Remote sensing expert receives national award for teaching

**By Richard Velleux**

Daniel Civco, a professor in the Department of Natural Resources Management and Engineering, has received a National Award for Excellence in College and University Teaching in the Food and Agricultural Sciences. It is the highest honor an educator in the field of agriculture and natural resources can receive.

Civco, an expert on geomatics who specializes in remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS), was presented with the award on Nov. 11, during a meeting of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC) in New York City. The award is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.

“Dr. Civco is a world class instructor. He brings the results of his and others’ research into his teaching, and provides students with a sound fundamental understanding of his discipline that is complemented by state-of-the-art technology,” says Cameron Faustman, associate dean in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. “It’s a wonderful honor that results from a very competitive process. Dr. Civco’s recognition reflects well on his department and our college and university. We couldn’t be more proud.”

John Clausen, a professor of natural resources management and engineering and one of those who nominated Civco for the award, says, “Dan is a productive researcher who has kept teaching as his number one priority. He loves to teach, and continually works at becoming a better teacher.”

Says Civco, “I believe that my role is not only as a teacher, but also as a facilitator, encouraging students to question, examine, explore, and hopefully develop the level of enthusiasm – and love – that I have for what I teach.

“The accomplishments of an educator are a reflection of his or her students,” he adds. “I consider this award a recognition of them as much as of me.”

Civco, who earned his bachelor’s, master’s,
Charitable campaign reaches midway point

BY LAUREN SHEA

With the 2007 State Employees' Campaign for Charitable Giving past its mid-point, contributions at the Storrs campus are more than half way to this year's goal of $135,000.

President Michael J. Hogan enthusiastically endorses the Campaign. He shared his perspective on giving in a University-wide e-mail last month.

"A common question is: Why contribute through the University of Connecticut?" he wrote. "There are a couple of good reasons: First, the University receives significant support from the citizens of this state. It's meaningful for Connecticut taxpayers to see that we recognize the support the University receives and willingly give back to our communities.

"Second, the costs of fundraising are substantial – particularly for small agencies," he said. "Umbrella campaigns, such as the State Employees' Campaign, absorb some of these costs for the individual agencies, allowing them to devote more funds to the urgent needs they address in our communities.

"If you have already completed your pledge card and submitted it, thank you! If not, I encourage you to pledge to the charity of your choice," Hogan added.

Every employee has received a pledge card. A card can also be downloaded from the President’s website: http://president.uconn.edu/Pledge%202007-1.pdf. If using a pledge card from the web site, when completing it be sure to note affiliation with a University of Connecticut campus under the “State Agency Name” section.

Completed pledge cards should be sent to your campus representative or, if you are uncertain who your campus representative is, send the completed card to the President’s Office, Guelley Hall, U-2048. Additional information, including directories of charitable organizations, can be found at http://www.csec.ct.gov/

The UConn Health Center, the top state agency for giving through the Campaign for the past two years, launched its 2007 campaign with a “Kick-off in the Courtyard” Oct. 3, featuring representatives from charitable organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, the American Cancer Society, Food Share, and the Greater Hartford Arts Council. The Health Center also held a bake sale, and firefighters held a “fill-the-boot” drive.

Health Center campaign chair Mary Ellen Bonelli reports that contributions pledged are more than half-way to the Health Center's 2007 goal of $170,000.

At the School of Social Work, $4,340 has been pledged to date, while at the Waterbury campus, $6,015 has been pledged and the total to date at the Greater Hartford Campus is $1,694. At UConn's campus in Torrington, amounts pledged have been similar to those of earlier years. At Avery Point, campus chair Joyce Wood says contributions have not yet been tallied, but a chili cook-off fundraiser is planned to benefit the Campaign’s charities.

At the School of Law, campaign chair Laurie Welting says the Campaign closed at the end of October, with $12,483 having been raised. She said the School of Law raised $8,920 in 2006, making this year’s total a 40 percent increase.

