Health Center VP honored for chemical engineering achievements

BY KRISTINA GOODNOUGH

Dr. Cato T. Laurencin, vice president for health affairs at the UConn Health Center and dean of the medical school, has been named among "100 Chemical Engineers of the Modern Era" by the American Institute of Chemical Engineers.

The recognition from the world’s leading organization for chemical engineering professionals acknowledges Laurencin’s work in tissue engineering to develop materials to promote bone repair and wound healing. Specifically, AIChE recognized Laurencin for development of a novel polymer-synthesized, ceramic composite-based system for bone repair and in vitro evaluation.

“This is a wonderful honor, made possible by the collective work of the colleagues on my research team,” says Laurencin, who received the recognition as part of the organization’s centennial celebration. The recognition is designed to highlight individuals who have contributed to the profession during the “Modern Era,” the years following World War II. The awards will be presented at the AIChE’s annual meeting in Philadelphia next month.

An orthopedic surgeon as well as a chemical engineer, Laurencin has focused much of his research on the development of materials to assist in treating orthopedic trauma and performing reconstructive surgeries and arthroplasties.

“The synthetic materials are biodegradable polymers or plastics made from specific compounds that are absorbed into the body as part of the healing process,” he says.

“Besides aiding in tissue repair and regeneration, these new materials don’t need to be removed like traditional materials.”

Mun Choi, dean of the School of Engineering, says, “Through the AIChE recognition, Dr. Laurencin has taken his rightful position alongside leading figures in the field.” Laurencin also has an appointment in the engineering school as a professor of chemical and biomolecular engineering.

“Dr. Laurencin has helped to expand the boundaries of chemical engineering and its influence on emerging technologies through his research and training activities in regen-

Students enjoy science-based opera at the Met

BY CAROL DAVOGE

The time: July 1945. The place: The Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. The action: Scientists prepare to test the first nuclear weapon.

And it’s an opera. Dr. Atomic, by the contemporary post-minimalist American composer John Adams and librettist Peter Sellars, had its debut at New York’s Metropolitan Opera recently.

Thanks to a special partnership between the School of Fine Arts and the Met, science and arts students from the UConn were able to attend the final dress rehearsal on Oct. 9.

The trip was one of the activities in the Year of Science.

The UConn science students reacted enthusiastically, saying they wanted to participate because it afforded them a different experience from their daily studies. Most had never been to an opera.

“It breathed new life into opera – it was something more modern,” said David Lindsay, a biomedical engineering student.

As the bomb is being armed, thunder blasts, lightning flashes, and rain and wind blow wildly. Despite protests, General Grove orders that the test will go on. When the skies clear and the wind ceases, the scientists drop silently to their knees until the bright light of the bomb blast flashes across the stage, ending the opera.

Physics student Sarah Lamb said she was fascinated by how much modern technology was used to accomplish the visual and sound effects. “It was totally different from what you think of as opera,” she said.

Emergency management grant awarded to UConn

BY MARY LOU SULLIVAN

The U.S. Department of Education has awarded a $500,000 Emergency Management for Higher Education grant to the University of Connecticut’s Center for Continuing Studies to fund a state-of-the-art behavior threat assessment model.

“In the wake of the Virginia Tech tragedy, it becomes increasingly important for higher education institutions to shift their focus from a strategy based purely on response to one based much more strongly on prevention,” says Neal Olderman, UConn’s principal investigator for the grant. “The overarching goal of this project is to enhance the University’s commitment to a safe learning and working environment that collaborates with off-campus partners in advancing a supportive community that is free of threats and violence.”

The threat assessment model will be incorporated into UConn’s existing emergency management plans, and will involve students, faculty, staff and surrounding community members. The program will also include a computerized crisis leadership simulation, as well as classroom discussions and exercises for senior officials.

Specialized training in behavior threat assessment and crisis leadership will be pro-

see Students at the Met page 8

Students at the Met

Students react to the UConn science students’ visit to the Metropolitan Opera.

Students enjoy science-based opera at the Met

BY CAROL DAVOGE

The time: July 1945. The place: The Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. The action: Scientists prepare to test the first nuclear weapon.

And it’s an opera. Dr. Atomic, by the contemporary post-minimalist American composer John Adams and librettist Peter Sellars, had its debut at New York’s Metropolitan Opera recently.

Thanks to a special partnership between the School of Fine Arts and the Met, science and arts students from the UConn were able to attend the final dress rehearsal on Oct. 9.

The trip was one of the activities in the Year of Science.

The UConn science students reacted enthusiastically, saying they wanted to participate because it afforded them a different experience from their daily studies. Most had never been to an opera.

