



Polls, panels examine race for president

BY MICHAEL KIRK

Two weeks before Election Day, the University held a day-long event on the historic presidential race at both its Storrs and Stamford campuses on Oct. 20.

"Every four years, we're told that this is the most important election of our lifetime," said University President Michael Hogan, kicking off the day in the Dodd Center's Konover Auditorium. "However, this year it may actually be true."

The four Storrs panel discussions were on foreign policy and the approaches favored by Barack Obama and John McCain; race, gender, and age in the 2008 race for president; fairness and bias in the media during the campaign; and polling, politics, and the electorate this year.

The Stamford portion of the event featured a panel on the economy and financial crisis in the context of the election.

More than 20 UConn faculty experts either participated in or moderated the panels. They represented a broad array of disciplines from the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Law, and Business. Guests included journalists and media commentators such as *Journal Inquirer* managing editor Chris Powell, *Hartford Courant* columnist Kevin Rennie; former U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons; and Jack Condlin, president of the Stamford Chamber of Commerce.

The final panel of the day – on polling, the electorate, and the state of the race for president – was moderated and recorded for broadcast by WNPR, Connecticut Public Radio. In addition to UConn political science faculty, the panel featured Lauren Ellis, president of the UConn College Democrats, and Jennifer Miller, president of the UConn College Republicans. A recording of the panel discussion can be found at: <http://www.cpb.org/program/where-we-live/episode/uconn-presidential-symposium>.

The centerpiece of the event was the release of two public opinion polls conducted by UConn's Center for Survey Research and Analysis (CSRA). The first, a "straw poll" of undergraduates, revealed that among the nearly 3,900 UConn students who participated in the poll, Democrat Barack Obama was overwhelmingly favored for president over Republican John McCain, by a margin

see Polling symposium page 6



PHOTO BY FRANK DAHLMAYER

Panelists from left, Lauren Ellis, president of the College Democrats, Jennifer Miller, president of the College Republicans, and Professors Jeffrey Ladewig, Samuel Best, and Howard Reiter, all of political science, discuss the presidential race during a symposium at Konover Auditorium on Oct. 20. The panel discussion was recorded for John Dankosky's *Where We Live* radio show on Connecticut Public Radio.

Nanotechnology 'clean room' opens at IMS

BY COLIN POITRAS

The University dramatically expanded its nanotechnology research capabilities this month, with the opening of a 1,000-square-foot 'clean room' that will allow scientists to fabricate cutting-edge devices for use in defense, industry, and medicine.

Gov. M. Jodi Rell, President Michael J. Hogan, and a host of other elected officials and University representatives acknowledged the opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony Oct. 20 at the Institute of Materials Science (IMS) in the Edward V. Gant Science Complex.

The Nanobionics Fabrication Facility – as the dust-free 'clean room' is formally known – supplements state-of-the-art research technology worth more than \$20 million that is currently available at the IMS, including high-power electron microscopes, atomic force microscopes, and advanced spectrometers.

Hogan called the \$2 million facility a

"significant milestone" in UConn's continuing program to build new interdisciplinary scientific initiatives.

"This new nanobionics clean room is one part of UConn's comprehensive nanotechnology infrastructure that we think is second to none in Connecticut," Hogan said. "The possibilities of nanotechnology are innumerable, with the potential to revolutionize every facet of applied science and modern technology – from high-tech manufacturing to military devices to fuel cells to new methods of health care."

The University has invested more than \$7 million of its own funds in support of nanotechnology research facilities and faculty as part of its revised academic plan. Nearly 80 faculty members from UConn's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Schools of Engineering, Medicine, Dental Medicine, Pharmacy, and Agriculture are now actively engaged in nanotechnology research. Together they have received more

than \$25 million in research grants over the past three years.

Nanotechnology is the science of manipulating biological, chemical, and other material particles on an ultra-small scale – smaller than one-hundred-thousandth the width of a human hair.

The clean room offers both wet and dry processing capabilities. Researchers working inside the room must wear white Gore-Tex suits and special shoe covers and gloves to protect the sterile environment, which allows for no more than 1,000 microdust particles per cubic meter of air.

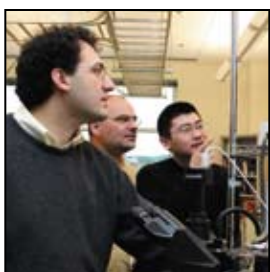
The clean room is expected to advance UConn research into such things as a nano-sized implantable glucose sensor for diabetics. It will also help Robert Birge, holder of the Harold S. Schwenk Sr. Distinguished Chair in Chemistry, in his quest to develop an artificial retina. Nejat Olgac, the head of

see Nanotechnology facility page 4

Inside



3 Spiritual values



4 Electronic sniffer



8 Outstanding advisor



PHOTO BY JEREMY POLLACK

Keith Fox '80 BUS, left, and Christopher Earley, dean of the School of Business, on the occasion of Earley's investiture as holder of the Auran J. Fox Chair on Oct. 17. Fox established the Chair in memory of his father.

Health Center seeks faculty, staff feedback

BY KRISTINA GOODNOUGH

Through Nov. 12, faculty and staff at the Health Center are asked to share their perceptions and opinions about the Health Center through a confidential survey.

"The survey has several goals," says Cindy Couture of Know Better Place, the workplace culture change initiative that is sponsoring the survey together with the Health Center's human resources department.

"We want to evaluate how connected the staff and faculty feel to the Health Center; assess how well the mission, vision, and strategies are communicated; identify areas of strength as well as opportunities for improvement; and continue to improve our standing as an employer."

A summary of the results will be presented to the Health Center community within 90 days of the survey closing date.

The survey takes only minutes to complete, according to Couture. Employees can access it through a link in the daily broadcast messages, through the Know Better Place web site (employees.uchc.edu), and at kiosks located in the lobbies of the Food Court, the Munson Road, Dowling South, and Medical Arts and Research buildings, the Human Resources reception area in the Administrative Services Building, and at clinical offices in East and West Hartford.

Individuals who don't have access to a workstation computer or kiosk can obtain paper copies of the survey at the volunteer desk in the hospital lobby and at the Human Resources reception desk.

"We're trying to make sure it's easy and convenient to take the survey," says Couture.

Know Better Place and Human Resources have partnered with the Connecticut Area Health Education Center (AHEC) to conduct the survey.

"AHEC will receive the surveys, handle the data, and maintain the

confidentiality of respondents," Couture says. "Aggregate results will be reported without any personal identifying information."

The survey is scheduled to be a biennial event, says Alexis Crean, human resources education and staff development specialist for the human resources department. "Change doesn't happen overnight. It's a gradual process, and we want to make sure the voices of our faculty and staff are well represented in any changes we make."

The survey follows the culture and diversity survey conducted in 2005 by the Collaborative Center for Clinical Care Improvement (C4I) and the Office of Diversity and Equity, which provided baseline data about the Health Center's workplace culture. The Know Better Place culture change initiative was established in 2007 in response to feedback from that survey.

Three questions in the 2005 survey relating to engagement are included in the current survey, to provide a measure of whether change has taken place since then.

Based on the feedback provided in the new survey, it will be possible to evaluate employee perceptions, identify best practices, and plan improvements, says Crean.

Couture says engagement represents a higher degree of commitment to the workplace than satisfaction. According to industry experts, engaged employees feel a sense of connection to their workplace; they believe in what they do and feel valued for doing it. Their commitment to stay with the organization improves and, as a result, they and the organization are more productive.

"The Health Center wants to be an employer of 'first choice' in the region, with the ability to attract and retain a diverse, high quality staff," says Couture. "The survey can help us continue moving towards that goal."

Brazilian music at Jorgensen Oct. 28

BY ANDREA ADER

Heitor Villa-Lobos died 50 years ago, but Marsalis Brasilianos gives new life to the revered Brazilian composer's music. World-renowned saxophonist and three-time Grammy-winner Branford Marsalis will perform with the Filharmonia Brasileira, famous for its preservation of the work of Villa-Lobos, at Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts on Tuesday, Oct. 28, at 8 p.m. A free concert talk will precede the performance at 7:15 p.m.

Villa-Lobos was inspired by native cultures, music, politics, the classical tradition, and modernists from Picasso to Aaron Copeland.

