Two groups will receive Dodd Prize in human rights

BY RICHARD VILLEULX

The third biennial Thomas J. Dodd Prize in International Justice and Human Rights will be awarded jointly to the Center for Justice and Accountability and Mental Disability Rights International on Oct. 1. The 11 a.m. prize ceremony, on the plaza of the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, is the first of three human rights-related events that will open the month of October.

The second, which follows the ceremony, is an 11 a.m. program and book signing with U.S. Sen. Christopher Dodd, whose first book, Letters From Nuremberg: My Father’s Narrative of a Quest for Justice, will be released Sept. 11.

Then at 4 p.m. on Oct. 2, Harold Koh, dean of the Yale Law School and an internationally acclaimed leader in human rights, will deliver the 15th Raymond and Beverly Sackler Distinguished Lecture on Human Rights with a talk entitled, “Repairing our Human Rights Reputation.”

“Clustering these three wonderful events into a 24-hour period will allow the UConn community and guests a rare opportunity to immerse themselves in a variety of issues concerning human rights, which has become a very important part of UConn’s academic identity,” says Thomas Wilted, director of the Dodd Center.

The Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) is an international human rights organization dedicated to ending torture and other severe human rights abuses around the world, and advancing the rights of survivors to seek truth, justice and redress.

The San Francisco based non-governmental organization uses litigation to hold perpetrators individually accountable for human rights abuses, develop human rights law, and advance the rule of law in countries transitioning from periods of abuse.

Founded in 1998 with support from Amnesty International and the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, the CJA has won judgments against a Bosnian war criminal, a mayor of Beijing, two Salvadoran ministers of defense and a vice minister of defense, a Honduran chief of military intelligence, a Chilean death squad member, and a Haitian parliamentary leader.

Pamela Merchant, director of CJA, will accept the center.

Pharmacy school to lead new center

BY BETH KRAHIE

A federal center to be established at the University may help determine which treatments your doctor recommends and which prescription drugs your health plan covers.

The five-year center also has the potential to immerse UConn faculty, graduate students, honors students, and research fellows in up to one million dollars of federally-funded work each year.

The UConn center, to be led by the School of Pharmacy in collaboration with the School of Business and Hartford Hospital, is one of 14 Evidence-based Practice Centers nationwide. Other institutions that run such centers include Duke, Johns Hopkins, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, and Tufts University-New England Medical Center.

The centers are charged by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with conducting comprehensive, systematic reviews of research on health topics of vital importance to the U.S. healthcare system, and advising federal and state policymakers, professional organizations, and insurance companies on the highest quality, most effective, and most cost-effective healthcare treatments and delivery options.

The topics the new UConn center will review include common medications, exorbitant treatments, and those particularly significant for Medicare and Medicaid populations.

The UConn center is the first to be led by pharmacists, notes its director, C. Michael White, an associate professor of pharmacy practice and expert on cardiac medicine.

It will also forge the first partnership between UConn’s College of Pharmacy and the School of Medicine.

Austin Chair to honor President’s 11-year legacy

BY JOHN SPOKNAKER

When President Philip E. Austin steps down after 11 years of leading the University of Connecticut, his legacy will include a refurbished campus, a five-fold growth in endowment, an increased reputation for academic excellence, national athletic success, and many other points of pride.

In addition, as a result of the generosity of donors and the efforts of the UConn Foundation, Austin’s name will live on through a new $1.5-million endowed chair established in his honor.

Officially announced on April 14 at the 2007 Founders Society celebration, the Philip E. Austin Endowed Chair will fund a highly visible faculty position, once approved by the Board of Trustees. The drive to fully fund the chair is supported by some of the University’s most prominent donors and leaders, each of whom has worked closely with Austin during his historic tenure as the University’s president.

“Part of Phil’s legacy is, obviously, the physical transformation of UConn with the dramatic assistance of the state,” says John W. Rowe, M.D., chairman of the Board of Trustees and an incorporating donor of the Austin chair. “But beyond the bricks and mortar, he has led the University to a much greater level of academic strength and enhanced pride. You simply can’t put a price tag on that. This institution today is a reflection of his vision and determination.”

Ray Neag, ’56, whose transformational gift of $23 million in 1999 marked a turning point for private giving to support the University, says Austin’s personal style of leadership has made the difference.

