African Americans, and what it meant to see an African American taking office that has not been accessible to it means to see an African American taking the franchise, she called for reflection on "what 'memorable,' 'momentous,' 'monumental,' and the 2008 election, Nunnally described the blue.

but there is still a marked divide between red and middle, and even won some of the red states, carried the blue states and many in the Republican/Democratic) division of states, Obama promised to bring people together, divisions persist. He said that in the red/blue (Republican/Democratic) division of states, Obama carried the blue states and many in the middle, and even won some of the red states, but there is still a marked divide between red and blue.

Reflecting on the significance of race in the 2008 election, Nunnally described the election as 'momentous,' 'monumental,' and 'memorable.' Noting that only in 1965 did African Americans acquire the full privileges of the franchise, she called for reflection on "what it means to see an African American taking an office that has not been accessible to African Americans, and what it meant the appointment. As director, Singh will oversee operations and guide the Center's research and educational activities. He will be responsible for attracting resources and developing collaborative partnerships among the Center, government, and industry. He will also lead a team developing fuel cell technology and applications.

Singh is widely recognized for his technical expertise involving the accelerated corrosion of metals and alloys under bi-polar exposure conditions, as happens in advanced fuel cell electrochemical power generation systems.

Before joining the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, Singh held several technical and management positions at Ford Motor Co., Westinghouse Electric Corp., and FuelCell Energy. While at Ford's Visteon Corp., he managed proton exchange membrane fuel cell research and development. At Westinghouse Electric, he developed cell and stack component materials for solid oxide fuel cells, large-scale manufacturing processes, hydrocarbon processing, and 'on anode' reforming. At FuelCell Energy, he led the development work on corrosion tolerant materials, creep tolerant electrodes, and process scale up.

Singh earned his Ph.D. in metallurgy at the University of Sheffield, England, and an MBA from the University of Pittsburgh. He holds more than 50 U.S. patents and trade secrets, and he has authored or co-authored more than 100 technical reports and papers, as well as three book chapters. He is a Fellow of ASM International, the American Ceramic Society, and the National Association for the advancement of science.

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Injury prevention advice offered to female athletes during health program

BY CHRIS DEFRAENCESCO

Girls who attended a female sports health program at the Health Center Nov. 2 left with plenty to think about.

The more than 100 adolescent athletes and their parents learned from Health Center faculty about a syndrome known as “the female athlete triad,” what they can do today to avoid osteoporosis as adults, and how to reduce their risk of tearing a major knee ligament.

The female athlete triad refers to three interrelated health problems—low energy availability, menstrual disorders, and weak bones—that often are triggered by disordered eating.

“Importance of play”

UConn women’s basketball coach Geno Auriemma told the audience that there is no substitute for “being a kid and doing kid stuff.”

He said when it comes to physical activity, girls start to fall behind boys in middle school.

“When boys are in eighth grade, they do dumb stuff, they wrestle, they beat each other up, they play football, their bodies are constantly in motion, and they’re constant-ly training themselves without actual professional or parental or coaching training,” he said. “I think girls for the most part miss out on that. And all of a sudden they get to be in high school and their coach wants to put them through a rigorous program, and they’re not quite prepared for it.”

Auriemma said middle-school girls should force themselves to go out and play, and that both girls and boys should try different sports throughout the year.

His comments were part of a workshop on bone health and injury prevention presented by the Health Center’s New England Musculoskeletal Institute and its Celebrate Health program. The event was designed to raise awareness of the potential health challenges specific to young female athletes.

Need for calcium

UConn School of Medicine faculty member Susan Gebo, a registered dietitian, said the female athlete triad starts with poor eating habits that are common in athletes, including skipping meals, avoiding certain food groups, strict dieting, and binging.

“As a result of disordered eating, girls are likely to lose their menstrual period,” Gebo said, noting that the resulting lack of estrogen production leads to bone loss.

Bone loss later in life was the focus of Dr. Pam Taxel’s presentation. Citing research showing that close to 90 percent of females ages 12 to 19 don’t get the recommended daily calcium intake, Taxel, an osteoporosis expert, said it is important for this age group to take sufficient calcium to reach peak bone mass, which can protect against osteoporosis in adulthood.