“It breathed new life into opera – it was something more modern,” said David Lindsay, a biomedical engineering student.

As the bomb is being armed, thunder blasts, lightning flashes, and rain and wind blow wildly. Despite protests, General Grove orders that the test will go on. When the skies clear and the wind ceases, the scientists drop silently to their knees until the bright light of the bomb blast flashes across the stage, ending the opera.

Physics student Sarah Lamb said she was fascinated by how much modern technology was used to accomplish the visual and sound effects. “It was totally different from what you think of as opera,” she said.

see Students at the Met page 8
Heilig Memorial Concert feature four internationally known pianists

BY CAROL MONTGOMERIE

The Twelfth Annual Charles and Alice Murray Heilig Memorial Concert, presented by the School of Fine Arts, brings to UConn a program by four internationally recognized pianists: Menahem Pressler, Frederic Chiu, Andrew Russo, and Neal Larrabee.

The concert, which inaugurates Jorgensen’s new Steinway Model D Grand Piano, will take place on Sunday, Oct. 26 at 3 p.m. in Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts. Admission is free.

The concert is a tribute to the life of Charles Heilig (1920-2007), who with his late wife Alice Murray Heilig and their daughter Cheryl, have been major benefactors to UConn and the School of Fine Arts. “This very special musical event for the public is our way of expressing our appreciation of a man who believed in us, who opened doors to the musical world for our students, and who enriched the artistic program at UConn and in the state,” says David Woods, dean of the School of Fine Arts.

Menahem Pressler, 84, an icon of classical music, founded and performed with the Beaux Arts Trio for more than 50 years, has recorded more than 80 albums. He received his fifth Grammy nomination in 2006. His honors include a Lifetime Achievement Award from Gramophone magazine (one of only five ever awarded); Germany’s highest cultural honor, the Cross of Merit; and France’s highest honor, the Commandeur in Letters and Arts. He holds the Dean Charles H. Webb Chair in Music at Indiana University. Frederic Chiu is an award-winning artist of the Romantic period. A non-traditional pianist, he is influenced by his Asian/American/European background and his exploration of artificial intelligence and human psychology. He has recorded more than 20 albums, including the works of Prokofiev. He is an artist-teacher at Indiana University.

Andrew Russo is a young, Grammy-nominated pianist. Classically trained, he specializes in contemporary piano, including electro-acoustic music and the hybrid world of live music and theatre. He is artist-in-residence at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, N.Y.

Neal Larrabee is a member of the New England Trio and heads the Piano Division in UConn’s School of Fine Arts. He is highly respected in Russia for his interpretation of works by Russian composers.

In addition to creating a tribute to Charles Heilig, we wanted the audience to hear the full range of the new Steinway Grand,” says Woods. “To hear four internationally ranked artists in one program rarely happens. The generosity of the Heilig family toward the University includes, in addition to the Alice Murray-Heilig Annual Concert Fund, the Alice Murray-Heilig Piano Fund, the Alice Murray-Heilig Scholarship, the Alice Murray-Heilig Graduate Assistantship in Piano; the Murray-Heilig Scholarship Fund, and the Alice Murray-Heilig Chair in Music, the first endowed chair in the School of Fine Arts. The family also established the Murray-Heilig Chair in Surgery, the Murray-Heilig Chapel Endowment Fund, and the Murray-Heilig Chair in Molecular Medicine at the Health Center.

Charles Heilig was a member of the Foundation Board of Directors from 1987 to 1998.

Conservation contest a success among students

BY RICHARD VEILLEUX

When Catherine Pomposi was handed the job of coordinating this year’s EcoMadness contest, her goals were to get more students involved and increase the amount of water and energy conserved during the bi-annual three-week contest.

She succeeded in both.

The junior from Southington recruited 32 eco-captains, nearly one for every floor in each residence hall involved. They ran movies in the residence halls – Planet Earth – and in the Student Union Theatre – Into the Wild.

Before showing Into the Wild, she explained to the audience that unless people become more environmentally aware, the pristine forests and lakes and mountains seen in the movie will be no more. She also made sure that the editors of the Stroll Street News – a mimeographed newsletter posted in residence hall bathrooms – carried ads for EcoMadness.

The results? Every building in every complex that participated – North, Northwest, North, Towers, and Shippee – showed an improvement compared to last fall’s contest. Sherman/Webster, a building in Towers, won the energy reduction contest, cutting their energy use by more than 28 percent for the period. Another building in Towers – Morgan/Trumbull/Sousa/Lafayette – won the water conservation contest by reducing its water use by nearly 10 percent, more than 9 gallons a day, during the three weeks.

