Researchers develop new method of detecting heart failure

By Chris Defrancesco

A simple blood test can indicate whether a patient’s heart is failing, according to doctors at the Health Center’s Pat and Jim Calhoun Cardiology Center.

Evidence from a continuing clinical research study being conducted at the Health Center suggests that a failing human heart releases the peptide, or protein fragment, identified as Caspase-3 p17.

Rather than use an invasive surgical procedure to confirm suspicions about a deficiency in the heart’s ability to circulate blood to the rest of the body, cardiologists can check a blood sample for the peptide, believed to be a marker, or indicator of heart failure.

“It’s a peptide that we think is released from injured tissue, such as the heart during an acute episode of congestive heart failure,” says Dr. Bruce Liang, director of the Calhoun Cardiology Center. “[Checking a blood sample for this peptide is] a novel method that we’ve developed. We’re the first and only ones doing this.”

Liang, the lead investigator, presented his research at the American College of Cardiology’s annual scientific session in Chicago earlier this year. The study was published in

Recent grad wins thesis awards

By David Bauman

A recent UConn graduate has won national recognition for research that examined how the expansion of Wal-Mart Supercenter stores into food retail markets affected prices at competing grocery stores.

Rebecca Cleary, who earned her master’s in agricultural and resource economics, received the 2008 “Outstanding Master’s Thesis Award” from the Agricultural & Applied Economics Association (AAEA).

Her thesis, “Is Wal-Mart Good for Competition? Evidence from Milk Prices” found that the expansion of the retail giant’s Supercenters increases competition and is good for consumers.

Cleary’s thesis also won the Outstanding Thesis Award from the Northeastern Agricultural and Resource Economics Association, a regional professional association, and the Food Distribution Research Society’s 2008 William Applebaum Memorial Scholarship Award for a master’s thesis.

“Wal-Mart’s retailing strategy has always intrigued me,” says Cleary, now a Ph.D. student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. “They have such a simple concept, but it’s so innovative.”

“AAEA is the flagship academic organization of our profession,” says Professor Rigoberto Lopez, head of the agricultural and resource economics department, who was Cleary’s advisor. “We’re very proud of Becky. She’s won the top three awards in our field.”

Students congregate on campus at the beginning of the school year. Photo by Susan Ferreira

Law students to practice before U.S. patent and trademark office

By Michael Kirk

Students in the School of Law’s intellectual property clinic will now have the opportunity to practice law before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

UConn is one of six institutions nationwide selected to participate in a new two-year pilot program launched by the Office this fall.

Students in the program will practice under the guidance of supervising attorneys. They will choose to practice either patent or trademark law, and will have the opportunity to draft and file applications, respond to office actions, and brief in appeals.

Jeremy Paul, dean of the law school, says the selection of UConn’s intellectual property clinic by the Patent and Trademark Office “ratifies the wisdom of the governor and the Connecticut General Assembly in investing in the law school’s important new program aimed at invigorating our state’s economy and training our students in this vital area of the law.”

UConn’s Intellectual Property and Entrepreneurship Law Clinic is part of the University’s Connecticut Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Established by the state legislature, it is designed to strengthen Connecticut’s economy with innovative new programs aimed at supporting emerging companies. Law students counsel Connecticut’s innovators on patent, trademark, copyright, and trade secrecy issues, as
Lauren Cunningham, a sophomore majoring in physiology and neurobiology, donated a wooden nickel to the Green Campus Fund at the UConn Co-op. The Co-op Cares Bag Program is designed to reduce plastic bag use.

Slavery is topic of Constitution Day events

BY ALEXA BUCKWOLD

A Harvard law professor will give a talk and the captain of the ship Amistad will join a panel discussion on Constitution Day on Wednesday, Sept. 17. The events will take place in the Conover Auditorium at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, from 3 to 5 p.m.

This year, Constitution Day will comprise a series of events focused on the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, its history, and state issues.

“Constitution Day at UConn is becoming a well-established tradition and a much-anticipated event, with this our fourth annual celebration,” she says. “The celebration helps us to learn, enjoy, and be inspired by the U.S. Constitution and its legacy.”