His compositions became a radical synthesis of European and Brazilian music. In 1942, he founded the Conservatorio Nacional de Canto Orfeônico (National Conservatory for Choral Singing) in Brazil, and became respected for his work as a modernist composer.

Best known as a giant of jazz, Marsalis has made forays into the pop world with artists such as The Grateful Dead and Roger Hornsby, and has performed as a soloist in film scores including *Malcolm X* and *Mo' Better Blues*. Recently, he has turned his attention to classical music with a 2001 recording of *Creation*, featuring the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and recit-

als with symphonies in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Düsseldorf.

Marsalis' performances of the music of Villa-Lobos at the Ravinia Festival in 2005 led to the current collaboration with the Filharmonia Brasileira under the artistic direction of Gil Jardim. Their recent album, *Villa-Lobos in Paris*, won the Diapason d'Or and was nominated for the second Bravo Culture award. An accomplished composer, flutist, and arranger, Jardim heads the Department of Music at the University of São Paulo.

For tickets, go to www.jorgensen.uconn.edu or call 860-486-4226.

Playwright, author David Rabe to speak at Torrington Campus

Playwright and author David Rabe will discuss his Tony Award-winning play *Sticks and Bones* at the Torrington campus on Wednesday, Oct. 29, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. His talk is part of the Litchfield County Writers Project fall series. He will also talk about his new novel, *Dinosaurs on the Roof*, published in June. A book signing will follow the discussion.

Sticks and Bones is part of Rabe's trilogy of Vietnam plays. It charts the reactions and dynamic of a middle-American family faced with the return of son David from Vietnam as a blinded and traumatized veteran. The play depicts the agony of David and the horrible solution he and his family reach to end his suffering.

Rabe's work is characterized by its dark humor, satire, and surreal fantasy. In 1965, Rabe was drafted into the U.S. Army and later served 11 months in Vietnam

until the end of 1967. After leaving the service, Rabe earned an M.A. and began work on *Sticks and Bones*. The other two plays making up the Vietnam trilogy are the award-winning *The Basic Training of Pavlo Hummel*, which focuses on the brutalization of American troops and the effects of the war, and Tony Award-nominee *Streamers*, depicting racial and sexual tensions in a Virginia army camp.

His other plays include *Hurlyburly*, *The Orphan*, and *In the Boom Boom Room*. Rabe has also written screenplays for the Vietnam War drama *Casualties of War* and the film adaptation of John Grisham's *The Firm*.

Davyne Verstandig, director of the Litchfield County Writers Project says, "David Rabe captures the conscience of the American people with his surrealistic play *Sticks and Bones*. It is one of the strongest plays I have read that deals with

ethical crises and the consequences of war in a family setting. Both Arthur Miller's *All My Sons* and Rabe's *Sticks and Bones* deal powerfully with moral issues of private and public conscience."

The Litchfield County Writers Project provides programs that celebrate the creative work of Litchfield County and support the academic aims of the University of Connecticut. The Torrington UConn Co-op carries all the books for related events.

A series of presentations, Playwrights of Litchfield County, is offered on Wednesday evenings at the Torrington Campus from 6:30 to 9 p.m., running through Dec. 3. Special events will run at different times. For details, see the web site www.lcwp.uconn.edu/

All discussions will be in the Francis W. Hogan Lecture Hall at the Torrington Campus, 855 University Drive, Torrington.

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT Advance

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PHOTO BY JESSICA TOMMASELLI

Charlotte Bunch, executive director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University, delivers the Sackler Lecture in Human Rights.

Human rights speaker brings discussion close to home

BY SHERRY FISHER

As the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approaches, Americans should think about how to celebrate human rights in the United States, says Charlotte Bunch, founder and executive director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University.

Bunch gave the 15th Raymond and Beverly Sackler Distinguished Lecture in Human Rights on Oct. 20 at Konover Auditorium in the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center. Her talk was titled, "Passionate Politics: The Intersection of Gender, Culture, and Human Rights." Bunch said the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, is "an amazing document, because it puts forward what I think is the aspirational aspect of human rights. Human rights is a struggle for relationships of individuals to each other and individuals to the state."

She said now is the time to look at the Declaration's principles and ask, "What does this mean in the United States today? How can we begin to interpret our own relationship to rights, not just as something somewhere else in the world?"

She adds, "We think of human rights primarily in terms of government's accountability, but rights are also about our accountability to one another."

She said she was disappointed that the question of human rights wasn't raised more often in the presidential debates.

"It's a critical discussion," she said. "I recall only one moment when Obama and McCain were asked if health care was a right or a responsibility. I think that was a reflection of an important discussion going on in this country that I hope we will see as part of a worldwide discussion, about how we understand human rights to be not only in the civil and political sphere but also as a matter of social

and economic well being, and the importance of everyday rights in everyday life, in the home and family. I believe that that's what women's human rights has sought to personify."

Bunch said 20 years ago violence against women wasn't considered a human rights issue.

"If you went to an Amnesty International meeting or a Human Rights Watch meeting, you would be told that violence against women was not a human rights issue," she said. But today the situation is different.

"Women started to think about what violated their human dignity, taking principles of human rights and saying that something that so fundamentally corrodes and debases our dignity must be understood in relation to human rights," Bunch said. That led to a body of works that women have contributed to from around the world, defining rape, domestic violence, and torture. Today, the United Nations Committee Against Torture recognizes that there can be extreme forms of domestic violence that constitute torture.

Bunch said that indigenous peoples have sought to interpret their human rights and how their traditional understanding of rights relates to human rights declarations.

For example, a group of indigenous women from several different countries wrote a companion report to the UN Secretary General's Report on Violence, Bunch said. They looked both at violence within the community by men toward indigenous women and violence against indigenous women as indigenous people in the community.

"This is the kind of work that's happening all over the world," she said, "where people take human rights principles and connect the issues of race, gender, and class and come up with new interpretations of how human rights are viewed."

Combine spiritual values with political activism, conference presenter urges

BY GREGORY HLADKY

Breath control and meditation can be part of the solution for a world in economic and political turmoil, according to spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

"The root cause of violence is stress and a lack of understanding," he told an audience of more than 350 people at the Student Union Theatre on Oct. 21.

His prescription for solving those problems is an unusual combination of ancient Indian traditions, modern education, and new attitudes toward religion, business, and politics.

Shankar (no relation to the musician) was the closing speaker at a conference on the extent to which values molded by religious institutions and philosophy have promoted or undermined human rights. The daylong event was sponsored by the UNESCO Chair & Institute of Comparative Human Rights in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences.

Shankar is the founder of the Art of Living Foundation, an international nonprofit educational and humanitarian organization.

His foundation has been involved in relief programs for natural disasters such as the tsunami in Southeast Asia and Hurricane Katrina, as well as mediation efforts in regional conflicts from Kosovo to Kashmir. Shankar has been recognized around the world for his work toward global peace.

Other featured speakers at

the conference were Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, retired archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, and Jeremy Gunn, director of the American Civil Liberties Union program on freedom of religion and belief.

In his evening keynote speech, Shankar argued that all cultures "need to secularize religion." He said one way to deal with religious intolerance is to have "people of every religion pray for the people of all religions."

Young people need "multi-cultural and multi-religious education," he said, to help them understand that everyone is part of the worldwide human society.

Shankar said there is an urgent need to "socialize business," not through state takeovers of private industry, but by having every business recognize that it has "a social responsibility" to its workers and its customers.

According to Shankar, the best solution doesn't involve a choice between socialism and capitalism but "a good marriage of both."

Shankar said he believes each nation must "spiritualize its politics ... Today, spiritual values are being eroded from politics, and corruption is taking their place."

He pointed to Mahatma Gandhi and his combination of spirituality and political activism.

At the heart of Shankar's philosophy is his belief that people can reduce their own stress – and therefore the stress and violence

in the world – through deceptively simple techniques, such as controlling their breathing.

"Your breath is the link between mind and body," he said.

His belief is that the human mind and its emotions are often too intangible for a person to control. "But what you can have control over is your breath," he said. "If you attend to your breath, you can calm your mind down."