“Catherine did a great job,” says Rich Miller, director of the Office of Environmental Policy, where Pomposi is a student intern. “It’s a real challenge to put this together, recruit enough eco-captains, and motivate everybody to really work at conservation.” Pomposi says the event is held in late September for three reasons: to reach out to freshmen early in their careers – all the residence halls involved are predominantly freshman dorms; because the Fenton River typically has not reappeared in the fall after summer’s heat and dry spells; and because the demand for water and electricity on campus, with roughly 13,000 students moving in, typically spikes at that time.

“I think the results show that we have well educated and younger greenies coming in,” she says. How much they learned she will know in a few weeks, she says, when she checks the sub-meters installed in the residence halls to see whether the energy and water use levels have remained low since the EcoMadness campaign ended.

Now, Pomposi, who is studying to be a climate scientist, is taking on another challenge – coordinating Earth Day activities on campus.

Flu shots offered Oct. 27-28

Faculty, staff, and students can receive flu shots on Monday, Oct. 27, and Tuesday, Oct. 28, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. in the Student Union Ballroom. Appointments are not necessary.

The shots will be administered by nurses from Student Health Services.

There is a $20 charge, payable in cash or by check. Students may also charge the cost to their University fee bill.

Please bring your UConn I.D.
Merger creates ‘one-stop-shopping’ for students with disabilities

BY SHERRY FISHER

The Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) and the University Program for College Students with Learning Disabilities (UPLD) have merged to form one office serving all students with disabilities. The office is located on the second floor of the Wilbur Cross Building.

“Now students have access to services for all constituents, including faculty and staff, now that services are consolidated in one location. Also the opportunities for collaboration on research are significantly enhanced with faculty and staff from both programs meeting regularly,” says Manjushri Banerjee, associate director of the Center.

The merging also creates benefits for all constituents, including faculty and staff, now that services are consolidated in one location. Also the opportunities for collaboration on research are significantly enhanced with faculty and staff from both programs meeting regularly. Banerjee says that students with disabilities are the largest growing minority population in higher education, noting that the Center works with more than 1,000 students at any given time. Of these, the largest number have chronic health conditions, such as asthma and diabetes. Some students are undergoing chemotherapy, others are recovering from major illness or surgery.

“These kids are amazing in terms of trying to keep their lives as normal as possible, but may have some limitations imposed on them because of their conditions,” says Korbel. “We can help out by providing accommodations that enable them to be in school.”

Each student is looked at individually. “Every student is different in terms of how we try and assist them in maximizing their chances for success,” she says. “We don’t guarantee success. We guarantee access, but we also try to give them the tools they need to become successful.”

After chronic disabilities, the next largest group seeking help is students with psychiatric disabilities. “Many of our students have significant mental health issues,” Korbel says. “We work with them to find what types of accommodations are appropriate for them in order to fully participate in campus life and help them find other resources on campus.”

“This campus is amazingly responsive in terms of working with students with disabilities,” Korbel says. “We’re fortunate to have had such tremendous institutional support. Many students with disabilities tell us that being at UConn is the most independent they’ve been in their entire lives.”

New sculpture in Babcock Library to be dedicated Oct. 23

BY SUZANNE ZACK

University Libraries will celebrate the installation of the sculpture “Endangered Species” by internationally known sculptor, printmaker, and painter Werner Pfeiffer on Thursday, Oct. 23 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Pfeiffer’s sculpture, titled “Endangered Species,” uses books that have been sealed shut, then mutilated, and placed on shelves lined with pages from the dictionary, making a compelling statement about the power of the written word and censorship. The work, which measures 7 feet by 24 feet, was created in the 1980s and exhibited throughout the U.S. and Europe. It is a gift of the artist.

A native of Stuttgart, Germany, Pfeiffer attended the Akademie der Bildenden Kunste (State Academy of Fine Arts and Design) in Stuttgart, where he trained as a fine artist specializing in book art. He emigrated to New York in 1961, where he worked for nearly a decade as a freelance artist and art director, earning many citations and awards for his work. He was appointed professor and director of the Adlib Press at the prestigious Pratt Institute in 1969, a position he held for 42 years.

Pfeiffer’s books, collages, drawings, paintings, prints, and sculptures have been shown internationally in more than 100 group exhibitions and in more than 60 solo shows in countries including Chile, Colombia, France, Germany, Israel, Sweden, Switzerland, and in the U.S. In addition to being in many private and corporate collections, he is represented in the U.S. in institutions including the Brooklyn Museum, the Guggenheim Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art. His work has also been shown at institutions including the Buchmuseum in Dresden, Klingsor Museum in Offenbach, the National Museum and Ostergoterslag in Sweden, and the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, where his work was also exhibited in a show together with that of his wife, Lise Pourier, a collagist. In addition to UConn’s library, his work may also be seen at UConn’s Law School, at the criminal court building in Waterbury, the offices of The Hartford Courant, and elsewhere.