This year’s agenda will include:

• A panel discussion on the Amistad Freedom Voyage, with Professor Mary Sarah Bilder, student Erica Whyte, who served as a co-chair of the Amistad Freedom Voyage, with a group of lawyers and other experts representing the anniversary of the signing of the Constitution.

• The movie Amistad will be shown in the Student Union Theatre, on Sunday, Sept. 14, at 2 p.m. and Wednesday, Sept. 17, at 7 p.m.

Constitution Day was first celebrated nationally in 1997 to represent the anniversary of the signing of the Constitution on Sept. 17, 1787 in Philadelphia.

Babbbidge Library to offer lunchtime talks by faculty

I nterested in learning more about tapeworms in sharks? Maybe the prospect of traveling back in time appeals to you? Or, if you prefer to stay rooted on Earth, how about some tips on battling tooth decay?

This fall, the University system’s newest library facility will sponsor a new monthly lunchtime series featuring faculty discussing these and other topics in a program titled "Research Highlights at Noon.”

Janine Caira, Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, will kick off the series on Thursday, Sept. 18 with the talk, “The Denizens of the Deep: The Secret of the Sea—A Global Look at Shark and Stingray Tapeworms.”

Caira recently won a $3 million National Science Foundation Planetary Biodiversity Inventory grant to oversee a worldwide network of specialists to study the biodiversity of tapeworms, her research specialty.

Although present in the bowels of all classes of vertebrates, not much is known about tapeworms, she says. On Thursday, Oct. 16, Ronald Mallett, professor of physics, will talk about “Time Travel: The Possibilities and Promise.”

In his latest book, Time Traveler—a Scientist’s Personal Mission to Make Time Travel a Reality, Mallett tells how a childhood trauma—the death of his father when he was 10 years old—inspired his quest to build a time machine so he could return to an earlier time and save his father’s life. Director Spike Lee has recently acquired the film rights to the book, and will co-write the script and direct the film.

The UConn Co-op will have signed copies of Mallett’s book available for purchase at the event. On Wednesday, Nov. 5, William Kraemer, professor of kinesiology, will speak on “The Physiology of Aging: Fighting the Aging Process with Strength Training.”

An internationally renowned expert in exercise physiology, sports medicine, and strength and conditioning, Kraemer holds joint appointments as a professor in the Department of Physiology and Neurobiology and as a professor of medicine in the School of Medicine. Cinea.

Recipient of the University’s highest research award, the Provost’s Research Excellence Award, he has also been honored by the National Strength and Conditioning Association, the leading authority on strength and conditioning worldwide, which awarded him its most prestigious research award.

All the talks, which are sponsored by the Academic Liaison Libraries, will take place at noon in the Class of ’47 Lecture Room, across from the library’s south entrance, and adjacent to Bookworms Cafe on the library’s plaza level. A question and answer session will follow the talk. Those who plan to attend are invited to bring a lunch.

For further information, please contact Frances Libbey, sciences librarian, at 860-486-2521 or Frances.Libbey@uconn.edu.

Co-op shoppers boost Green Campus Fund

BY JENNIFER HUBER

Co-op shoppers who want to do their part for the environment and support UConn’s sustainability efforts now have the opportunity to do both at the register.

The Co-op Cares Bag Program, launched in April, is intended to reduce the use of plastic bags and promote environmentalism. For each customer who declines a bag, the Co-op will donate 5 cents—the average cost of a plastic bag—to one of four charities, including the UConn Foundation’s Green Campus Fund.

Customers are given a wooden token to put in collection bins for the charity of their choice. The four charities, selected by the Co-op’s board of directors, include the Green Campus Fund, which supports sustainable building, water conservation, recycling, and other environmental initiatives at UConn; the Carlee A. Wines Memorial Scholarship Fund, named in memory of a UConn freshman who was killed in a car accident in 2007; SoundWaters; and the Joshua’s Tract Conservation and Historic Trust.

Customers who need to use bags may still participate. Marcia Firsick, marketing manager for the Co-op, says that some shoppers have been purchasing the nickel tokens or simply dropping cash in the collection bins. She also notes that customers can feel better about the bags they’re using because the Co-op is now using bags made of 100 percent recycled materials, they also are 100 percent recyclable.