In Storrs, Steve Rhodes, special assistant to the president, recently joined the Husky mascot at Chuck & Augie’s in the Student Union for the first weekly drawing for donat- ed gifts for Storrs-based employees who complete pledges. Employees become eligible to win one of these gifts as soon as their pledge cards are submitted. Drawings will be held at Husky Hall, Storrs, by the end of October, with $12,483 having been raised. She said the School of Law raised $8,920 in 2006, making this year’s total a 40 percent increase.

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Diplomat discusses emergence of India on world economic stage

MICHAEL KIRK

Amid news of martial law in Pakistan, war in Afghanistan, a crackdown on pro-freedom dissidents in Myanmar, and nuclear saber-rattling in Iran, India is beginning to look like an "oasis of democracy" in a troubled region, according to Neelam Deo, India’s consul general in New York City, who spoke at UConn on Nov. 2.

The lecture, “India’s Emergence as a Major Political/Economic Power,” was hosted by the India Studies Program and sponsored by the Center for International Business, Education, and Research.

Deo also visited the business school’s Health Center’s New England Musculoskeletal Institute during a recent Discovery Series event. But they said, there are both non-surgical and surgical treatments for painful conditions, which increases bone loss. That, in turn, can lead to more curve in the spine, which can increase abdominal compression and result in a loss of appetite. Patients often try to counteract the stooped spine by bending their knees. That unfortunately can result in changes in balance and increased risk of falling.

All the physicians emphasized the importance of a healthy lifestyle for a healthy back, especially not smoking, maintaining an ideal weight and doing appropriate exercise.

Early College Experience program accredited

RICHARD VILLLEUX

UConn’s Early College Experience (ECE) program, the oldest high school-to-college transition program in the nation, has become the first ECE program in the Northeast to earn accreditation from the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Programs (NACEP).

It is one of just a handful of accredited programs in the nation.

“This is a very positive, important step in our continued growth, and really puts us in the vanguard of the national movement toward concurrent education programs,” says Gillian Thorne, director of UConn’s program.

The program brings UConn courses to high school juniors and seniors across the state.

High school teachers who apply to teach one of the courses are certified by a departmental coordinator at UConn, given training on the UConn curriculum, and attend an orientation program in Storrs.

To maintain certification they must attend conferences and annual professional development seminars, and work with their UConn coordinator to ensure continued course compatibility. Once certified, they are considered adjunct professors.

Certified high school teachers and students who enroll in ECE also have access to a range of UConn resources, including library databases, WebCT Vista, and e-portfolios. The students register and participate in add-drop just as UConn students do.

“These are UConn courses, top to bottom,” says Thorne. “Students who successfully complete a course earn UConn credit. This year, there are 128 high schools in Connecticut participating in the program, and nearly 5,300 students.

Forty-five courses are being offered.

Leaders in the concurrent enrollment community consider the program to be far more effective than the more popular Advanced Placement program, because concurrent enrollment classes mirror those actually taught in the college offering them.

AP credits are based on testing and classes that some say are not college level, and are often taught by high school teachers whose specialty is in another subject. UConn’s ECE courses must be taught by somebody whose specialty is in the field they teach.

ECE courses also are reflected on the student’s college transcript. AP courses are not.

UConn’s program started in 1955 as the High School Co-op program. It became the Early College Experience in the late 1990s.
Economics professor reports on workers’ compensation in China

BY CINDY WEISS

An emeritus faculty member in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences who is an expert on workers’ compensation systems has reviewed The People’s Republic of China’s new workers’ compensation program and reported to the government there on how it is working.

Peter Barth, professor emeritus of economics, has analyzed China’s workers’ compensation program and submitted a report to the Chinese government.

Barth found what he described as “two countries” – a countryside where 60 percent of the population lives and people have no workers’ compensation or work accident insurance, and urban areas where coverage is more common but where many are excluded, especially part-time migrant workers from rural areas. He found that more than 120 million people in China now have protection under workers’ compensation, up from 85 million at the end of 2008, after the program’s first year. But as many as 700 million people are still left without it.

