Creation of new human embryonic stem cell lines announced

BY DAVID BAUMAN

UConn researchers have created two new human embryonic stem cell lines and are making the lines available to academic researchers to study the therapeutic potential of the cells. The two new lines signify a milestone in the state’s pioneering stem cell program, which was approved by the Connecticut General Assembly and signed by Gov. M. Jodi Rell in 2005. The state committed $100 million to fund stem cell research and training programs for 10 years.

The ability to provide human embryonic stem cell lines is essential for investigators to make discoveries that can be translated into new treatments and cures for diseases. Passage of the Stem Cell Investment Act made Connecticut the third state in the nation to provide public funding for embryonic and human adult stem cell research. It established a competitive process for awarding state stem cell research grants and created the publicly appointed Stem Cell Research Advisory Committee, chaired by the Commissioner of Public Health.

State funds awarded in April 2007 were used to establish a $2.5 million Human Embryonic Stem Cell Core laboratory led by Dr. Ren-He Xu at the UConn Health Center, where the two new stem cell lines—identified as CT1 and CT2—were developed by postdoctoral fellow Ge Lin and coworkers in Xu’s lab. UConn joins an elite group of universities—including the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Harvard, and the University of California-San Francisco—that have created human embryonic stem cell lines.

“Three years ago, when we committed $100 million over 10 years as part of our Stem Cell Investment Act, there were some who asked ‘Is it worth it?’” says Gov. M. Jodi Rell. “The world-class researchers and scientists in Connecticut are answering that question with a resounding ‘Absolutely!’ The news that UConn researchers created two new stem cell lines comes just 18 months after receiving funding. So we are getting great returns on that investment,” Rell adds, “and we know the possibilities for health care therapies from...”

Two liberal arts faculty receive NEH fellowships

BY CINDY WEISS

Two faculty members in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences have received National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) fellowships to undertake scholarly projects. They are among 74 faculty from around the country to receive NEH fellowships or faculty research awards this year.

Richard Wilson, the Gladstein Distinguished Chair in Human Rights and director of the Human Rights Institute, will devote his fellowship to completing a book on three United Nations tribunals: the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda and the International Criminal Court in The Hague. International criminal trials “represent one of the most significant human rights interventions in recent history,” Wilson wrote in his NEH proposal.

His research interests center on expert witness testimony from historians and social scientists in international criminal trials. Michael Lynch, professor of philosophy, will write a book defending an original theory of truth that is at odds with both traditional theories and what he calls the new orthodoxy.

Lynch is the author of several books on truth, including True to Life (2004), which a New York Times review described as “a passionate demonstration that truth matters.” “An NEH fellowship is one of the most distinguished awards that a scholar in the humanities can receive,” says Jeremy Teitelbaum, dean of CLAS. “By winning this prestigious fellowship, Wilson and Lynch highlight the diversity and strength of CLAS’s programs in the humanities.”

Richard Brown, Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of History and director of the Humanities Institute in CLAS, says, “NEH fellowships are so competitive [only 1 in 25 applicants wins an award] because they provide time for research and writing that does not require uprooting one’s family to travel to a research site.” Brown is a former NEH fellow himself. Wilson’s interest in human rights conflicts had its origins in a trip he made to Guatemala to learn Spanish when he was 18 years old. He returned there in 1987 to do research for his Ph.D., at a time when Guatemala was coping with poverty, violent conflict, and refugees.

His research focus later shifted to South Africa, where he studied truth commissions and wrote a book, The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa. He then turned to studying international tribunals, the subject of the book he will complete with his NEH fellowship.

While existing research has focused on the judgments of tribunals, “greater insight...”
The new art installation at Babbidge Library will celebrate words in many languages

BY SUZANNE ZACK

The Homer Babbidge Library, the University’s principal repository of printed and electronic information, is home to literally millions of words — words that have been used to give expression to countless thoughts and ideas. To celebrate the myriad forms that human language can take, Linda Foster, an artist from Goleta, Calif., is creating for the library a work of art that focuses on words, specifically those spoken by or written in the languages of UConn’s rich linguistic community.

