New dean of agriculture joins UConn from Arkansas

By Michael Kerk

Gregory Weidemann of the University of Arkansas has been named the new dean of UConn’s College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. He will begin in July.

Weidemann is currently dean of the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food, and Life Sciences in Arkansas, where he also serves as associate vice president for academic programs.

“I am so pleased to be joining the leadership team at UConn and serving the needs of the faculty, staff, and students at this great university,” Weidemann says. “I was very much attracted to the ambitious vision that has been set for the University and the important role the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources will play in achieving that vision.”

At Arkansas, Weidemann served as dean and associate vice president for research and as the director of the University of Arkansas’s Agricultural Experiment Station.

He joined Arkansas’s Department of Plant Pathology in 1983. As a faculty member, his research focused on the taxonomy and biology of plant-pathogenic fungi and biological control. He has received several awards, including the National Association of Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture Award of Merit in 1990, the John W. White Teaching Award,

Community celebrates Hogan’s Inauguration

By Sherry Fisher

Music resonated through Jorgensen Auditorium on Sunday afternoon and continued at the festivities afterwards, as the University of Connecticut celebrated the inauguration of its 14th president, Michael J. Hogan, on April 13.

Hogan’s address stressed the importance of collaboration, focusing on the theme “in unity there is strength.”

“Where we’ve previously seen the pieces, I ask that we see the whole,” he said, “to imagine the possibilities of collaboration, and to turn those possibilities into real strategies, real partnerships, and ultimately real successes in which we can all take pride.”

He urged departments, colleges, and campuses to work together to establish a solid union and build on the academic culture.

“We’ve learned to think too much in terms of my research, my teaching, and my service,” he said. “We can’t move to the next level of prominence if we continue to look inward, in self-driven and competitive ways, for a sense of purpose and value as members of what’s really a university community.”

Draft of academic plan presented to Board of Trustees

By Karen A. Garza

A revised academic plan that focuses on the themes “Our World, Our People, and Our Future” was presented to the Board of Trustees on April 15.

The plan is still under revision, as further input is gathered from various University constituencies. In addition, an “environmental scan” is being prepared that will outline such factors as economic and population trends that affect the University’s operations, Provost Peter J. Nicholls said.

“Universities are in a rapidly changing environment and economy,” he said. “We have to be sure to have an appropriate level of consultation that allows us to identify the assumptions under which we will be able to pursue our priorities, strengths, and opportunities.”

The plan will be particularly helpful for allocating resources, with funds going to those programs that represent UConn’s strengths and opportunities.

“Decisions related to the distribution of revenues, recruitment and retention of faculty, students, and staff, space assignment, capital improvements, and curricular enhancements will be driven by their effects on the goals of the Academic Plan,” Nicholls said. Decisions that stimulate greater achievement of our goals across the plan will be given priority.”

The plan identifies the overall vision for
Middle East studies award given to women’s rights activist

Fatemeh Haghighatjoo was one of 13 women elected to the University of Connecticut’s Board of Trustees in 2000. She was the first woman elected to the Board of Trustees and the first woman to be selected as a director of the University of Connecticut’s Board of Trustees. She was appointed in 2000 and served until 2004.

Haghighatjoo was a member of the women’s movement in Iran, which was founded in 1979. She was also a member of the Women’s Movement for Human Rights, which was formed in 1991. Haghighatjoo was arrested twice in Iran for her involvement in the women’s movement. She was released on bail both times, but was not allowed to leave Iran. She was finally released in 2000 and moved to the United States to continue her work on human rights.

In the United States, Haghighatjoo continued her work on human rights and women’s rights. She was a member of the Board of Directors of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and served on the board of the Women’s Rights Action Coalition. She was also a member of the Board of Directors of the Women’s Rights Action Coalition in New York City.

Haghighatjoo was awarded the 2008 Lambda Sigma Delta Teaching Award of Merit for her work on human rights. She was also awarded the 2008 Lambda Sigma Delta Teaching Award of Merit for her work on women’s rights.

Haghighatjoo was a recipient of the 2008 Lambda Sigma Delta Teaching Award of Merit for her work on women’s rights. She was also awarded the 2008 Lambda Sigma Delta Teaching Award of Merit for her work on human rights.