The central government is concerned about high rates of industrial injuries and fatalities, Barth says. Government compensation and private insurance programs are managed locally, however, where the highest priority often is on production, employment, and profitability goals.

The problem is akin to current product safety problems, he notes – what the central government seeks may be undermined by pressures to produce goods in a booming economy.

“The central government may have a harder time implementing its goals at the local level than our federal government does,” he says. This surprised him. “It’s a single party system, and you’d think that a strong central government could get whatever they want done at the local level,” Barth says.

In some cases, companies may not report injuries, and workers may not be aware they are entitled to the new coverage. Migrants from rural areas often take the most hazardous jobs. If they are injured or killed, their relatives may not know where they worked, that they were injured, or that compensation is due, Barth says.

Companies skirting the law may disappear and reorganize under a new name.

The whole notion of employment is different in China, Barth says. Many in the countryside work the land or work for small family enterprises. The government’s insurance provider won’t always accept certain employers, despite the new laws, and there is no insurer of last resort.

When companies evade the law or are left out, he says, it “messes up your insurance system – you don’t know where the potential risks are.”

In China’s legal system, contingency fees for attorneys were introduced recently and can be difficult for attorneys to collect, making redress for injuries harder to obtain through the courts. Barth’s report includes data, descriptions and analysis of the current program and best practices; and suggestions for consideration, rather than recommendations.

“As a foreigner, it would seem arrogant or immodest to make recommendations based on a one- and-a-half-year study,” he says.

Working with academic colleagues in five other countries and at the People’s University of Beijing, Barth collected detailed information on workers’ compensation programs function in the U.S., Australia, Argentina, Japan, Germany, and the People’s Republic of China.

He supplemented this with information he acquired on his visits to Beijing and to Chongqing, a city with more than 31 million people, and Lanzhou Province in the northeast. He worked with translators, since he knows only a couple of words of Mandarin and many government officials do not speak English.

Barth cautions that China’s problems with workers’ comp are no different, although larger in scope, than some of the problems still associated with the older U.S. system, which is controlled largely by state governments.

Compensation programs vary widely in the U.S. and problems of evading coverage still can be found here, though on a lesser scale.

China will achieve fuller coverage, he predicts, “in a decade or more, he predicts.

Barth, who retired in 2002, has written several books on workers’ compensation.

Barth, a former Brookings Institution Fellow, served as executive director of the President’s commissi on on how the nation’s workers’ compensation laws in the early 1970s, and director of the Office of Research for the U.S. Depart ment of Labor. In 1973, he came to UConn as head of the economics department.

Barth will return to China in December, to give seminars for government officials in two cities about his report and next steps.

Dietitian offers weight management course for cancer survivors

BY CHRIS DEFRANCESCO

Outpatient oncology dietitian Rachel Rodek at the UConn Health Center speaks with cancer survivors about weight management.

Many people, when they find out they have cancer, promise themselves they’ll be healthier, but it takes to beat it. Once the last round of therapy is over, the time is right to make good on that promise by committing to a healthier lifestyle, says Rachel Rodek, an outpatient oncology dietitian at the Health Center’s Carole and Ray Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center.

“Nutrition and weight loss are very important for survivors,” Rodek says. “To help prevent a recurrence, or development of other cancers, weight loss has been shown to be a key factor. This is especially true during hormone-based therapies, such as prostate and breast. With these, the patients receive therapies that typically result in weight gain, and these extra pounds cause increases in circulating hormones, which increase the risk of recurrence. So getting that weight off is really important.”

This fall, Rodek introduced a five-week “Weight Management for Survivors” course, and her first class of five students “graduated” Oct. 31.

“We’re eating healthy, and it’s preventing disease,” says one of the participants. “Rachel gave us a way to find optimal health for ourselves. I wish I knew this as a young person.”

Rodek says she designed the course with cancer survivors who’ve completed therapy in mind.

“We really don’t want patients to start losing weight while they’re still receiving either radiation or chemotherapy,” she says. “A significant drop in weight can change the toxicity of chemotherapy or, if the patient is undergoing radiation, it can change their position on the table, altering the exact location of the beam. But more importantly, weight loss during therapy can prolong recovery time and wound healing, and decrease tolerance of the side effects of therapy.”