“We have a professional relationship that has grown into a friendship,” Neag says. “It’s not often you can find a person with as many qualifications as he has, as a leader and a smart businessman, as well as someone who was adept at meeting the challenges that we faced. He’s moved us to a first-class position across the country.”

The chair will offer an opportunity to recruit a nationally recognized scholar and highlight the role that private giving plays in recruitment and retention of preeminent faculty.

“We’re at a crossroads today where we can grow the University even more, and we need
Speakers announced for Teale Lecture series

"Corporate Environmentalism: Doing Well by Doing Good!" is the title of the first lecture in the 2007-2008 Teale environmental lecture series. The lecture, by Geoff Heal, professor of finance and economics and Garrett Professor of Public Policy and Business, will be presented by performance artist/associate professor of communications Anne Theriault, anne.theriault@uconn.edu.

The Edwin Way Teale Lecture Series on Nature and the Environment, now beginning its 11th year, brings world-renowned scientists and scholars to the University to discuss the intersections of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and class, and sexuality on Oct. 11 and 12.

The conference, "Rethinking the Latino@ Intellectual Ecology" will take place in the Dodd Center and Rome Ballroom.

Guillermo Irizarry, director of the Institute of Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, says the program "locates UConn's intellectual community within the framework of a scholarly agenda that labors to understand the changing parameters of self and society, in the middle of a seismic demographic transformation. "LRSLs has gathered an impressive cohort of academics, artists, and activists," he adds, "and has designed a conference that will allow students, faculty, and community members to interact dynamically and offer new insights into the significance of the Latino@ demographic and cultural exploration for the state, nation, and the Americas."

Keynote speakers are: Tomás Almaguer, professor of ethnic studies at San Francisco State University, and author of Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California; Elsa Núñez, president of Eastern Connecticut State University, professor of linguistics, and author of Pursuing Diversity, and Elín Stavín, Lewis-Sebring Professor in Latin American and Latino Culture at Amherst College, and author of Dictionary Days and The Hispanic Condition. A theatrical performance will be presented by performance artist/writer Guillermo Gómez Peña.

Panel speakers are: Carlos Ulises Decena, an assistant professor who teaches in the departments of women and gender studies and Latino and Hispanic Caribbean studies at Rutgers; Josuanna Arroyo Martinez, who teaches in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Texas at Austin; Stephen Furt, a professor of history and American studies, and director of the Ethnicity, Race, and Migration Program at Yale; and Mari Castañeda Paredes, associate professor of communications at UMass-Amherst. Register at http://www.conferences.uconn.edu/latinocology/reg.htm.

For more information, contact Anne Theriault, anne.theriault@uconn.edu, 860-486-8997, or Wendy Wilbert, wendy.wilbert@uconn.edu, 860-486-0229.

Latino studies conference set for Oct. 11-12

The Puerto Rican and Latino Studies Institute at UConn will host an interdisciplinary conference to discuss the intersections of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, and class, and sexuality on Oct. 11 and 12.

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Jerry Hadley, tenor, dies

Operatic tenor Jerry Hadley, a former adjunct professor at UConn, died July 18. He was 55.

Hadley, who taught at UConn from 1979 to 1979, became an international opera star. He sang with many of the world’s leading opera companies, including the New York City Opera, where he made his professional debut in 1979, the Metropolitan Opera, the Vienna State Opera, the Royal Opera at Covent Garden in London, and the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Constance Rock, assistant professor of music, says Hadley was an "incredibly gifted and versatile singing actor. He was one of America’s finest contributions to the operatic world. We were fortunate to have him teach at UConn."

Recalling a performance by Hadley at UConn in 1999, Rock adds, “His ability to communicate with his audience through the music was perhaps his greatest gift, and it was a joy to see the effect his performance had on our students.”

Hadley received international recognition for his interpretation of the great Mozart operatic tenor roles and those of the French romantic and Bel canto styles. He also became known for his expertise with 20th-century and American operas. He was comfortable in the realms of Broadway musical theater, operetta, and popular song. He collaborated with Leonard Bernstein on many projects, and was a Grammy-award winner.

Frank Rich, former UConn trustee, dies

Frank D. Rich, business leader, philanthropist, and former member of the University of Connecticut’s Board of Trustees, died Aug. 7. He was 83.

Rich, of Darien, was chairman of the F.D. Rich Co. real estate development firm and chairman of the Stamford Center for the Arts. Rich led the transformation of downtown Stamford from a deteriorating district to an office and commercial center.