Titled Hamlet: A Cast of Shadows, the project draws its inspiration from Act II of William Shakespeare’s play, Hamlet. “What do you read, my lord?” Hamlet. “Words, words, words,” transcribed into multiple languages and written in three-inch letters, will be cut from clear vinyl and affixed, upside down and reversed, to the interior of four west-facing windows on Level 3 of the library. Light from the afternoon sun will project the words as legible shadows on the carpet below. The seasonal rotation of the earth will cause the shadows to shift in shape and size, marking time and space.

Norman Stevens, the former director of University Libraries, has worked closely with the artist on the project. “Individual, distinctive marks of time and cultures, alphabets and characters represent our individuality,” he says, “while demonstrating an inclusive, common bond: our fundamental need to communicate.”

As part of the project, and to celebrate diversity, the University Library will conduct an informal census of the languages written or spoken by members of the UConn community. To complete the survey, go to http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/asp?sm=08C8G2m9Cag_3d_3d

Participants will also be asked to contribute translations of “words” for possible use in the installation or in the dedication program.

Details of the census will be available on the web at www.lib.uconn.edu. Foster’s art focuses on artists’ books, or works of art in the form of a book, which she has created for some 25 years. She did a similar installation at the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1997. “I’m looking at this project as an artist’s book and thinking of the window as a transparent page, with the text on the page cast out into the room as shadows,” she says. “There’s a collective body of knowledge, ideas, and images that get cast onto our thinking, influencing how we think. Shakespeare has certainly cast a huge shadow on all the literature that has come after him.”

Foster will complete the design during the next several months. The dedication of the installation in April will include a talk by the artist, and recitations of the dialogue between Polonius and Hamlet in many languages.

“This project is an extraordinary way of recognizing and celebrating our individual differences through the common denominator of language,” says Brinley Franklin, vice provost for University Libraries. “The installation will enable users of the library to study and learn in an environment that celebrates diversity and the power of words to transmit culture over centuries of time.”

The new installation complements other works of art that celebrate books, reading, and information, both inside and outside Babbidge Library. These include Dudley Giberson Storr’s Murmur Window on the B Level of the library, which represents the evolution of symbols from cave drawings to the alphabet; the massive Stonebook Universe, sculpted by Kubachi/Wilmsen from Finnish granite, on the plaza between Babbidge Library and the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center; John Magnati’s carved wooden Poem Book, housed in a display case at the entrance to Babbidge Library; and Werner Pfeiffer’s Endangered Species sculpture, recently installed in Bookworms Café; and Ian Aver- buch’s Dove Tower and Steps to the Bottom of a Pyramid, with its allusion to the use of message-carrying pigeons, located on the quadrangle west of Babbidge Library.

Development and installation of Hamlet: A Cast of Shadows will cost approximately $5,000. The library is seeking donors who wish to help support the project. Interested parties should contact Linda Perrone, director of external relations for the University Libraries, at linda.perrone@uconn.edu, or 860-486-0451.

Contributions are tax-deductible and should be made payable to the Homer Babbidge Library Unrestricted Fund through the University of Connecticut Foundation.

Correction

A photo on page 8 of the Jan. 26 Advance shows turfgrass student Kyle Carney mowing a lawn. He was incorrectly identified in the photo caption. The photo was also supplied by Kyle Carney.

Winners of this year’s outreach awards announced

The winners of this year’s Awards for Excellence in Outreach and Public Engagement were announced by Provost Peter J. Nicholls during a reception on Dec. 2 at the Wilbur Cross South Reading Room. The ceremony was preceded by a poster display featuring the accomplishments of the finalists in each of the five categories.

The winners are:

Faculty Award: Stephen Schensul, Community Medicine and Health Care, School of Medicine. Schensul, director of the Center for International Community Health Studies at the School of Medicine, has developed transdisciplinary programs related to the health needs of the public, developed well recognized models for community research and its translation into social change programs, and built an international reputation in applied research, with techniques including epidemiology, and HIV/STD prevention. His public engagement spans both local and international levels, from Hartford to Mumbai.

