When College of Liberal Arts and Sciences alumnus Charles Duelfer (’74 MA, history) was sent to Iraq in 2004 by President George W. Bush to find out why the administration had been wrong about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, he was assured by his old friend George Tenet, CIA director, that they wanted “just the truth.” But Duelfer responded, “How deep do you want to go?”

“There’s always another explanation,” he told faculty and students at the Storrs campus during a talk he gave as part of his national book tour.

Duelfer’s new book, *Hide and Seek: The Search for Truth in Iraq*, examines how Iraq and the U.S. twice misled each other into war. Both sides understood information only in light of hypotheses that fit their own assumptions, he said. “We thought Saddam Hussein would be crazy not to have weapons of mass destruction,” he said. “Saddam missed the import of 9-11.”

He said that critical thinking might have raised the questions: “What are your assumptions? What are Saddam’s? Can you see something that you don’t have a
Psychologist to speak on virtual reality research

Albert “Skip” Rizzo, the inventor of Virtual Iraq, will deliver a talk about the future of virtual reality research and its clinical applications on Thursday, March 26 at 12:30 p.m.

His presentation, “Clinical Virtual Reality: A Brief Review of the Future,” is sponsored by UConn’s Center for Health, Intervention and Prevention (CHIP) and will be held in CHIP’s second floor video conference room (Ryan Refectory, Room 204).

A brief tour and demonstration of CHIP’s New Virtual Reality Lab, which ultimately will be available for use by UConn researchers from across the University, will immediately follow Rizzo’s talk.

Rizzo, a clinical psychologist and Hartford-native, is the director of the University of Southern California’s Institute of Creative Technologies, which has partnered with the gaming industry and Hollywood to harness the power of interactive, virtual environments for education, training, and healthcare. Rizzo is also a research professor in psychiatry at the University of Southern California.

Virtual Iraq, which borrows elements from the Xbox game Full Spectrum Warrior, is a form of exposure or immersion therapy that allows soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan who have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder to work through combat stress in a computer-simulated environment. The U.S. Department of Defense is now testing Virtual Iraq in six locations nationwide.

Rizzo began work on Virtual Iraq shortly after the U.S. invaded Iraq in 2003. Previously, he had been designing virtual reality systems to help diagnose attention deficit problems in children and memory problems in older adults. His other projects have included virtual reality games to assist with physical rehabilitation after stroke or traumatic brain injury. He is currently working with a team that is creating virtual patients with artificial intelligence that clinicians can use to practice the skills required for challenging circumstances, such as sexual assault.

Please RSVP for the talk to C. Stacey Lee at 860-486-1062 or c.stacey.lee@uconn.edu by Monday, March 23.

Performances to highlight life of Marie Curie

Two performances of a drama about the struggles and triumphs of Marie Curie will take place at the University on March 25 and 26.

Curie is known for her discovery of radium and radioactivity, and for establishing the first successful radiation treatment of cancer through collaboration with the medical community.

Manya, A Living History of Madame Marie Curie, is the story of Marie Curie from the political oppression of her childhood, to her scientific emergence and fame, the tragedy that forced her into single motherhood, and her further world prominence. It is presented by Susan Marie Frontczak.

The performances will take place at the Health Center’s Keller Auditorium on March 25, beginning at 5:30 p.m. and at the Nafe Kater Theatre on the Storrs Campus on March 26, at 7:30 p.m.

There is no charge for admission. However, a minimum suggested donation of $5 per person is encouraged. Public seminar, Marie Curie, Her Life and Times, on March 26 at 3 p.m. at Konover Auditorium in the Dodd Center. Registration is not required.

The event is hosted by the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) sub-committee of the Provost’s Commission on the Status of Women. It is funded by a variety of University sources, including the UConn Year of Science 2009 Committee.

The STEM subcommittee, chaired by Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor Debra Kendall, is developing a distinguished lecture series for, and by, women as one mechanism for bringing successful role models to the University. The group is also working on an NSF Advance grant application to support and enhance the recruitment and retention of women faculty in STEM disciplines at the University.

Tuition increase continued from page 1

rable to tuition increases in prior years, represents a compromise between the trustees and Gov. M. Jodi Rell. Due to the uncertainty with the state budget, the governor initially opposed any tuition increase. At its February meeting, the board reviewed four tuition scenarios, ranging from no increase to a 13.67 percent increase.

