Graduation ceremonies celebrate students’ achievements

BY SHERRY FISHER & ELIZABETH OMARA-OTUMU

The best of both worlds is how Doctor of Pharmacy graduate Alison Smith describes her experience in the School of Pharmacy. “What I like best about the school is that in a huge university, it’s a very small community,” she says. “You know everyone in your class, and the faculty know you by name.”

May 5, Smith graduated along with nearly 90 fellow Pharm.D. and 11 Ph.D. students in a ceremony in Rome Ballroom that combined a personal touch with the formalities of Commencement. With tables set for brunch and live music provided by three fine arts students, more than 600 family members and friends mingled with students, faculty, and staff of the pharmacy school.

In previous years, the school offered brunch in the morning and then headed to the formalities of Commencement. With tables set for brunch and live music provided by three fine arts students, more than 600 family members and friends mingled with students, faculty, and staff of the pharmacy school.

BY DAVID BAUMAN

Christopher Earley, dean of the National University of Singapore Business School — one of the top business schools in Asia — has been named the next dean of the School of Business. He also has been awarded the new Auran J. Fox Chair in Business. The appointment will be effective Jan. 1.

Earley is an authority on multinational work teams, cross-cultural differences of individual behavior in organizations, and motivation systems across cultures. His research interest in cultural intelligence — people’s capacity to adjust to new cultural environments — led him to visit China for the first time in 1986. Since then he has traveled and worked in China, England, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Thailand for more than 20 years.

Prior to his appointment as dean at the National University of Singapore, Earley was chair and professor of organizational behavior at the London Business School in England. He has taught on the faculties of the National University of Singapore, London Business School, Indiana University, University of Arizona, University of Minnesota, and University of California-Irvine.

“Dr. Earley is a leader in the global business school community,” says University President Philip E. Austin. “He is passionate about business education within a global context, and we are confident that his strong record of leadership will lead to a new era of growth and progress for UConn’s School of Business.”

Earley says, “The excitement at UConn is infectious, and there are tremendous opportunities for the School of Business to advance as a world-class leader in business.

New dean of business school specializes in global issues

Experienced administrator to head School of Nursing

BY BETH KRANE

Anne Bavier, currently dean of the School of Nursing at St. Xavier University in Chicago, has been selected as the next dean of UConn’s School of Nursing.

Her appointment, the result of an extensive national search headed by pharmacy dean Robert McCarthy, is effective Aug. 17.

Bavier served as assistant dean for development, alumni, and external relations, and then assistant dean for planning and external relations at Emory University’s Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, one of the leading schools of nursing in the country, from 1999 to 2003, before assuming the deanship at St. Xavier University in 2004.

She has taught on the faculties of St. Xavier University, Emory University, Yale University, and Georgia State University. Bavier also brings to her new post a dozen years of experience in leadership roles at federal health care agencies, including being the deputy director of the National Institutes of Health’s Office of Research on Women’s Health.

“Dr. Bavier is an adept academic administrator with a proven talent for rapidly advancing institutions through strong, strategic initiatives,” says Provost Peter J. Nicholls. “Her extensive background in university settings and within federal health care agencies positions her well to help our nursing faculty maximize its engagement in scholarly research. Both President Austin and I are pleased that we attracted one of the very best nursing deans in the country to UConn.”

Bavier says she is impressed by the faculty’s “palpable energy and commitment to the profession. Also, I find UConn’s
Business dean  

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education. Just as important, UConn is also in a great position to become a national leader in business programs emphasizing entrepreneurship, technology, and globalization.”

Provost Peter J. Nicholls says the appointment of Earley, 47, brings to a close a national search process that began in April 2006. Earley led a field of more than 40 candidates from higher education and the private sector, spanning North America, Europe, and Asia.

“Dr. Earley has all the leadership attributes necessary to take the School of Business to the next level of excellence in today’s competitive global business educational arena,” Nicholls says. “He is a renowned scholar, an experienced academic leader, and has significant international experience.”

Ross MacKinnon, dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, who chaired the business dean search, says Earley was the unanimous choice of the committee. A broad group of alumni participated in the search process, including Denis Nayden, ’76, MBA ’77, managing partner of Oak Hill Capital, and Keith Fox, ’80, a former executive at Cisco Systems and entrepreneur living in Saratoga, Calif.

Professor Mohamed Hussein, head of the accounting department who served as interim dean during the search, says Earley has "excellent credentials, great energy, and a friendly personality to lead us forward."

"With more corporate deals occurring on a global scale in today’s marketplace," he adds, "it is increasingly important that business students get experience in worldwide business cultures. Dean Earley’s expertise and global contacts will be valuable in increasing our students’ global opportunities.”

During his tenure at the National University of Singapore, Earley developed strategies that resulted in a rapid rise of the business school in the rankings and a record growth of both undergraduate and MBA enrollments; expanded the school’s executive education division through a $12 million contract with the Nestle Co. to train 300 managers over two years, resulting in a four-fold increase of the school’s profitability; and raised approximately $30 million to underwrite the construction of a new business school on campus.

An internationally recognized scholar, Earley has written 10 books and more than 100 articles and book chapters. These include “Cultural Intelligence” (Harvard Business Review, with E. Mosakowski), Cultural Intelligence: Individual Interactions Across Cultures (Stanford University Press, with Ang Soo), Multicultural Work Teams: A New Perspective (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, with Cristina Gibson); Culture, Self/Identity, and Work and The Transplanted Executive: Managing in Different Cultures (Oxford University Press, both with Miriam Erez). He has consulted for companies including British Aerospace, Deutsche Bank, Eli Lilly Pharmaceuticals, General Motors, IBM, Islamic Development Bank, Merck, and Unilever, in China, England, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, and Thailand.