Taxel recommends a daily intake of 1,300 milligrams of calcium, or four servings of calcium-rich foods, and 400 international units of vitamin D, which helps the body absorb calcium.

She said girls who limit their daily caloric intake can’t expect to get enough calcium and vitamin D.

“Often people tell me they think they need 1,200 calories a day to maintain their weight, but a young female athlete most of the time needs about double that,” Gebo said.

“The truth is, in order to perform, you really need a large amount of calories,” Gebo added, “and a female athlete does a dis-service to herself and her team if she’s not feeding herself well.”

Injury prevention

The young athletes also were told that because the strength of their hamstrings doesn’t keep pace with the strength of the quadriceps, they are up to eight times more likely to suffer an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tear than their male counterparts.

But Tom Trojan, a sports medicine specialist, also offered hope. He said the risk of this major knee injury can be greatly reduced in female athletes who re-learn their technique for landing from a jump.

“We identify poor body position, where the hips and knees are straight, landing on flat feet, and we teach good body position,” said Trojan, one of UConn’s team physicians. “Hips and knees are bent, land on the balls of the feet, and that reduces the risk of ACL injury.”

Trojan said the best time to introduce ACL prevention training is in the eighth or ninth grade, when the connection between the brain and the muscles used for landing are still developing.

“Many of these concepts must be well-received by coaches and players to be successful.”

He said the training also has performance-enhancing benefits, including improved vertical jump, hamstring strength, sprint speed, power endurance, and running economy.

“This kind of advice can change your life. Listen to what these experts have to say,” advised surprise guest Shea Ralph, who played on the UConn women’s basketball team from 1986 to 2001 and is now on Auriemma’s coaching staff.

Fuel Cell Cell director continued from page 1

of Corrosion Engineers, and serves as chairman of the ASM Energy Committee. He has received a number of honors and awards. He serves on the ASM Executive Committee and the editorial boards of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the American Ceramic Society.

The Connecticut Global Fuel Cell Center, established in 2001 with significant investment from Connecticut Innovations Inc. and Connecticut industries, is housed at Storrs. Its mission is to become the world’s premier academic resource for advanced research, development, and technology transfer in fuel cell technologies.

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The Reserve Officers Training Corp (ROTC) hosted at UConn is booming. “Our mission last year was to graduate 13 cadets,” says Lt. Col. Christine Harvey, head of the Department of Military Science in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. “We graduated 19. Now it’s 18, then it will be 20 next year, and 21 in 2011. We’ll surpass all the numbers.”

The department offers a range of courses that all ROTC cadets must take in order to graduate. The courses are open to the general student population as electives. When Harvey arrived at UConn in 2006, there were 36 students under “contract,” a term the Army uses to describe students who have signed paperwork committing them to four years of active duty after they graduate from the college. At the start of this academic year, the number had increased to more than 70.

Most contracted students receive full scholarships for tuition and fees, paid by the federal government to the University. The total has doubled since Harvey arrived, to more than $900,000 this year.

In addition, students from 10 other colleges in Connecticut attend ROTC programming at UConn, the only university in the state to offer it.

Harvey, who went through an ROTC program herself at the State University of New York at Cortland, has worked hard to get the program where it is. She also ran into a bit of luck: just as she was arriving, the Army lifted a cap on the number of scholarships programs could offer. That cap had hurt the efforts of her predecessor, Lt. Col. Paul Veilleux, to expand the program. But that wasn’t the only problem.

“When I got here in 2006, I was stunned by how many students met that didn’t know there was an ROTC presence here,” Harvey says. She decided to address the problem from the academic side first. “There was a disconnect in the curriculum, she says, “especially between the sophomore and junior years. The students were not ready to progress to the leader- ship course. And the quality of the training had to be improved.”

The training is rigorous. Contracted students (73 of the 101 currently enrolled) must be in the training room by 6 a.m. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for workouts, to prepare for the five-week course at Ft. Lewis, Wash., they’ll attend during the summer after their junior year.