The two student trustees on the board, Ross Gonfrado and Richard Colm Jr., voted against the tuition hike. Both said they felt that 6 percent was too low, in light of the $34 million budget deficit the University is facing in Fiscal Year 2010. They felt that setting an average tuition increase in the face of the deficit might lead to cuts in student services and loss of many student jobs.

Meredith Zartephy, president of the Undergraduate Student Government, and Hedley Freake, professor of nutritional sciences and chairman of the University Senate Executive Committee, spoke in support of an increase of 8.67 percent. Both said the higher increase would protect services while maintaining affordability.

“Over the past year, many departments have been squeezed to the limit,” Freake said. “We feel the 8.67 percent option achieves the correct balance in maintaining quality and affordability.”

Freake said the Senate was unable to discuss the issue because its March meeting was cancelled due to a snow storm. But the Senate Executive Committee was unanimous in its support. Zartephy noted that students polled by the USG overwhelmingly supported the 8.67 percent increase.

Student Amanda Stauble said she felt that many students were worried about any increase above 4 percent.

Hogan said the 6 percent increase leaves a budget gap of at least $1.4 million and could generate 150 to 170 layoffs. That could be mitigated by union give-backs, however, he said. The president said demand for enrollment remains high, with applications up nearly five percent. That the University remains very competitive nationally, with the fifth-lowest tuition among regional public flagship universities, and that lower tuition hikes will mean larger classes and a deterioration from the student-faculty ratio of 17 to 1.

Other flagships plan much higher increases for the fall, he said, including the University of Massachusetts at 15 percent, the University of Rhode Island at 10 percent, and the State University of New York between 11 percent and 14 percent.

“The only exception appears to be Maryland,” he said, “where the university and the state are working on an agreement that posits a tuition freeze in exchange for a current full service budget, without rescission.”

Hogan said that even with the tuition increase, he is looking for additional ways to trim the budget. “The budget situation remains the focus of our attention every day, and we’ve moved aggressively and quickly to contain costs, identify efficiencies, and put into place plans to generate more revenues.”

He noted that this year, $12 million was cut from the budget. Next year, $7 million in cuts are recommended by the Costs, Operating and Revenue Efficiencies (CORE) Task Force will be implemented.

Another report from CORE is expected in June.

“It hasn’t been easy,” he said, “but through a spirit of collaboration and support, we have managed to generate or identify this $19 million in just a few months without undermining program quality, student access, or incurring substantial layoffs.”

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Giuliani offers law school audience insider’s view of justice department

BY MICHAEL KIRK
Former New York City Mayor and one-time Republican presidential candidate Rudolph Giuliani joined two fellow justice department alumni for an event, “40 Years Inside the Department of Justice,” at the UConn Law School on March 5.

The event began with a brief talk by Giuliani, followed by a panel discussion featuring former U.S. Attorney for Connecticut and Associate Attorney General Kevin O’Connor ‘82, former justice department official Marc Mukasey, and Evan Flaschen ‘82, who served as the panel’s moderator. All now work for Giuliani’s law firm, Bracewell & Giuliani.

Giuliani was pleased with the improvement in the quality of the student body, the way the Board of Trustees handled challenges related to the construction program, and the increase in the University’s national stature during his tenure.

“The theme of this year’s conference on health communication is ‘Building Bridges: Culture, Community, and Health.’ It’s an important conference,” said Lin, the campaign project director. "We hope to encourage the students to contribute their own slogan ideas and video stories to help promote a healthy social norm that aims at safe drinking practices and a safe campus environment for their college experience at UConn,” said Lin, the campaign project director.

Giuliani said the definition of the justice department’s job as “the most complex cabinet position. He said in recent decades presidents have preferred to break up their cabinet meetings — which usually entail more than a dozen heads of federal departments — into meetings of smaller subgroups. The one cabinet position that was included in every subgroup, he said, was attorney general, because every other cabinet department needs legal advice.

The utility of the position, added Giuliani, rests on the Attorney General being able to give independent legal advice and be the one who is able to say ‘no’ to the President.

All the speakers described their time in the justice department with pride.