Still, says Rodek, the lessons are useful to anyone who would benefit from losing weight. “Just general healthy eating can help decrease the risk of developing several illnesses, such as diabetes and heart disease,” she says. “So patients who follow a healthy diet are helping themselves not only in terms of keeping the cancer at bay, but also by helping prevent other health issues that are linked to a heavier weight.”

Among the topics the course covers: changing nutrients to make a diet healthier; portion sizes and nutrition labels; improving eating and lifestyle habits; making healthy choices at restaurants; and maintaining weight loss.

Pamela Goulet, a clinical coordinator at the Neag Cancer Center who works with cancer survivors, says she lost 11 pounds in the first three weeks of the class.

“It’s unbelievable all the things I didn’t know for years, like how to shop, how your plate should look, just the little tips she’s given us: types of menus, how to be more creative with vegetables and organic things, and how to substitute more natural grains for starchy foods so you’re actually getting the best nutrition,” Goulet says.

“It’s a natural way to help yourself.”

She plans to offer another session early next year. Details will be available at 860-679-7692.

Photo by Frank Dahlmeyer

Peter Barth, professor emeritus of economics, has analyzed China’s workers’ compensation program and submitted a report to the Chinese government.

Photo by Chris DeFrancoese

Dietitian offers weight management course for cancer survivors...
Courses improves TAs teaching skills, offers additional qualification

BY ELIZABETH OBARA-OTUOHU

When a small but growing group of UConn teaching assistants graduate, they will have creadentialed leaders in their field or academic specialties, but also in education. Those students have taken one or more courses with Keith Barker, director of the Office of Teaching and Learning, who offers three education courses for TAs through the Neag School's Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

The cluster of courses includes a one-credit introductory course, a two-credit seminar, and a three-credit independent study. More than 180 graduate students have taken the one-credit course, now in its ninth year. The seminar accommodates eight to six students at a time, and the independent study is offered on demand.

In many of UConn's EDCI programs, students are required to earn six credits outside the discipline, says Barker, a professor of computer science and engineering. "They can get them here.

"These courses give TAs' certifica- tion," he adds. "Not only have they had practical experience in teaching, they have taken courses education and had experiences that made them better teachers."

The heart of Barker's approach is the seminar class, which meets every two weeks for two hours during the fall semester. Co-taught with David Moss and John Settlage, associate professors of curriculum and instruction, each session focuses on an area that one of the TAs identifies as a challenge in his or her teaching.

"This seminar encourages students to identify difficulties in their teaching work. They are asked to read, discuss, and think about their teaching and then respond to each other in writing," Barker says. "During the discussion, the group is able to identify with the issues, and offer suggestions to solve or improve the situation."

Although the TAs come from different subject areas, many of the problems they face are the same.

"When TAs raise issues in class, it turns out everyone has the same problems," Barker says.

Lily Alpert, a Ph.D. student in family studies who took the seminar last year, said she was concerned about maintaining author- ity in the classroom, and that she was so close in age to the under- graduates. Barker suggested tips, such as moving around more in the classroom, that helped change her relationship with the students. "It was very helpful for the second half of the course," Alpert says. "Some of what we discussed in the seminar were things I knew before, but I needed confirmation to feel more at ease."

Another TA said she had a "problem student" in her class. After discussing the situation in the seminar, she talked with the student about his learning style. "Before that, I felt the student was there to give me a hard time," says Denise Lee, a doctoral student in biochemistry. "After talking with him, I opened my eyes to his specific needs. I realized that if a student takes longer to digest the information, it doesn't necessarily mean they don't prepare." A third TA, James Hilliard, a Ph.D. student in finance, shared his frustration with the volume of grading for a series of writing assignments. Guest presenter Tom Deans, director of the Writing Center, suggested ways to keep the task manageable, as well as focusing on a limited number of grammatic- cal errors in a paper, rather than trying to catch them all.