Earley received a bachelor’s degree from Knox College, a liberal arts college in Galesburg, Illinois, and a master’s and Ph.D. in industrial and organizational psychology from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Nursing dean  

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academic leaders are a thoughtful, reflective group, respectful of the different disciplines at the University and united in common goals.” Among her accomplishments as dean at St. Xavier University, Bavier quadrupled faculty publications and scholarly presentations, increased the school’s grant funding by 50 percent, and dramatically expanded funding for disadvantaged undergraduate nursing students. At Emory University, Bavier was instrumental in securing the largest single gift ever – $5 million – and funding for the first endowed professorship in nursing.

As a deputy director at NIH, she oversaw a $17.5 million budget related to research on women’s health, represented the agency on major federal policy committees, and led the development of new funding approaches to enhance research on women’s health.

“My approach at UConn’s School of Nursing will be to set forth a bold strategic plan for elevating the school’s research focus to the highest level, while enhancing its existing emphasis on teaching excellence,” Bavier says. “UConn’s School of Nursing has a proud history as a national leader in nursing education. I intend to honor that legacy, while ensuring the school remains relevant for the current time and into the future.”

Bavier received the first Edith Moore Copeland Award for Creativity from Sigma Theta Tau International. The award is the highest honor bestowed by this international nursing leadership society. Colleagues also elected her a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing and the Institute of Medicine of Chicago. She received the highest honors from both federal agencies where she worked: the National Institutes of Health’s Director’s Award and the Administrator’s Award from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Policy and Research. Currently, she is a trustee of the NLN Foundation for Nursing Education and a board member of LaRabida Children’s Hospital and Smith Senior Living, both in Chicago.

Bavier earned her bachelor’s degree from Duke University, her master’s from Emory University, and her Ph.D. from Duquesne University, all in nursing. She also is a licensed registered nurse.

“Dr. Bavier’s demonstrated commitment to research, her national leadership roles in nursing, and her significant record of creating environments where underrepresented students thrive are a wonderful complement to our existing strengths,” says Carol Polfliotini, interim dean of nursing. “She is a dynamic administrator who will further the school’s research, teaching, and service excellence.”

New UConn IDs to be mailed this month

The new UConn ID cards, also called the Husky One Card, will be mailed to faculty and staff at their workplaces, and should be received by May 25. Old cards will not be valid after May 30, and should be destroyed for security purposes.

The new cards are part of a University-wide initiative to phase out the use of social security numbers wherever possible. Husky Bucks, a debit account that can be accessed using the new ID card, can be used for buying meals at dining halls and other campus eateries including the Dairy Bar, photocopying at certain locations, buying Jorgensen tickets, and making purchases at the UConn Co-op and convenience store.

If you do not receive the card by May 29, call the One Card Office at 860-486-3129, or e-mail oncard@uconn.edu.

Student trustee elected

BY SHERRY FISHER

Ross Gionfriddo, a junior with a double major in political science and economics, has been elected to the University’s Board of Trustees as undergraduate student representative.

He starts his term July 1. Gionfriddo is a member of the Beta Theta Pi fraternity and is currently serving as its vice president. He is a varsity rower on the UConn club crew team and is assistant director of recruitment for Huskython, an all-night dance marathon to benefit the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center. Gionfriddo, who is replacing Salman Kazeronian, will serve as student trustee for two years.

“I am honored to have been elected,” he says, “and I’m looking forward to making a difference in the UConn community.”

Issues he hopes to address include improving campus safety.

“I’d like to see sidewalks on Hunting Lodge Road, and University buses running on weekends,” he says. He would also like to see a “better system” for students to evaluate professors, and increased funding for student-run organizations.

“I want people to know that I’ll be accessible,” Gionfriddo added, noting that he will have office hours in the Student Union.

Elizabeth Omana-Ortiz

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Honors scholars address Class of ’07

Kristine Folkerts

BY KAREN MCCORMICK, ’07

Kristine Folkerts believes big changes can come from helping small communities. “Helping even just a few people is better than being apathetic,” she says.

Folkerts, a molecular and cell biology major with a minor in African Studies, went to Kenya with Operation Crossroads Africa in the summer of 2004. Through this program, she shadowed doctors, gave patients bed baths, and helped run two free health clinics that provided care to more than 3,000 people.

After spending time in a hospital where nearly 50 percent of patients had HIV, she realized how much help was needed.

“I saw at least two children die from preventable diseases,” she said. “Ever since I came back, I’ve been interested in public health and health disparities, especially in Africa.”

While in Ghana during the summer of 2006, Folkerts studied the malaria care-seeking behaviors of mothers in four different rural communities. With the help of a translator, she interviewed these women to learn about the different treatments used for malaria and to highlight factors that prevented timely and appropriate care.

Kevin Tyler

BY RICHARD VEILLEUX

When Kevin Tyler was in high school, he was all about grades. And it showed. The grades he received were excellent. Once he got to UConn, everything changed — except his grades.

“I had an educational transformation at UConn,” says Tyler, one of about 20 Honors Scholars in the class that graduated May 6. “At E.O. Smith High School, he says, “I was a straight-A student, but when I got here I fell in love with the learning process in general. It was empowering. UConn is a great place for an undergraduate career.”

Tyler, who majored in electrical engineering, was named senior class representative and spoke during the morning ceremony.

He warned the about 3,100 graduates that their genius may not be noticed at times during their careers, but that shouldn’t stop them from striving to be their best.

“There will likely be times when you are exhibiting genius — genius that is barely noticed by those around you,” he said, referring to a staged event when the famous classical violinist Joshua Bell played just outside a Washington, D.C., metro station, his violin case open at his feet for donations, and only seven of more than 1,000 people stopped to listen.