Staff Award: Richard Schwab, Neag School of Education. During his 11 years as dean of the Neag School of Education, Schwab has built productive partnerships with a range of educators, donors, and policy makers. He has championed innovative efforts such as Teachers as a New Era and CommPACT schools initiative that will establish a solid foundation for closing the achievement gap in American society, and has demonstrated sustained leadership in working with national and state government agencies, professional organizations, local educational agencies, and the general public to advance the cause of equity and quality in public education.

Program Award: Healthy Environments for Children Initiative/ Environmental Health Program, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Department of Extension, West Hartford

The Healthy Environments for Children initiative, led by extension specialists Mary Margaret Gaudio and Joan Bothell, provides statewide, regional, and national leadership in the areas of lead poisoning, radon, and asthma education as related to children’s health. The team has focused on educating parents and guardians, childcare providers, partner organizations, and others on reducing the risks of lead, asthma, and radon through innovative children’s books, manuals, curricula, and videos.

Graduate Student Award: Andrew Bzowyckyj and Jennifer Bobolich, School of Pharmacy

Bzowyckyj and Bobolich are students in the School of Pharmacy’s Pharm.D. program, and are currently on clinical rotation. In addition to their service to organizations within the School of Pharmacy, they developed a presentation on promoting health literacy, which they presented to practicing pharmacists at several retail chain pharmacies in Connecticut, and to pharmacy, nursing, and medical students during National Pharmacy Week.

Undergraduate Student Award: Shashi Ramandan, Allied Health Sciences, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Ramandan is an undergraduate student who is majoring in allied health sciences in the College of Agriculture, Natural Resources.

In 2006, she founded a campus fund-raising and awareness initiative regarding HIV/AIDS, which has regularly presented at conferences on outreach and human rights issues.

Program Award winner receives a $1,000 allocation to financial aid or a department account. These funds may then be used to further develop and enhance outreach and public engagement efforts at the University.
Developmental brain disorder can be reversed, say researchers

BY ELIZABETHE OMARÁ-DUÑUN
Research by a UConn neurobiologist has demonstrated that a developmental brain disorder that causes a predisposition to seizures can be reversed.

The research, by a team led by Joseph LoTurco, a professor of physiology and neurobiology in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, was the cover article in the January issue of the biomedical research journal Nature Medicine.

“We showed that adding back a normal gene in a brain that has already developed the wrong way can reverse a previously formed developmental malformation,” LoTurco says.

The cerebral cortex is a structure within the brain that plays a key role in memory; attention, perception, thought, and language. Its layered structure is formed during development by the migration of neurons.

The researchers focused on a malformation that happens early in fetal development that is a known risk factor for epilepsy. The malformation is linked to mutations in a certain gene known as Dcx or doublecortin. LoTurco says patients who have a mutation in this gene often have a secondary cortex, a new grouping of cells underneath the normal cortex, and 90 percent of them have a seizure disorder.

In previous research, published in Nature Neuroscience in 2003 and in Cerebral Cortex in 2006, LoTurco's team showed that by manipulating the Dcx gene in utero, the malformation can be prevented from occurring.

The latest findings show that a malformation that has already formed can be reversed and shrunken after birth by re-expression of the Dcx gene within the malformation.

The researchers also found that the predisposition to seizures in treated rats was no greater than in those without the malformation; whereas those with the malformation that were left untreated continued to experience seizures.

“The research takes advantage of developmental plasticity in the nervous system,” LoTurco says.

He says the findings may ultimately make it possible for humans with this developmental disorder to be treated through gene therapy or pharmaceutical therapy, though that goes beyond the scope of his lab.

“We're basic scientists,” he says. “This research is proof of concept. Our question was, 'Does the brain have the capacity to recover from what had been considered a permanent malformation?’ We showed that it does.”

He notes that most of the previous research related to developmental malformations in the brain has focused on trying to understand how genetic defects or environmental insults cause the disruption in development.

“It’s rarely been asked, ‘What’s the point of no return?’” he says. LoTurco says there’s a lot more research to be done in this area. His group is currently investigating the reversibility of other forms of structural malformations in the brain. Another avenue to explore is whether the point of reversibility can be extended into later stages of brain development.

“We don’t know the limits of when structural plasticities can be induced,” he says. “We’re interested in categorizing types of developmental malformations, and in determining when they can be reversed and whether we can extend this point to later periods in development.”

