. Opening reception 9/4, 5-7:30 p.m.

Monday, 9/8 through Friday, 9/19 – Student Union Art Gallery. *Be Aware, Show Your Care.* Suicide Prevention Week interactive art exhibit. Daily, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. third floor, Student Union.

Through Monday, 9/15 – Alexey von Schlippe Gallery. Paintings by Melissa Smith; sculpture and mixed media/watercolors by Leda Starcheva; mixed media sculpture and drawings/watercolors by Annie Varnot; and paintings and drawings 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 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

Wednesday, 9/3 – Men's Soccer vs. Stony Brook. 7 p.m., Morrone Stadium.

Friday, 9/5 – Women's Soccer vs. Yale. 7 p.m., Morrone Stadium.

Saturday, 9/6 – Field Hockey vs. Penn State. Noon., Sherman Family Sports Complex.

Sunday, 9/7 – Women's Soccer vs. Boston University. 1 p.m., Morrone Stadium.

Potpourri

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

Plant Science's turfgrass program showcased during open house

BY DAVID BAUMAN

Different turfgrass species have dramatically different water needs in the summertime, according to turfgrass scientist Jason Henderson, an assistant professor in the Department of Plant Science.

He spoke about low maintenance turfgrass species during UConn's first Turfgrass Field Day hosted by the plant science department on the Storrs campus in July.

Nearly 350 people attended the day-long event, including sports turf managers, golf course superintendents, sod farm owners, landscape architects and contractors, industry representatives, and lawn and garden professionals from across New England.

Gregory Weidemann, the new dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, said the event "sends a strong signal to the landscaping industry that UConn's turfgrass program has come of age and has no place to go but grow."

Management of turf grasses has become a lucrative part of the economy. Nationwide, golf alone generated \$76 billion in 2005 and employed more than 2 million people. In Connecticut, the golf industry contributes an estimated \$1 billion to the state's economy. There are currently about 180 golf courses in the state, with more being planned.

About two-thirds of UConn's turfgrass program's graduates end up working in the golf industry; while another third take jobs in grounds keeping, recreation field maintenance, or other sport-related field management.

Turfgrass is a species of grass that is maintained as a mowed turf. It is used in home lawns, parks, cemeteries, sports fields, schoolyards, and roadsides. Turfgrass originated from meadow and range grasses that thrived under close grazing by livestock.

Professional turfgrass managers blend the technical expertise of turfgrass culture and physiology with the challenges of managing insects, diseases, and weed populations to keep turf areas green and healthy.

The turfgrass field day was designed to showcase current research projects in the areas of professional and residential turfgrass management, according to John Kaminski, an assistant professor of plant science, who helped organize the event.

The morning featured plot tours and presentations by UConn turfgrass researchers in the areas of golf and sports turf management and nutrient and organic management practices, as well as demonstrations of the latest equipment by professional turf equipment manu-

facturers. Afternoon workshops addressed disease control, weed identification, organic approaches to lawn maintenance, and a tour of UConn's athletic fields to see how they are prepared for Division I level competition.

Henderson, who is involved in several research projects in golf and sports turf management, is part of a team of turf scientists nationwide that is investigating the impact of rolling and mowing heights on putting green quality

and turfgrass health.

Data from alternative rolling/mowing frequency programs were collected on eight plots at the UConn research facility this summer. Similar rolling/mowing frequency treatments using identical equipment but on different grass species were performed at Michigan State University, the University of Arkansas, and the University of Tennessee.

Henderson hopes the findings will offer turfgrass managers in

various regions of the country concrete data on which to formulate better management options for their greens.

"Mowing is stressful to the plant," he said. "The plant is not working as well during 90 degree days in August as during 80 degree days in May. That's why if we can reduce mowing and still maintain green speed with rolling, we can protect the plant, reduce disease, and keep high quality greens for golf players."



PHOTO BY SUSAN SCHADT

John Kaminski, assistant professor of plant science, gives a presentation during the turfgrass open house.

Students spend summer working with entrepreneurs in Guatemala

BY SHERRY FISHER

Max Chanoch wanted to make a difference this summer. He did just that during a Study Abroad program, where he helped local Guatemalan entrepreneurs.

Chanoch and nine other UConn students conducted eye exams and sold reading glasses to Guatemalan women who weave for their livelihoods; educated people about the benefits of water filters; and demonstrated how wood stoves are safer and more economical than cooking over an open fire, during an eight-week Study Abroad program in social entrepreneurship.

The students worked with local entrepreneurs and honed their skills at analyzing rural economic development models and practices. They also studied Spanish.

"It was a life-changing experience," says Chanoch, who is majoring in business management. "You learn about culture and a lot about people and how they live."

The program is run by the Social Entrepreneur Corps, an organization that offers opportunities for university students to have hands-on learning experiences focused on solutions to community problems. The program was sponsored by UConn's Study Abroad office, the School of Business, and the Honors Program in consultation with the Spanish section of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages, and led by Professor Linda Klein, associate dean of the School of Business.

"The program is part of our goal to give our students broader exposure to world issues," says Klein. "I

believe it's important for School of Business students to understand the positive impact of business on people's lives."