“Bell, the virtuoso playing to the rush hour crowd … is met with no applause, no acknowledgement of his genius. Yet he still played on with all his talent and heart …,” said Tyler. “Today, we leave the protective circle of our friends and professors to exercise our talents in a world that may be indifferent to our efforts. Like Bell, we are no less committed to the field of our endeavors, and no less gifted in our contributions.”

It’s unlikely the world will be indifferent to Tyler’s efforts. He not only earned top grades, prestigious scholarships, and the Outstanding Senior Award in Electrical Engineering in 2007, he also conducted research at the Yale Child Study Center in New Haven. There he helped create an interactive toy designed to encourage speech development in autistic children, many of whom do not develop an ability to speak. His sister is autistic.

Tyler, who also earned a minor in mathematics, will work for Bridgewater Associates in Westport, doing “financial engineering,” creating quantitative tools for investing.

Five years, five degrees

BY RICHARD VEILLEUX

Devon Gaines loves learning. And he has five degrees to prove it.

On May 6, Gaines accepted three diplomas during Commencement exercises in Gampel Pavilion, one for each of the three degrees he earned from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and one that morning in the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts during ceremonies for the School of Fine Arts. The fine arts event unfortunately kept him from attending the ceremony where he would have accepted the degree he earned from the School of Engineering.

Gaines not only earned five undergraduate degrees, he earned five minors as well. In only five years.

“One thing just led to another,” says the Stamford native who, as far as anyone can remember, is the first person to earn five degrees in one sitting from UConn. “I loved being here. I loved studying, learning different things.”

Since Gaines, 22, entered UConn in 2002, he has earned 276 credits, enough to qualify for degrees in computer science, cognitive science, theater studies, linguistics/psychology, and an individualized major in cinema, culture, and cognition. His record for one semester is 38 credits.

Overall — in about 90 different courses — he has a 3.2 GPA.

Gaines, who will work for Pension Associates in Stamford this summer, has been accepted to a master’s program in educational communications technology at New York University.

“I might go for an MBA, too,” he says, and he’s probably not joking.

Gaines originally came to UConn to study computer engineering, but found it somewhat constraining.

“I like being creative, too,” he says.

So shortly after arriving in Storrs he wandered into the School of Fine Arts, and bumped into a conversation about costume design. A student was creating a design on a computer, and Gaines began chatting with her. Soon, he decided to major in theater, too.

The story follows a similar script for his other majors — curiosity about the human element in computers led to a major in linguistics and cognitive psychology; a psychology course on paranormal media and an interest in cinema led to the individualized major in cinema, culture, and cognition.

All that required extra effort, and extra courses: to earn a degree at UConn, students are required to take at least 30 distinct credits directly related to that major.

Those 30 credits cannot overlap to another major. Gaines accomplished that, and he also sampled enough other courses to earn minors in math, communications, business, production design, and film studies.

He did not bring any AP or dual degree credits to UConn from high school. He earned some, but didn’t transfer them because he wanted to take the courses here.

“I just loved school, and the faculty have been tremendously wonderful and helpful with everything,” he says. “I like to keep busy.”
Devika Dhandapani

BY SHERRY FISHER

Devika Dhandapani, a physiology and neurobiology major in UConn’s Combined Program in Medicine, says community outreach has been a significant part of her college career. She is the first coordinator of the Alternative Breaks and Immersion Program for Community Outreach, which organizes service-learning experiences designed to heighten students’ awareness of critical social issues and enhance their individual growth.

“It has been very exciting,” says Dhandapani, who has planned and coordinated trips for UConn students in places such as New Orleans, Philadelphia, and Biloxi, Miss.

A Nutmeg Scholar, Dhandapani was valedictorian at Mark T. Sheehan High School in Wallingford.

She says her “most exciting feat right now” is leading UConn’s first international service learning trip to the Dominican Republic. The group will spend 20 days there, teaching nutrition and sex education to people in various villages. They will also teach English in a Haitian school.

Dhandapani, who has been active in the Honors Program, has mentored many students within the program.

“I try to get them to realize the potential of the college experience as long as they take it into their own hands and seek out opportunities,” she says. “I realized when I was a freshman that I needed that.”

She says her experience spending a semester through the Study Abroad program at the National University of Singapore last fall was a “grand finale for my time at UConn, and put a lot of things into perspective.”

Dhandapani received a Student Life Award for Individual Community Service; an Outstanding Senior Woman Award from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; and a citation for academic excellence from the Connecticut state legislature.

“UConn has afforded me so many opportunities,” Dhandapani says, “especially through the Honors Program. I’ve gotten a diverse and rich education here.”

She will attend UConn’s School of Medicine in the fall.

Joshua Fairchild

BY KAREN McCOMBIC, ’07

Joshua Fairchild, a psychology major, started college as an English major. But his plans changed after enrolling in Professor David Miller’s Psychology 132 class.

“I got hooked,” he says. “Professor Miller is so interesting and so dynamic, he kept me engaged Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8 a.m.”

As a result of taking that class, Fairchild decided to major in psychology and minor in neuroscience.

“It’s something I never thought I’d touch, but I’ve been loving it,” he says.

After taking the class, he was selected by Miller to be a supplemental instruction leader, holding study sessions for students who wished to attend.

Fairchild also worked in the lab of Etan Markus, associate professor of psychology.

For his honors thesis, he studied visual startle responses in rats.

Last summer, Fairchild interned at Fellowship Place in New Haven, a social and vocational rehabilitation center for people with psychiatric and drug abuse problems.

While there, he ran stress and anger management programs and taught art therapy.