In addition to LoTurco, the paper’s co-authors include two of his former postdoctoral fellows, Jean-Bernard Manent (the lead author) and Murugan Paramasivam, and two UConn graduate students, Yu Wang and Yoon Jeung Chang.
Pharmacy graduate recognized for Alzheimer's research

By Chris DeFranco

A urologist at the Health Center has landed a five-year, $729,000 grant from the American Cancer Society to study the role of inflammatory molecules on the development and progression of bladder cancer.

Urology researcher Dr. John A. Taylor III, an assistant professor of surgery at the UConn School of Medicine, says he is particularly pleased to receive the grant at a time when funding for cancer research is harder to come by, especially for those studying bladder cancer.

“Bladder cancer is one of the most understudied areas of urology,” he says. Taylor says there are currently “no markers or means to determine which patients with bladder cancer will have progression, which patients would benefit from early aggressive treatment, or even which patients will respond favorably to treatment.”

“Our early data are quite promising,” he adds, “and could lead to novel ways to manage this disease, if not stop its progression. The grant from the American Cancer Society will allow uninterrupted continuation of this important work.”

Taylor is one of the region’s few bladder cancer specialists. He says the goal of his study is to improve the prevention and treatment of the disease.

The grant is officially known as “The American Cancer Society New England Division Mentored Research Scholar Grant in Applied and Clinical Research – Beatrice C우en.” It is one of 27 research projects the American Cancer Society is funding in Connecticut.

“With the current serious challenges to cancer research funding, it’s more important than ever that the American Cancer Society continue to support the work of new investigators,” says American Cancer Society Connecticut vice president of health initiatives Sarah Shafr. “Virtually every major development in cancer research in the last half century can point to a society-funded researcher who played a key role along the way, with most of those investigators getting Society support early in their careers when funding is particularly difficult to get.”

Taylor, who chairs the cancer committee at the Carole and Ray Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center, is no stranger to grant support from prestigious sources. In 2005 he was one of 10 specialists in the country to receive a Dennis W. Jahnigen Scholars Award from the American Geriatrics Society. The two-year, $200,000 grant helped fund his work on age-related changes in the bladder.

He has also been the recipient of HERA Foundation funds; an American Urological Association Post-Residency Research Award; an American Cancer Society Institutional Research Grant; and a New Investigator Award from the American Geriatrics Society for his work on bladder cancer.

Before joining the Health Center in 2003, Taylor was an investigator in the Department of Defense’s Prostate Disease Research, while serving at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. He earned his medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City and completed his residency at Columbia University’s-Presbyterian Hospital.

For more information about cancer programs at the Health Center, go to http://cancer.uconn.edu/
Health Center’s online program helps patients help themselves

BY CAROLYN PENNINGTON

A new online tool designed to help patients maximize the quality of their health care is being offered through the Health Center. Believed to be the first of its kind, HealthEcademy is a convenient, free program that can be accessed through the Internet by clicking on http://healthecademy.uchc.edu/ any time of day or night.

Dr. Scott Wetstone and Wendy Soneson discuss the new online health education program.

HealthEcademy features several video presentations by School of Medicine faculty and other Health Center experts, who provide practical information on a number of health-related topics to enable individuals to become better, more successful patients and patient advocates.

“The task of navigating today’s complex health care system is becoming more challenging and frustrating for patients everywhere,” says Dr. Cato T. Laurencin, vice president for health affairs and dean of the School of Medicine. “Patients continuously seek practical information to help them achieve better outcomes. The demand for such information continues to grow, yet people often don’t know where to turn to receive information that is current and credible. As leaders in academic medicine, we’ve established the nation’s first HealthEcademy to address this growing public health need.”

HealthEcademy participants will be able to identify their rights and responsibilities as a patient or patient advocate, employ strategies to optimize doctors’ office visits and hospitalizations, and find and use reliable sources of health information to increase their understanding of medical conditions and treatment options.

Course topics include:

• “Questions You Were Never Asked … But Should Have Been” – how to optimize doctors’ office visits and make efficient use of time spent with health care providers.