A member of the University’s Board of Trustees from 1974 to 1993, he played a key role in the long effort that culminated in the opening of the downtown Stamford campus. He also contributed to the campus.

The University awarded him a University Medal in 1994, and an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 1999.

“He was an extremely effective trustee,” says Peter McDadden, professor emeritus of engineering and a longtime UConn administrator. “He served long and well as chairman of the finance committee. His requirements for studies and his thoughtful questioning were legendary. It was a pleasure to work with him.”

Rich served as a first lieutenant in the Marines in World War II and graduated from Princeton University with a bachelor’s degree in engineering. He was the driving force behind the creation of the Stamford Center for the Arts and its Rich Forum theater, named for his family. His company has also been involved in other projects, including Landmark Square complex, the Stamford Town Center, and the Stamford Marriott Hotel.

Rich is survived by his wife, Jean Hopkins Rich, four daughters, two sons, and 13 grandchildren.
Mandatory water conservation announced

BY KAREN A. GRAVA

University officials have asked all campus and New England Water Utilities Services, have continued to closely monitor and assess daily consumption, well field production and storage, environmental conditions, and the precipitation forecast, and have determined it is now prudent to move to a Stage II drought watch, he says.

A drought watch advisory means conservation measures are mandatory. That means:
- Lawn watering for all University and non-University users is limited to four hours per day or less and to the hours of 5-9 a.m. and 7-9 p.m. Athletic fields are limited to two hours’ watering each day during the same hours.
- Filling public or private pools must be provided via pool truck.
- Washing motor vehicles is banned. The University's wash bay is closed until further notice.
- The use of ornamental or display fountains is banned.
- The use of water for washing and wetting down streets, sidewalks, driveways, or parking areas is banned, unless required by the local public health authority.
- The use of UConn water for dust control at construction sites is banned. Contractors are required to provide water for dust control from off site.
- The use of hydrant sprinkler caps is banned.
- Water main flushing will only be addressed to water quality issues.
- The University expects to take additional voluntary steps to curtail consumption in its dining facilities, central utilities, and irrigation systems.
- The Aug. 6 water conservation alert also remains in effect. Students, faculty, staff, and other members of the University community and other UConn water system users should:
  - Take shorter showers.
  - Run dishwashers and washing machines with full loads.
  - Avoid power washing buildings.
  - Raising thermostats in UConn buildings, particularly when leaving at night.

Callahan, “By reducing consumption during these dry weather conditions, you can help us reduce groundwater withdrawals and protect local streams and the aquatic life they support.”

Puppeteer, historian named director of Ballard puppet museum

BY SHERRY FISHER

John Bell, an internationally renowned puppeteer, professor, and historian of puppet theater, has been appointed director of UConn’s Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry (BIMP). He started his new job June 9.

BIMP, located on the Depot Campus, houses a collection of more than 3,000 puppets, created by leaders in the field in cluding Tony Sarg, Margo and Russell Rose, Bill Baird, and Jim Hen son. It also maintains a collection of books, letters, musical scores, designs, and scripts of important puppetry in the puppet arts. The institute and museum, until now, has been run by volunteers. It was designated the state’s official museum of puppetry in 2003.

Bell’s duties include preserving and building the institute’s collections, organizing exhibits, and conducting archival work on puppets. His position is part-time.

Bell earned a Ph.D. in theater history from Columbia University in 1993. While there, he did extensive research in the Brander Matthews Collection of puppets in the library. After earning his Ph.D., Bell worked for five years at the Ballard Institute in the United States. He initiated preservation projects for the collection and mounted an exhibition of parts of the collection in the library. After earning his doctorate, he became a founding member of the award-winning Great Small Works theater company. He was a consultant and curator for the exhibits Revealing Roots: Uncovering Influences in Contemporary American Puppet Theater and Puppets and Performing Objects in the Twentieth Century, both at Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts. These were part of the Jim Henson International Festivals of Puppet Theater.

Bell taught at Emerson College from 1989 to 2007. He has been involved with puppetry since the mid-1970s, when he became a member of the acclaimed Bread and Puppet Theater. In addition to producing and performing with Bread and Puppet, he also played an active role in the creation of the Bread and Puppet Museum in Glover, Vt. Bell has authored several books. His latest, American Puppet Modernism, is forthcoming from Palgrave/Macmillan publishers.