Upon leaving, Fairchild was surprised to receive gifts and a standing ovation from the patients. “It seems I was able to make a connection with people,” he says.

Fairchild has also worked at the University’s Center for Students with Disabilities, and has served as social chair of the psychology honor society.

He was also a member of the Agents of Improv and Dramatic Paws, giving him the chance to let loose. “It was nice to get out there, to be silly and laugh,” he says.

Fairchild made the most of his time at UConn through teaching experiences, hands-on research, and an internship.

“I’m ready to see what’s out there in the rest of the world but I’m not ready to leave,” he says. “I love it here.”

Currently he is applying for clinical research positions. He plans to apply to doctoral programs in the future.

Fairchild is one of the students interviewed by Miller about his experiences at UConn in a podcast recorded during the psychology department’s undergraduate Commencement reception. The podcast can be accessed at: http://web.uconn.edu/psychology/2007Commencement.mp3.

Carleen Graham

BY KAREN McCOMBIC, ’07

“I think UConn can offer a lot of different people what they want,” says Carleen Graham, an international relations major.

Graham, who attended Simsbury High School, transferred from a small liberal arts school to UConn after her freshman year.

“I wanted a large university where I would have lots of different opportunities,” she says.

She found UConn offers lots of activities, as well as requiring academic rigor.

In her spare time, Graham has been involved with UConn PIRG (Public Interest Research Group).

She also worked for the Writing Center, and was a writing liaison for the individualized major department, helping fellow students with their writing.

“Writing my thesis was an eye-opening experience,” she says.

Graham’s thesis was a study of the “resource curse” effect, that looked at major oil exporting countries.

“The resource curse effect is a developmental phenomenon where developing nations that have abundant natural resources tend to under-perform economically,” she says. “I’m interested in major oil exporters, because oil is such a lucrative natural resource.”

Graham, who graduated with a 3.9 GPA, will enroll in Emory University’s political science Ph.D. program, with a focus in international relations and international political economy.

After obtaining her doctorate she plans on a career in academia.

Tristan Jones

BY CHAD WEISS

Tristan Jones, is an actuarial science major with some impressive statistics of his own to analyze.

An outstanding scholar, with a cumulative GPA of 3.94, he is also an outstanding athlete and, as head swim coach Bob Goldberg says, an outstanding person.

Tristan was one of two seniors, along with women’s soccer player Courtney Sands, ’07, to receive the Donald Kinsman Award, the highest award from the Counseling Program for Intercollegiate Athletes at UConn. It recognizes academic and athletic achievement, leadership, service, perseverance, and character.

He was UConn’s Big East Scholar-Athlete of the Year and co-captain of the swimming and diving team. He holds UConn records in the 100-yard breaststroke and 200-yard individual medley, and was one of four UConn student-athletes nominated last year to the NCAA Leadership Conference.

He swims all strokes and all events, something that in itself is unusual, according to Goldberg. He has times that are in the top 10 at UConn in seven different individual events, is on all five UConn team relay records, and is an All Big East Conference Swimmer.

Out of the pool, he has impressive stats, too. Tristan is a Babbidge Scholar, recognizing his three perfect 4.0 semesters. He was awarded the Gordon Ashton Actuarial Scholarship.

He has passed three professional exams of the Society of Actuaries. UConn’s Actuarial Science Program in the mathematics department is known for the professional preparation of its students, who are in high demand in the financial services industry.

Tristan has accepted a job with CIGNA in Philadelphia, one of two places — along with ING — where he interned.

Last year his father died, and Tristan returned home to Wanniassa, Australia, for several weeks. He still finished the year with high marks, maintaining his momentum, as his coach says, toward the standards of excellence he has always worked for.

Last week, his mother and grandparents traveled halfway around the world to Storrs to see him graduate.
Bethany Lepine

By Sheri Fishner

Bethany Lepine, a biomedical engineering major, has spent much of her time involved in community outreach.

She started volunteering with a homeless shelter in Willimantic called the No Freeze Hospitality Clinic in January 2006. She became program director there, and then was asked to direct another shelter in Rockville.

“For the past year, I’ve been organizing close to 60 volunteers,” she says. “We’ve been doing fundraisers and awareness events, and were able to help train people to be site leaders.” Lepine received a Student Life Award for her efforts.

Her interest in helping others led to a 10-day trip to Haiti for an independent study on healthcare technology in underdeveloped countries.

“We saw different programs in action and learned what programs the U.S. is implementing to affect change,” she says. For the past two spring breaks, she has gone to Kentucky to help rebuild homes for the poor.

“I chose biomedical engineering because I want to use the skills I have to do something productive,” she says. “That’s one of the big things that I got out of these trips. Part of the reason I’m doing the independent study on Haiti is that I’m learning to use my skills to benefit society.”

Lepine, who spent a portion of her college career on the cross country and track and field team, worked on a senior project with the UConn Health Center, designing a tool to test the properties of orthodontic wires.

“In engineering, something you design can impact thousands of people if it goes to market,” she says. “Even if you make a small change, it can make a procedure less painful.”

Lepine, who will be working as a mechanical engineer at Dominion Nuclear Connecticut, says that while UConn is a large university full of opportunities, “it feels like home.”

Sudha Balla

By Nan Cooper

Sudha Balla, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Computer Science & Engineering, has won a prestigious Sallie Rosen Kaplan Srck Fellowship for Women Scientists in Cancer Research, awarded by the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health.

Balla is one of only seven researchers nationwide to receive the 2007 award, which is open to female researchers nationwide who earned a doctoral degree within the past five years. She graduated with her Ph.D. from the School of Engineering May 5, and will begin her Fellowship during the summer.