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Cinema

The Cold War and Early Holocaust
The Representation of Atrocity:
ies and History, Queens College,
Stuart Liebman

Meaning, Intersubjectivity, and
Awards: External Faculty Fellowship
for 2008-2009. The recipients are:
Humanities Institute announces Fellows

Carolyn Runowicz, director of
the Neag Comprehensive Cancer
program, "says Dr. Carolyn Runowicz, director of
the Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center. "We've assembled a team of surgeons and medical experts who have outstanding credentials and provide our patients with the same level of care that they would
receive at any other major cancer center in the country. "Our mission is to be a regional center of excellence in cancer, based on our research, clinical practice, and education," Runo-
wicz adds. "This certification by the American College of Surgeons acknowledges that our multidisci-
plinary, comprehensive team ap-
proach has created such a center." The Health Center first won Commission on Cancer approval in 1977 and has maintained that status ever since. In this latest survey period, eight other Con-
necticut facilities earned scores that put them in the highest tier of approval.

"This award from the Commis-
sion on Cancer is a recognition of our ongoing commitment to preventing and treating cancer," says Dr. John A. Taylor III, who chairs UConn's cancer committee and specializes in the treatment of urologic cancers, with a focus on bladder cancer. According to the Commission on Cancer, patients receiving care at an approved cancer program are ensured access to:
- comprehensive care, including a range of state-of-the-art services and equipment;
- a multi-specialty, team approach to coordinate the best treatment options;
- information about ongoing clinical trials and new treatment options;
- access to cancer-related infor-
mation, education, and support;
- a cancer registry that collects data on type and stage of cancers and treatment results and offers lifelong patient follow-up;
- ongoing monitoring and improvement of care;
- quality care close to home.
The American College of Sur-
gons, the world's largest organiza-
tion of professional organizations dedicated to improving survival and quality of life for cancer patients.

Roper Center creates database of CBS polls

BY MICHAEL KEE
The Roper Center – a national-
ly-recognized repository of public opinion polls going back to the 1940s – has inked a deal with CBS News to organize and catalog the network’s recent political public opinion polls in the lead-up to the November elections.
The Center has created a searchable database of the CBS/ Wall Street Journal polls, on topics ranging from presidential approval ratings to candidate horserace numbers to approval (and disap-


Cancer program earns high rating

BY CHRIS DEFRANCOSE
The Carole and Ray Neag Com-
prehensive Cancer Center contin-
ues to impress the Commission on
Cancer of the American College of
Surgeons.
The UConn Health Center's cancer program has won the com-
mission's highest possible overall rating, "three-year approval with commendation."

This level of approval is awarded to facilities that have voluntarily committed to providing the high-
est level of quality cancer care and that undergo a rigorous evaluation and review of their performance. They must undergo an on-site re-
view every three years to maintain approval.

"This further validates the work of our cancer program," says Dr. Carolyn Runowicz, director of the Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center. "We've assembled a team of surgeons and medical experts who have outstanding credentials and provide our patients with the same level of care that they would receive at any other major cancer center in the country. "Our mission is to be a regional center of excellence in cancer, based on our research, clinical practice, and education," Runowicz adds. "This certification by the American College of Surgeons acknowledges that our multidiscipli-

Humanities Institute announces Fellows

The Humanities Institute has announced its fellowship awards for 2008-2009. The recipients are:

External Faculty Fellowship Awards:
Barbara Fultner (Philosophy, Denison University)
Meaning, Intersubjectivity, and Social Practice: Social Theories of Meaning

Stuart Liebman (Cinema Stud-
ies and History, Queens College, CUNY)
The Representation of Atrocity: The Cold War and Early Holocaust Cinema

UConn Faculty Fellows:
Amanda Bailey (English)
Bofong: Human Capital and the Early Modern Theater
Jonathan David Bobaljik (Linguistics)
Grammar of Holmén. A Language on the brink
Rose Helena Chinchilla (Modern & Classical Languages)
Literary Patronage in Spain (1500-1560)
Jeremy Pressman (Political Science)
Sixty Years of Conflict: The Central Historical Themes in Arab-Israeli Relations
Helen Rozwadowski (History)
Always the Last Frontier: The 1960s Ocean
Nancy Shoemaker (History)
New England Indians and the American Whaling Industry

Central Historical Themes in Arab-Israeli Relations
Always the Last Frontier: The 1960s Ocean
New England Indians and the American Whaling Industry

Earth Day events planned at Avery Point, Storrs

The University will celebrate Earth Day with collaborative events at its Storrs and Avery Point campuses on April 21-22. The Avery Point Earth Day celebration will take place Monday, April 21, from 2 p.m. to 2 p.m. on the gazebo lawn. The event will move to Bradenoe House if it rains.