Pfeiffer is scheduled to attend the dedication, as is University President Michael J. Hogan.

Pfeiffer’s “Endangered Species” has been installed in the highly popular and often crowded Bookworms Café, a prime location on campus for socializing, studying, and eating. The café was expanded 625 square feet this past summer, thanks in part to a gift from the Class of 2006.

Renowned ecologist to give lecture

BY CRIS WELLS

Gene Likens, a distinguished ecologist who discovered acid rain more than 40 years ago, will speak about one of his latest research projects—the impact of road salt on an alpine lake in New Hampshire—on Thursday, Oct. 23, at 4 p.m. in Room 130 of the Biology/Physics Building.

The lecture is part of Likens’ yearly two-week stay at UConn as a distinguished research professor (visiting) in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Likens will also meet for discussions with six groups of students during his stay.

For 43 years, Likens has studied the effects of road salt on Mirror Lake, near the base of the Hubbard Brook Valley in New Hampshire. Likens is a distinguished senior scientist and founding director of the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, N.Y., a center of highly cited ecological research. His studies of Hubbard Brook have shown how land-use practices affect the functioning of the ecosystem. His work led to the discovery by his research team of acid rain caused by the combustion of fossil fuels.

A National Medal of Science winner, in 2003 Likens won the Blue Planet Prize for outstanding scientific research that helps to solve global environmental problems.
**Study shows birth trauma can impact new mothers’ ability to breastfeed**

**BY COLIN POLITRAS**

Up to a third of all new mothers report suffering through a traumatic childbirth. For some – believed to be up to 9 percent – the birth is such a traumatic event that they experience post-traumatic stress disorder, the same debilitating disorder that scars the lives of combat veterans and victims of rape and other violent crimes.

This frightening and debilitating trauma can cause women to abandon their aspirations for future children, damage their ability to bond with their babies, and leave them permanently psychologically scarred.

Cheryl Tatano Beck, Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of Nursing, is one of the country’s leading experts on post-traumatic stress disorder and childbirth. She has spent the past 20 years studying postpartum depression mood and anxiety disorders.

In her latest findings, Beck has found that birth trauma can have an adverse impact on some women’s ability to breastfeed.

“Working closely with the Trauma and Birth Stress charitable trust in Auckland, New Zealand, Beck evaluated the detailed responses of 52 mothers who participated in her research project. Her results showed that the impact of birth trauma can lead new mothers down two strikingly different paths with regard to breastfeeding.

For some, the trauma propels them into persevering in breastfeeding to prove their “success” as a mother and perhaps to make up to their infant for the difficult birth.

As one mother in Beck’s study who had had an emergency Cesarean said, “Breastfeeding became my focus for overcoming the birth and proving to everyone else and mostly to myself that there was something that I could do right. It was part of my crusade, so to speak, to prove myself as a mother.”

Yet for others, birth trauma sets in motion a chain of events – intrusive flashbacks, detachment from their child, and physical pain – that can curtail their attempts to breastfeed.

A first-time mother who had induced labor followed by a failed vacuum extraction and a Cesarean delivery wrote, “When I breastfed my baby, I felt like it was one more invasion upon my body and I couldn’t handle that after the labor I suffered. Whenever I put her to the breast, I wanted to scream and vomit at the same time. After a horrible eight weeks, I made the decision to stop breastfeeding.”

Another first-time mother who endured a long, painful labor in which the epidural did not work and who ended up with a forceps delivery stated: “I had flashbacks to the birth every time I would feed him. When he was put on me in the hospital, he wasn’t breathing and he was blue. I kept picturing this … Breastfeeding was a similar position … I would get really upset and cry when I fed him, which would cause my baby to cry.”

Beck concludes that intensive one-on-one support for trauma-traumatized mothers may be necessary to help them establish breastfeeding. Sensitivity and awareness by medical professionals of the traumatized mother’s needs may also be helpful.

During the postpartum period, it is suggested that healthcare providers be attentive to the symptoms that may indicate a new mother is traumatized, such as being withdrawn, having a dazed look, or suffering temporary amnesia.

Beck’s latest research study: “Impact of Birth Trauma on Breastfeeding – A Tale of Two Pathways,” which appears in the July/August 2008 issue of *Nursing Research*, was co-authored by Sue Watson, chairperson of the Trauma and Birth Stress charitable trust.