Firsick modeled the Co-op Cares Bags Program after a similar one at New York University. She says it has been a great success so far. By Sept. 3, a total of more than 22,300 tokens—worth more than $1,100—had been collected, including 9,560 tokens ($478) for the Green Campus Fund.

To support the Green Campus Fund, call 800-269-9965 or 860-486-1173.

Research forum Sept. 16 to focus on multiple myeloma

A collaborative clinical, basic, and translational research forum focusing on issues related to contemporary clinical and investigative approaches to multiple myeloma will take place on Tuesday, Sept. 16, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. in the Low Learning Center at the UConn Health Center.

Presenters will include faculty from the Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. All interested Health Center faculty, nursing staff, graduate students, and research fellows in the basic sciences, clinical attendings, residents, fellows, medical and dental students, and members of the University community at Storrs are welcome to attend the presentations and participate in the discussions that follow.

An opportunity to compete for internal grant funding for start up/pilot research projects will be announced and information concerning submission of proposals will be available online.

A light buffet dinner will be available for all who attend, free of charge, beginning at 5:45 p.m.

Advance • Monday, September 8, 2008
Students, University, town residents benefit from off-campus director's work

By RICHARD VEILLEUX

When Jim Hintz arrived at UConn from Ohio University in May 2007, there were signs of relief in several University departments. Staff there would soon be freed of extra duties that had been added to their work loads because the heating office set up to handle them.

“We picked up pieces from all over the place,” says Hintz, the first director of the Heating Office for Off-Campus Student Services. “People did what they could, but most of this stuff was outside the scope of their duties. So we consolidated a lot of programs and services that we offered our off-campus population, and increased, improved and built upon what was already there. We are a one-stop shopping opportunity for off-campus services.”

Hintz helps students look for housing, match roommates, and understand their leases. He also gives advice on their rights as tenants and responsibilities as members of the community – and hosts the occasional barbecue and Wiffle Ball game.

On the other side, Hintz works with town officials to keep them abreast of what his office is doing, and to lend a hand when community members complain about students’ behavior. He serves on the Mansfield Community Campus Partnership, which is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all members of the Mansfield community, and on the University/Town Relations Committee, which provides a forum for formal communication between town and University officials on issues of mutual interest.

And he works with property managers and landlords.

“Jim is the best addition to campus/community relations since I don’t know when,” says longtime Mansfield Mayor Betsy Paterson. “He understands the issues, he’s great with the kids, and he’s very easy to work with. He understands the impact of students on the community, the residents’ expectations of the kids living off campus, and he makes sure the students recognize they have both rights and responsibilities.”

About 6,000 students live off-campus in about 10 apartment complexes and an increasing number of single family homes or with their parents in nearby communities. More than 700 students showed up for Hintz’s first off-campus housing fair last year.

To deliver his messages to such a diverse, wide-spread group, Hintz isn’t averse to old-fashioned marketing. He, his program assistant, and a graduate student have offered hot chocolate in the primary commuter parking lots. They also ride on the buses regularly, handing out information packets to the student riders, who are mostly community-oriented.

“I want to raise awareness not just about my office, but also about all the other educational opportunities and services that are available to these students,” he says. “I’ve asked a lot of other departments what they want the off-campus students to know – library hours, Senior Year Experience, career services.”

He also expanded an ongoing effort by the Mansfield Community Campus Partnership to bring University and town officials on a door-to-door tour of off-campus apartment complexes as possible over a three-day period.

This year, he convinced President Michael Hogan to join the group. Students at Celeron Square poured out of their apartments when they noticed Hogan and a group of television cameras heading across a field.

“I looked through my peephole and said ‘hmm. I don’t know any of these people,’ said Adam Sokolow, a senior from Burlington.

“Then I opened the door and President Hogan and the Mayor are standing there. I think it’s great.”

Roday of Orange agreed. “It’s a great thing he’s doing,” Rogad said, “especially during the first week of school. It’s a great tradition.”