“John Bell is one of the best historians and researchers of puppetry in the United States. We’re delighted to have him,” said David Woods, dean of the School of Fine Arts.

“We have the largest collection of any museum in the nation and now one of the most important archival collections in puppet history,” Woods adds. “Because this is a research institution, we should be focusing on archival material, and we’ve started that. The appointment of John Bell as the first position line director of the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry takes us to another level of excellence in the puppet arts.”

Bell Roccoberton, director of UConn’s Puppet Arts Program, is excited to have Bell on board. “He is an internationally known puppeteer, researcher, and author,” says Roccoberton. “We have a well-known champion of puppet arts leading our museum.”

Bell says he’s excited about his new position.

“We’re the American center for puppetry education and training,” he says. “People in puppetry from all over the globe know about us. Our collection has not only Frank Ballard’s work, but also important puppet collections of the early 20th century from many notable figures in puppetry, he says.”

Bell plans to continue the work of Frank Ballard in preserving puppet collections in the collection and continue to improve preservation and cataloging. He hopes to augment the collection with other 20th-century materials and “let more people locally and internationally know that the Ballard Institute is an invaluable center for research and a resource for puppetry.”

Recreational Facilities members get free access at other schools

BY KAREN A. GRAVA

Faculty and staff who are paid members of the Student Recreational Facility are now able to use the fitness facilities at many other universities free of charge. The Division of Athletics’ Department of Recreational Services has signed on to a national program that will allow access to the facilities of potentially hundreds of other institutions.

The Health & Wellness Passport Program, sponsored by the National Intramural-Recreational Sports Association (NIRSA), is free to member institutions who choose to join the program.

Announced during the summer, more than 40 universities have already signed on, says Patti Bostic, executive director of recreational services. She expects there may be up to 300 universities available by the end of the semester.

“It’s a good service for us to offer and a great opportunity for all our members,” Bostic says. “Faculty and staff often travel to other campuses, and if they enjoy working out, they now have access to some excellent facilities.”

There are currently about 600 members of UConn’s recreation facility who are eligible for the benefit, Bostic says. Those who are traveling to another campus and are interested in using the facilities there must pick up a voucher at the recreation office. The voucher is good for 30 days. Membership of UConn’s facility is available to all faculty and staff for $100 per semester. It entitles individuals to use of the Guyer Gymnasium, which includes basketball, volleyball, and badminton courts, the Geer Field House, which includes basketball courts, an indoor track, and table tennis; racquetball courts, free weights, cardiovascular equipment, resistance training machines, the Brundage pool, a climbing center, and daily use of locker rooms.

The fee may be paid through payroll deduction.

The Ballard Institute has benefited so dearly from a strong community of volunteers and supporters in the Storrs area.”

He and Roccoberton have been discussing the possibility of starting a monthly puppet event that would feature lectures, films, and performances.

He says the Ballard Institute has applied for a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to improve storage and archival endeavors. “We’re looking into becoming a home for even more example pieces,” he says.

On Sept. 15 from 1 to 4 p.m., there will be a welcoming reception for Bell at the Ballard Institute, on Weaver Road at the Depot Campus.

At 1 p.m., Bell, his wife Trudi Cohen, and their son Isaac will perform two Great Small Works productions: The Short Entertaining History of Toy Theater and a toy theater spectacular about religious tolerance in medieval Spain, Three Books of the Garden. A reception will follow.

Visitors will also have a chance to enjoy the Shadows and Shadow puppets at the Ballard Institute, as well as the works featured in the new permanent collection gallery.

The Puppet Arts Complex on Bourn Place, also at the Depot Campus, will be open. Roccoberton invites the community to see marionettes being built for forthcoming productions.

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Professors in new education center tackle behavior problems in schools

BY SCOTT BRINKERHOFF

UConn’s George Sugai and his colleagues at the Neag School’s new Center for Behavioral Education and Research have embarked on a daunting mission: to help U.S. schools improve their teaching environments and adopt ways of positively addressing problem behaviors.

Against a backdrop of negative headlines about violence in schools, mediocre test scores, and escalating school budgets, Sugai’s approach to improving education is easily summarized, but perhaps not so easily implemented.

“Our Center focuses on establishing safe and positive school climates where problem behaviors are addressed in a constructive, rather than punitive manner,” Sugai says.