After discussing the problem and proposing solutions, the seminar instructors and other TAs sometimes visit the class where a TA has been experiencing a prob- lem, to see how the solution works.

Jason Gibson, a doctoral student in molecular and cell biology taking the seminar this semester, says he has learned more about establishing a presence in the classroom and setting clear expectations.

Souris Das, a Ph.D. student in statistics, says he learned how to teach abstract mathematical concepts using graphics and Pow- erPoint.

"Having taken the EDCI series will help someone move to a higher position or help them decide to pursue a different career entirely," Klein says. "We had to identify a local leadership project that we would be interested in bringing to fruition," Klein says. "We were asked to think about the project before coming to the institute so that it could be en- hanced through team discussion."

"That forced me to step back from an incredibly busy sched- ule to think about the future and identify something I would really like to accomplish in this job," Klein says. "I decided to focus on developing a stronger undergradu- ate business community, with increased involvement of student leaders and alumni. I have already started implementation." The conference also helped women understand and articulate their accomplishments and iden- tify a career map. "That was valuable for those who want to move into higher adminis- tration positions," Klein says. She says she recommends tak- ing part in leadership activities because "they help you hone your skill set, offer the opportunity to share ideas with other people, provide a wonderful peer support group, and give you a sense of con- fidence about what you're doing."

Academic administrators find leadership training helpful

BY SHERIE FISHER

Two UConn administrators spent almost a month this summer attending classes, workshops, and seminars to learn more about higher education—and themselves. Andrea Hubbard, associate dean in the School of Pharmacy, and Lin Klein, associate dean in the School of Business, participated in the HER'S Bryn Mawr Summer Institute in Higher Education in July. Held on the Bryn Mawr College campus in Pennsylvania, the residential pro- gram offers female administrators and faculty intensive training in education administration. Seventy women from 30 states, Guam, and South Africa were se- lected for the Institute. They came from four-year liberal arts colleges, major research universities, and community colleges. Participants were in class for at least six hours a day, including several hours on weekends.

"We got to interact with suc- cessful administrators who talked about what contributed to their success," Hubbard says, noting that living on the campus for nearly four weeks was an advantage. "We were immersed in the experience and got to interact with many dif- ferent people."

Hubbard says the institute originally started "when women's original role in community colleges. Participants were in class for at least six hours a day, including several hours on weekends.

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GRANTS

The following grants were received through the UConn Health Center's Office of Grants and Contracts in August 2007. The list represents new awards as well as continuations. The list of grants is supplied to the Advance by the Office of Grants and Contracts.

Federal Grants

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Award Period</th>
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<td>Surgery</td>
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<td>National Heart, Lung &amp; Blood Institute</td>
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<td>Brain Changes and Risk Factors Causing Impaired Mobility</td>
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<td>NSF, Behavioral &amp; Natural Sciences</td>
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Private Grants