Hintz has also added new programs, most recently the Community Member Program, which is similar to one he ran in Ohio. He hired eight students – two at Carriage House, three at Celeron Square, one each at Hunting Lodge and Clubhouse apartments, and one to work at single family homes at the corner of North Eagleville and Hunting Lodge roads – who are responsible for communicating information from Hintz’s office to the students living in their area, and vice versa. Each has a small budget to organize activities, including cook-outs and games.

“If the students in these complexes get to know each other,” says Hintz, “they’ll start to respect each other and respect the community they live in.”

“It’s hard to believe Jim has only been here a year,” says Dean of Students Lee Williams, to whom Hintz reports. “He’s been a tremendous amount in that time. Because of his work, both our off-campus students and Mansfield residents are benefiting.”

Engineering students to help power plant improve efficiency

By MAN COOPER

Three engineering students, under the supervision of chemical engineering professor Douglas Gaudet and power plant supervisor Tim Grady to: reduce natural gas usage and carbon emissions through improvements in overall plant efficiency; reduce water usage through identification of alternative designs and operational practices; and lengthen equipment usage through identification of alternative designs and operational practices; and lengthen equipment maintenance costs through decreased performance evaluation and loop tuning where the cogeneration plant operation is the primary focus and beneficiary. The control system is the computer “brain” of the plant. It receives hundreds of temperature, pressure, flow, and other sensor signals, and rapidly adjusts valves, pumps, compressors, and other elements so the plant runs safely and efficiently. Hogan has developed a method for analyzing control signals and improving control system performance without the need to “bump” or deliberately disrupt the plant as required by current industrial practice.

Przybylek, an honors student, will perform an overall energy and carbon balance analysis that will form the basis of her senior honors thesis. Tweedy will build upon her experience as a summer intern with UTC Power to perform an overall water balance analysis. Both will participate in other tasks as needed for the benefit of the plant.

Lee Langston, professor emeritus of mechanical engineering, who encouraged the University to build the cogeneration plant, explained that after electricity generation, there is plenty of low-pressure steam left over to heat campus buildings, kitchens, and laboratories in the winter. During the warmer summer months, when heating loads are greatly reduced, the low-pressure steam drives refrigeration compressors to supply chilled water to air conditioning units in these buildings.

“The result,” says Cooper, “is that UConn’s new facility is among the most versatile and efficient academic cogeneration plants in the country.”

Engineering students Melissa Tweedie, seated, Rachelle Howard, left, and Michelle Przybylek, in the control room of the cogeneration plant.
By John Spouauer

Students at the UConn Health Center who wish to carry on a long institutional tradition of studying global health issues may now have private financial support to do so, thanks to a scholarship funded by a School of Medicine alumnus.

Dr. Edward Hargus, M.D. ’73, and his wife Maria have made a gift to provide assistance for students participating in global health education activity through the Center for International Community Health Studies in the School of Medicine.

To recognize the work done by Judy Lewis, director of the Global Health Education program and professor in the departments of community medicine and pediatrics, the fund is named the Maria and Edward P. Hargus M.D. Professor Judy Lewis Global Health Education Scholarship. Since 1985, more than 300 medical, dental and public health students have taken part in global health studies, including language study, research, clinical care, and community health improvement projects. The programs have allowed UConn students to collaborate with local community research programs in more than 60 countries to improve patient care and public health.

Hargus says the inspiration to fund a scholarship springs from his own education, which was supported with private giving. “I come from a blue-collar family,” he says. “I was one of the first to go to college and I couldn’t have done it without the scholarships I received. I once received a note with my scholarship that told me which donor supported it. When you actually see that name, you realize that the money comes from someone else’s generosity.”

Lewis says Hargus’s gift fits perfectly with the increasing realization of – and interest in – global health issues.

“A majority of incoming students express a desire to participate in global health issues, but many do not because of financial considerations,” she says. “The UConn Health Center has been fortunate to have some funding for summer research projects, but has been limited. The gift from Dr. and Mrs. Hargus is an important beginning, providing students with the means to participate in global health programs.”

GHE seeks to respond to global health needs with an education that focuses on understanding and responding to the problems and needs of underserved communities worldwide; learning and implementing the principles of primary health care across cultures and nations; and encouraging medical, dental, master of public health, and Ph.D. students to enter fields of primary care and community health.