“To develop a sense of shared responsibility and maximize success, schools must include every-one, from bus drivers to principals, family members to paraprofessionals, security guards to substitute teachers,” he says. “Everyone needs to believe that all students can thrive and learn vital social skills in their school.”

Sugai came to UConn two years ago from the University of Oregon, where his special education programs are ranked among the top in the country. He has published extensively and is one of the nation’s top experts on classroom and behavior management, school discipline, and educating students who demonstrate “at-risk” behaviors.

He holds the Carole J. Neag Endowed Chair at the Neag School of Education, and has helped establish the new Center for Behavioral Education and Research which includes UConn researchers such as Sandra Chaofaleas, Michael Coyne, Mike Faggella-Luby, and Brandi Simonson.

Sugai also co-directs the National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Education to conduct research and disseminate “best practices” to schools around the country. The PBIS Center supports nearly 6,000 schools across more than 40 states.

When Sugai looks at U.S. schools, he sees places that can enhance the academic and social needs of all students and be a resource to communities-at-large. He believes schools often fall short because they emphasize a “get-tough” approach to discipline rather than teaching and encouraging student social skills associated with respect, responsibility, safety, and relationships.

Sugai stresses that giving school family, and community members the tools to create constructive teaching and learning environments is one of the best ways to improve the surroundings for all students. In addition, it can often prevent antisocial behavior.

Although metal detectors, security personnel, and surveillance cameras may be necessary in some places to ensure safety, they are no substitute for a school climate where academic and social instruction are paramount.

Many students come to school prepared to learn and ready to accept disciplinary rules and consequences for violating them. But some students do not conform, and need additional support rather than tougher, more severe consequences.

Sugai and his colleagues have seen what happens when schools fall into the trap of “getting tough.”

For example, in one academic year, a school of 800 students processed 5,000 office discipline referrals for major rule violations. In another district, more than 400 kindergarteners were expelled.

A teacher in one school sent students to the school principal more than 250 times for classroom disruptions, and at another, one student was sent to the office or in-school suspension room more than 49 times.

Of such cases he says, “The research is clear—if the primary or only way of responding to bad behavior is punishment, the problem is exacerbated, not resolved.”

Sugai says school climates can improve when students are involved in activities such as drafting a code of conduct, identifying positive school values, and developing lessons for teaching those values. Students who participate in such ways, he says, are more engaged, disrupt teaching less, and are generally better behaved—all of which results in improved academic achievement.

Unacceptable behavior can be found to some degree in all sorts of schools—urban poor, isolated rural, crowded suburban. But when classrooms, hallways, and lunchrooms are predictable and upbeat environments, students can be taught to adjust their behavior to local expectations. Sugai says he has seen schools with healthy climates where kids soften their demeanor and their language the minute they walk in the door. The PBIS approach involves frequent and sustained training in which the emphasis is on giving local staff the capacity to establish effective practices.

Sugai acknowledges that change is difficult. But in some states, schools have accepted the training protocol with enthusiasm. One year after training, schools in those states experienced a decline in “problem behaviors,” a better self-perception of safety, better quality attention given to youngsters who did exhibit behavior problems, and noticeable gains on statewide achievement tests.

Much of what Sugai has to say sounds like common sense and it is, says Richard Schwab, dean of the Neag School of Education. He applauds Sugai’s “holistic” and evidence-based approach to fixing the nation’s schools.

“George is doing a brilliant job, and he’s also helped attract some bright young talent,” Schwab says. “They’re doing excellent research in all sorts of areas, including early literacy, classroom management, early vocabulary development, and adolescent literacy.”

Course helps dentists bring latest technology into practice

BY CAROLYN PENNINGTON

By combining research, innovative technology, and business know-how, a dental professor at the UConn Health Center is pioneering an emerging dental specialty known as Biodontics.

Dr. Edward Rosomando, a professor of craniofacial sciences at the School of Dental Medicine, has developed a program that moves biotechnology more efficiently from scientists and inventors to dental practitioners.

Biodontics has become a specialized educational program that introduces the entrepreneurial process to dental students, faculty, and practitioners.

Students in the program get hands-on experience using the most advanced dental products, equipment, and therapies, thanks to dental equipment manufacturers and scientists who present their new tools to the class. They recently learned, for example, about vaccines for tooth decay, and received hands-on training with a new laser that cuts out cavities almost without pain.