“I hope to work on a project that requires new computational approaches to address very important challenges that exist today in the domain of cancer research,” she says. The SRK Fellowship is competitive, and recipients are selected by a committee. The award enables Fellows to train in any of the National Cancer Institute’s research facilities in Maryland, to examine basic, clinical, epidemiological, or prevention science.

Each SRK Fellow is supported by an intramural Cancer Research Training Award. The duration of the Fellowship is typically two to five years.

Balla earned her master’s degree at the University of Bridgeport in 2002, and began her doctoral studies at UConn in the area of algorithmic applications to bioinformatics.

Her doctoral work centered on development of novel computational techniques for problems in molecular biology that involve identification of complex signals called motifs appearing in large datasets. These motifs, she says, “have applications in the discovery of biologically significant regions in our DNA, understanding gene function, and efficiently designing drugs for disease.”

Balla, whose adviser was Sanguthevar Rajasekaran, the UTC Professor of Computer Science & Engineering and director of the Booth Engineering Center for Advanced Technology, collaborated on an inter-disciplinary team involving faculty and students from the departments of Computer Science & Engineering in Storrs and Neuroscience and Molecular, Microbial & Structural Biology at the Health Center.

The team developed an online application, Minimotif Miner, used by biological researchers to investigate protein function and derive novel hypotheses for the causes of human diseases.

Aaron Mushengyezi

By Cindy Weiss

Aaron Mushengyezi, a Ph.D. graduate in English, will return to his native Uganda after graduation with a trove of stories that preserve the country’s tradition of passing folk tales from elders to children.

Mushengyezi came to UConn in 2002 on a Ford Foundation fellowship after earning his master’s degree in African literature in Uganda. Working with faculty advisor Margaret Higonnet, a professor of English, he devoted his doctoral dissertation to documenting and analyzing Ugandan folk tales for children.

“Twice he returned to the countryside of Uganda, recording more than 500 children’s songs and stories passed along by village performers and elders such as Isaya Katuka. Katuka is about 88 years old, and he is a "reference point" for many of the country’s traditions, says Mushengyezi.

“If you lose a guy like that – everything is gone,” he says.

To prevent that, Mushengyezi transcribed the children’s tales he collected into English and three dialects – from Luganda, in central Uganda; and from Runyankore and Rukumbira-Runuwarunda in the southwest.

He hopes to publish the stories in bilingual books for children that could be used in Uganda’s bilingual education system.

“Aaron’s work is a product of a national agenda – shaped by an urge to preserve Ugandan culture,” says Higonnet.

Mushengyezi grew up in rural Uganda, where his mother, now 78, told him the folk tales. Traditionally, children hear them from their elders after the evening meal.

“Collecting the stories gave me a kind of nostalgic feeling,” he says.

Today’s rural children often are sent to boarding school, or they are read to rather than told the stories. Urban children never experienced the oral tradition.

Mushengyezi’s own children – three boys, ages 8, 6, and 3 – live in Kampala with his wife. He will return there and take a job as a senior lecturer in the literature department at Makerere University.

Veronica Segarra

By Karen McCormick, ’07

“Since elementary school my mom has been telling me: ‘You’re going to college,’” says Veronica Segarra, a graduate student earning a master’s degree in communication disorders.

Segarra came to UConn as an undergraduate from Crosby High School in Waterbury, after she was offered a scholarship that paid for her full tuition.

“My mom is a single mom, she needed the help,” she says.

Growing up with an older brother with cerebral palsy and mental retardation, Segarra became interested in how he was treated.

During her senior year of high school, Segarra was a teacher’s aide for a reading and writing enrichment program. She also participated in research that was published in the Journal of Communication Disorders.

While attending UConn, Segarra worked for Birth to 3, an early intervention program for children with developmental disabilities. She was a graduate assistant on an NIH-funded three-year research project with the School of Nursing that uses an interactive software education program to teach older adults about medication literacy.

“Growing up with children who have special needs, you tend to be more empathetic,” she says.

Segarra’s busy schedule taught her how to balance her priorities.

“No matter what,” she says, “you need to give yourself a break to have a social life.”

After graduation, Segarra, who is bilingual, plans to do speech pathology in schools that have a large number of Spanish-speaking students.

This is a small sample of outstanding students from some of the University’s schools and colleges. Additional profiles of graduating students are on the Advance website: www.advance.uconn.edu.

Contact: Wendi Wachler, Advance editor.

Photos by Jordan Bendik, Teresa Phillips, Dan Butler, Carleen Giannam, Christopher LaRosa, Stacy Blanchard

Graduating Students
Pulmonologist honored for children’s asthma program

BY KRISTINA GOODNOUGH

Thousands of children in Hartford and surrounding towns are breathing easier because of Dr. Michelle Cloutier, a pediatric pulmonologist who is this year’s recipient of the UConn Health Center Board of Directors’ Faculty Recognition Award, which is given each year to recognize outstanding academic and professional accomplishments.

Cloutier helped develop Easy Breathing, a disease management program designed to reduce the burden of asthma in youngsters. It helps physicians recognize asthma in their patients with a standardized survey that can be used along with a child’s medical history and physical exam. It also provides guidelines for determining asthma severity and appropriate asthma treatment plans to manage the disease in individual children.

Cloutier developed the program in 1998 with a grant from the Donaghue Foundation. The goal was to help busy physicians identify and treat asthma, a common, chronic condition among Hartford children and a leading cause of hospitalizations, emergency room visits, and missed school days. The challenge for primary care physicians is the need to be an expert in about 250 different diseases, says Cloutier. Easy Breathing helps them identify and treat asthma. The hour-long training is provided at no cost to the physicians, and is usually scheduled during a lunch hour.