“The course can make or break their careers. All cadets in the country – more than 4,400 attend last summer – are assessed during the activity, and their scores determine whether they are given active duty status. The course also determines which career path they will be assigned to. A better rating gives students a better chance of being assigned to one of their first three choices. “Over the years, students who lived far away were allowed to work out on their own rather than trek up here at 6 a.m.,” Harvey says. “When two of our students failed the test in Washington, that ended. I brought the training standards higher and the kids stepped up, they rose to the challenge.”

Harvey has also made the program more interesting and more enjoyable, adding painting balls to field exercises, giving leadership positions that had been the exclusive property of seniors to juniors, and letting the seniors design labs, teach, and mentor younger cadets.

“We’re not doing the juniors any justice if we don’t let them have leadership roles,” she says. “And it’s working. Students are now talking about it on campus.”

Harvey has also pursued some marketing strategies. Husky ROTC T-shirts have been added to the green camouflage uniforms usually seen on campus, and baseball caps are coming soon. She worked with admissions director Lee Melvin, and UConn’s online application form now includes a question asking whether the applicant would like information about ROTC. Flyers are also included in orientation packets. She and her top assistant, Master Sgt. Daniel Pinion, a senior military instructor, also plan to place ROTC brochures at various points around campus.

In addition, Harvey has partnered with the School of Nursing to try and inspire nursing students to join ROTC and become Army nurses – a critical need. The first cohort of students to apply for ROTC, currently completing their last year at UConn will also be her 25th year in the Army.

Then, Harvey says, she will have a new mission – retirement.

South African writer reflects on literature of reconciliation

Few books have been written by South African novelists that were inspired by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, according to playwright and author Zakes Mda. That, he says, may seem uncharacteristic, considering that many writers often harvest their material from society.

Mda, the 2008 Marsha Lilien Gladstein Visiting Professor in Human Rights, made his remarks during the Gladstein Distinguished Lecture on Human Rights in Konover Auditorium on Oct. 29. The lecture series is administered by the Human Rights Institute. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to deal with the human rights violations that occurred between 1960 and 1994 during the apartheid era in South Africa.

The Commission sought to affirm the dignity of the victims of apartheid and make recommendations about their rehabilitation. It also aimed to acknowledge the perpetrators of those violations, provided that they confessed all they knew to the satisfaction of the commissioners. The process was intended to bring about reconciliation and promote the transition to democracy in South Africa.

The TRC was an innovative alternative to the approach epitomized by the Nuremberg Trials and prosecutions of former Nazis after World War II, and has since been implemented in several other countries.

“One would have imagined that as a major event in South African life, the TRC would have generated a considerable amount of imaginative fiction from us – black writers,” said Mda, a South African who currently teaches at Ohio University.

Dearth of fiction

But for black people in South Africa there was nothing new in these revelations, he said. “Throughout the years we all knew that these atrocities were happening because they were happening to us. The fiction that we produced during the days of apartheid was, in fact, about those human rights violations. The atrocities were a revelation only to our white compatriots, those who had brought into state propaganda that any talk of South African security forces – the very Afrikaners who had been grounded in Calvinistic Christian teachings – committing atrocities was nothing but Communist propaganda.”

Publishers have played a significant role in the depiction of fiction surrounding the TRC, Mda said, noting that it’s difficult for new writers to publish books that are set during the apartheid era. “It has nothing to do with political censorship,” he said. “It’s a commercial decision. Publishers wrongly believe that stories about apartheid don’t sell. People don’t want to read about the past.”

Dramatic representations

“Theater, however, goes through different gate-keeping processes, he said. “Theater is highly subsidized by the state or private grants and foundations. Therefore commercial considerations are rarely the ultimate determining factor as to whether a work will be produced.”

Mda said that unlike writers of fiction, playwrights have written about the TRC quite extensively. “The stage thrives on what is dramatic and visually appealing,” he said. “What could be more visually impactful than the images that were captured on live television of perpetrators, former apartheid police officers, assuming the role of actors and demonstrating how they carried out the vilest acts of torture and murder? Here was the true spectacle: The spectacle of confession; the spectacle of violence; the spectacle of victims and their relatives bathing mournfully as evidence is presented, and then bursting out into searing screams before they faint.”