Hargus says that although he never traveled as a student, he sees a clear benefit to doing so. “It’s a big world. I think exposure to other cultures is very good for students, or anyone who wants to be involved in helping the poor,” he says. “It’s good for the school. And it’s good for the country.

“Either by sending our students to other countries, or support- ing people to come here and get their medical education, I think we’re taking great steps to improve the lives of people everywhere,” Hargus adds.

Lewis also believes that exposure to global health issues creates better physicians.

“Citizens from underserved communities have voiced their encouragement of global health immersions as part of preparing culturally skilled health care practitioners,” she says. “There is no substitute for our students experiencing being the other.”

For more information about the Center for International Community Health Studies and the Global Health Education program, go to http://www.commmed.uconn.edu/cichs/education.htm

Photo by Frank Diamare

Edna Brown, assistant professor of human development and family studies, outside the Family Studies Building.
Failure, a simple blood test could yield additional information about a heart’s health. “The beauty of the blood test is it’s simple and it’s quick and it’s non-invasive,” Liang says. “This is like any other lab test that we do, except unlike any other lab test that we do, this one gives us a window on the viability of the heart.”

Although the research is still at an early phase, the test may even benefit patients involved in the study. Liang says, because it can diagnose it. Or it could rule it out.” A biomarker for acute heart failure would be both a diagnostic and prognostic tool for physicians. Scientific proof of the study’s findings could lead to an approved clinical testing method that can influence therapy and clinical decision making.

The University of Pennsylvania’s Liang says, “For people who have already had heart failure, it might predict how well they will do in the future. For people who have symptoms consistent with heart failure but may not have heart failure, a simple blood test could provide insights about species, behavior, broods, and frequently asked questions for anyone who is curious.

Some of the maps showing where periodical cicadas emerge date from as far back as the 19th century and are, not surprisingly, outdated, says Simon. They also overestimate periodical cicada range limits. The UConn lead team spent much of May and June on the road, living out of their cars, locating and mapping the distribution of the cicadas. They found dense populations from the mountains of Northern Georgia to the oak forests of Cape Cod.

The researchers say the work has ramifications beyond updating the maps. “The questions involved are not trivial,” they wrote on the web site. “Periodical cicada responses to deglaciation may provide insights into the possibility that they are useful for monitoring forest and ecosystem health, while the biogeography of broods and species may provide critical insights into the general nature of species, speciation processes, and gene flow between species. Modern transportation, highly accurate base maps, GPS technology, and a better understanding of periodical cicada biology provide unprecedented opportunities for accurately mapping Magicicada populations.” To date, the team has surveyed and mapped more than 10,000 localities where the periodical cicadas have emerged, using detailed base maps and GPS technology. In an effort to involve the public, people living in or visiting the regions that are home to the cicadas were invited to report cicada sightings via the Magicicada web site. The data collected through the web was kept separate from that gathered by the research team, and later checked for accuracy.

The outpouring of interest and support from the public was greater than we could have expected,” says Cooley. “The public’s reports on the web site helped us plan and prioritize our efforts, and the custom GPS data-loggers [computers mounted to the vehicles used by the team] helped our researchers obtain extremely accurate and detailed distribution information.” UConn is one of the leading universities in the field of cicada research. Connecticut’s cicadas are restricted to the coast and central valley regions and although the state did not have a population of cicadas this year, it does have one population – Brood II – that is due to emerge in the Connecticut River Valley in 2013. “The map we generate this year will help us understand how the distributions of these species change over time,” says Cooley, “and possibly help us understand the extinction of one of our local broods in 1954 and suggesting ways that we can preserve the remaining Connecticut brood.”
The following grants were received through the Office for Sponsored Programs (OSP) in June 2008. The list represents only new proposals awarded, and excludes continuations. The list is supplied to the Advance each month by OSP.

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Patent law program continued from page 1

well as related business law matters.