The UConn program has attracted dental students from prestigious schools across the country including Howard, Marquette and New York Universities, and the University of Southern California. “I think the most important experience I got out of the course was the understanding that dentistry is much more than drill and fill,” says Todd Lyman from Marquette dental school, who recently completed the Biodontics course.

“I now look at the way we do things in dentistry or patient care in general, and I look for new and better ways to provide the best care possible.”

Rosomando says, “Most dentists realize it is in the best interest of their patients to introduce new products and technologies into their practice. But existing office routines and habits can present obstacles to change.”

His research has found that dentists often believe they can’t afford to stop treating patients in order to adopt new technologies or learn new procedures, not realizing that new products and technologies can allow them to treat larger numbers of patients more efficiently.

Rosomando hopes that teaching dental students the principles of entrepreneurship and how to be early adopters of new technology will create dental practitioners capable of effectively incorporating new procedures and therapies into their practices for the benefit of patients. The National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, a branch of the National Institutes of Health, has awarded Rosomando grant money to bring the concept to educational reality.
I walk and talk, " he says. everyday events manifest. " It's about having students look at the real world around them, " Richard Hiskes, professor of political science, recently received an Alumni Association undergraduate teaching award. Political scientist brings philosophical issues home to students

Richard Hiskes teaches his political theory course by having students participate in what is called "The Great Conversation." "The term was coined by Machiavelli, but it began with Plato and the classical Greeks," says Hiskes, a professor of political science. "It's about having students look at the real world around them, and through a process of discussion, find out what the consistent philosophical issues are that our everyday events manifest." What is Hiskes' teaching style? "I walk and talk," he says. It doesn't matter whether it's a class of 20 or 200; he tries to make eye contact with every student. "I want to make them feel like they're having a small conversation." He doesn't use PowerPoint or other technology, but his students don't seem to mind. For 27 years, his student evaluations have been at the highest levels of the department and college. So it's not surprising that he was given the UConn Alumni Association's 2007 Faculty Teaching Award for Undergraduate Teaching.

Hiskes specializes in modern and contemporary political thought, democratic theory, environmental ethics, and human rights theory. "We might be reading Plato, Marx, or Machiavelli, but I try to get students to see the theory-ladenness of their everyday lives," Hiskes says. "For instance, a major philosophical issue that Americans think about is the nature of consent. So I'll ask the students what counts as consent." It's a tacit consent situation," Hiskes says. "Conceptual issues of consent, democracy, justice, liberty, rights and responsibility, and political obligation are as alive today as in ancient Athens," he says. "Students are amazed when they realize that they've been grappling with major, timeless philosophical questions their whole lives. And they thought they were just arguing with their parents." Hiskes says he tells students: "I promise you this class will make you realize you're in college. You may not like it that much. You may think it's boring reading. But it doesn't mean it's not worthwhile." He enjoys teaching freshmen. "I find it helpful. You can't lose the ability to talk about sophisticated, highbrow research simply, in ways that ordinary people can understand it, without losing your ability as a researcher," he says. "I always talk about my research in my classes. In some courses, I have students read articles I've written, to see what they think." Hiskes says he has concerns about higher education: "Some universities are in danger of losing the intellectual side of what they do. A university is a place where there is a huge amount of human knowledge in every area.

Health Center research team finds path to vision loss

Richard Hiskes, professor of political science, recently received an Alumni Association undergraduate teaching award. Universities are the depositories and distributors of the intellectual legacy of the species. UConn has done better than most." When students ask which courses they should take, Hiskes tells them: "These four years are probably the only time in your life to develop interests that will carry you for the rest of your life. You need to stretch while you're here, and find interests that will sustain you. Take a course in Shakespeare or movie-making, or something you wouldn't normally take. "We have to be the place where our students come to be intellectually stimulated," he says. Hiskes' current research focuses on environmental human rights and justice across generations. He is working on a new book on environmental human rights.
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CALENDR
Monday, September 10 to Monday, September 17

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 submitted by 4 p.m. on Monday for inclusion in the issue published on Wednesday.

Note: The next Calendar will include events taking place from Monday, Sept. 10 through Monday, Sept. 17. Those items must be in the database by 4 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 10. Please note: Key Advance applications to participate in events, call 860-486-4357, ext. 4399 (Engelhard), or 860-865-3163 (Farmington), or 860-877-3520 (School).