• “A Roadmap to Reliable Health Information” – how to find reliable and accurate sources of health information and evaluate web sites.

• “Understanding the Results of Diagnostic or Screening Tests” – how to interpret diagnostic and screening test findings and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the diagnostic process.

• “Legal and Ethical Issues at the End of Life” – practical information about treatment decisions at the end of life that are consistent with the patient’s goals and values.

• “Understanding HIPAA Privacy” – an outline of the many facets of privacy protection to which patients are entitled under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). These video presentations total more than three and a half hours of instruction.

“We believe HealthEcademy can significantly help people become wise and savvy health care consumers by providing the tools they need to negotiate today’s health care environment with confidence,” says Dr. Scott Wetstone of the Department of Community Medicine and Health Care. “Knowledge and information are the foundation for maximizing patient care and bring your own best advocate, and direct instruction from professionals is the best way to build that foundation.”

Program manager Wendy Soneson says, “This educational program, which we believe is the first of its kind in the nation, is for everyone. I think we’re offering something of real value to people.”

Soneson notes that users can watch all the presentations or pick and choose the topics that most interest them.

“As an academic institution,” she adds, “our mission is to educate, and we think we’ve done that.”

Interim hospital director

Dr. Mike Summerer, a hospital administrator from Massachusetts, has been appointed interim director of UConn’s John Dempsey Hospital. He began the job Jan. 26.

An experienced cardiologist, Summerer has more than 15 years of hospital system senior leadership experience. He was most recently system vice president and chief medical officer at Hallmark Health System, a multi-hospital healthcare system in eastern Massachusetts. Previously, he was corporate senior vice president and chief medical officer at St. Vincent’s Health Services in Bridgeport.

A graduate of the UConn School of Medicine, Summerer also earned an undergraduate degree in physics from UConn. He is board certified in internal medicine and cardiovascular disease, and is a Fellow of the American College of Cardiology and the American College of Physician Executives.

Summerer takes over from Jim Thornton, who is retiring.

“The University continues to be involved in affiliation discussions with Hartford Hospital,” said Dr. Cato Laurencin, vice president for health affairs and dean of the School of Medicine. “For that reason, we have decided to fill the hospital director position on an interim basis. The longer-term status of the position will be determined pending the outcome of the affiliation discussions.”

NEH fellows continued from page 1

can come through studying what prosecuting attorneys, investigators, judges, and legal officers actually do with historical evidence during a trial,” he wrote in his NEH proposal.

He is collaborating with a former investigator from the Yugoslavia tribunal to survey some 200 former investigators, trial attorneys, and legal officers on the use of historical and social science evidence in international tribunals.

Wilson came to UConn in 2003 from the New School for Social Research in New York, where he was a visiting professor of anthropology.

Lynch will devote his fellowship to working on an alternative theory of truth and writing about it in a book that will be published by Oxford University Press.

“Many philosophers have held that truth has a single essence, even while they disagreed about what that essence is,” he wrote in his proposal.

Current researchers reject those traditional theories because they do not explain why some kinds of judgments or beliefs can be true or false, he wrote.

For example, he says, “My belief that there is an oak tree in my yard seems true because it corresponds to the objective facts. But it is much less obvious that my beliefs about things like art and morality are true for that reason.”

While the new orthodoxy of “deflationism” holds that truth has no nature, Lynch rejects it and will develop an original theory of truth, the culmination of a decade of work on the subject.

Among the books he has written or edited in the past 10 years are Truth in Context, Truth and Realism, and The Nature of Truth: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives.

He has been interviewed extensively by the media on his views of the truth. His books have been reviewed in the Washington Post, Toronto Globe and Mail, Denver Post, and other major newspapers.

Lynch came to UConn in 2004 from Connecticut College, where he chaired the philosophy department. He is an associate fellow of the Archib Russell Centre for the Philosophy of Logic, Language, and Metaphysics, and Epistemology at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland.