Because innovators encounter challenges arising from both the law and the market-place, the Connecticut Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation partners the law school's intellectual property clinic with the business school's Innovation Accelerator. Hillary Greene, the clinic's director, says “The IP Clinic provides students with the unique opportunity to counsel innovator-entrepreneurs on an extensive range of intellectual property issues. This is a tremendous opportunity for our students, and also for the law school, which has a broad-based commitment to clinical education, an innovative approach to the study of intellectual property law, and a dedication to serving the people of Connecticut.”

Other participating law schools are the American University Washington College of Law; The John Marshall Law School in Chicago; the University of Maine School of Law, Vanderbilt Law School; and William Mitchell College of Law, an independent law school in St. Paul, Minn.

Jon Dudas, under secretary of commerce for intellectual property and director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, says, “We look forward to providing a real-world experience for the students so they will be well prepared to tackle the complexities of intellectual property law that are so important in today's economy.”

Students applying for the patent and trademark programs must have certain legal prerequisites, and those wishing to practice in the patent program must also have certain scientific and technical prerequisites.
by Karen A. Graw

A project designed to give the public a new, enticing view of Northwest Connecticut as a regional asset, and to help educators and public historians use the region's historic sites effectively is now underway.

The project, “Locally Grown History – It's in Your Backyard,” is led by Robert Forbes, an assistant professor of history at the Torrington campus, who organized a group of educators, directors, curators and members of many local historic and cultural organizations to collaborate on the event.

“Torrington is Connecticut’s treasure trove of historical gems,” says Forbes. “Locally Grown History is an opportunity to bring educators and public historians together to explore the most effec- tive and interesting ways to reach students with these irreplaceable sites and artifacts. Since Litchfield County is geographically large, the project packages the area’s historical assets (historical societies, museums, historic sites, and traditional artforms) and agricultural resources (coun- tries, orchards, farms, farmers markets, and farm stands) into a ‘frail’ so visitors can easily move from one to another as a day or weekend destination.

“While many of the sites that are part of this project are exceptional, only a few constitute a destination in and of themselves,” says Forbes. “Viewed collectively, however, the whole is far greater than the sum of its parts.”

He notes that the project hopes to create a revenue base for the historic sites and build networks among personnel at the sites for problem-solving, sharing ideas, and obtaining resources. At the same time, it aims to help re-brand Northwest Connecticut as a vibrant tourist destination and cultural site on a par with Massa- chusetts and New York – not just a pretty passage between them.

“This project will provide amenities that are both geographic-ally and cultural for tourists and provide a fuel-conserving alterna- tive to distant travel,” Forbes says. “In a time when we cannot travel to See stories – many of them related to each other – rather than as indi- vidual places, they become much more interesting to the public. This is where scholars can be helpful: locating the sites in a larger con- text and drawing the connections among them.”

The project also encourages integrating the historical resources with educational programs at institutions from K-12 to higher education.

“Locally Grown History” began on Labor Day and features prizes for people who visit the sites and keep track of the visits on “pass- ports” that look like postcards on Oct. 18 and 19 with special exhibits and a forum on the Torrington campus that will include workshops and panel discussions.

The program on Sunday, Oct. 19 will include addresses by Con- necticut State Historian Walter Woodward, an assistant professor of history, and by Carl Nold, presi- dent of Historic New England. There will also be workshops on the impact of geography, religion, and immigration on the state, and a roundtable discussion on “Teach- ing History: Local History in the World in Your Backyard.”

For more information about Locally Grown History, visit www. localgrownhistory.org or contact Melissa Flaherty at 860-626-6802.
Students travel to China to learn about traditional medicine

BY SHERI FISHER
A group of UConn students traveled across the globe this summer to learn about medical practices that have existed for thousands of years.

Seven students from the School of Pharmacy and six from other academic disciplines spent five weeks in Beijing, China studying traditional Chinese medicine.

They took field trips to herb farms and pharmacies, watched acupuncture performed on patients, and studied Mandarin. They also visited hospitals that prescribe herbal medicine and the factories that produce it.

“It was an amazing experience,” says Gregoria Rzdk, who is in UConn’s Pharm.D. program. “I never would have done something like this on my own. I learned a lot about the culture and many aspects of herbal medicine.”