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<td>Rubin, J.</td>
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<td>A Molecular Survey for Chromosome 21q31 Deletions in Psychiatric Patients</td>
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<td>City of Holyoke War Memorial Multipurpose Senior Center</td>
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Genetics & Developmental Biology | Rivera, G. | American Heart | $66,000 | 7/07-10/08 |
| Cancer Association | | | |
| Oral Rehabilitation, Biomaterials, & Skeletal Development | Oral Rehabilitation, Biomaterials, & Skeletal Development | $1,000 | 7/07-10/08 |
| Correlations of Facial Soft Tissue Anatomical Landmarks with Facial & Dental | Oral Rehabilitation, Biomaterials, & Skeletal Development | $2,000 | 7/07-10/08 |
| Surgery | Gronowicz, G. | Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation | $34,765 | 8/07-10/08 |
| Project for Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation | Pharmacology | Smilowitz, H. | Institution Regina Mater | $3,948 | 9/07-10/08 |
| Combination of Radiation Therapy and Immunotherapy for Advanced Fjgh Gliomas | Psychiatry | Connor, D. | Northeastern University | $65,000 | 2/07-10/08 |
| Risperidone and the Behavioral Pharmacology of Escalated Aggression | Center on Aging | Fumigini, B. | Alzheimer’s Association | $80,659 | 10/07-10/08 |
| Quality Assurance Plan for the Emily J. Settlement Agreement | Community Medicine & Health | Bailey, H. | Hospital for Special Care | $41,082 | 8/07-10/08 |
| State Grants Quality Assurance Plan for the Emily J. Settlement Agreement | Psychiatry | Hawke, J. | Dept. of Children & Families | $49,997 | 4/06-10/08 |
| | Psychiatry | Bauer, L. | Dept. of Public Health | $538,607 | 7/07-10/08 |
| Effects of Tobacco on Brain Structure & Function are Alleviated by Genotype | Molecular Medicine | Tiranov, J. | Dept. of Public Health | $399,045 | 7/07-10/08 |
| | Molecular Medicine | Smilowitz, H. | | |
| Micropipette Positioning in Intestinal Cancer | Community Medicine & Health | Ungemack, J. | CT State Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment Evaluation Project | $164,000 | 8/07-10/08 |
| | Medicine | Treatman, R. | Dept. of Mental Health & Addiction Services | $10,000 | 1/07-10/08 |
| | Medicine | Croteau, M. | Dept. of Public Health | $8,000 | 8/06-08/08 |

Brent Learned discusses his artwork during the opening of his exhibit in the Student Union Art Gallery in celebration of Native American Heritage Month.
Tuesday, November 13 to Monday, November 26

**Libraries**

**Homer Babbidge Library.** Hours: Monday-Thurs., 8 a.m.-2 a.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-11 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-12:15; Sunday, 12-10 p.m. - 360-486-2657.

**Hollfelder Library.** Hours: Monday-Thurs., 8 a.m.-2 a.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-11 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-12:15; Sunday, 12-10 p.m. - 360-486-2657.

**Waterbury Campus Library:** Monday, 8:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m.; Tuesday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.; closed Sunday. - 360-486-2412.

**Information Technology Engineering Building:** Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; closed Sunday and holidays. - 360-486-6750.

**Music Library.** Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; closed Saturday and holidays. - 360-486-6750.

**University IT Services.** Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. - 360-486-7760.

**Help Desk Hours:** Call 860-486-4357, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Meetings, Conferences, and Continuing Education.** See comment about the implications of an uneducated society, and the **impact it will have on your profession as a social worker.**

**Tuesday, November 13—15**

- **Tuesday, November 13**—Panel Discussion. “Non-Traditional Religious and Spiritual Beliefs in the Latino Community,” 6-9 p.m., Zachy Community Center, School of Social Work, Greater Hartford Campus.
- **Tuesday, November 13**—Lecture. “Closer at the Relationships between Extracellular Matrix and Why Does Muscle Care If It Has One?” by Sandy Wellman, The Ohio State University. 6 a.m., Room 201, Alumni Annex.
- **Tuesday, November 13**—The Campaign to Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 12:45-2:45 p.m., Zachy Community Center, School of Social Work, Greater Hartford Campus.
- **Tuesday, November 13**—Materials Science Distinguished Lecture. “Reengineering Protein Polymers to Starke,” by David Kaplan, Tufts University. 4 p.m., Room 301, Student Union.
- **Tuesday, November 13**—Dosing Student. “The Impact of Background Aquatic Noise on Captive Beluga Whales as it Related to their Threshold of Hearing,” by Kathryn In Proton Exchange Membrane Fuel Cells (PEMFC),” by Anil Vikas, University of Utah, 10 a.m., Room 301, Student Union.
- **Tuesday, November 13**—Information Technology Engineering Building.