The program was initially developed for use in busy urban clinics with lots of patients. To reach more children, Cloutier and her colleagues in the Asthma Center, which is housed at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, decided to offer the program to physicians in private practices. There are about 670,000 children under age 18 in Connecticut and more than 70 percent of them receive their medical care from doctors in private practices, Cloutier says.

Another grant from the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality helped make the program transferable.

More than 300 primary care physicians in 41 communities now use the program, and more than 70,000 youngsters have been enrolled in it. Careful monitoring and analysis of the program show that it is extremely successful in reducing hospitalizations and Emergency Department visits for asthma.

“The private practices that have adopted Easy Breathing also have achieved a 29 percent decrease in urgent-care outpatient visits,” says Cloutier.

The goal now is to expand the program statewide.

“There are about 1,000 pediatric clinicians in Connecticut and we plan to invite all of them to participate in the program,” says Cloutier. “I know we’re making a real difference with thousands of kids.”

Cloutier’s teaching and training abilities rate with medical students as well as with physicians in the community. For three years in a row, she was selected by first and second-year students to receive the Outstanding Teacher Award.

“I am pretty much a full-time teacher in January, February and March every year,” says Cloutier, who teaches respiratory physiology. “Students ask some of the most penetrating questions and they won’t let you use jargon. They keep you honest.”

Cloutier will share the award’s $10,000 prize with her colleagues at the Asthma Center.

Teaching, advising award-winners for 2007 announced

This year’s winners of awards for excellence in teaching and advising were announced on April 26, during the annual recognition dinner, hosted by Provost Peter J. Nickolls, Veronica Makowsky, vice provost, and Keith Barker, associate vice provost.

The award recipients are:

First Year Experience

Frances DiFranco, University Libraries Outstanding First Year Experience Teaching Award

Jeff von Munkwitz-Smith, Registrar Outstanding First Year Experience Teaching Award

Katherine Jolly, Elementary Education Outstanding First Year Experience Mentor

Susie Mendzahal, Pre-Communication Sciences Outstanding First Year Experience Mentor

Advising

David B. Miller, Psychology Outstanding Student Advisement and Advocacy Award

Angela Rola, Asian American Cultural Center Outstanding Student Advisement and Advocacy Award

2007 Teaching Fellows

Sarah Glaz, Mathematics Ralph McNeal Jr., Sociology

2007 Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award

Renée Gilbert, Molecular & Cell Biology Sumie Shima, Chemistry Nicholas Shunda, Economics

2007 Institute of Teaching and Learning Teaching Associate

Lynne Rogers, English, Avery Point Campus

Early College Experience Program

Thomas Recchio, English Outstanding Faculty Coordinator Award

Julie Barker, Cheshire High School

Maureen Brown, Daniel Hand High School Thomas Cangelosi, The Gilbert School High School Instructor Award for Excellence in College Teaching

Thomas Connelly, Ellington High School Eugene Desjarlais, Sacred Heart High School Lifetime Achievement Award

Award Acknowledgments

Honors Program

Louis Lombardi, Mathematics

2007 Honors Council Faculty Member of the Year

College of Agriculture & Natural Resources

Carol Aser, Plant Science CANR Alumni Association Award for Teaching Excellence

Karl Guillard, Plant Science UConn Alumni Association, 2006 Excellence in Teaching, Undergraduate Level

Steven Rackliffe, Plant Science North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Award

School of Business

Amy Dunbar, Accounting 2006 Outstanding Master of Science Program in Accounting Professor

David Papandria, Accounting 2006 Outstanding Undergraduate Accounting Professor

V. Kumar, Marketing Graduate Teaching Award

Kevin McEvoy, Marketing Undergraduate Teaching Award

Sulim Ba, Operations & Information Management Teaching Innovation Award

School of Engineering

John Chandy, Electrical & Computer Engineering Electrical & Computer Engineering Outstanding Teaching Award

Swapna Gokhale, Computer Science & Engineering Aggelos Karyas, Computer Science & Engineering

Computer Science & Engineering Outstanding Teaching Award

Gregory Frantz, Civil & Environmental Engineering C.R. Klewin Inc. Award for Excellence in Teaching

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

David B. Miller, Psychology Outstanding Student Government 2006 Excellence in Teaching, Undergraduate Level

School of Pharmacy

Robin Bugner, Teacher of the Year

Teaching Fellows Ralph McNeal Jr., sociology, and Sara Glaz, mathematics, are recognized during the morning undergraduate Commencement ceremony.

School of Business

David B. Miller, Psychology Outstanding Student Advisement and Advocacy Award

Angela Rola, Asian American Cultural Center Outstanding Student Advisement and Advocacy Award

2007 Teaching Fellows

Sarah Glaz, Mathematics Ralph McNeal Jr., Sociology

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School of Pharmacy

Robin Bugner, Teacher of the Year

School of Medicine

Robert Bona

2006 Charles N. Loeser Award

Joseph Palmisano

2006 Kaizer Permanente Award

Glenn Affleck

Michelle Cloutier

Yvonne Grimm-Jorgensen

Dan Henry

Joseph Grasso

Dale Matheson

Christine Niekrash

Richard Zeff

2006 Outstanding Teaching Awards

AAUP

Keith Conrad, Mathematics Jayanthi Rajan, Marketing

David Solomon, Mathematics

2006 Teaching Promise

 Earl MacDonald, Music

2006 Teaching Innovation

HOTO BY RISTINA MONTAGNER

Dr. Michelle Cloutier

PHOTO SUPPLIED BY CONNECTICUT CHILDREN’S MEDICAL CENTER

PHOTO BY PETER MIRKULIN

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Cloutier will share the award’s $10,000 prize with her colleagues at the Asthma Center.
**CALENDAR**

**Monday, May 14 through Tuesday, May 29**

**Libraries**

**Homer Babbidge Library**
- Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday noon-5 p.m.
- Dodd Center: Reading Room hours: Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; closed weekends, closed 5/26.
- Research Center hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; closed weekends.
- Health Center Library, Hours: Monday-Thursday, 7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday, 7 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed 5/26.
- Law Library, Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-9 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed 5/26.
- Trottier Campus Library, Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-9:30 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, closed.
- Avery Point Campus, Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, closed.
- Waterbury Campus Library, Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-8 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, closed.
- Transfer Campus Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-9:30 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, closed.