---

**FYE seminars offer freshmen opportunity to pursue interests**

**BY KAREN A. GRAVA**

This year’s freshmen come from a wide range of different backgrounds, but one thing a majority have in common is participation in a First Year Experience course.

About 2,700 students are taking an FYE class this year, says David Ouimette, director of the program. More than 150 sections of FYE courses are being offered.

The program has grown significantly since its introduction in 1996, when 332 freshmen enrolled in the classes.

Today, many students take the basic course designed to acquaint students with the University and help freshmen and transfer students adjust to the new expectations they face here,” Ouimette says. “Our goal is to enhance their academic and interpersonal skills.”

Other students sign up for seminar courses intended to provide them with an opportunity to investigate topics of professional interest to the instructor through guided research, reading, discussion, and writing.

“These courses help students learn independently and engage actively in the academic life of the University,” says Ouimette.

Seminar courses range from cooking to digital photography, leadership, health, and the evolution of language.

One course keeps students on their feet, learning about how dance has changed through the centuries. “Dance with Jane Austen,” taught by Thomas Boecherer, is looking at the presidential election in a course called “Political Palm Reading.”

The course is looking at who – by race, gender, religion, and other forms of identity – will be voting for each of the presidential candidates.

“I encourage students to develop an opinion and defend their opinion with facts,” says Boecherer, who is also a Ph.D. candidate in political science. “The course doesn’t provide concrete answers, but looks at what it means to be American or ‘anti-American,’ and how different cultures view major issues.”

He says many American support the death penalty, for example, while many Europeans view it as barbaric. Some people vote one way in a caucus where others can see how they are voting and another way when the ballot is secret.

“We will talk about what is happening in various parts of the world, as well as what is happening in the U.S.,” Boecherer says. “My goal is for students to decide for themselves what they feel is right or wrong.”

---
Pharmacy professor holds students to high expectations

BY SHERRY FISHER

Robin Bogner wasn’t planning a career in academics.

“I thought I’d climb the corporate ladder in the pharmaceutical industry,” says Bogner, an associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences.

As an undergraduate, she had worked for four summers at Johnson & Johnson, and her heart was set on becoming an industrial leader. Once she got to graduate school at the University of Iowa, however, something happened.

“They made me a teaching assistant,” she says, “and I was derailed. A student in a lab was struggling with a question and I explained to him how to answer it. When he said, ‘Oh, I see,’ I was hooked. There was no better feeling in the world. I went into pharmacy to help people, and I realized I could do that by teaching.”

Bogner, who joined the UConn faculty in 2004, was named a 2008 University of Connecticut Teaching Fellow. She has taught many courses, including solution and solid dosage forms of drugs, compounding, and special topics in clinical rotations.

Each student brings his or her own talent, personality, and experience to the classroom, says Bogner, who was also named 2007 School of Pharmacy Teacher of the Year. “That’s a challenge, particularly in classes with 100 students, because you only have one voice to talk to them all. You can’t engage students with a one-way conversation and expect learning to occur, so I use different strategies to effect learning.”

“As pharmacists, the students are going to have to dispense these new dosage forms and they need to experience how fast the tablets actually dissolve.”

Bogner pulls out a large bag of three-inch, clear plastic horse capsules. “It would be hard to explain to students how large this really is,” she says. “So I show them instead.”

During one class, students test placebo tablets to experience how they dissolve in the mouth.

“Any solution that can speed up the healing and long-term function is hugely important to patients,” says Laurence.

Laurence joined the University of Connecticut in August. He holds the Van Dusen Endowed Chair in Academic Medicine and is a professor in the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery. He is a member of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences.

“His teaching style sets him far apart from instructors or trainers; she strives to teach her students not what to think, but how to develop their own thinking style.”

What does Bogner enjoy about teaching? It keeps her learning, which in turn, makes her a better teacher, she says. “Every time I teach something, I get a better understanding of it. That’s important, because I owe my students the best explanation I can offer.”

She says she hopes that when her students complete her courses, they are able to access what they’ve learned when working in the field.

“I’ve taught them what they need to know—they have the information, but I want them to be motivated to go back in their brains and access that knowledge when they need it and figure out how to address a particular problem,” says Bogner. “They have to be willing to use the knowledge, take a risk, and try to find a solution.”

100 Chemical Engineers

By Carolyn Pennington

Good health should not be a privilege; it should be a right. That was one of the assertions made on Oct. 3 at a forum on the problems of accessing health care in Hartford, which attracted more than 50 community members, health care providers, professors, students, and politicians.