**Exhibits**

- **Tuesday, November 13**—Art of the Bible. “Jerusalem from Rome, Italy and Europe,” by Marilyn Pet, Main and mezzanine lobbies. Hours: 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Monday-Saturday, 7 a.m.-8 p.m., Thursday, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Thursday, 7 a.m.-8 p.m., Saturday, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, 7 a.m.-8 p.m., Sunday, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Sunday, 7 a.m.-8 p.m.
- **Saturday, November 17**—Rentschler Field. “The Inequality of Desire and the Belief in the ‘Lone Madman’,” by Zhizhao Cui, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. 3 p.m., Room 306, Eastman Building.
- **Tuesday, November 13**—Sculpture and a Sleeping Youth,” part of the exhibition “An Italianate Landscape with Sculpture and a Sleeping Youth,” by Kelly James Carrington; “Jerusalem from Rome, Italy and Europe,” by Marilyn Pet, Main and mezzanine lobbies. Hours: 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Monday-Saturday, 7 a.m.-8 p.m., Thursday, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Thursday, 7 a.m.-8 p.m., Saturday, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Saturday, 7 a.m.-8 p.m., Sunday, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Sunday, 7 a.m.-8 p.m.
- **Saturday, November 17**—South Asian Art Symposium. “The Impact of Background Aquatic Noise on Captive Beluga Whales as it Related to their Threshold of Hearing,” by Kathryn

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Honor Study Abroad in South Africa engages students beyond the classroom

By Elizabeth Obara-Otomo

While doing an internship in the South African township of Khayelitsha, UConn student Jason Balfor met Vivian, a woman who ran a soup kitchen from her home for wounded soldiers. When he learned a few weeks later that her home had burned down, he was moved to try to help.

With a former program student Kelly Witten, he went door-to-door soliciting donations from local businesses. James Tinley, another UConn student who was doing an internship with the Cape Town Argus newspaper, wrote an article publicizing Vivian’s plight. And an e-mail to UConn’s Honors Program prompted an offer of help from director Lynne Goodstein.

Soon, Vivian had the promise of a new home, and free delivery of 30 loaves of bread a day for her clients.

“We learned how easy it is to make a difference,” says Balfor.

The students were among a group of 17 from UConn participating in a semester-long Honors Study Abroad program in South Africa. Offered this past winter, the program combines coursework and service in the community. In 2006, the academic component focused on South African ecology. This year, it highlighted another of the country’s strengths, its arts and culture. Nest year, the program will feature women’s studies.

“UConn Honors in Cape Town goes to the heart of what the University of Connecticut values: the development of global citizens,” says Ross Lewin, director of Study Abroad.

While in South Africa, the group lived in a rented house in the suburb where the University of Cape Town campus is located.

“The living experience in the house all together is one of the learning situations we create for our students,” says Peter Bagley, a retired UConn professor of music, who led the program. “It provides a wonderful opportunity to share their experiences.”

The students spent two days a week in class and three days a week at their internship placement. One class, on the politics and culture of South Africa, was taught by a local instructor. The other, a fine arts class, was taught by Bagley.

South Africa is an excellent place to study the arts, Bagley notes, especially because the arts played such a dramatic role in the expression of protest against apartheid.

“Even 10 years into this young democracy,” he says, “South Africans feel they have a long way to go to achieve equality. South African arts reflect that anger.”

The final class project was to create a hypothetical School of Fine Arts at Cape Town. Each student had to develop three course proposals in art and art history, dramatic arts, or music that could be offered in Cape Town but not in Storrs.

“I wanted our students to expand their imagination,” Bagley says. “One student came up with courses on the art of beading and how prevalent this craft is, especially in the townships.”

While the classes stretched the students intellectually, the internships provided experiences that were potentially life-changing.

“The heart and soul of the program is the internship experience,” says Bagley.

Like many classes with a community-based component, the South Africa program benefits from the knowledge and experience of a local contact, in this case the Rev. Vernon Rose. “He knows everyone,” says Bagley.

Rose identified the placement opportunities, and came to the U.S. to interview the candidates before they traveled to Cape Town.

Balfor, a junior majoring in accounting, worked at a non-profit organization that trains unemployed people for jobs in the hotel industry.

Chad Sagnella, a senior in UConn’s combined medical program, worked at the Red Cross Children’s Hospital in Cape Town.

“I was working with kids with HIV, seeing them clinically as well as conducting research that involved antiretroviral drugs,” says Sagnella, who will start medical school next fall. “It provided me with an experience you can’t get in the classroom.”