Students spent the first two weeks living in the homes of Guatemalans, in rural, traditional communities outside Antigua. Most of the host families did not speak English. The students studied Spanish for four hours each morning, and spent afternoons in academic sessions discussing topics including the difference between relief and development, and the basics of entrepreneurship.

For the last six weeks, they were divided into four groups (along with students from Duke, Columbia, Notre Dame, and the University of North Carolina, who were also participating in the program) and worked in four different rural areas on "campaigns" or projects run by local entrepreneurs, mostly women.

The primary focus of the campaigns was vision projects, where free vision screenings were offered, and reading glasses were sold.

"Many women weave for their livelihoods, but have no access to glasses," says Klein. "As they reach their peak production years, their eyesight starts to fail, and they can no longer work. Reading glasses extend their productive years."

Ricky Bogart, a management major, says, "We facilitated the process and helped out as much as we could with the projects, including publicity. We also brought energy-efficient light bulbs, seeds, water purifiers, and stoves. Once they come to the campaigns for



PHOTO SUPPLIED

Students in the social entrepreneurship Study Abroad program in Guatemala pose with a weaver. Top row from left, Ricky Bogert, Jon Beery, and Kate Koenigsnecht. Bottom row from left, Max Chanoch, Isaac Selkow, and Stanley Huang. Selkow and Huang are from Duke University, the others are from UConn.

the free eye exams, we also try to educate them about these other projects – how they will benefit them, and how they pay for themselves in the long run."

Bogert says the experience will help him in his career.

"I want to get into international development, and there's a lot you can't learn in books and classes," he says. "You have to be out in the field to see what works and what methods don't work, and how to make an organization sustainable. A lot of people were surprised at how involved we actually were with the process. I learned a lot of things I'll be able to apply in

the future."

Kevin Bahr, an economics major, says, "The experience gave me an opportunity to see concepts in action. We offered people products with economic and social benefits. The water filters, for example, have had a huge impact on the people. They save them money because they don't have to buy bottled water."

Ross Lewin, director of UConn Study Abroad, says the program is "one of the most important Study Abroad initiatives at UConn because it really makes an impact on the lives of poor people. UConn Social Entrepreneurship is an example of UConn students engaged

in the improvement of communities beyond our local, state, or national borders. They have truly exemplified the practice of global citizenship."

Klein adds, "From the business perspective, it gives our students hands-on experiential learning that blends the academic with application."

On Oct. 6 students who participated in the social entrepreneurship Study Abroad will present a symposium about their experience. The event will take place at 6:30 p.m., in the School of Business, Room 211. Refreshments will be served.

Public service internship takes honors student to nation's capital



PHOTO BY DANIEL BUTTREY

Honors student Michael Mitchell, an economics and political science major.

BY SHERRY FISHER

Michael Mitchell spent his summer in Washington, D.C. surrounded by politicians and other national leaders, and made some lifelong friends.

Mitchell, a junior majoring in economics and political science, was an intern in Sen. Edward Kennedy's office during June and July. He was chosen for the internship by the Institute for Responsible Citizenship, which offers internships to 24 of the "most promising black male college sophomores in the U.S." The organization focuses on developing young men who will sustain a lifetime commitment to public service.

"It was the greatest summer I've had in college, or in my life," says Mitchell, who is in the Honors Program. The students were housed at American University.

Mitchell answered some of the senator's correspondence and scheduled appointments, but a large part of the internship involved attending hearings. "It was amazing to see the senators and congressmen and congresswomen doing their jobs and trying to solve problems," he says.

He was required to take notes and read the transcripts of the hearings, and write memos to the senator and staff member in charge of the hearing topic.

"I got a lot of professional experience from the internship," Mitchell says. "There's no place more professional than the Senate – there are rules and protocol that you have to follow. I learned a lot. Also, there was a lot of networking and it was fun meeting people who have jobs there, who you can keep connected to."

Mitchell attended three-hour classes three evenings a week, after working full days. One was a seminar on professionalism in the work world, another focused on federalism and politics, and a third dealt with economic theory.

One evening, when there were no classes, Mitchell and some of his fellow interns got a nice surprise. They were invited to the Supreme Court to meet some of the law clerks.

"We got to talk to law clerks for Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas," he says. "We talked about the career paths they took, some of the things they do for their current job, and what they're going to do afterwards. Talking to them made me more certain that I want to go into law. They described it as fun, hard work, and rewarding."

Mitchell says that since about 70 per cent of the students in his program were interested in law careers, many of the events were

centered on law and visits to law firms. "The events helped you figure out the different kinds of law you can practice and what law schools you might want to attend," Mitchell says. "From that standpoint, it really helped me focus on my future."

One of his memorable experiences was working on a project involving international high school students.

"Senators Kennedy and Lugar from Indiana have a joint program called Cultural Bridges where they bring about 500 students to their states from across the world to study in high school," Mitchell says. At the end of the experience, they bring them to Washington.

"I was picked to help coordinate the event," Mitchell says, "and being there to hear Lugar speak and watching these kids – knowing I had helped set it up – was amazing."

Mitchell says the program offered him a chance to live in "one of the most important cities in the world" and was an opportunity to make connections for the future. He hopes to participate in the program again next summer.

After earning a law degree, Mitchell says he would love to go into politics: "I'd like to help people and be able to influence others to make positive changes."