UConn Study Abroad and the University School of Pharmacy, which has had a “sister” relationship with UConn’s School of Pharmacy since 2007, provided students with the opportunity to study at the university’s health sciences campus in the center of Beijing.

Although Western medicine is practiced in China, most citizens rely heavily on traditional Chinese medicine, says the program’s director, Diane Burgess, a professor of pharmaceutical sciences.

“Traditional Chinese medicine covers a range of medicinal practices that developed over thousands of years, including herbal medicine, massage therapy, and acupuncture,” she says. “Our program focused on herbal medicine, which is becoming a popular method of treatment in the West. We wanted our students to see how this other type of Chinese medicine is practiced in China, to learn more about it and how it well works.”

Students earned six credits for the program, which included seminars that covered the history and the basic theories of traditional Chinese medicine. They also studied the morphology and chemistry of Chinese herbs and minerals, quality control, and the clinical use of the medicines. Faculty at Peking University presented the lectures.

The students were also required to take 28 hours of instruction in Mandarin.

Students visited pharmaceutical groups and observed the preparation of Chinese herbs. They were shown ancient and modern processing methods, and learned how the major dosage forms are manufactured, including pills, powders, tablets, and capsules.

At herb farms, students learned how to identify plants and prepare sample specimens. Visits to hospitals and other community medical facilities gave students exposure to physicians prescribing and dispensing herbal medicines.

Rzdk was impressed by the quality control, and the production of herbal medicines.

“The quality control was far more than I expected, and I really appreciated that,” says Rzdk, who studied analytical chemistry as an undergraduate before going into pharmacy.

“The Chinese know absolutely every single part of each extract,” he says. “They have a standardized list of what to follow from the very beginning, with checkpoints along the way. Everything was done perfectly. We really want to show them that really care about analyti- cal chemistry and quality control of their herbal products.”

Alexandra Mooney, who is also in the Pharm.D. program, says the experience offered an opportunity to “see what health care is like in another country. The Chinese have been using herbal medicine for thousands of years, and health care in the West is changing and incorporating some of that.”

Mooney says the program was more than just learning about traditional Chinese medicine: “It was a wonderful cultural experience as well.”

Students travel to China to learn about traditional medicine

Neag faculty train teachers to help kids solve verbal math problems

BY ROBERT FRAIM
Most public school students can do simple math such as multiplication and division, but many have trouble applying those skills to real problems, according to teachers attending a University of Con- necticut seminar.

About two dozen Hartford teachers worked with professors from the Neag School of Educa- tion during a week-long summer seminar on strategies to help students solve problems requiring them to read, choose an appropri- ate mathematical approach, and explain their work.

“When they see a word prob- lem, a lot of students just look at it and say, ‘I can’t do this,’ ” said veteran teacher Meg Borowski, a math coach at Hartford’s Batchelder School.

Borowski and others played mathematical games, practiced problem-solving techniques, and created new classroom lessons un- der the direction of UConn math educators Megan Staples and Mary Trusaw.

Trusaw is Neag’s director of the project, supported by a $112,000 grant from the Connecticut Department of Higher Education, an expansion of a program that operated on a small scale last year at Batchelder and Bulkeley schools.

“We saw great improvement in our kids’ responses,” Paige Calhoun, a fourth-grade teacher at Batchelder, said during the sum- mer workshop. “It worked so well last year that I wanted to come back.”

Staples, the project co-director, said the ACCESS program will continue during the school year, as teachers form teams and meet regularly to discuss strategies and create new problem-solving les- sons. The lessons will be posted on the website of UConn’s Center for Research in Math Education. Teachers in the project are from Batchelder, Kennelly, and Bulkeley public schools and Watkinson, a private school in Hartford.

UConn’s Neag School has had a longstanding partnership with Hartford schools. The ACCESS project, supported by a $112,000 grant from the Connecticut Department of Higher Education, is an expansion of a program that operated on a small scale last year at Batchelder and Bulkeley schools.

“Even though it’s math, language is a primary issue. As soon as we deal with word problems, it all falls apart.”

In addition to outlining strategies to help non-English speaking students, UConn educators taught lessons on topics such as alge- braic reasoning and proportional reasoning.

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