Academics
Monday, 9/10 – Courses after this date will have a “W” for withdrawal. Add/Drop via the Student Administration System closes. Last day to add courses or drop courses without additional signatures. Last day to place courses on Pass/Fail. Tuesday, 9/11 – Late Add/Drop begins in the Office of the Registrar; Wilbur Cross Building. Monday, 9/17 – Last day for students to make up Incomplete or Absence grades.

Libraries
Homer Babbidge Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-9 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-10 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Dodd Center. Reading Room hours: Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; closed weekends.

Health Center Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-9 p.m.; Friday, 7 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, noon-6 p.m.

Law Library. Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-11 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; Sunday, 1-4 p.m.

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

Stamford Campus Library.

Waterbury Campus Library.

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

Meetings
UConn Faculty/Staff Group. 5 p.m., Room 109, Westwyck Center.

University IT Services. Monday, 9/10 – 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Human rights prize continued from page 1

Mindfulness Meditation (MDRI) is the world’s leading human rights education organization dedicated to the protection of people with mental disabilities. MDRI works to promote the human rights and full participation in society of children and adults with mental disabilities worldwide. Founded in 1993, MDRI has worked in 24 countries throughout Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East.

Eric Rosenthal, executive director of MDRI, and associate director Laurie Averbach will accept the award.

UConn has also been a leader in developing new human rights curricula. In 2005, the university was granted a $230,000 grant from the Open Society Institute to establish the University of Connecticut Human Rights Program. The grant was renewed in 2007 for an additional $230,000.

Through Friday, 9/10 – Dodd Center. The Jump Cow Over the Moon, illustrations by Sally Navoy. Research Center Gallery.

Performing Arts
Thursday, 9/13 – Fable Concert. Nan Keane, 8 p.m., Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts. Admission $15 for UConn students, $20 for non-students.

Sports
Monday, 9/10 – Men’s Soccer vs. Hofstra. 7 p.m., Morrone Stadium.

Wednesday, 9/12 – Women’s Soccer vs. Hofstra. 7:30 p.m., Gampel Pavilion.

Friday, 9/14 – Volleyball vs. Hofstra. 7:00 p.m., Gampel Pavilion.

Saturday, 9/15 – Women’s Soccer vs. Brown. 7:30 p.m., Morrone Stadium.

Saturday, 9/15 – Volleyball vs. Northeastern. 7:00 p.m., Gampel Pavilion.

Sunday, 9/16 – Women’s Soccer vs. Fairfield. 2:30 p.m., Morrone Stadium.


Saturday, 9/15 – Festival on the Green Fireworks Display. 6:30 p.m., Main street, Storrs Center. Admission to the fireworks is free. Rain site: Mansfield High School. Saturday, 9/15 – Long River Reading. Bring a poem, short prose piece, or music to share at the open mic. Enjoy coffee, tea, snacks with other members of the UConn creative writing community. 7 p.m., room 317, CLAS Building.
Summer institute helps Connecticut educators teach writing

F or 12 years, teachers from around Connecticut have come to UConn to learn how to teach writing. They attend the Connecticut Writing Project's Summer Institute, four weeks of graduate-level study of composition and creative writing. When they leave, they can act as teacher-consultants, training other teachers as well as their own students in the art and skills of writing.

The Connecticut Writing Project at UConn, part of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, was one of the nation's first writing projects, says Jason Courtmanche, its new director.

There are now some 160 around the country, including three in Connecticut—at UConn, Fairfield University, and Central Connecticut State University.

The Connecticut Writing Project at UConn receives federal support along with funding from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the English Department, and the Aetna Chair of Writing. Courtmanche, who earned his bachelor's degree in English at UConn in 1991 and completed his Ph.D. here last winter, brings first-hand experience to his new job.

For 12 years, he taught English at RHAM High School in Hebron. He has also previously been co-director of the Connecticut Writing Project and an adjunct professor here. For his master's degree at Humboldt State University in California, he studied composition. Now, as director of the Connecticut Writing Project, he teaches a course that he once took as a student: "Advanced Composition for Prospective Teachers."

Most of the participants in the Connecticut Writing Project's summer institute are high school teachers, although the program is open to practicing teachers at any level K-12. They study composition theory and creative writing, and they each develop a research-based workshop on writing that they can present to other teachers. They also develop a portfolio of their own writing.

The ripple effect of the institute makes it a powerful tool to improve student writing, says Lynn Bloom, Aetna Chair of Writing and Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of English.