Activities will include:
- a free locally grown organic lunch, tree planting ceremony, hybrid car display, kite flying competition, information booths, and free com-
pact fluorescent light bulbs.

The Storrs Earth Day Spring Fling will take place all day Tues-
day, April 22, the official Earth Day, with a celebration on Fairfield
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Research, teaching, and service are not separate activities, Hogan said.

“Having grown up in Iowa, in the heart of the Corn Belt, I find myself falling back on the old milking stool analogy,” he said. “Like a milking stool, there are three legs to the University’s mission, and if one leg is too short or is taken away, the stool falls over. By enhancing our research mission, we’ll also be strengthening the other two legs of the stool – our teaching and service missions, including our engagement with the community around us.”

He said the University should congratulate itself on its outstanding students. “Today’s students are the best prepared undergraduates in the University’s history,” he said. He noted that they have a first-year retention rate of 93 percent and a six-year graduation rate of 74 percent.

Hogan said UConn students are taught and inspired by faculty who “are among the most accomplished in their fields of study.” He noted that the University has gotten where it is today “through the tireless commitment and hard work of many faculty and staff. These faculty and staff, many now among our most senior colleagues, stuck it out through thick and thin, through good years and bad, always persevering in their search for excellence.”

He urged the community to build on its success.

“We’ve got great programs, but we can still do better,” Hogan said. “At the undergraduate level, we need to expand our honors program, create more living and learning communities, and offer students more opportunities to study abroad and to collaborate with faculty on research projects.”

At the graduate level, he said, “We need to have more programs ranked in the top 25 among all public universities.”

Gov. M. Jodi Rell, who was on the presidential search committee, said Hogan “fell in love with Connecticut almost as quickly as we fell in love with him.”

Francis Archambault, president of the UConn Alumni Association and emeritus professor of educational psychology, said Hogan is “ideally suited to lead this institution to greater heights.”

John DeWolf, professor of civil and environmental engineering and chairman of the Senate Executive Committee, said to Hogan, “You’re one of us.”

Dr. John W. Rowe, chairman of the University’s Board of Trustees, described Hogan as “the right leader at the right time.”

Well-wishers attending the inauguration included members of the University community, state government officials, and dignitaries. The ceremony included the traditional procession of faculty in academic regalia.

Music was performed by UConn’s pep band, wind ensemble, marching band, jazz ensemble, and Voices of Freedom gospel choir.

After the ceremony, the UConn Marching Band and a giant inflatable Husky Dog balloon led the crowd outside to a celebration that included a barbecue, entertainment, and music.

Clowns on stilts, baton twirlers, blue cotton candy, and ice sculptures of Hogan and the Husky Dog added to the festive atmosphere.
Once a student, now an award-winning professor at dental school

BY CHRIS DEFRANCESCO

The first impression members of the dental school's Class of 2009 had of Dr. Jacqueline Duncan came several weeks before they matriculated.

"We as a class didn't know what to expect when, the July before our first year started, she sent us a huge homework assignment," says Chris Benton, now a third-year student at the UCOnn School of Dental Medicine.

The students had to show up to the first class with an intimate knowledge of dental form and structure.

But that tall task didn't keep Benton — and many of his classmates — from casting the votes two years later that would make Duncan the winner of a National Dental Honor Society teaching award.

Duncan has a 20-year history with UCOnn's dental school. She went through the curriculum herself, earning her D.M.D. in 1992, completing the Advanced Education in General Dentistry residency program a year later, then becoming the first prostodontic resident at the University.

After earning a certificate in prosthetics and Master's of Dental Science degree in 1996, Duncan joined the faculty. Today she is an associate clinical professor and director of predoctoral prostodontics in the dental school's Department of Restorative Sciences.

Duncan also sees patients, practicing complex restorative dentistry such as implants, dentures, and replacement of missing teeth. She's also heavily involved in curriculum development. But teaching is what she enjoys the most.

"As faculty, we choose to be here because we love doing what we do, whether it's research, administration, or teaching," Duncan says.

"I'm here because I love to teach. My interaction with the dental students doesn't seem like work." Duncan describes the caliber of the students and the passion of the faculty are what make the School of Dental Medicine thrive.