Asked how he was able to get members of violent groups to listen to his message of peace, Shankar recounted his interaction with extremists in the disputed province of Kashmir, on the border between Pakistan and India. After several sessions of breath control and meditation, Shankar said, "their minds became calm" and they started to listen to his message of non-violence.

"It was a shift," he added, "even though it was just a drop in the ocean."

In discussing how to combat prejudice, Shankar urged the audience not to see the world only in terms of "culprits and victims."

"Inside every culprit there is a victim crying for help," he said.

He also argued that those seeking to right the world's wrongs should not fall into "a victim consciousness."

"Fight for justice, but without being self-pitying," Shankar said. "Mahatma Gandhi fought for his rights, but never did he hate the British."



PHOTO BY ALEXANDRA OSTASIEWICZ, SFA '09

Spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar speaks at the Student Union, during the comparative human rights conference.

Ambassador of Nepal to speak on campus

Ambassador Suresh Chandra Chalise, who represents the country of Nepal in Washington, D.C., will give a public lecture about "Peace and Democracy in Nepal: Current Challenges" at the Storrs campus on Nov. 3. His talk will begin at 4:30 p.m., in the Asian American Cultural Center, on the fourth floor of the Student Union.

Chalise has also represented Nepal in the United Nations and in China, and has taken part in many international forums as a Nepali

representative. He has recently been advisor to the Prime Minister of Nepal on foreign affairs. He has contributed to the peace process, facilitating the government of Nepal's negotiations with the Maoist People's Liberation Army and with the United Nations to bring an end to the insurgency.

He received his Ph.D. in political sociology from Benaras Hindu University in India, and has dedicated his life to understanding and alleviating poverty, repression, and

discrimination. He has consulted for many international organizations and has published extensively on political development and poverty reduction in articles and books. His publications include *Sociology of the Legislative Elite in Development Society*, *Women in Politics in Nepal: Their Socio-economic, Health, Legal, and Political Constraints* (co-author), and *Nepal Human Development Report 2004: Empowerment and Poverty Reduction* (contributor).

Research team developing electronic nose to detect explosives

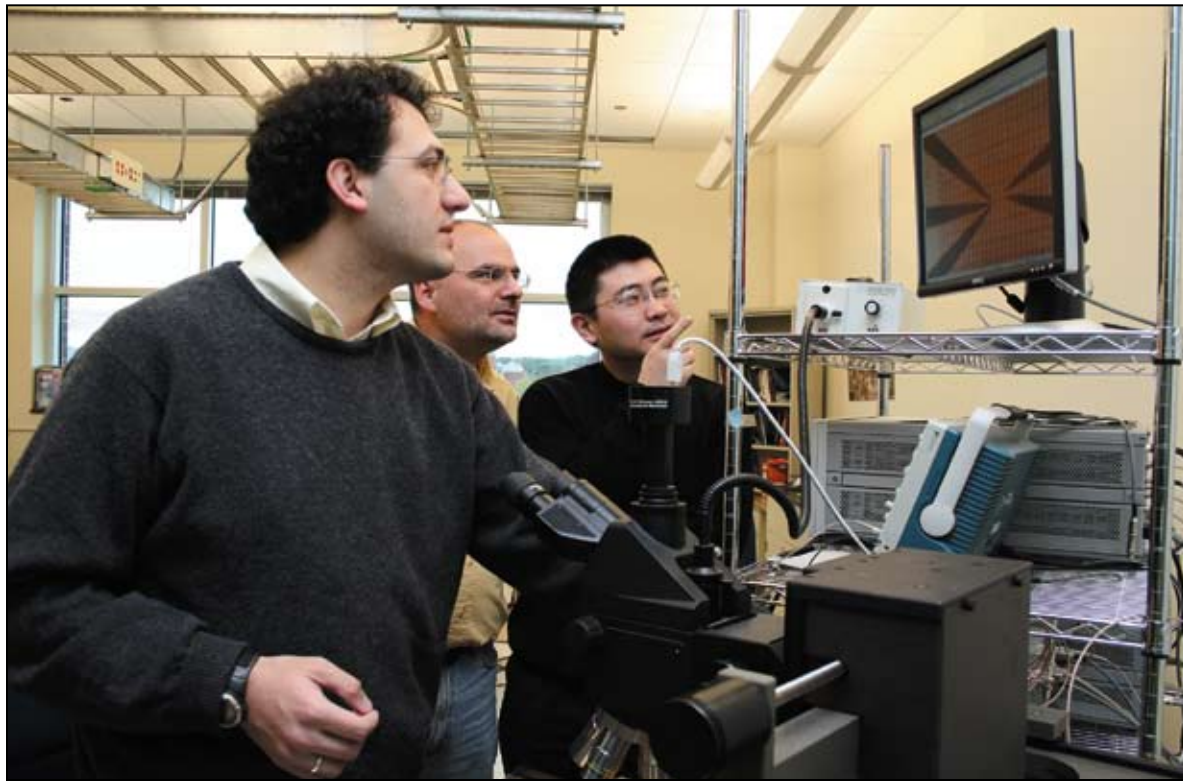


PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER LAROSA

From left, researchers Ali Gokirmak, Christian Brückner, and Yu Lei in their lab.

BY NAN COOPER

A team of researchers headed by a UConn engineering professor is working to develop an electronic nose system to detect explosives.

With a three-year grant of almost \$800,000 from the National Science Foundation, a team headed by Yu Lei, an assistant professor of chemical, materials, and biomolecular engineering, hopes to develop real-time arrays of ultra-sensitive sensors that can sniff out even trace quantities of explosives.

The team includes UConn colleagues Christian Brückner, an associate professor of chemistry, and Ali Gokirmak, an assistant

professor of electrical and computer engineering, and University of California-Riverside professor Yushan Yan. UConn's Krishna Pattipati, a professor of electrical and computer engineering, will assist the team with aspects of the research that involve pattern recognition.

The team is focusing on developing the science behind a miniaturized sensing device capable of detecting potential explosives with greater speed, selectivity, and accuracy than ever before, using simple instrumentation. Lei and his colleagues hope this will lay the groundwork for a hand-held unit that could be used by officials to

inspect the luggage of passengers boarding a plane, for example, or mounted on a small robotic vehicle to 'sniff out' land mines.

The team envisions a unit that will combine the ability to capture and concentrate airborne explosive molecules, and the real-time capacity to distinguish and identify compounds commonly found in explosives.

A real-time system requires that the operation be performed not only correctly but also within a specified time.

Lei says the complexity of the animal scent detection/recognition "system" illustrates the challenge of designing an electronic sensor.

Animal noses – including those of humans – detect and process scents with an array of sensors that respond to all gaseous components of a scent, although each sensor type responds to a differing degree. The brain collects the output from these sensors and memorizes the pattern of responses for roses, apples, or carrion, for example.

The next time the animal brain detects this pattern, the animal recognizes the scent as corresponding to a rose or an apple – even if the apple aroma comes mingled with all the other scents of a supermarket or the apple is of a type that's different from those smelled previously.

Many bombs use nitrated compounds – such as TNT or dynamite – with volatile components that emit scent molecules which can be detected by trained animals, such as dogs or rats.

An electronic sensor for detecting explosives would likely be used in an open space, such as a luggage handling room, where volatile explosive vapors are found at such low concentrations – in the range of parts per billion or even parts per trillion – that detection is difficult.

To overcome this problem, the unit being developed will employ an ultra-thin molecular sieving membrane that will sample ambient air and concentrate any explosive vapors encountered.

Concentration is possible because the membrane's pores are about half the size of a single nanometer (a typical human hair is about 100,000 nanometers wide). The small molecules of nitrogen and oxygen found in air can pass easily through these pores, but larger explosive molecules cannot. The unit will concentrate the

explosives molecules by many orders of magnitude within a short period of time.

Having concentrated the molecules on the membrane's surface, the unit's next task is detection. The device will incorporate an array of single-walled carbon nanotube-porphyrin conjugates as sensors. Planted onto microelectronic circuitry, these are capable of signaling the presence of explosives (and many other volatile compounds) by a change in their conductivity.

Using a variety of different porphyrins – large organic molecules that are particularly suited to interacting with nitroaromatic compounds – different sensor elements will respond differently to particular explosive vapors.