Mda noted the “carnevalisique atmosphere among spectators gathered outside the school audi-

toriums and church halls where the TRC held its hearings. Some sang freedom songs or hymns, others danced. "The TRC played well into black South African expressive culture," he said, "where there is a strong interrelationship of performance and reality.”

Mda said in the play Ubu and the Truth Commission, the main question was how to resolve the conflicting interests of justice and punishment on the one hand, and forgiveness and reconciliation on the other.

The production contributed to the debate at a time "when many black South Africans were beginning to question in whose interests really was all this talk of forgiveness and reconciliation,” he said. “It took the most was that people who admitted to committing atrocities were granted amnesty and continued to derive benefit from those wrongs.”

In Truth and Translation, a recent play about the TRC, the focus is on the victims and their perpetrators.

"This one takes a different direction in that it focuses on the translators and interpreters who had to simultaneously repeat the words of both victim and perpetrator in all the country’s 11 official languages,” Mda said. "They had to tell both sides of the story using the first person pronoun ‘I’. The play shows how their personal lives were affected just by speaking those words, taking ownership of each horrendous story.”

Zakes Mda, the 2008 Gladstein Visiting Professor in Human Rights, speaks at Konover Auditorium.
Education professor works to attract students of color into teaching

By Joanne Nesti

"The rise. The number going to college is now on students have attended techni- of boys with better cognitive and describing social interaction defi-

By Karen Singer

Overcoming obstacles
But the path has been anything but smooth.
"My father was absent for much of my childhood," he says. "Still, I felt very blessed to have wonderful relatives, including an aunt who was the only college graduate in my entire family." Spending summers with her, Irizarry recalls that she wouldn't allow him to go out to play until noon, so they could spend the morning on school work sheets and other drills.

"You have to make it," she would tell him.

"So I worked really hard," Irizarry says, "but also the sun, moon, and stars had to align in order for us to support and we can't base educational policy on luck.

Irizarry's memories of his years at Cathedral Prep, a high school seminary in Elmhurst, New York, include a constant struggle to navigate the school and neighborhood context, which were often at odds. There were times when he was disciplined for speaking non-standard English at school, while at other times, his language and discouragement were criticized by friends in the neighborhood for being "too white.

"Traversing all these different challenges can be a herculean task for urban students," he says, "but schools can do more to help.

Reaching out to students of color
The task is made harder by racism, which remains strong. Irizarry says, even in areas re-
garded as liberal. "We talk about civil rights struggles in the Deep South. In my writing, I refer to this area as the 'Deep North.' I have constantly been reminded that I am different. Race has always mat-
tered to me. Ethnicity has always mattered."

It certainly matters now, as he works to attract more students of color into the teaching profession. A major focus of his current research is an initiative he calls Project FUERTE (Future Urban Educators Conducting Research to Transform Teacher Education). Last year, it was based at the Metropolitan Learning Center. This year it involves students from Windham High School.

"The FUERTE students and I ask questions that stem from personal experience," he says, "search for answers, and develop research-based recommendations that we hope will improve the quality of teaching and learning in urban public schools.

Irizarry's team of high school researchers has found that urban students want school to be a challenging environment that is also caring, nurturing, and supportive. They also want a curriculum that can relate to, just as he did in el-

Administrantor writes books on autism for higher ed personnel

By Karen Singer

While watching her autistic son grow up, Jane Thierfeld Brown noticed similarities between his behavior and that of some children with other disabilities, includ-
ing Asperger syndrome, a higher functioning form of autism.

Her observations, along with nearly three decades of research and work with autistic children, have resulted in a forthcoming book, Students on the Autism Spectrum – A Guide for Col-
lege Personnel, from the Autism Asperger Publishing Co. Brown, director of student services at the UConn School of Law, is one of three co-authors.

Asperger syndrome is named for Hans Asperger, who first identified the condition in 1944, describing social interaction defi-
cits similar to autism in a group of boys with better cognitive and communication skills.