"These teachers go back to their home schools and other schools to give workshops to their peers on the basis of what they have learned in the summer," she says. Since 1988, when the Aetna Chair—the first endowed chair at UConn—began supporting the summer institute, about 400 teachers have attended, but as many as 250,000 in Connecticut and surrounding states have benefited from the ripple effect, "to say nothing of their students," Bloom says.

One premise of the project is to empower teachers to write creatively themselves. Some teachers don't think of themselves as writers, Courtmanche notes.

"The idea is, they've got to be writers and learn their craft in order to teach others," he says.

With $25,000 or more annual support from the Aetna Chair, the Connecticut Writing Project sponsors a student and teacher writing conference, and it publishes a magazine of student writing each year.

This year's summer institute attracted teachers from schools that included Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven, Weaver High School in Hartford, Glastonbury High School, and elementary and middle schools in Mansfield, Pawcatuck, and New London.

This year's co-facilitator of the institute, along with Courtmanche, was Kelly Andrews-Babcock, a kindergarten teacher at Killingly Memorial School.

Among the workshops that this year's participants will take back to their home schools are a poetry slam, using drama and acting in the classroom, and how to combine music and student writing.

Austin Chair continued from page 1

private support to do that," says Denis McCarthy, ’64, ’65, chairman of the UConn Foundation's Board of Directors during much of Austin's tenure. He says the challenge of funding the chair with private funds illustrates the pivotal role that philanthropy plays in maintaining and enhancing UConn's reputation for excellence.

McCarthy recalls a "profound speech" that Austin gave. "He said, 'We are professionals—only passing through the University, but its ultimate direction is determined by alumni and the community.' He was absolutely right about that."

"It is critical that we maintain the level of quality education we're now so good at," McCarthy says.

"Phil has put us on the map, but it's up to us to take it to the next level."

Approximately $1.4 million has been raised to support the Philip E. Austin Endowed Chair. The founding donors of the Austin chair include: David ’65 and Trisha Barton Peter S. Drosth ’64


To support the Austin Chair fund, contact John Martin, president of the UConn Foundation, at 860-486-2709.

Federal center continued from page 1

between UConn's schools of Pharmacy and Business, he says.

"Pharmacists are healthcare medication experts and the profession possesses unique insights into patient care that often are underrepresented among leaders formulating the nation's health-care policies," White says. "Having pharmacists, physicians, and healthcare policy experts all working together will benefit everyone. You need to have practictioners from all healthcare disciplines involved in deciding which questions you ask to provide the best, most useful answers.

"Dr. Jeffrey Kluger of Hartford Hospital will be the center's associate director and Craig Coleman, an assistant professor of pharmacy practice, will be the center's project manager.

John Vernon, an assistant professor of finance, who recently completed an appointment as senior economic policy advisor to the Office of the Commissioner at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, will be the new center's health policy chief.

White, Kluger, and Coleman have been working together for almost a decade. Their collaboration has resulted in close to 200 peer-reviewed publications, including lead articles in the Journal of the American Medical Association and The Lancet Infectious Diseases.

In recent years, the research team has used a review technique known as meta-analysis to study statins, the most commonly prescribed class of medications in the United States, and the popular herbal supplement Echinacea.

Those studies, which are representative of the type of work the researchers will conduct under the new center, made international headlines largely because they pooled the totality of existing research to shed light on controversial medical topics in ways individual studies had failed to do.

"There can be so much conflicting research out there," says Coleman, an expert in a field known as pharmacoeconomics and outcomes research. "Often, practicing physicians and pharmacists aren't aware of all of the available research, or the latest study is the one they remember best. The key is that we'll be looking at all of the evidence as a whole.

Vernon will bolster Coleman's economics expertise and help the center translate its clinical findings into policy recommendations.

"For instance, say you find out that Drug A is better than Drug B, but Drug A is more expensive. The two drugs are not medically different in terms of clinical results, where do you go from there?" Coleman says. "We'll be weighing all the repercussions to make the best recommendations possible."

Vernon calls the partnership between the two schools "a very natural alliance, adding that "there are an abundance of important policy-related research questions that can be answered far more effectively from a cross-disciplinary perspective."

UConn members of the new center's leadership team anticipate that the chance to help shape federal healthcare policy will help them better communicate to other faculty members about what they are learning in the classroom.

The center will also draw on the strengths of other teaching and research members in Storrs and at the UConn Health Center, by inviting them to serve as content experts on specific projects.