Tamarah Kramer, a senior majoring in political science, worked for an organization that gives free legal advice to people who suffer economic and human rights abuses. Kramer, who hopes to go to law school, undertook research on the problems of undocumented migrant workers.

“It was an amazing experience,” she says. “You’re getting more than class. You’re immersing yourself in the community, working and meeting people in South Africa.”

William Janiszewski, a senior majoring in music education, also valued the internship as a way to be involved in the community. Janiszewski did his internship at a music school in one of the townships, teaching a class in music theory, giving individual guitar and voice lessons, and helping write some of the curriculum.

When the principal asked him to stay on, Janiszewski spent an extra two months at the school. Janiszewski says he would recommend the experience to others, “because it’s a challenge. It’s not going on vacation. It’s really getting a different perspective of the world.”

Reporting by Sherry Fisher is included in this article.

Event encourages students to reflect on discrimination, oppression

By Sherry Fisher

It’s a common scene – a person dressed in Ku Klux Klan robes standing in a corner holding a baseball bat.

In another room, photographs of women who were victims of violence were arranged on a table. In yet another room, a student reflected aloud: “What’s wrong with me? I can’t do anything right” – while a recording repeated “Only selfish people think of themselves.”

These were part of The Tunnel of Oppression, an eight-room multi-media, interactive, walk-through experience designed to increase awareness of acts of oppression.

The event took place Nov. 6 and 7 in the Student Union. Guides led visitors, 10 at a time, through “rooms of oppression” that focused on topics including racism, substance abuse, STDS, violence against women, depression, eating disorders, and homophobia.

The 45-minute experience included a “processing area,” where participants and a guide discussed the experience and shared thoughts about oppression.

“The main objective of the program is to educate students about the oppressions that are occurring in society and around the world, and potentially on campus,” says Missy Korduner, program coordinator for the Honors Program. “Dozens of departments, programs, and centers sponsored the Tunnel of Oppression. Although similar events are held at other colleges and universities, this is a first for UConn.”

“I’m hoping that the experience will open people’s eyes to oppression, especially those who have never experienced it or may not realize that it still occurs,” says Korduner.

“Hopefully, they’ll start discussions in the community about why it is happening and what we can do to promote acceptance and tolerance.”

Visitors moved quietly from room to room. In the area dealing with depression and suicide, guide Kathy Hampton emptied a backpack. It was full of bricks bearing words such as “lonely,” “worthless,” “shame,” “guilt,” and “empty.” The bricks were passed around.

“You never know what burdens someone is carrying with them,” said Hampton, a licensed clinical social worker at Counseling and Mental Health Services.

Empty cookie boxes, crumpled chip bags, and frozen food packages were strewed around a toilet in a room focusing on eating disorders. A sign above a scale read, “I’m a Prisoner in My Own Body.” Large, cracked mirrors reflected the images.

“Some people think that oppression of certain groups, such as women, or African Americans, was something that occurred in the past only,” Hampton says. “If you are not a member of an oppressed group, you may not be aware of the violence that still occurs daily to people.”

She adds, “One room in the Tunnel, called “Everyday Violence Against Women,” graphically depicted the continuum of violence against women, starting with attitudes and name-calling. I have heard students say that they didn’t realize how the words they hear every day in popular music, on TV, and on campus perpetuate negative stereotypes and lead to violence against women. Awareness is the first step in taking action to make change.”

Ashley Wildfeldt, a student guide at the event, says the ideas showcased “occur, to some degree, in our lives on a daily basis and are usually overlooked. Something that one person thinks of as a simple joke may seriously affect another person.”

She says the event allowed students “to get into the heads of the people suffering from these oppressions, and see the world from the other’s point of view.” Wildfeldt is a senior, with a double major in journalism and communication sciences. She is also the Health and Human Services Coordinator for the Office of Community Outreach.

Krupali Patel, a freshman majoring in business, came to the event as part of an FYE course. “I thought it was extremely good,” she says. “Everyone should check it out.”