Traditionally, many of these students have attended techni-
cal schools, says Brown, but the number going to college is now on the rise.

"Many people diagnosed with Asperger syndrome are attend-
ing college and finding a way to navigate higher education," Brown says.

But they may encounter prob-
lems along the way, "despite their high intellectual abilities, high SATs, and high IQ scores," she says.

Academically, such students of-
ten have in-depth knowledge and intense interest in a very narrow field but lack the ability to handle curriculum covering a wide spec-
trum of knowledge, she says.

Social settings present addition-
ally challenges.

"If you don't understand the so-
cial world or non-verbal commu-
nication [common hurdles for stu-
ents with Asperger's syndrome] how do you navigate dining halls or dorms?" says Brown. "Some students do very well, but others need a lot of support, personally, academically, and professionally."

More colleges and universi-
ties are providing that support, including UConn, which launched a program this semester based on a pilot program Brown and her colleagues ran for two years at the University of Minnesota.

Students who enroll in the Strategic Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disor-
ders program meet weekly with a graduate adviser who helps them improve their social and interper-
sional skills, so they can better cope with campus life, make connec-
tions with other students and staff, and live autonomously.

"It's very much a student-based program, where they work very closely with one of our grad students, learning social skills management, time management, personal hygiene and care, and health and safety," says Christine Morello, assistant director of the Center for Students with Disabili-
ties. "They also help students iden-
tify other areas on campus that may be a resource, like tutoring." Morello says there will also be a social component, which could be something as simple as 'going on an outing' to the Student Union to play video games, in order to get out of the residence hall.

Brown says her new book contains material to help disability service provid-
ers work with this population on campus, including coping strate-
gies and specific interventions for common dilemmas.

"A lot of our students really have difficulty with things like shuttle bus schedules," she says. They may need help figuring out which bus to take, for example, and can become flummoxed if they see a different bus driver. "They live by routine, sometimes go into panic mode and shut down," she adds.

Brown says students with Asperger syndrome have done well to get as far as college. "People who are succeeding in the system had a very good K-12 education and very sup-
portive parents involved in their education," she says. "They have sort of made it, to be able to get that far, and hopefully, will be able to get further. There are a lot of very successful people who show those types of tendencies."

She hopes the book will not only help students with Asperger syndrome get through college but also create more opportunities for them.

Adds Brown, "We also have to find a way for our colleges and educational communities to be more accepting of people who just act very differently."

"You make the path by walking it. " says Irizarry, quoting the Spanish poet Antonio Machado. Irizarry likes to say, quoting the youth, 'You have to make it, you have to make it.' "The FUERTE students and I ask questions that stem from personal experience," he says, "search for answers, and develop research-based recommendations that we hope will improve the quality of teaching and learning in urban public schools.

Irizarry's team of high school researchers has found that urban students want school to be a challenging environment that is also caring, nurturing, and supportive. They also want a curriculum that can relate to, just as he did in elementary school when, he says, his mother had to spank him to get him to read the classic book, Freckle Juice. "I said, "Who cares about freckles? I'm the furthest thing in the world from freckles.

It was his first exposure to works by Puerto Rican authors that really connected him to the content of school.

"I wasn't until I started to en-
gage with some of that literature," he says, "that I started to recognize that I liked reading, I liked learn-
ing. It turned on a light for me."

Boosting academic achievement
Irizarry now works to produce what he calls a "counter-narrative" for teachers who may believe that urban students don't care about school. He also tries to engage urban students in thinking about teaching as a realistic, achievable goal.

"My hope is that they'll get the skills they need to increase aca-
ademic achievement," he says, "but also that they'll consider teaching as a platform for bringing about the social change that we speak of in class."

His work has brought him many honors, among them a recent National Council of Teachers of English 'Cultivating New Voices Among Scholars of Color' fellow-
ship.

Irizarry is optimistic about the future of education.