This will generate a distinct electric response pattern that, properly processed using pattern recognition software, will identify the explosive. Once this electronic nose 'smells' an explosive, the software will trigger an alarm, alerting the user to the presence of explosive vapors.

Preliminary proof-of-concept data have been encouraging. The team will now focus on building a solid-state 32-sensor array to generate the signature for common explosives such as TNT. They will expand the recognition capacity of the device to include other explosives over time. The sensor device will then be combined with the molecular sieving membrane to complete the unit.

The researchers hope the project will help the nation attain a greater level of security in a variety of venues, including airports, bus terminals, and post offices.

Nanotechnology facility *continued from page 1*

UConn's Advanced Laboratory for Automation, will use the room to help with the ongoing development of a nanoscopic device that can transfer genetic material into cells with greater accuracy and effectiveness – a potential boon for nanomedicine.

In addition, nanotechnology is expected to have a major impact on next-generation energy concepts, such as state-of-the-art solar and fuel cells.

The nanobionics fabrication facility was made possible in part through a U.S. Army Center grant, in conjunction with pooled resources and equipment from the University's nanobionics-associated faculty and IMS.

In addition, UConn 2000 funding supported the necessary infrastructure improvements to make the clean room, said Professor Fotios Papadimitrakopoulos, director of the Nanobionics Fabrication Facility and associate director of IMS.

"Nanobionics lies at the intersection of nano- and bio-technol-

ogy, where artificial nanomaterials and devices are complemented with biological function," Papadimitrakopoulos said. "This facility intends to enable researchers across the state to realize advanced devices, along with bridging different disciplines to cross-fertilize new concepts."

UConn is the only place in the state that high-technology businesses can come to access equipment that can characterize, synthesize, manipulate, or assemble matter on the nanoscale level.

Each year, more than 40 Connecticut companies use UConn's expertise in nanotechnology and materials science for their research and development efforts.

"The basic scientists in UConn's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, such as Fotios Papadimitrakopoulos in our Department of Chemistry, are providing knowledge about the nature of matter that is at the foundation of work in nanotechnology," said Jeremy Teitelbaum, dean of the College.



PHOTO BY GERALD LING

Legislators and other dignitaries join University President Michael Hogan, center, and Gov. M. Jodi Rell, fifth from right, for a ribbon-cutting at the nanobionics 'clean room' on Oct. 20. From left are Prof. Harris Marcus, Mary Ann Hanley, former U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, State Rep. Denise Merrill, State Sens. Donald E. Williams Jr., Gary LeBeau, and Eileen Daily, Vinod Makhijani, and Higher Education Commissioner Michael Meotti.

Study finds nicotine gum helps women who smoke during pregnancy

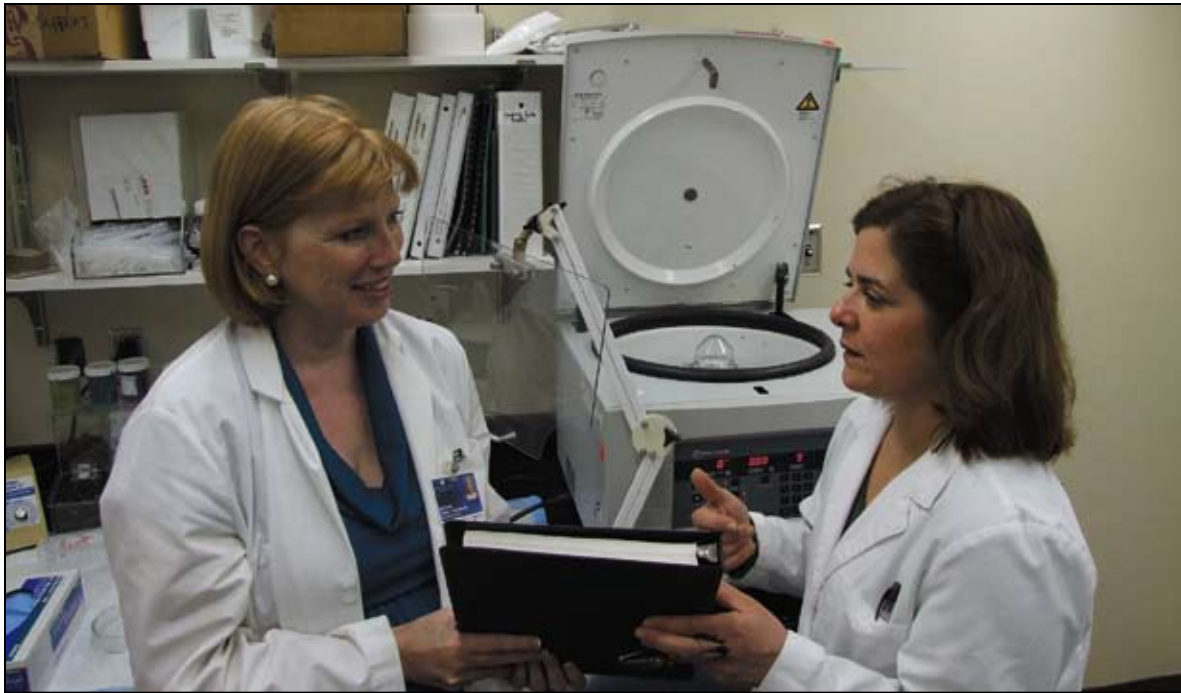


PHOTO BY CHRIS DEFRANCESCO

Dr. Cheryl Oncken, left, headed a team studying the use of nicotine gum by pregnant women who smoke. Also shown is research assistant Pam Ferzacca.

BY CHRIS DEFRANCESCO

Smokers who use nicotine gum during pregnancy are likely to smoke fewer cigarettes and reduce their risk of having a low-birth-weight or premature baby, according to research led by Dr. Cheryl Oncken, associate professor of medicine and obstetrics and gynecology at the UConn Health Center.

A study published Oct. 1 in the journal *Obstetrics & Gynecol-*

ogy compared birth outcomes of smokers who during pregnancy used either nicotine gum or a placebo gum, and found that the offspring of the nicotine-gum users had a better average birth weight and gestational age.

"The decreased risk of low birth weight and preterm delivery associated with nicotine-replacement therapy is clinically important," Oncken writes. "With the prevalence of smoking in

pregnant women being 12 percent, a modest reduction in the risk of low birth weight and premature delivery can, in the aggregate, be very great."

Lowering the premature delivery rate could result in cost savings by lowering neonatal intensive care unit admissions and infant length of stay, she adds.

The nearly 200 study participants smoked an average of 18 cigarettes per day before preg-

nancy and 10 cigarettes per day in the week leading up to the study, which was supported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the Lowell P. Weicker Jr. General Clinical Research Center at the UConn Health Center.

"There was a modest increase in cessation rates in both groups," Oncken says. "Those who had the nicotine gum showed an 18 percent quit rate, while the placebo group showed a quit rate of 15 percent. More noticeable than that was a decrease in average daily cigarette use. The nicotine gum users smoked almost six fewer cigarettes a day, while the placebo group cut back by three and a half cigarettes."

Oncken's research partners included Health Center colleagues Ellen Dornelas, associate professor of medicine, Dr. John Greene, associate professor of obstetrics and gynecology, and Dr. Henry Kranzler, professor of psychiatry. The study was a collaborative effort between the Health Center, Hartford Hospital, New Britain General Hospital (now known as the Hospital of Central Connecticut), Yale School of Medicine, and Baystate Medical Center.

The participants received two smoking cessation counseling sessions, were given a supply of gum, and were instructed to chew one piece for every cigarette they usually smoked per day. The women in the "nicotine" group were given two-miligram nicotine gum, while

the women in the placebo group got a nicotine-free gum in packaging that mimicked the nicotine gum.

In addition to the findings on gestational age and birth weight, Oncken noted that the study showed a trend for other differences in birth outcomes favoring the nicotine gum users, including neonatal length (the newborn's height), head circumference, Apgar scores (an assessment of neonatal well-being), infant length of stay, and neonatal intensive care unit admissions. But Oncken describes those findings as not statistically significant.

"It's important to examine treatments that may help pregnant women quit smoking or reduce their tobacco exposure, especially when these treatments are available for purchase over the counter and may be used in prenatal care," Oncken says. "Smoking is the most modifiable risk factor for poor pregnancy outcomes in the United States."