The event, held at Hartford’s Real Art Ways, was organized by UConn medical students Erica Hinz, Teresa Doucet, Shan Essam, and Shabba Venkatesh. “We reach out of the gate bringing together a very diverse and enthusiastic group of people to raise awareness about this issue,” says Hinz.

Speakers included Dr. Laurel Baldwin-Ragaven, Hartford family physician and human rights scholar at Trinity College; small business owner Kevin Galvin, Connecticut Commercial Insurance; and Carlos Rivera, Hartford’s director of health and human services.

“This is a critical issue that needs all of our attention,” said Rivera. “Good health should not be a privilege; it should be a right. It is incumbent on us to take on the responsibility and health care and being denied the right to health care.”

Event highlights access to health care

The U.S. is the world’s only advanced nation that fails to provide health coverage to all its residents, Rivera maintained. In 2005, Connecticut spent approximately $15 billion on health care, including $572 million on the direct health costs of uninsured residents.

Doucet, one of the students, said, “The oft-quoted statistic that 47 million Americans lack health insurance is nowhere more apparent than in Hartford. Approximately 20 to 30 percent of residents of the so-called insurance capital of the world are uninsured, and twice as many are underinsured.”

The uninsured receive less preventive care, less appropriate care for chronic illnesses, and lower hospital services when admitted, they are also more likely to die prematurely, she added.

The medical students’ desire to raise awareness about health care disparities meshes with the Health Center’s Strategic Plan for Diversity. “As an institution, our goal is to make sure the best business practices of building, valuing, and managing a diverse workforce and student body are fully implemented, operationally successful, and continually improved,” said Carolyn Lyle, executive director of the Office of Diversity and Equity at the Health Center.

Lyle cited a recent study by the Connecticut Health Foundation’s Policy Panel on Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities. She said that lack of diversity in the health care workforce has a substantial negative impact on the quality of care for racial and ethnic communities.

Recommendations included enhancing Hartford’s health and wellness infrastructure, improving access to affordable prescription medications, and making primary health care more accessible by expanding the hours of operation at Hartford’s health centers.

The students plan to turn the artwork and multimedia presentations from the event into a mobile exhibit to be displayed at libraries, community centers, hospitals, and Hartford’s City Hall.

“We hope to build on this over the next year and start engaging the community on issues that are sometimes thought of as discrete problems, but which are connected to what is happening with our health care system,” says Venkatesh. “For example, are there parks? Is there a safe way to cross the street? Are your children safe in the neighborhood? These are all questions that directly tie into the health of our communities.”
### GRANTS