"I do hope that schools can be a place of liberation, where stu-
dents can dream and develop the skills to achieve those dreams," he says. "We can teach kids. We can have a more egalitarian society. I can imagine different futures for young people. They're going to change the world."
Kinesiologist studies cholesterol-reducing drugs and muscle pain

BY BETSY KOANE

Many studies have found statins to be the most effective medications for lowering cholesterol, but until now, very little research has examined a commonly reported side effect associated with the drugs: muscle pain and weakness. A large-scale clinical trial underway at three sites, including UConn’s Human Performance Laboratory, aims to pinpoint the prevalence of statin-induced muscle pain and weakness and to better understand how the most prescribed class of drugs in the world exerts its potentially harmful effects on muscles.

Multi-site trial

Linda Pescatello, a professor of kinesiology in the Neag School of Education and a principal investigator at UConn’s Center for Health, Intervention, and Prevention, is part of the team conducting the four-year study through a $3 million grant from the National Institutes of Health and the National Heart, Blood, and Lung Institute. "Anecdotal evidence suggests that anywhere from 1 percent to 25 percent of patients taking statins experience some level of muscle discomfort or pain," says Pescatello. "In some cases, muscle side effects are severe enough that patients stop taking the medications. Considering the number of people currently taking statins, the potential impact of this research could be huge."

National guidelines setting treatment goals for people with high cholesterol and cardiovascular disease recently lowered target cholesterol levels, meaning that even more people are likely to be prescribed statins in the future, Pescatello adds. Muscle symptoms associated with the drugs range from mild complaints such as pain, cramps, and weakness to muscle protein breakdown, known as rhabdomyolysis, which is extremely rare but can lead to kidney failure and death.

Dr. Paul Thompson, director of cardiology at Hartford Hospital, is the grant’s principal investigator. Pescatello is the site principal investigator for UConn. Michael White, a UConn professor of pharmacy practice who has a clinical appointment at Hartford Hospital, is a site principal investigator there, responsible for double-blinding the randomized trial. The University of Massachusetts is the third site participating in the study.

"According to most studies, statins produce a 30 percent reduction in cardiovascular disease," says Thompson. "That’s phenomenal."

He notes that about 10 percent of patients taking statins report muscle pain, but it is harder to judge the number of people experiencing muscle weakness.

"In this study, we’re measuring changes in exercise performance and actual damage to muscle," Thompson says. "Even if you don’t have muscle pain, do statins diminish muscle strength and performance?"

Double-blind study

The research team is recruiting 440 participants (220 men and 220 women) over 20 years of age at the three study sites. Because age may affect the incidence of statin-induced muscle disease or myopathy, the researchers will split equal numbers of male and female participants into three age groups: 20-39 year olds, 40-59 year olds, and those aged 60 and older.

All participants will have blood serum measured for baseline lipids or cholesterol levels, as well as for liver, kidney and thyroid function. They also will complete a baseline muscle symptom questionnaire and take part in an exercise performance test.

They will then be randomly assigned to a group taking a placebo or to a group taking 80 mg of a statin daily. Neither the participants nor the researchers who will know who is in which group.

The research team will call participants twice a month to ascertain muscle symptoms and will see them after three months for a safety assessment, including additional blood work.

After six months or at the onset of muscle symptoms suggesting myopathy, participants will undergo exercise testing identical to that conducted at the start of the study.

The research team also will collect blood and store DNA samples from participants for future research to identify and analyze genetic variants that may affect the degree to which patients taking statins experience muscle pain and weakness.

Pescatello hopes that ultimately, the study’s findings may lead to the development of cholesterol-lowering drugs devoid of muscle symptoms.

Pescatello’s research team is still recruiting study participants age 40 and older. Those interested in participating should contact kinesiology graduate student Matthew Kostek at 860-486-2812.

Health Center encourages students to study overseas

BY KRISTINA GOODNOUGH

Medical student Neena Qasba spent most of last summer in Bolivia studying poor women’s use of small loans for essential health services. Cheryl Bilinski, an MD/MPH student, spent the summer in Haiti working on a prevention and treatment program for pregnant women and newborns with syphilis.

The two students represent the growing number of Health Center students who study abroad during their graduate school careers. Both say the experience was an invaluable adjunct to their education, giving them an understanding of cultural issues in health care they might not see if they studied only in this country.