"It's the students who make the dental school what it is," she says. "In less than two years in clinic, they go from being dental novices to being competent dentists. It's rewarding to be part of that."

And the students think highly of Duncan, as evidenced by the 2007 Omicron Kappa Upsilon-Phi Chi Chapter Teaching Award, which recognizes excellence in teaching in the first two years of the preclinical dental science curriculum.

"Through all my years of education, Dr. Duncan has been one of the best at creating an environment that makes you want to learn," says third-year dental student Brian Bell. "As a student, I don't think there is anything more you can ask for in a professor."

Says Benton, "Dr. Duncan has been a great mentor to me and I could never begin to repay her for all that she has taught me. She has been a very demanding teacher, pushing us to become better dentists and better people. She constantly pushes us toward excellence and doesn't accept anything less than our best."

Dr. Monty MacNeil, dean of the School of Dental Medicine, says the award was more a "pleasant affirmation" than a surprise.

"As faculty, we have recognized Dr. Duncan's abilities for some time and knew that it would just be a matter of time before students did as well," MacNeil says. "I think students see her as very passionate about what she does and as someone who will go the extra mile on their behalf in the interests of learning."

That's why and Dr. Thomas Taylor, who chairs the Division of Prosthodontics, also credit Duncan for her work on the dental school curriculum.

"Over her years as a faculty member she has created a number of substantial changes in our teaching methodology and direction," Taylor says. "I would say that in our discipline, we have the most modern clinical curriculum available at any dental school."

Socializing via Internet natural for today's teens, says speaker

BY GREGORY HADDY

If teachers and parents don't know what Soulja Boy is or why carmakers are sponsoring virtual-world Internet games, they're behind the times.

Goodstein, a former New York Times reporter, is an associate professor and director of the Precollege Studies Program at UConn's Neag School of Education.

"New Media Literacies for Today's Teenagers" hangs out online or texts stay connected — but amplified. "It's that age-old desire to be active in learning about the world has been revolutionized," she said. "What it feels like to be a teenager hasn't changed, but the space they're spending their time in has changed."

"Suddenly, their space wasn't just the physical space anymore," she said. "In the past year, according to Goodstein, the majority of Myspace profiles have become private and there has been an "exodus over to Facebook." A networking site originally focused on college students.

She said that well-meaning efforts to block teen use of school computer problems, and start teaching teenagers and pre-teens about the marketing strategies that are being used to manipulate them.

Goodstein warned that advertisers and marketers are seeking to manipulate teen and pre-teen consumers in extraordinary ways.

The makers of the Scion car, she said, now sponsor a virtual-world site for pre-teens, to try and imprint that vehicle as something desirable for the consumers of the future.

Goodstein said teachers and parents need to ask young people how they are spending their time online, ask their help to solve computer problems, and start teaching teenagers and pre-teens about the marketing strategies that are being used to manipulate them.
### GRANTS

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Prin. Investigator</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
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<td>Federal Grants</td>
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### Private Grants

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<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Prin. Investigator</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Award Period</th>
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<td>UMass</td>
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<td>Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital</td>
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<td>Northeast Community Collaborations for Farm Worker Health and Safety</td>
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### State Grants

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<td>Conn. State Adolescent Substance Abuse Treatment Evaluation Project</td>
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### State Capitol Outage

A complete steam shutdown at the Storrs campus to enable repairs and maintenance to the system is scheduled to take place from Sunday, May 11, at 11:45 p.m., through Friday, May 16. It is expected to take a couple of days to restore the system to full capacity. In some cases there will be no hot water available for heat, showers, dishwashing, or lab needs. If you have questions or special requirements, please call Mike Pacholski at 860-486-0041, or Work Order Control at 860-486-3113 to discuss alternate arrangements.
**CALENDAR**

**Monday, April 21, to Monday, April 28**

**Item 1:**

- **Topic:** Children of Autism Spectrum Disorder
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Features an interview with Dr. Therese Nickelson, a neuropsychologist.

**Item 2:**

- **Topic:** Kinesiology
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses kinesiology as a field of study.

**Item 3:**

- **Topic:** Music and Social Behavior
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Features a discussion on the impact of music on social behavior.

**Item 4:**

- **Topic:** Public Policy and Health
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Focuses on the intersection of public policy and health issues.