The study cites previous research that concludes smoking doubles the risk of delivering a low-birth-weight or premature infant, and that tobacco smoke contains more than 3,500 chemicals, many of which can threaten fetal development.

An abstract of Oncken's study is available at <http://www.greenjournal.org/cgi/content/abstract/112/4/859>

Sociologist takes peer-driven HIV intervention overseas

BY BETH KRANE

An award from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has enabled sociology professor Robert Broadhead to adapt a proven HIV-prevention intervention he developed for injection drug users in Connecticut for use in regions of the world considered epicenters of drug-related HIV infection.

Through a five-year NIDA Independent Scientist Award, Broadhead has been working since 2003 as a consultant and technical advisor to researchers and public health officials in Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia, where interventions for injection drug users are still in their infancy.

Broadhead, who also is a principal investigator at UConn's Center for Health, Intervention, and Prevention (CHIP), has tested modified versions of his peer-driven intervention for injection drug users in Russia, Ukraine, China, and Vietnam. CHIP has its roots in HIV/AIDS prevention.

The model offers nominal cash incentives to active injection drug users to educate their peers about HIV in the community and to recruit them to local storefronts for testing and prevention services. Each active injection drug user

who is recruited and provided services is asked to recruit three peers in return, so that the reach of the intervention grows exponentially.

"The peer-driven intervention relies on those with the best contacts and most credibility among injection drug users – other injection drug users," says Broadhead.

"HIV prevention should not require different countries to reinvent the wheel," he says. "Instead, Western research-based innovations need to be made available to developing countries as soon as possible."

Broadhead first developed and tested the peer-driven intervention in eastern Connecticut during the 1990s.

During a four-year, three-site project in Yaroslavl Province, Russia, he tested a standard peer-driven intervention against two versions of the model with different reward structures.

More than 3,100 active injection drug users were recruited and all three sites reported significant impact in reducing injection frequency and the sharing of syringes and other injection equipment and increasing injection drug users' knowledge of HIV and how it is transmitted.

At one site, Bragino, Broadhead implemented the standard peer-driven intervention, which pays active injection drug users for each peer they recruit to the project and for each recruit's performance on a brief HIV knowledge test. At the second site, Rybinsk, he tested a simplified peer-driven intervention that pays injection drug users based solely on each recruit's performance on the knowledge test.

He found that injection drug users in Bragino recruited more peers for prevention services, but those in Rybinsk performed much better on the knowledge test.

"I found you get what you pay for," Broadhead says.

At the third site, Tutayv, Broadhead experimented with using food vouchers instead of cash rewards, but, after six months, switched to cash incentives because injection drug users were not responding to the vouchers.

"Many injection drug users will avoid a project that offers food vouchers, for fear of being publicly identified as drug users at local grocery stores," he says. "We found the cash rewards more ethically defensible, because they safeguard anonymity and ultimately increase their participation in prevention

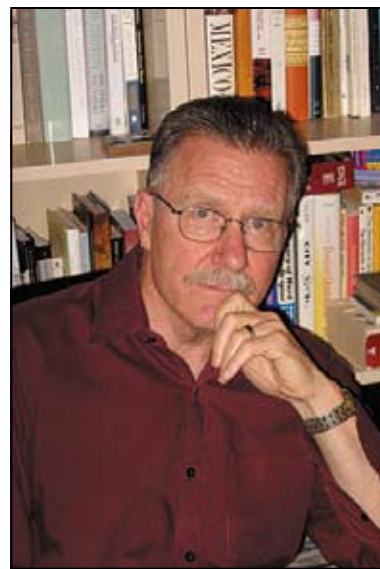


PHOTO BY KATHLEEN CAHILL

Robert Broadhead, professor of sociology.

services."

A five-city pilot project in Ukraine has yielded such encouraging results that the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria now is funding the implementation of the intervention at 16 new sites across the country.

In Ukraine, almost one third of injection drug users are HIV-positive, with women twice as likely to be HIV-positive as men and older drug injectors significantly more likely to be HIV-positive, Broad-

head says.

"Preventing new HIV infections in Ukraine urgently requires accessing young and female injection drug users for services," he adds. "Our pilot projects there showed that peer-driven intervention is able to recruit a very large number of injection drug users, including those in targeted populations, very quickly and at minimal cost."

Broadhead also has piloted the standard peer-driven intervention at two sites along the China-Vietnam border.

Both sites experienced similarly high recruitment rates, both initially and for follow-up services six months later. The projects also saw comparable reductions in injection drug users' risk behaviors and increases in their willingness to be tested for HIV and to participate in a drug treatment program.

Broadhead says his results to date from the four different countries suggest his intervention is readily adaptable for other countries with high rates of drug-related HIV infection.

His NIDA award will continue to fund global expansion of the peer-driven intervention model for one more year.



PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

A view of the new Hillside Environmental Education Park, adjacent to the former landfill. The 64-acre park includes trails, a boardwalk, and two decks for hiking and bird watching. The layout was developed by Professor Kristin Schwab's senior landscape design students.

GRANTS

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

Principal Investigator	Department	Sponsor	Amount	Award Period
Arnold, C.	Dept. of Extension	Environmental Protection Agency/Conn. Dept. of Environmental Protection	\$200,000	8/08-6/10
<i>Responding to the First Impervious Cover-based TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) in the Nation</i>				
Babb, I.	Nat'l Undersea Research Center	Dept. of Commerce/ Nat'l Oceanic & Atmospheric Admin./ Office of Ocean Exploration	\$900,500	1/08-1/09
<i>National Undersea Research Center - 2008 Omnibus Proposal</i>				
Boggs, S.	Inst. of Materials Science	Dept. of Defense/ DARPA/General Electric Co.	\$100,000	8/08-12/08
<i>Modeling of Nonlinear Nanodielectrics</i>				
Boggs, S.	Inst. of Materials Science	UtilX Corp.	\$123,750	8/08-6/10
<i>Research into New Approaches to Partial Discharge Detection and Analysis for Shielded Power Cable</i>				
Boggs, S.	Inst. of Materials Science	UtilX Corp.	\$123,750	8/08-6/10
<i>Optimization of PD Data Acquisition and Analysis</i>				
Bonelli, J.	Dept. of Extension	U.S. Dept. of Agriculture/ Risk Management Agency	\$222,750	10/08-9/09
<i>Crop Insurance and Risk Management Education and Informational Resources Initiative for Connecticut Agriculture</i>				
Bucklin, A.	Marine Sciences	ENSR Corp.	\$52,200	8/08-8/08
<i>Research Vessel Connecticut Charter by ENSR Corp.</i>				
Bucklin, A.	Marine Sciences	Nat'l Oceanic & Atmospheric Admin./Dept. of Commerce/ Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution	\$24,360	8/08-8/08
<i>Research Vessel Connecticut Charter by WHOI for UMass Cruise</i>				
Bucklin, A.	Marine Sciences	Nat'l Science Foundation	\$74,423	9/08-8/11
<i>Collaborative Research: Climate Forcing of Calanus finmarchicus Population of the North Atlantic</i>				