Qasba says she came to recognize that there are many cultural barriers to obtaining health care. She worked with women who had successfully used microfinance loans to build small businesses to support themselves and their families. Because of their success with the business loans, they were eligible for small loans for health care services, but they didn’t use them very often.

"Barriers to obtaining care seemed related more to cultural attitudes, such as the lack of trust in doctors and low health care literacy or general knowledge about health care procedures," says Qasba who is analyzing the data for a presentation during Medical/Dental Student Research Day in February.

Bilinski says her experience helped her understand the difficulty of implementing health care protocols in low-resource settings. A simple blood test can detect syphilis in newborns, but in a rural country where laboratories and supplies are scarce, a blood test is not such a simple procedure, she says.

Bilinski adds that her experiences in Haiti affirmed her interest in international health studies, and she hopes to return there to do additional public health research during her fourth year of medical school.

Judy Lewis, professor of community medicine and pediatrics and director of global health education, says the Health Center’s program to support foreign study by students has an emphasis on encouraging students to study in "low-resource settings, where they can experience what life is like for 80 percent of the world, as well as gain a sense of how it feels to be the other.” This type of immersion helps improve communication and other clinical skills for effective patient care in all settings.”

Lewis plans to expand students’ access to global health studies with the help of a recent gift from Dr. Edward Hargus, ’73, and his wife Maria. She also hopes to attract other donors to help support this work.

Lewis says study and research in other countries help students think more about what they need to know about a patient before they take care of them, says Lewis.

"We are a nation of immigrants," she says. "Physicians need to understand the culture and background of their patients to provide appropriate health care. They have to know what language their patients are speaking and what their lives are like. They can’t find out if they don’t ask, and we believe global health studies can help them better understand the kinds of questions to ask.

The medical school curriculum includes a first-year elective seminar, Community Health Research Methods, that prepares students for the development of international health research proposals.

As part of the elective, students conduct research for two months during the summer and then are guided in data analysis by faculty advisors.

Opportunities for clinical work abroad have been available to fourth-year students since 1984, when two medical students went to Lima, Peru, to work in a clinic serving shantytown communities with Stephen Schensul, professor of community medicine and health care, who has developed global health studies with Lewis.

Since 1984, more than 18 faculty members have established relationships with institutions in other countries where students can work; and informal program relationships support students in many more countries. More than 300 students have taken part in global health studies, traveling to Puerto Rico and 67 other countries.
Researchers seek to identify Pequot War battlefield sites

BY SHERIF FISHER

The Pequot War, a conflict between English settlers and the Pequot tribe, is the focus of a new comprehensive study by a team of UConn researchers.

Kevin McBride, associate professor of anthropology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS), says the war, which took place from 1636 to 1638 in southern New England, remains one of the most misinterpreted and least understood events in the history of early America.

McBride is working on the project with Connecticut State Historian Walter Woodard, assistant professor of history in CLAS, State Archaeologist Nick Bellantoni, and the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center. Funded by the National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program, the project aims to identify and preserve battlefields and historical sites associated with the Pequot War.

“The English wanted to eliminate the powerful Pequot,” says McBride. “It was the first time a policy of cultural genocide was perpetrated upon a native people in North America. The English justified what they did through a variety of means, including vilifying the Pequot and making them evil.” But although the English tried to wipe out the Pequot tribe, two communities survived and are known today as the Mashantucket Pequot and the Eastern Pequot.

“The war was far more than the single attack by the English and their Mohican and Narraganset allies on the tribe’s fortified village at Mystic in 1637,” McBride says. “Lasting for more than two years, there were several major battles and skirmishes that extended over what is now southwestern Rhode Island, coastal Connecticut, the Connecticut River Valley, northeastern Connecticut, and parts of eastern New York.”

The war changed the political and social landscape of southern New England, he says. “The massacre at Mystic Fort, as was the English intent, demonstrated to all native people in southern New England and elsewhere, the English ability and will to wage total war against real and imagined enemies.”

The early phases of the research include identifying and analyzing narratives, accounts, and descriptions of the war, a review of scholarly and antiquarian works, an analysis of military strategies, and an analysis of artifacts. About a dozen prospective battlefield sites have already been identified. The researchers will also search for physical evidence through archaeological investigations.