To hear a podcast recorded by Lynch in 2004 about his book, True to Life, go to http://www.cla.sconn.edu/facultysnapshots/view.php?id=wilson

Lynch describes his research in human rights, go to http://www.cla.sconn.edu/facultysnapshots/view.php?id=wilson

Advance • Monday, February 2, 2008 5
Year of Science events planned

BY KAREN A. GRAHA
This year marks the 200th anniversary of the shared birthday of Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin. It also marks the 150th anniversary of the publication of Darwin’s book, On the Origin of Species, and the 400th anniversary of both Johannes Kepler’s publication of the first two laws of planetary motion, and the first telescope made by Galileo.

In an effort to engage the public in science and improve public understanding about the nature and processes of science, the year was proclaimed the national Year of Science by the American Institute of Biological Sciences, the National Academy of Science, and more than 185 professional societies, colleges and universities, museums, and corporations.

UConn will celebrate the Year of Science with performances, exhibits, lectures and seminars.

“At a time when the challenges facing humanity are growing rapidly, and when meeting those challenges increasingly depends on scientific research, the need for public support and understanding of science has never been greater,” said Kent Holsinger, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology and former president of the American Institute of Biological Sciences.

A complete list of events for the year can be found at http://yearofscience.uconn.edu. The work focuses on the science of science! Special events at UConn focusing on Darwin and Lincoln include:

• A June 3 March 6, Charles Darwin (1809-1882), The Legacy of a Naturalist, an exhibit illustrating the life and career of Charles Darwin. Dodd Center Gallery.
• Tuesday, Feb. 16, “The Legacy of Charles Darwin” Speaker: Dr. Constance M. Clark, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Michael Robinson. University of Hartford, Lee Kaufman, Boston University, and Jennifer Ting. Wesleyan University, will focus on the legacy of Darwin’s many contributions to science and society. 6:30 p.m., Branford House, first floor, Avery Point Campus.
• Tuesday, Feb. 10, David Constanza, writer and historian, will discuss his book Rebel Giants: The Revolutionary Lives of Lincoln and Darwin, as a prelude to the performance of Dramaturgic Meditation for the People of the United States of America. Jorgensen. 4 p.m., Jorgensen Gallery.
• Thursday, Feb. 12, “President Lincoln’s Test Message: The Second Inaugural Address.” 3 p.m. Four days before he was murdered President Abraham Lincoln delivered his second inaugural address, a speech widely recognized as the best ever given by a U.S. President and a cornerstone of American rhetoric. The Humanities Institute will sponsor a symposium in which that 700-word oration will be interpreted.
• Thursday, Feb. 12, Darwin’s Meditation for the People of Lincoln. This multimedia presentation examines the literal andimagined relationship between Charles Darwin and Abraham Lincoln – who were born within hours of one another on the same day – and the people of the United States born after the end of the Civil War. Using video and text drawn from both Darwin and Lincoln, compiled and narrated by actor-playwright Daniel Reay, Hattian-American artist Daniel Bernard Roumain produces an imagined conversation between historical giants. The work features a 20-piece chamber ensemble together with four soloists.

UConn Stem Cell Core faculty serves a diverse research community, provide core facilities, initiate new research projects, enable the recruitment of new faculty, and stimulated collaborations among scientists at universities and biotech industries throughout the state.

“The State of Connecticut has been very smart in its grant-making strategy, “ says Ho Hall, Alumni Center.

For more information on the UConn Stem Cell Core lab, go to http://genetics.uchc.edu/stemcell/index.htm.

Researchers statewide. It provides stem cell line to more than 30 labs at UConn, Yale, and Wesleyan, has trained more than 100 researchers and graduate students in stem cell culture; and provides technical support for researchers and training throughout the state.

University President Michael Hogan says the state’s funding program has drawn into the field a broad spectrum of scientists who traditionally have not conducted research with human embryonic stem cells, in part due to federal funding restrictions. Federal funding for research on human embryonic stem cells to date has been limited to lines created before Aug. 9, 2001. But the regulations do not restrict research on stem cell lines created using state or private funds.

“The State of Connecticut has been very smart in its grant-making strategy,” says Ho Hall, Alumni Center.