Bucklin, A.	Marine Sciences	Nat'l Science Foundation	\$53,933	9/08-8/09
<i>SGER: Environmental Genomics of Salpi Thompson in the Southern Ocean</i>				
Bullock, K.	School of Social Work Instr. & Research	Hartford Foundation/ Council on Social Work Education	\$5,000	7/08-6/11
<i>Curriculum Development Institute Program</i>				
Carstensen, F.	Economics	U.S. Dept. of Agriculture	\$34,724	8/08-8/09
<i>Bioenergy</i>				
Casa, D.	Kinesiology	Bloomfield Public Schools	\$17,049	8/08-6/09
<i>Athletic Training Services: A Partnership with Bloomfield High School</i>				
Casa, D.	Kinesiology	Nat'l Athletic Trainers' Association Research & Education Foundation	\$1,000	7/08-4/09
<i>Appearance of D20 in Sweat-Oral Ingestion vs. Intravenous Administration</i>				
Casa, D.	Kinesiology	Nat'l Athletic Trainers' Association Research & Education Foundation	\$2,500	8/08-5/09
<i>IV vs. Oral Rehydration: Medical and Performance Consideration</i>				
Casa, D.	Kinesiology	Select Physical Therapy	\$27,396	8/08-6/09
<i>Athletic Training Services: A Partnership with Select Physical Therapy</i>				
Chasin, E.	Educational Psychology	Conn. Dept. of Higher Education	\$475,000	8/08-6/09
<i>CommPACT Schools Initiative</i>				
Chiu, W.	Mechanical Engineering	Nat'l Science Foundation	\$90,000	10/08-9/09
<i>GOAL: Pore-Scale Understanding of Ohmic Polarization in Solid Oxide Fuel Cell Electrodes</i>				
Covell, N.	Psychology	Nat'l Insts. of Health/ Nat'l Inst. of Mental Health/ Mt. Sinai School of Medicine	\$48,698	7/08-9/08
<i>Effectiveness of Switching Antipsychotic Medications</i>				
D'Andrade, R.	Anthropology	Nat'l Science Foundation	\$14,750	8/08-7/09
<i>Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant: Culturally Situating Risk Factors for Type 2 Diabetes Within Cambodian-American Communities</i>				
De Guise, S.	Sea Grant College Program	Morris Animal Foundation	\$76,502	9/08-8/10
<i>The Impact of Brevetoxin on the Health of Bottlenose Dolphins</i>				
Drinkuth, H.	Dept. of Extension	U.S. Dept. of Agriculture/ Conn. Dept. of Environmental Protection	\$89,706	8/08-7/10
<i>Building and Implementing a Watershed Conservation Plan at the Local Level</i>				
Enderle, J.	Electrical & Computer Engineering	Veterans Administration/ Boston Healthcare System	\$218,727	8/08-9/13
<i>Clinical Engineering Internship Program at the Boston VA Hospital</i>				
Fein, D.	Psychology	Autism Speaks	\$63,370	8/08-7/10
<i>Mimicry and Imitation in Autism Spectrum Disorders</i>				
Fernando, G.	Physics	Nat'l Science Foundation/Univ. of Massachusetts at Lowell	\$26,443	7/08-5/09
<i>Novel Homogeneous, Low Loss, and Tuneable Magnetic Semiconductor-based Metamaterials</i>				
Frisman, L.	School of Social Work Instr. & Research	Nat'l Insts. of Health/ Nat'l Inst. on Drug Abuse	\$3,521,025	9/08-8/13
<i>Conn. CJ-DATS 2 Center</i>				
Frisman, L.	School of Social Work Instr. & Research	U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Svcs./Substance Abuse Mental Health Svcs. Admin./ Conn. Dept. of Mental Health & Addiction Svcs.	\$302,614	8/08-9/10
<i>Seclusion and Restraint Reduction</i>				
Gebremichael, M.	Civil & Environmental Engineering	Nat'l Aeronautics & Space Admin.	\$357,155	5/08-5/11
<i>What is the Ability of Global Land Surface Models to Simulate Land Surface Processes?</i>				
Giardina, C.	Molecular & Cell Biology	Nat'l Insts. of Health /Nat'l Cancer Inst./UConn Health Center	\$28,500	8/08-5/13
<i>Cancer Biomarker Evaluation in Cell Culture Models</i>				
Gokirmak, A.	Electrical & Computer Engineering	Nat'l Science Foundation	\$199,644	8/08-7/11
<i>GOAL: Side Gated Ultra Narrow Channel Silicon MOSFETs and Transport Studies at Nanometer Scale</i>				

Polling symposium *continued from page 1*

of 68 percent to 20 percent.

A straw poll is different from a scientific poll in that respondents must opt in to participate, rather than be chosen at random. Several e-mails with a link to the poll were sent to all UConn's undergraduates, who had to enter their NetID and password to ensure each could vote only once.

The poll revealed that students are paying attention to the 2008 presidential race – more than 8 in 10 (82 percent) say they have been following it “very” (33 percent) or “somewhat” (49 percent) closely. Almost all (96 percent) say they have discussed the election with friends or family. Nearly all those who participated – 9 in 10 – say they will definitely or probably vote on Nov. 4.

Television ranks first among students as a primary source of information about politics. Almost half identify cable TV news (36 percent), or local or national TV news (12 percent) as such a source. Online news

websites follow, with 23 percent.

Yet although students are following the campaigns, few are actively participating. Less than 2 in 10 (17 percent) undergraduates have attended a political event/rally or signed a petition to support a candidate (16 percent). Fewer (9 percent) have volunteered with a political campaign or group. Active participation through the Internet is also limited. Less than one-fourth of students have signed up on a candidate's e-mail list (22 percent), forwarded or sent an e-mail to friends about a campaign (22 percent), or contributed online to a candidate's campaign (13 percent).

About 9 in 10 students (88 percent) believe the country is seriously on the wrong track. Two-thirds (66 percent) identify the economy and jobs as the most important issue facing the United States today. No other issue is named by more than 8 percent of students who are likely voters.

Almost all students (95 percent) describe the country's economic condition as “poor” (65 percent) or “fair” (30 percent). Almost 3 in 10 (28 percent) think the economy will get worse in the next year.

More than half (56 percent) worry “a great deal” about finding a good paying, high quality job, and about a third (34 percent) worry about having too much student loan debt. Credit card debt is of less concern to students (13 percent worry a great deal) than being able to afford health care (26 percent) or secure a loan to purchase a car or house (26 percent).

“Students' emphasis on economic issues is not surprising considering their overwhelming dissatisfaction with the economy and their worry about finding a job in the near future,” said Christine Kraus, associate director of CSRA.

Among the student respondents, 94 percent said they were registered to vote

or planned to, and 83 percent say they are registered to vote in Connecticut. Other numbers show that 87 percent say Obama's race does not affect their choice for president, while 52 percent say that the age of a candidate does.

A second, separate poll of residents in the Fairfield County-based 4th Congressional District on the competitive, bellwether race between Chris Shays and Jim Himes was also released. It showed the candidates tied at 44 percent each, with 10 percent undecided. In addition to questions on the election, the 4th District poll also covered the economic situation facing those living in Fairfield County, among other issues. The race has generated a great deal of national attention because Shays is the lone Republican House member in New England.

For the full results from both polls, see http://news.uconn.edu/press_room/

CALENDAR Monday, October 27, to Monday, November 3

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, Nov. 3 through Monday, Nov. 10. Those items must be in the database by 4 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 27. 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, 10/27 – Registration for the spring semester begins.
Monday, 10/27 – Last day to drop a course.
Monday, 10/27 – Registration for winter intersession begins.
Monday, 10/27 – Last day to convert courses on pass/fail option to letter grade.

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. 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.
Music & Dramatic Arts Library. Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-10 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 1-4 p.m.; Sunday, noon-10 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. 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 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.

Ph.D. Defenses

Thursday, 10/30 – Linguistics. *Degree Constructions in Japanese*, by Toshiko Oda (adv.: Sharvit). 10:30 p.m., Room 339, Arjona Building.
Friday, 10/31 – Behavioral Neuroscience. *CB1 Antagonists and Inverse Agonists as Obesity Therapies: Food Motivation and Emotion*, by Kelly Sink (adv.: Salamone). 8:30 a.m., Room 160, Bousfield Building.

Lectures & Seminars

Monday, 10/27 – Hascoe Physics Lecture. "Statistical Mechanics of the Genetic Code," by Nigel Goldenfeld, University of Illinois at

Urbana-Champaign. 4 p.m., Room P38, Gant Science Complex.

Tuesday, 10/28 – Family Strides Lecture. "The Stranger You Know," discussion of child sexual abuse awareness and prevention, with Robert Kenary. 9 a.m., Hogan Lecture Hall, Torrington Campus.

Tuesday, 10/28 – Chemical, Materials, & Biomolecular Engineering Seminar. "Synthesis, Functionalization, and Clinical Diagnostic Applications of Semiconductor Nanocrystals," by T.J. Mountziaris, UMass. 11 a.m., Room 150, United Technologies Engineering Building.

Tuesday, 10/28 – Rainbow Center Panel Discussion. Cross-generational coming out panel discussion. Noon, Room 403, Student Union.

Tuesday, 10/28 – Humanities Institute Faculty Luncheon Lecture. "Endgame Gear and the Multiplayer Epic: MMORPG's and the Epic Tradition from the *Iliad* to World of Warcraft," by Roger Travis. 12:30-1:30 p.m. Room 301, CLAS Building.