McBride says that documents from commanders in the war have provided information about battlefield locations. “It’s taken a lot of analysis to figure out where these battlefields are,” he says. The researchers are now in the process of notifying and talking to land owners to get permission to conduct archaeological investigations on their property.

The Pequot War was taught in American history books throughout the 19th century, and is not often studied outside academic circles, McBride says. He notes that the conflict provides a rich source of information about a particular time in history.

“We don’t know that much about the early colonial history of the region of southern New England,” he says, “and the war is an incredible window into that.”

He adds, “We took the opportunity through this grant to explore many aspects of the Pequot War. We initially looked at this as a one-year grant process and now we’re looking at probably four to five years. It’s a pretty extensive piece of work.”

The war lives on in the memories of the descendants of the colonists and native peoples of southern New England. McBride says. Each year members of the Pequot Tribe gather on the anniversary of the Mystic Massacre for a “First Light” ceremony to commemorate and honor the more than 500 Pequot men, women, and children who were massacred at the Mystic Fort on June 11, 1637.

A woodcut of the Mystic Massacre in 1637, commissioned by John Underhill, the co-commander of the English forces.
Study shows ‘ripple effect’ of weight loss programs among couples

BY COLIN POTROS
Behavioral psychologist Amy Gorin has good news for married couples trying to maintain a healthy diet.

Gorin is the lead author of a study published in the International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity, which shows that couples tend to lose weight together – even if only one person actually goes on a structured diet.

Lifestyle changes The study compared the body weights of 377 couples over the course of a year. Researchers specifically studied whether couples lose weight individually or as a couple. Individuals were married or cohabiting and between the ages of 18 to 65. Two of the couples were selected so that one spouse was starting to gain weight as it grew greater. Then he went to speak with Mansfield precinct chief volunteer, who was also concerned about the long wait for voters. Eventually, another line was created, to keep people moving, at least during the last one and half hours until the polls closed at 8 p.m.

Researchers found that 161 of 387 individuals in weight loss programs lost more weight and made more healthy changes in their lifestyle than the spouses of people with type 2 diabetes assigned to a control group.

Spouses of individuals enrolled in the more intense program lost an average of five pounds, even though they were not participating in the weight loss program themselves. In some cases, the ripple effect was even more pronounced. In one case, a husband lost 35 pounds through the intensive lifestyle intervention while his untreated wife lost 14 pounds. In another case, a woman lost 9 pounds while her untreated husband lost 6.

“The best of our knowledge this study is the first to document that behavioral weight loss treatment delivered to one spouse has a clinically significant impact on the weight of the untreated spouse,” says Gorin, an assistant professor of psychology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences who specializes in weight control strategies, motivational techniques, and social influences regarding weight loss.

Gorin believes the ripple effect may be due to untreated spouless emulating their partners’ healthier eating and exercise habits, in doing such things as counting calories, weighing themselves more often, and eating lower-fat foods. “When you see someone eating and exercising, you may cultivate others around you and get them motivated as well,” says Gorin.

Buying food online Gorin is a principal investigator for several National Institutes of Health-funded research grants at the University’s Center for Health, Intervention and Prevention (CHIP). In a separate study released last fall, she found that some people trying to lose weight may also benefit from buying their grocery online and taking advantage of home delivery services such as Peapod.com.

The 2007 study, published in the International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity, showed that individuals on weight loss plans who purchased their groceries from the online service Peapod.com bought 28 percent fewer high-fat foods than those who purchased items at their local supermarket.

“Making food choices online helps people avoid the temptations of high-fat impulse purchases in their local grocery store,” says Gorin, the study’s lead author. “Many online grocery shopping sites also help consumers make healthier food choices by allowing them to sort their purchases by calorie and fat content,” she says. Gorin recently received financial support from CHIP to create an obesity research interest group in Storrs, with the goal of fostering interdisciplinary research on the topic at Storrs campus and with researchers at the UConn Health Center in Farmington.

Presidential election panel continued from page 1

Amy Gorin, assistant professor of psychology.