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

**State Archaeologist Nicholas Bellantoni at the new exhibit, Humor's Nature, at the State Museum of Natural History and Connecticut Archaeological Center.**

**Academics**

**Sundays, 5/20 – Law School Commencement**
- 10 a.m., Law School Campus, Elizabeth Street, Hartford.

**Ph.D. Defenses**

**Monday, 5/14 – Polymer Science, Optoelectronics**
- Properties of Upconverting, Walled Carbon Nanotubes and their Aggregates, by Zhengang Liu (adv.: Papadimitrakopoulos); 9 a.m., Room IMS20, East Science Complex.

**Monday, 5/14 – Computer Science & Engineering, Modeling Restricted Processor Sharing in a Computer System with Non-Exponential Service Times,** by Feng Zhang (adv.: Lipsky); 10 a.m., Room 336, Information Technology Engineering Building.

**Monday, 5/14 – Cell Biology**
- The Roles of Phospholipase C-β in Alzheimer’s Disease,** by Zhenglong Wang (adv.: Wu); 10 a.m., Room E506; Academic Research Building, Health Center.

**Tuesday, 5/15 – Neuroscience, Effects of Repetitive Box Lifting on Circulating Measures of Testosterone, Cortisol, and Growth Hormone in 48 Hippos:** by Bulet Sokken (adv.: Manshe); 9:30 a.m., Room 144, Gentry Building.

**Tuesday, 5/15 – Cell Biology**
- Cell-DNA interactions and the induction of an Antiviral State, by Ioannis Tzimas (adv.: Marcus); 10 a.m., Room 204, Biology/Physics Building.

**Wednesday, 5/16 – Economics**
- Understanding China’s Economic Performance: Gaining Insight from the Balassa-Samuelson Hypothesis, by Binghui Hu (adv.: Fitzgerald); 1:30 p.m., Room 339, Montefell Building.

**Lectures & Seminars**

**Tuesday, 5/15 – Alumni Association**
- Women’s Leadership Roundtable; $15 per UConn member, $25 per nonmember, $30 per UConn student. 6 p.m., Stamford Campus, Gil Re Auditorium.

**Wednesday, 5/16 – Center for Molecular Medicine, “Genetic Lessons from Colon Cancer,” by Sandy Markowitz, Case Western Reserve University. Room E505; Academic Research Building, Health Center.

**Exhibits**

**Saturday, 5/16 through Sunday, 5/23 – Benton Museum, Alpine Views: Alexander Cochrane and the Swiss Landscape; and Artwork by Women: Portrait Tapestries from Chile, and Connecticut Landscapes from the 20s and 30s. Aio, through 6/17; Tradition and Innovation: Latin American Art from the Permanent Collection. Hours: Tuesday-Sunday, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Saturday & Sunday, 1-4:30 p.m. Free admission, $2 per person for docent-led tours. Reception for summer exhibitions 5/18, 5:7 p.m., East Gallery.**

**Pothourri**

**Wednesday, 5/16 & Thursday, 5/17 – Employee Benefit Fair, Vendors, with plan and enrollment information. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Campbell Pavilion.**

**Wednesday, 5/16 – Master’s Entry Into Hispanic Heritage Hall of Fame, 6:30 p.m. Bishop Center, Room 146.**

**Saturday, 5/17 – Notable Trees of UConn, Campus Center, State Museum of Natural History. Advance registration is required. Contact David Colberg.**

**Medical students bike across country to benefit leukemia research**

*By Chris DeFrancisco*

Four students at the School of Medicine are trying to raise money to fight blood cancers, so they’re flying to San Francisco next month. That’s the easy part. Then they’ll spend the next nine weeks on bicycles, pedaling their way back to Connecticut.

“ar the the 2007 Coast-to-Coast for a Cure, to benefit Lea’s Foundation for Leukemia Research. “I believe the improvement of cancer management and treatment is an incredibly important topic to which science and humanity must devote their utmost efforts and resources,” says Lindsay Brown, one of six riders taking part this year.

Brown, Jared Spilka, Nikki Goulet, and Cheyenne Beach are members of the class of 2010 at the UConn School of Medicine. Brown’s brother, Michael, an undergraduate at Bentley College in Waltham, Mass., and Josh Weinschank, a law student at Western New England College in Springfield, are joining them.

“This ride has special meaning for me,” Weinschank says. “My mom is an eight-year survivor of non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.”

“It took a lot of careful, hard work, and dedication to train for a 4,000-mile journey,” says John Nannow, President of Lea’s Foundation.

The first Coast-to-Coast for a Cure was organized by UConn medical students Ben Ristau and Jeremiah Tracy, who also completed the ride. Tracy’s mother had been diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia in 1997, and died two years later.

This year’s goal is to raise $100,000 for Lea’s Foundation, which provides financial support to blood cancer research efforts at the UConn Health Center. The Foundation has pledged $1.25 million for a Center for Hematologic Disorders on the Health Center campus in Farmington.

“The funds we raise are being used to propagate amazing research that could change the future of leukemia treatment and care,” Spilka says.