Tuesday, 10/28 – Psycholinguistics Lecture. "Cursing in America," by Tim Jay, Mass. College of Liberal Arts. 7 p.m., Student Union Theatre.

Wednesday, 10/29 – Chemical, Materials, & Biomolecular Engineering Seminar. "Interfaces and Mechanical Properties in NanoCeramic Coatings and Thin Films," by Brian Sheldon, Brown University. 10:30 a.m., Room IMS 20, Gant Science Complex.

Wednesday, 10/29 – Judaic Studies Lecture. "The Politics of Memory and Sefarad Historiography in Contemporary France," by Solange Guenoun. 11:30 a.m., Room 162, Dodd Center.

Wednesday, 10/29 – Rainbow Center Lecture. "Courting Equality in Massachusetts," by Patricia Gozempa & Karen Kuhn, authors. Noon, Room 403, Student Union.

Wednesday, 10/29 – The Fate of Public Education in Africa. "Fertilizers, Pills and Magnetic Strips," by Gene Glass, Arizona State University. 2 p.m., Room 144, Gentry Building.

Wednesday, 10/29 – Statistics Colloquium. "Two Algorithms for Learning Sparse Representations," by Tong Zhang, Rutgers University. 4 p.m., Room 344, CLAS Building.

Wednesday, 10/29 – Litchfield County Writers Project Discussion. "Sticks and Bones," with David Rabe, playwright, and Davyne Verstandig, 6:30 p.m., Hogan Lecture Hall, Eads Building, Torrington Campus.

Thursday, 10/30 – Comparative Pathology Seminar. "Lymphangiogenesis in Experimental Inflammatory Bowel Disease," by Dr. J. Steven Alexander, LSU Health Sciences Center. 11 a.m., Room A001, Atwater Laboratories.

Thursday, 10/30 – Stamford Faculty Colloquium. "From Captivity to Commerce: How the Navajo Nation Changed," by Harriett Koenig. Noon, Multi-Purpose Room, Stamford Campus.

Thursday, 10/30 – African American Studies Lecture. "The Paper Bag Principle: Myth-Making and Rumor in the Growth and Development of Black Washington D.C.," by Audrey Kerr, Southern Connecticut State University. 12:30 p.m., Class of '47 Room, Babbidge Library.

Thursday, 10/30 – India Studies Lecture. "Indian women in the House of Fiction," by Geetanjali Singh Chanda, Yale University. 4:10 p.m., Class of '47 Room, Babbidge Library.

Friday, 10/31 – Asian American Studies Lecture. "The Asian American Archive," discussion with Remé Grefalda, Library of Congress. 11:30 a.m., Konover Auditorium, Dodd Center.

Friday, 10/31 through Saturday, 11/1 – Asian American Studies Conference. "A Movement to Look Back To," celebrating the

40th anniversary of the strike that facilitated the emergence of ethnic studies. Opening address by Gary Okihiro, Columbia University. 4 p.m., Student Union Ballroom. Free to UConn faculty, staff, and students. See <http://asianamerican.uconn.edu/EOC2008Program.pdf>

Friday, 10/31 – Environmental



PHOTO FROM THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES WEB SITE

"Chile Patagonia," a photo by Carolanne Markowitz, part of the *Portraits of Nature* exhibit in Homer Babbidge Library. See Exhibits.

Engineering Seminar. "Results from Field Experiments in Ethiopia and New Mexico," by Menberu Bitew & Dawit Zeweldi. Noon, Room 212, Castleman Building.

Sunday, 11/2 – Health Issues for Female Athletes. Physicians and other experts, including Geno Auriemma, will discuss health issues pertaining to young female athletes. 1-4:30 p.m., Keller Auditorium, Main Building, Health Center.

Monday, 11/3 – Celebrate Women. "Managing Diabetes Around the Holidays," by Jean Kostak. Noon, Henry Low Learning Center, Health Center. Call 860-486-8899 to register. The program can be viewed live at www.celebrate.uchc.edu/webcast.

Monday, 11/3 – International Studies Lecture. "Peace and Democracy in Nepal: Current Challenges," by Ambassador Suresh Chandra Chalise. 4:30 p.m., Asian American Cultural Center, Student Union.

Monday, 11/3 – SUBOG Lecture. Maya Angelou, author. Admission: \$10 for non-students, \$2 for students. 7 p.m., Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts.

Exhibits

Through Friday, 10/31 – Torrington Campus. *Empty Place at the Table*, display to raise awareness about domestic violence. Eads Building.

Through Sunday, 11/2 – Alexey von Schlippe Gallery. *Latin Views 2008*, works by 38 Latin artists. Weds.-Sun., noon-4 p.m. Members and students free, others \$3 donation. Avery Point Campus.

Through Friday, 11/7 – Babbidge Library. *The American President*, archival photos, West Alcove. Also, through Friday, 12/19, *Offline*, works by UConn Libraries staff, Gallery on the Plaza; *Portraits of Nature*, photos by Carolanne Markowitz, Stevens

Gallery. Reception, Thursday, 10/30, 4-5:30 p.m. Stevens Gallery.

Through Friday, 11/14 – Jorgensen Gallery. *Regarding India*, works by Neil Chowdhury; Hanuman Kambli & Kathryn Myers; and students and alums from Goa College of Arts. Mon.-Fri., 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

Through Thursday, 11/20 – Health Center. Oil paintings by Linda Tenukas. Daily, 8 a.m.-9 p.m., Main and Mezzanine Lobbies. Also, through Wednesday, 1/7, works by

Quartet. U.S. Coast Guard Band. 8 p.m., von der Mehden Recital Hall. Free admission.

Friday, 10/31 – Sun Ra Orchestra. Jazz group performs Halloween Show. 7 p.m., von der Mehden Recital Hall. Admission: \$20 with costume, \$25 without; students free.

Saturday, 11/1 – Student Recital. Eddy Hussain, piano. 7 p.m., von der Mehden Recital Hall. Free admission.

Sunday, 11/2 – UConn Opera. *Little Red Riding Hood*. Tickets \$11, \$13. 1 p.m. and 3 p.m., Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts. For tickets call 860-486-4226.

Sunday, 11/2 – Student Recital. Samantha Glazier, trumpet. 3 p.m., von der Mehden Recital Hall. Free admission.

Sunday, 11/2 – Student Recital. Matt Gordon, clarinet. 8 p.m., von der Mehden Recital Hall. Free admission.

Monday, 11/3 – Jazz Lab Band. John Mastroianni, director. 8 p.m., von der Mehden Recital Hall. Tickets: adults \$7, students and children free.

Films

Monday, 10/27 – Puppet Film. *Dante's Inferno*. 7:30 p.m., Student Union. Free.

Tuesday, 10/28 – India Film. *Manichitrathazhu*. 6:30 p.m., Room 106, Art Building.

Wednesday, 10/29 – Rainbow Center Film. *Boys in the Band*. 4 p.m., Room 403, Student Union.

Thursday, 10/30 – Documentary Film. *After Stonewall*, narrated by Melissa Etheridge. 5 p.m., Konover Auditorium, Dodd Center.

Saturday, 11/1 & Sunday, 11/2 – Tibet Film. *Tibet, Cry of the Snow Lion*. 2 p.m., William Benton Museum of Art. Free admission.

Monday, 11/3 – Puppet Film. *Being John Malkovich*. 7:30 p.m., Student Union. Free admission.

Athletics

Wednesday, 10/29 – Field Hockey vs. Georgetown. 3 p.m., Sherman Family Sports Complex.

Friday, 10/31 – Men's Soccer vs. Seton Hall. 7 p.m., Morrone Stadium.

Friday, 10/31 – Women's Volleyball vs. Seton Hall. 8 p.m., Gampel Pavilion.

Sunday, 11/2 – Women's Volleyball vs. Villanova. 2 p.m., Gampel Pavilion.

Potpourri

Monday, 10/27 and Tuesday, 10/28 – Flu Vaccination Clinic. 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Student Union Ballroom. \$20 cash or check. Students may charge this to their University account. Please show UConn ID.