**Item 5:**

- **Topic:** Environmental Science
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses environmental science topics.

**Item 6:**

- **Topic:** Business Ethics
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Focuses on ethical considerations in business.

**Item 7:**

- **Topic:** Economics
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses economic theories and principles.

**Item 8:**

- **Topic:** Law
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Focuses on legal studies and practices.

**Item 9:**

- **Topic:** Philosophy
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses philosophical concepts and ideas.

**Item 10:**

- **Topic:** History
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Focuses on historical events and periods.

**Item 11:**

- **Topic:** Science
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses scientific theories and discoveries.

**Item 12:**

- **Topic:** Technology
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Focuses on technological advancements and innovations.

**Item 13:**

- **Topic:** Arts
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses cultural and artistic expressions.

**Item 14:**

- **Topic:** Sports
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Focuses on athletic events and competitions.

**Item 15:**

- **Topic:** Faith
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses religious beliefs and practices.

**Item 16:**

- **Topic:** Community Engagement
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Focuses on community service and outreach programs.

**Item 17:**

- **Topic:** Entrepreneurship
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses entrepreneurial strategies and practices.

**Item 18:**

- **Topic:** Leadership
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Focuses on leadership development and principles.

**Item 19:**

- **Topic:** Communication
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses communication skills and techniques.

**Item 20:**

- **Topic:** Ethics
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses ethical dilemmas and decision-making.

**Item 21:**

- **Topic:** Governance
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Focuses on governance and public administration.

**Item 22:**

- **Topic:** Economics
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses economic policies and impacts.

**Item 23:**

- **Topic:** Law
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Focuses on legal issues and regulations.

**Item 24:**

- **Topic:** Science
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses scientific research and findings.

**Item 25:**

- **Topic:** Technology
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Focuses on technological advancements and innovations.

**Item 26:**

- **Topic:** Arts
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses cultural and artistic expressions.

**Item 27:**

- **Topic:** Sports
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Focuses on athletic events and competitions.

**Item 28:**

- **Topic:** Faith
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses religious beliefs and practices.

**Item 29:**

- **Topic:** Community Engagement
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Focuses on community service and outreach programs.

**Item 30:**

- **Topic:** Entrepreneurship
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses entrepreneurial strategies and practices.

**Item 31:**

- **Topic:** Leadership
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Focuses on leadership development and principles.

**Item 32:**

- **Topic:** Communication
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses communication skills and techniques.

**Item 33:**

- **Topic:** Ethics
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Discusses ethical dilemmas and decision-making.

**Item 34:**

- **Topic:** Governance
- **Location:** University of Connecticut Public Policy Building, Room 103
- **Contact:** Health News (Ashley J. B.)
- **Details:** Focuses on governance and public administration.
Class of ’08 Outstanding Students

Lola Odesina

BY SHELLY FISHER

It’s not surprising that Lola Odesina would be drawn to pharmacy. She and her sister were diagnosed with a chronic blood disorder when they were children.

“I’ve been immersed in health care settings for as long as I can remember,” says Odesina. “My sister and I have sickle cell anemia, my mother is a nurse, and we’ve always been around nurses, doctors, and drugs. It’s something I find familiar and interesting.”

Odesina is graduating with a Pharm.D. degree, earned in a six-year program. She says the program was “a great learning experience. You’re exposed to so much information about the field. The professors are passionate about the subject, want you to learn, are entertaining, and are there for you if you need help.”

During their last year of study, pharmacy students are required to do nine one-month rotations in the field.

“The rotations gave me a taste of what it would be like to be a pharmacist in different settings,” she says. “My first was in ambulatory care at St. Raphael’s Hospital in New Haven. I did another in critical care at Yale, and one in hospice care at the Connecticut Hospice in Branford. I worked with doctors, nurses, and patients.”

Odesina says she has enjoyed the “endless opportunities” offered to pharmacy students at UConn.

“Whatsoever area of pharmacy you’re interested in, there’s an organization you can join,” she says. “It’s great for networking and making new friends.”

Nathaniel Bergan

BY SHEERY FISHER

When Nathaniel “Nate” Bergan took his first engineering course at UConn, he was hooked.

“The class was about the basic mechanics of engineering,” he says, “and it really made me say, ‘Wow!’”

Bergan will graduate in May with a bachelor’s degree in civil and environmental engineering.