The six riders leave for San Francisco June 10, and plan to arrive at the Health Center on the 5th day. Details of their cross-country itinerary, as well as information on how to contribute or become a sponsor, are available at www.leadfoundation.org. Donors also may call 860-727-8989.
Women’s Polo team wins championship

The Women’s Polo team won the national championship for the third time in a row this year, despite sickness among UConn’s horses which almost forced them to cancel the season.

Their coach, Matthew Syme, also missed much of the season because of shoulder surgery. Riding borrowed mounts, the team – senior Meaghan Scanlon, and juniors Elizabeth Rockwell and Kelly Musner – defeated the University of Virginia in the final on April 6 in Lexington, Ky.

After the UConn herd was quarantined in January because of an outbreak of equine herpes virus, a respiratory infection, the team traveled to Yale University several times a week to practice.

Home games were canceled, and during away games, the UConn players had to ride horses owned by their opponents. Polo is a club sport at UConn.

There are about 25 college teams in the nation, divided into four regions.

Commencement continued from page 1

over to Gampel Pavilion for gradu-ation. This year the brunch included an award ceremony, and the graduates received their actual diplomas.

Robert McCarthy, dean of phar-macy, says only about a third of the school’s graduates participated in the event in Gampel, compared with about 80 percent taking part this year.

McCarthy reminded the class of their collective accomplishments, fund raising for Xavier School of Pharmacy in the wake of Hurri-cane Katrina; building a fledgling student government into “an effective powerhouse,” represent-ing the school at the dedication of the Pharmacy/Biology Building; and helping Connecticut residents choose a Medicare Part B plan.

Keynote speaker Robin Bogner, an associate professor of pharmacy and the school’s 2007 Teacher of the Year, urged the graduates to be teachers.

“T he best way for you to treat your patients is to teach them,” she said, “so they can become par-ticipants in their own health care.”

Don’t just provide information, go above and beyond, she added. Focus not just on patients and fami-lies, but on caregivers, technicians and support staff, and other phar-macists and health professionals.

“You will affect the lives of peo-ple you will never meet,” she said.

Pharmacy was one of three schools at Storrs that held separate ceremonies this year. The School of Fine Arts and the Neag School of Education staged their graduations in the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts May 6, with speakers Christopher Ken Dono-van, ’93, an Emmy-nominated director and technical director, and philanthropist Ray Neag, ’56, respectively.

The Pharm.D. students were the only ones this year to receive a genuine diploma on graduation day, rather than a diploma case.

“It’s kind of cool,” said graduat-ing student Richard Menking after six years to actually get what we went to school for.”

Undergraduate ceremonies

Today’s society has given this generation empathy in abundance, British novelist Fay Weldon told this year’s graduates.

“Empathy is simply the ability to understand what it’s like to be someone else,” she said, during her Commencement address to more than 3,200 undergraduates.

“Without empathy, social and political cooperation between nations and peoples is a tragic, tragic business: With it, it’s a matter of easy common sense: the victory of good will.”

Weldon was the speaker at twin ceremonies May 6 at Gampel Pavillion, where she was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. Also honored was Mark Shenkman ’85, president and chief investment officer of Shenkman Capital Management Inc., who received an honorary doctorate of Humane Letters.

Weldon, the mother of four grown sons and a brother to three, said students have “weathered the dangers of growing up, got to college, stayed there, and won a starvation victory.

“No one is going to say to you, at least today, you should have worked harder, spent less, gone to bed earlier, kept away from this boy, that girl, walked the dog more often, not treated this house as a hotel, or whatever – they are just going to say ‘well done.’

Weldon commended parents for their efforts, eliciting laughter and applause from the crowd. “On your children’s birthdays,” she said, “it’s the parents who should get the flowers and the gifts… the annual bonus for having survived another year bringing them up.

To the students, she said that “older generations have bequeathed you something of a mixed inheritance, global warm-ing, for example. But you come out of this splendid university, UConn: You are trained to think properly, feel sensitively, and you’ll cope.”

She said students will want to find jobs that suit them, “without quite knowing what this is… Any job is better than none, and you never know what suits you until you try.”

During the ceremonies, Provost Provost P.J. Nichols announced this year’s University Teaching Fellows.

John W. Rowe, chairman of UConn’s Board of Trustees, acknowledged President Philip E. Austin for his efforts during his 11-year tenure. Austin, who has resigned effective in September, received a standing ovation.

Graduate ceremony

During the graduate Com-mencement in Gampel Pavilion on May 5, Wolfgang Ketterle, John D. MacArthur Professor of Physics at MIT, delivered the address to more than 630 students receiving mas-ter’s degrees, and about 120 who received doctorates.

Ketterle, who was born in Ger-many, received the Nobel Prize in physics in 2001 at the age of 43 for work that expanded on the research of other physicists related to the condensation of atomic gas.

His talk was about the success he had with success early in his career, he did not always know what he wanted to do.

In his first permanent position came at the age of 39, when he joined the faculty at MIT. Soon after, he discovered a new form of ultracold matter, called the Bose-Einstein condensate, which led to his winning the Nobel Prize.

“I think it helped me to have entered my current field rather late,” Ketterle said. “When you switch fields… you try to under-stand and analyze the old ques-tions of your new field with a mind which has been trained differently.”

He drew an analogy with sailing.

“In my life, I have changed direc-tion several times, like in sailing when you leave one course and you have to change your course.

“You may reach a destination different from what you originally planned but it may turn out well,” he added.

Ketterle received an honorary Doctor of Science degree, as did John Krebs, ’84, president and CEO of GE Energy.

Also during the graduate ceremony, the recipients of the Provost’s Research Excellence Awards for 2006 and 2007 and this year’s Board of Trustees Distinguished Professors were recognized.