“We granted this so far has allowed universities to lay the groundwork for preparing a generation of stem cell scientists.”
Monday, February 2, to Monday, February 9

CALAENDER


Monday, February 2, Monday, 2/2 – Research Highlights Seminar. “Neuropsychology: Clues to How Brain Enables Mind,” by Richard Myers, panelists; Patrick Hogan, Cobbey, Josef Gugler, Kathryn Myers, Jon Gajewski, and Carl Coelho. 2:30-3:30 p.m., Benton Museum.

Monday, February 2, Monday, 2/2 – University Senate. Meetings

Monday, February 2, Monday, 2/2 – University Libraries. Libraries

Monday, February 2, Monday, 2/2 – University Libraries. Museums

Monday, February 2, Monday, 2/2 – University Libraries. Performing Arts

Monday, February 2, Monday, 2/2 – University Libraries. Athletics

Monday, February 2, Monday, 2/2 – University Libraries. Potpourri

Monday, February 2, Monday, 2/2 – University Service Award.

Monday, February 2, Monday, 2/2 – William Orr, former administrator, dies

William Orr, professor emeritus of chemistry and former administrator, died Jan. 16. He was 88.

Orr, who lived in Bloomfield, served for 13 years as associate provost and associate vice president for academic affairs during his 30-year career at the University. He retired in 1978. Orr earned a bachelor’s degree from Princeton University in 1942 and a Ph.D. in chemistry from the University of California at Berkeley in 1948. His postgraduate work was temporarily interrupted by his enlistment in the Navy, where as a lieutenant, he served as a radar officer on an aircraft carrier in the Pacific.

Winthrop Smith, professor of physics, says Orr made substantial contributions to the University. “He worked tirelessly to support competitive faculty salaries so we would be more competitive in hiring,” Smith says. “A lot of his work was done quietly behind the scenes.”

Smith adds, “He was a good citizen and an active member of the community.”

John Tanaka, emeritus professor of chemistry, says Orr was well liked. “He was one of the nicest guys you could meet, and always very helpful.”

Norman Stevens, former director of University Libraries, says an administrator Orr was a strong supporter of the University Libraries.

“After he retired, he continued to be a strong personal supporter and active member of the Friends of the University Libraries that had been formed as the first formal effort to increase private support for the libraries,” Stevens says. “He was always a true friend of the library who was the deserving recipient of the University Service Award, which recognizes ‘exceptional contributions that strengthen and support the school’s values and mission.’” Orr received the award in 1978.

Orr was dedicated to serving his community. His volunteer commitments included serving as treasurer of Northeastern Connecticut’s Opera New England, as a member of the Mansfield Board of Education, as a board member of the Special Education Foundation, as president of the Friends of the University of Connecticut Libraries, and as president of the University’s chapter of Sigma Xi, a scientific research society.

He is survived by his wife Nancy and their children. His first wife, Jean, predeceased him in 1993, but he is survived by their daughter Alison and her husband, Kate; daughter Katherine and her husband, John; and son Christopher and his wife, and their two children.

Memorial contributions in his memory may be made to the Special Education Foundation, 200 Seabury Drive, Bloomfield, CT 06002-6650.
UConn economy report highlights impact of research on state's citizens

BY SHERIDAN FISHER

Laura Crow and her students are headed to a performance at the Metropolitan Opera. Another day, they’re in Manhattan shopping for fabric. “One of my missions is to make my students less afraid of New York City,” says Crow, a professor of dramatic arts specializing in costume design. “There’s so much available there for them.”

No stranger to Manhattan, Crow, who joined the UConn faculty in 1994, has been designing costumes for Broadway, off Broadway, regional theater, film, and opera for more than 30 years.

She was resident costume designer for the Circle Repertory Theatre for 13 years. With some 300 productions under her belt, she is perhaps best known for her work with playwright Lanford Wilson and the poetic realism movement in American theater.

Crow works with graduate students, who design costumes for UConn’s Connecticut Repertory Theatre.

Choosing fabric for a particular costume isn’t easy, she says. “You need to choose the right fabric for the right costume, and that takes a great deal of education. You need to learn how to hold the fabric in your hand, see how it drapes, and feel what we call the hand of the fabric. That’s only learned with experience.”

Crow enjoys designing for period plays. She recently worked on The English Channel, a new play by Robert Brustein about Shake-