He says engineering is a good fit. “I’ve always had a strong interest in construction and buildings,” he says. “My father is a land surveyor, so I’ve been around construction sites, bulldozers, and dirt all my life. What I find interesting is learning the mechanics of everything and applying all the mathematics I’ve learned, and seeing how it works in design and construction.”

Bergan got to put some of his school work into practice during Thanksgiving break last year, when he and two other UConn engineering students traveled to Nicaragua as part of the UConn chapter of Engineers Without Borders, a non-profit humanitarian organization that partners with people in developing communities to improve their quality of life.

The trip was to assess how to stabilize a key access road near Granada that is rendered impassable during the country’s rainy season. He and his team came up with a project application outlining all the details; it was just sent to the Engineers Without Borders headquarters for assessment.

“A member of Chi Epsilon, the civil engineering honor society, Bergan is also secretary of the UConn chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers.”

This summer, he will work on a UConn environmental engineering research project in Ethiopia, where he will collect rainfall data and investigate possible dam sites on the Blue Nile River.

After graduation, Bergan will head to Columbia University to earn a master’s degree in civil engineering.

“After that, I want to do structural design and be involved in projects that will affect a lot of people,” he says. “Civil engineering affects the world. It’s about what we use every day.”

Philip Shaw

BY CINDY WEISS

Philip Shaw, who will receive his Ph.D. degree in economics in May, had an unusually strong outcome to his job search for an academic position.

Shaw had 18 interviews, 11 offers of trips to campuses, and six offers of tenure-track faculty positions at colleges ranging from Kenyon College – a small, private liberal arts college in Ohio – to Kansas State University, a public university with more than 23,000 students.

In the fall, he will begin teaching economics at Fairfield University, the offer he accepted in order to be close to his girlfriend and other friends in the Northeast.

Shaw said his thesis topic, educational corruption, was particularly interesting to potential employers.

He began working on it as an undergraduate economics major in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, graduating in 2004. As an undergraduate, he won a Summer Undergraduate Research Fund award.

He went to the Ukraine, where he found that 96 percent of students bribed their way into acceptable scores on college entrance exams.

He developed an economic model to examine what this does to economic growth and to educational institutions.

Shaw’s undergraduate and graduate adviser Christian Zimmermann, associate professor of economics, says that Shaw gathering his own data firsthand was rather unusual.

“Got a research grant, and he just did it. That’s how he is,” he says.

That firsthand experience with data, and Shaw’s extensive teaching experience as a graduate student, helped him in the academic job market. Zimmermann says. Shaw says he chose an academic career because he really enjoys teaching: “It’s something I need in my life.”

Several other Ph.D. students in economics graduating this spring have academic job offers, too: Nicholas Shunda received an offer from the University of Redlands in California, and Rasha Ahmed from Trinity College in Hartford.

The economics Ph.D. market is well organized, says Zimmermann, with centralized advertising through the American Economics Association and a national meeting where students and employers schedule interviews.

And, he adds, “Everybody is interested in the best students.”

Nikita Lakdawala

BY CURRAN KENNEDY, CLAS ’08

Nikita Lakdawala, CLAS ’08, has combined experience with academics through a double major in molecular and cell biology and an individualized major that she created, health care and social inequality.

A graduate of Watertown High School, at UConn she has studied abroad in London, volunteered in soup kitchens and farm fields.

“Even though it’s such a large school, I’ve been able to get involved in community service programs,” she says.

Lakdawala’s community involvement has given her a new perspective, she says: “It’s not the same thing to read about something in a textbook as it is to see it firsthand.”

That’s why Lakdawala decided to organize her senior thesis around her volunteer work in Willimantic, where she has observed acute care and given health talks to the underprivileged.

“Barriers to health care access and discrepancies between the poor and rich are big issues that need to be tackled,” she says.

Ambition to reform U.S. health care led Lakdawala to London for a semester, where she visited hospitals and interviewed doctors.

“I think medicine now involves both medical and social aspects and it’s more important now than ever to understand how these work together,” she says.

“Studying abroad allowed me to compare two different health care systems and see how they operate,” she adds. “With med school on the horizon, this understanding is important for me.”

Next fall, she will begin studying for a medical degree at the UConn School of Medicine in Farmington.

“This week and for the next several weeks, the Advance is publishing short profiles of some of this year’s graduating students. Those featured were selected from among those recommended by each school and college.”