Tuesday, 10/28 – Engineering Career Fair. For graduate and undergraduate students. Noon-4 p.m., Rome Ballroom. See www.engr.uconn.edu/fall2008careerfair.php

Tuesday, 10/28 – Children's Literature Reading. By M.T. Anderson, author. 7 p.m., Konover Auditorium, Dodd Center. Free admission.

Saturday, 10/31 – Museum of Natural History Trip. Boston

Museum of Science. All ages welcome, children must be accompanied by an adult. Admission: \$40 Museum of Natural History member, \$50 non-member. For information, call 860-486-5690. Bus departs campus at 8 a.m.

Mondays – Muslim Student Association. General meeting.

4:45-5:30 p.m., Islamic Center, North Eagleville Road. For more information, call 203-687-5464.

Mondays – Graduate Student Christian Fellowship. 5-6:30 p.m., Room 213, CUE Building. For more information, call 860-368-9024.

Performing Arts

Through Sunday, 11/2 – Spring Awakening. CRT production of Frank Wedekind's 1891 play. For times and tickets, call 860-486-4226.

Tuesday, 10/28 – Marsalis Brasilianos. Branford Marsalis, saxophone, and Filharmonia Brasileira. Tickets: \$28, \$30. 8 p.m., Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts. Call 860-486-4226. Pre-concert talk at 7:15 p.m.

Tuesday, 10/28 – Jazz Combo. Kenny Davis, Earl MacDonald, and Bill Reynolds, ensemble directors. 8 p.m. von der Mehden Recital Hall. Admission: adults \$7, students and children free.

Thursday, 10/30 – Saxophone

Q Center's peer tutoring popular with students needing help in math, science



PHOTO BY JESSICA TOMMASELLI

Milanthi Sarukkali, a second-year graduate student in actuarial science, tutors freshmen Brian Libes, left, an exploratory major, and Mike Battipaglia, a business major, in the Q Center.

BY KAREN A. GRAVA

If Thomas Roby, associate professor of mathematics, was trying to explain the term “exponential” growth to a class, he might want to use the Q Center as an illustration.

The center, which offers students tutoring in mathematics, statistics, chemistry, and physics, has experienced explosive growth since it was founded in 2004. So far this fall, it has had 4,813 visits, compared to 3,097 by this time last year.

“Students like the center because they are often very shy about letting others know they are in trouble in a class,” says Roby, director of the center. “They like the center because of its peer tutoring.”

Located on the first floor of the Babbidge Library, the center occupies space that formerly housed journals now available online. It is part of the “Learning Commons” at the library.

“It’s a new way to use the library,” Roby says.

The center operates from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. four days a week (Monday through Thursday), and from 1 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Sunday. It’s set up like a chic café, with tables and stools, and except for the books spread out on the tables, a visitor might think it was a cozy place to socialize.

“It’s very relaxed and cheerful and very convenient for students,” Roby says. “They come here and get tutored and then go to other parts of the library to study.”

The popularity of the center has grown in part because students feel the need to do more practice problems than most instructors have time to cover in class, and because they lack math confidence.

“We provide students with a lot of reinforcement,” says Álvaro Lozano-Robledo, assistant professor of math and assistant director of the Q Center. “We work hard to keep them encouraged, and that goes a long way toward teaching them to trust their judgment.”

Lozano-Robledo says the students particularly like learning from other students, who are screened based in part on their grades in math, physics, and chemistry.

“Students are often afraid that if they ask a professor a lot of questions, it will affect their grades. Here there is no power relationship between the student and the peer tutor,” he says. “And it’s very private.”

Janelle Hajjar, of North Andover, Mass., agrees. A sophomore majoring in biomedical engineering, she has used the center this year for tutoring in physics. Last year, she used it for help with both math and chemistry.

“The center is great,” she says. “In class, the professors teach you what’s in the book. At the Q Center, the tutors tell you the tricks so that you do the problems easily.”

Students who use the center sign in by filling out a short online survey about why they are there, their opinion of the center (nearly three-quarters of the students rate the center as either “very good” or “quite good”), and whether they have visited the center before.

The web site also provides each tutor’s schedule, so a student can plan to work with the same tutor each time he or she visits. Student workers track which tutor is available and what courses they are able to tutor students in.

“We try not to have a long wait time for the students who come to be tutored, so often we will have a tutor work with multiple students from the same class,” says Lozano-Robledo.

“Students are often afraid that if they ask a professor a lot of questions, it will affect their grades. Here there is no power relationship between the student and the peer tutor.”

Álvaro Lozano-Robledo
Assistant director, Q Center

Strangely, the quietest times at the center are often just before mid-term and final exams, because students are busy with course review sessions at those times.

Roby says the center’s rapid growth has been a challenge. Finding enough furniture – and sufficient funding to provide extra tutors – has been a priority this semester.

But, he adds, between the quality of the center’s help and recent budget cuts causing many departments to teach more students in large sections, the growth of the Q Center is expected to continue.

Outstanding advisor helps biology students navigate UConn

BY SHERRY FISHER

Think outside the box. That’s the first piece of advice Jennifer Murphy gives her students.

“I tell them to look through the entire course catalog and come back with a list of classes they want to take – not classes they are required to take,” says Murphy, undergraduate program coordinator, who advises students majoring in ecology and evolutionary biology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. “That’s a good starting point for them to find out about their interests.”

Murphy, who came to UConn in 2002, advises some 300 students. She is the recipient of this year’s Outstanding Student Advisement and Advocacy Award.

She says many students aren’t aware of the career choices that are open to science majors.

“Some think their degrees will lead to medical or dental school, but they don’t know of other career opportunities,” she says. “After a while, they realize they don’t want a career in medicine, or they see the course work is more challenging and they think they won’t be competitive enough. That brings on the question, ‘What do I do now?’ So I ask questions like ‘What are you looking for?’ and

‘Where do you see yourself in five years?’”

Murphy listens to students work through the process, and encourages them to try something new. “They may come back and find a new path that changes their lives,” she says, “or they discover that a particular route wasn’t for them, and they’ll try something else.”

She is now in the midst of preregistration, her busiest time of year. Not only does she meet with up to 20 students a day, but she also answers e-mails and phone calls from students who have questions on issues ranging from graduate school applications and transcripts to adding and dropping courses.

Murphy says she enjoys working with students.

“I really like the interaction with them,” she says. “I like the college years because it’s such a key time in their lives. They’re learning a lot about themselves; they’re gaining independence, and their opportunities are endless.”

Every week she sends out an e-mail to all her advisees with information she deems relevant to their lives and careers. These include internship announcements, seminars and presentations on campus, scholarship news, and



PHOTO BY FRANK DAHLMAYER

Jennifer Murphy, undergraduate program coordinator in the ecology and evolutionary biology department, meets with an advisee.

other information pertaining to undergraduates in the sciences.

“It helps them see beyond their own course work,” she says.

She also encourages them to travel before they settle down. “I try to get them outside that box.”

She says advising is like teaching. “There’s that moment when they’re struggling with a concept, and finally they get it,” Murphy says. “They’re either more relaxed or more excited because they fi-

nally know where they’re heading. I enjoy being part of that.”

Murphy also received the National Academic Advising Association Region One Academic Advising Excellence Award in 2007, and UConn’s Undergraduate Student Government Advisor of the Year award in 2006.

Student Chien Lo describes Murphy as a “great advisor, friendly, motivating, and supportive.

“She is always more than will-

ing and available to meet with students to discuss their academic goals or plans for the future,” says Lo, a senior with a double major in ecology and evolutionary biology and molecular and cell biology.

Lo adds, “Jen is a student advisor, but is also an active member of the community, often merging the two together and building connections between students, faculty, staff, and the outside world.”

Gordon Ober, a senior majoring in ecology and evolutionary biology, says Murphy was always helpful whether it was finding a class or working with him on a resume for a summer job. “She’s very accessible,” he says. “Her office door is always open.”

Melanie Bouthillier, a senior majoring in biological sciences, says Murphy is “very concerned about students and always goes out of her way to help. I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do with my degree and she worked with me to figure it out. Now I know I want to be a physician’s assistant.”

Edwin Bolanos, a senior majoring in biological sciences, says Murphy put him in the right direction: “Without her, I would have been lost a long time ago.”