The following grants were received through the UConn Health Center’s Office of Grants and Contracts in July 2008. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investigator</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Award Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Puddington, L.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Immunology</strong></td>
<td><strong>National Institute of</strong></td>
<td><strong>$222,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>06/08-04/09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maternal Transfer of Protection from Allergic Gastrointestinal Disease</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Allergy &amp; Infectious Diseases</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rowe, D.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reconstructive Sciences</strong></td>
<td><strong>National Institute of</strong></td>
<td><strong>$482,801</strong></td>
<td><strong>09/06-04/09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assessing Lineage Decisions of Musculoskeletal Progenitor Cells with Ageing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Arthritis &amp; Musculoskeletal &amp; Skin Diseases</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shapiro, L.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Center for Vascular Biology</strong></td>
<td><strong>U.S. Army</strong></td>
<td><strong>$185,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>04/08-04/09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prostate Specific Membrane Antigen Regulation of Prostate Tumor Growth Angiogenesis &amp; Integrin Signal Transduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>National Institute of</strong></td>
<td><strong>$181,300</strong></td>
<td><strong>07/06-07/08</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vella, A.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Immunology</strong></td>
<td><strong>National Institute of</strong></td>
<td><strong>$337,185</strong></td>
<td><strong>07/06-04/09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proinflammatory Cytokines Block T Cell Death in Vivo</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Allergy &amp; Infectious Diseases</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wadhwa, S.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Craniofacial Sciences</strong></td>
<td><strong>National Institute of</strong></td>
<td><strong>$135,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>07/06-04/09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accelerated Osteoarthritis in the TmJ of Biglycan/Fibromodulin DKO Mice</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Dental &amp; Craniofacial Research</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wagner, J.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Oral Health &amp; Diagnostic Sciences</strong></td>
<td><strong>National Institute of</strong></td>
<td><strong>$181,300</strong></td>
<td><strong>07/06-07/08</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavioral and Physiological Responses to Race Related Stress in Diabetic Women</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Diabetes &amp; Digestive &amp; Kidney Diseases</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Xue-Jun, L.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Neuroscience</strong></td>
<td><strong>National Institute of</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,940</strong></td>
<td><strong>12/07-02/09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Generation of Cortical Motoneurons from Embryonic Stem Cells</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Neurological Disorders &amp; Stroke</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Private Grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investigator</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Award Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agar, J.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reconstructive Sciences</strong></td>
<td><strong>American Academy of Fixed Prosthodontics</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,100</strong></td>
<td><strong>06/08-09/09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Albertson, P.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Psychiatry</strong></td>
<td><strong>Cancer Therapy &amp; Research Center Foundation</strong></td>
<td><strong>$60</strong></td>
<td><strong>09/05-05/13</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Antonini, S.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Medical Genetics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Selenium and Vitamin E Oxidoreduction Trial</strong></td>
<td><strong>$80</strong></td>
<td><strong>05/04-05/04</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brenner, B.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Comprehensive</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inovotec LLC</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,700</strong></td>
<td><strong>02/07-01/09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Surgical Adjunct Breast and Bowel Project Breast and Bowel Cancer Treatment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dana-Farber Cancer Institute</strong></td>
<td><strong>National Institute for Deafness &amp; Other Communication Disorders</strong></td>
<td><strong>$301,411</strong></td>
<td><strong>07/06-06/09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finck, C.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pediatrics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Conn. Children's Medical Center</strong></td>
<td><strong>$57,023</strong></td>
<td><strong>07/07-07/08</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Finck Research Support</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>The Jackson Laboratory</strong></td>
<td><strong>$127,893</strong></td>
<td><strong>05/07-05/07</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hoch, J.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Psychiatry</strong></td>
<td><strong>Harvard University</strong></td>
<td><strong>$231,959</strong></td>
<td><strong>05/07-04/09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kream, B.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Medicine</strong></td>
<td><strong>A Chromosome 10 DTL Associated with IFG-1 and Bone Mass</strong></td>
<td><strong>$127,893</strong></td>
<td><strong>09/07-05/09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Li, Y.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Genetics &amp; Developmental Biology</strong></td>
<td><strong>March of Dimes</strong></td>
<td><strong>$82,346</strong></td>
<td><strong>04/05-04/05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mazzucca, A.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Orthopedics</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Donaghue Foundation</strong></td>
<td><strong>$85,106</strong></td>
<td><strong>07/04-07/04</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morgen, E.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Library</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prospective Random Study Following Rotator Cuff Repair</strong></td>
<td><strong>$102,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>09/04-04/04</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nichols, F.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Psychiatry</strong></td>
<td><strong>American Association</strong></td>
<td><strong>$12,600</strong></td>
<td><strong>07/04-04/04</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tissue Destructive Biological Activity of Complex Lipids Synthesized by Porphyromonas endodontalis</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>American Heart Association</strong></td>
<td><strong>$45,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>07/04-06/09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do, M.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Center for Vascular Biology</strong></td>
<td><strong>American Heart Association</strong></td>
<td><strong>$45,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>07/04-04/04</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanisms of STP Receptor Degradation and Vascular Instability</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Mechanical Loading of Bone and Prostaglandins</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drentsen, S.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Surgery</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ludwig J. Purtell Fund of Hartford Hospital</strong></td>
<td><strong>$20,005</strong></td>
<td><strong>07/06-06/06</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of Mast Histopathologic Tissue Changes at Site of Prosthetic Meshes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>piecemeal funds to other institutions and “passed through” to the UConn Health Center</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pappagallo, M.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pediatrics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ovatins Pharmaceuticals</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,800</strong></td>
<td><strong>05/05-04/05</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Fellow Conferences</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Puddington, L.</strong></td>
<td><strong>$222,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>06/08-04/09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wadhwa, S.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Craniofacial Sciences</strong></td>
<td><strong>National Institute of</strong></td>
<td><strong>$135,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>07/06-06/09</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### State Grants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investigator</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Award Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hawks, J.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Psychiatry</strong></td>
<td><strong>Conn. Office of Policy &amp; Management</strong></td>
<td><strong>$129,997</strong></td>
<td><strong>07/06-04/09</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality Assurance Plan for the Emily J. Settlement Agreement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Conn. Children’s Medical Center</strong></td>
<td><strong>$100,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>07/07-06/07</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kuchel, G.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Center on Aging</strong></td>
<td><strong>Children’s Trust Fund Council</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>01/07-08/07</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liberman, J.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Neuroscience</strong></td>
<td><strong>Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation</strong></td>
<td><strong>$93,417</strong></td>
<td><strong>07/07-07/08</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants in the Husky Run set out from Gampel Pavilion. The annual 5K run is an opportunity for students and members of the University community to join players from the Men’s Basketball Team in a race just before the season begins. The event took place Oct. 19.
PHOTO FROM THE ALEXEY VON SCHLIPPE GALLERY WEBSITE
Graduate student partners with National Geographic on turtle study

By Cindy Weiss

In an era of high-tech science, a biology graduate student is using an advanced instrument and decidedly low-tech adaptations to yield new data and excite youngsters about a creature that antedates technology: the turtle.

Tobias Landberg, a fourth-year Ph.D. candidate in ecology and evolutionary biology, is collecting data from turtles that swim and surface along Connecticut's waterways. He spent this past summer working with National Geographic on a project using the "Crittercam," a $10,000 video camera that is attached to the back of snapping turtles to track their travels.

Although Landberg's doctoral research focuses on a different species: salamanders - he wrote his master's thesis on turtles at the University of Massachusetts before coming to UConn to study for his Ph.D. When National Geographic was looking for a turtle expert to work on the project, they turned to UConn and Landberg was a natural choice.

Landberg has long been interested in how turtles breathe when moving. But the Crittercam can capture more - where they go, how long they stay, when and where they surface. And it does it all without human intervention, once the camera is attached.

"Sort of like old school naturalists," says Landberg. "We're observing individuals of the species to see what they do." The project was launched during the summer on the Connecti-Cut River by National Geographic, with the help of Landberg, Riverfront Recapture, and 10 teenagers from Hartford public schools, who were recruited by the "Our Piece of the Pie" organization for summer career-building work.

The high school students got hands-on field experience in biology and the excitement of scientific discovery. For their first specimen, they trapped the Godzilla of snapping turtles, a 39-pound creature that was missing its lower jaw. How does a snapping turtle reach that size when it's missing a mandible? Landberg and the students set to work to find out.

Landberg, who has been a Schweng Mentoring Fellow in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and has mentored eight UConn undergraduates, is now supervising an independent study on the turtle data by another undergraduate.

Landberg dropped out of high school at the age of 17, and tried his hand at carpentry, painting, general contracting, and restoring old houses. He also traveled, and a trip to Costa Rica revived his early interest in biology. He earned his GED high school equivalency and later a master's degree at the University of Massachusetts before coming to UConn.

His hands-on construction skills have served him well. In earlier experiments in the lab, he created masks to learn more about how turtles breathe.

Turtles at rest can breathe by moving a shoulder girdle in and out of the shell and moving their limbs. But Landberg wanted to know how they breathe when they are in motion. He attached the masks to the mouths of box turtles, using surgical adhesive that stuck to their tough skin without hurting them, then had them walk on a treadmill and measured their breathing.

He filmed his exercise routines and was surprised to learn that they took small breaths very rapidly and that their breathing had no relationship to what their feet were doing.

Landberg's Ph.D. research, funded by a National Science Foundation doctoral dissertation grant, is on the effects of the environment on salamander development. But he's still fascinated by turtles.

"The natural behavior of these animals in the wild is still a mystery," he says.

Students at the Met

Continued from page 1

Mitchell Underwood, also a physics major, had learned about the Manhattan Project in middle school and was curious how music could be incorporated into such a technical, scientific story. "It was an accurate portrayal of one of the most important events in our history," he said, "and the music and special effects were incredible.

Anastasia Gusen, a microbiology student, said she was impressed by the way something designed for destruction was used as the basis for an opera.

During the rehearsal, David Woods, dean of the School of Fine Arts, sat near the physics students. "When the equations came on the screen, they reacted to the scientific part of the opera, while the music students reacted to the music," he noted.

Woods initiated the joint program in 2002 with then-Metropolitan Opera director Joe Volpe. "We're the only university in the U.S. with this collaborative, and we work with the Met on a variety of opportunities for students," he said.

During an intermission, Dr. Atomic composer John Adams explained that he chooses "themes and symbols that constitute our American consciousness, and in some cases, our American unconsciousness." He said he chose to create a stage work about the atomic bomb test since it epitomizes how the "whole relationship between humans and the world changed after we had the power to destroy everything."

Because Robert Oppenheimer was not only an accomplished scientist, but read poetry and spoke five languages, Adams included poems from the Sanskrit text the Bhagavad-Gita, Tewa American Pueblo Indian culture, 17th-century English preacher John Donne, and 20th-century American feminist activist Muriel Rukeyser.

Among the physics faculty attending the rehearsal was Winthrop Smith, professor of physics, who specializes in atomic, molecular, and optical physics.

Smith said it was an inspiring idea to bring science and arts students together for a day at the opera.