“Nobody — whose father, Michael Mukasey, served as former President George W. Bush’s final Attorney General — who oversaw one of the most important and politically-charged positions in the federal government, could say that he or she did not get some recognition for the work they did.”

He added that while he did receive some recognition, he said, “I opened the door to questioning the process and the motives of the entire department.”

This year’s campaign is designed to prompt students to think about how and what they remember about their behavior last night (or at the last social event they attended), Row says. "We are asking students to recognize and evaluate their own behavior. Our message challenges and empowers them to aim for coming home safe and creating good memories of their college years." The campaign web site contains a number of campaign posters and public service announcements in addition to a blog, a Facebook page, resources on safe drinking tips, party smart skills, student support services, and other information such as how to judge the alcohol content of a drink, assess one’s blood alcohol level, measure one’s alcohol tolerance, detect the signs of alcohol poisoning, and assist someone who might have alcohol poisoning.

The theme of this year’s campaign is “How Do You Remember Last Night?” It invites students to contribute their own slogan ideas and video stories to help promote a healthy social norm that aims at safe drinking practices and a safe campus environment for their college experience at UConn,” said Lin, the campaign project director.

Lin is also the principal investigator of the larger research project associated with the campaign — Reducing College Student High-Risk Drinking Behavior via a Comprehensive Prevention Program, Norms Campaign, and Community Partnership Strategy.

Lin has shared the project results with other colleges, and recently presented a paper about the results at the 2008 National Conference on Health Communication, Marketing, and Media (sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and the International Communication Association.

The spring campaign to promote safe drinking practices is sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American College of Preventive Medicine, and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Since spring 2000, the campaign has engaged more than 200,000 students through research and implementation of student-generated slogans and videos on safe drinking.

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United States of America made the bust on the back of his neck stand up.

“It’s a job you don’t take for the money,” he said, “but it pays off in ‘spades’ in terms of the experience gained.”

Marc Mukasey left the department before his father was nominated for the post of Attorney General.

The department has had its share of problems. O’Connor served as chief of staff to former Bush Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez, who presided over a department that famously saw politics creep into the hiring and firing process for personnel. The scandal occurred before O’Connor worked in Gonzalez’s office.

O’Connor said the department became inherently political, with roughly 300 political appointees. This was underscored in January, with the change of administration, when some appointees — himself included — lost their jobs.

“College is one of the nation’s leading health care organizations.”

Spring campaign to promote safe drinking practices

BY KAREN A. GRAVO
Remember Last Night, a campaign originated by UConn students to reduce college students’ episodic heavy-drinking behavior, will begin this spring with a contest to develop videos and slogans for the campaign.

The campaign, funded with a two-year, $273,923 grant from the U.S. Department of Education, seeks to moderate the drinking behavior of UConn students and devotes special attention to alcohol-use safety.

Last year’s campaign evaluation suggests students reported a decrease of alcohol use during Spring Weekend, owing to their awareness of the campaign, says Carolyn Lin, professor and head of the communications program in the Department of Communication Sciences at the University of Connecticut.

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Study examines impact of exercise on older women who smoke

Dr. Cheryl Oncken, right, associate professor of medicine, speaks with Mary Carroll Root, an instructor with Powerful Aging, an exercise program developed at the Health Center.

"Our goal is to study whether an exercise program can help post-menopausal women quit smoking and abstain from cigarettes," says Oncken, a nationally recognized expert on smoking cessation, who received the grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. "Our study is looking at post-menopausal women who have a greater risk of lower bone density, depression, and weight gain, and other health problems than younger women," says Oncken. About 30 percent of female smokers are postmenopausal, and the proportion is expected to grow as the population ages. Smokers generally know about the harmful effects of smoking and want to stop, but most people have a hard time quitting.

"It takes an average of three to five attempts to finally kick the habit," says Oncken, who has studied the use of various medications and behavioral therapies designed to help people abstain from smoking. "Our aim is to find the most effective treatment or combination of treatments to help people achieve their goal."

The study, which is being conducted in collaboration with the University of Minnesota, will recruit about 300 postmenopausal women. All the women will receive smoking cessation treatment consisting of behavioral counseling and the medication varenicline; they will then be randomly assigned to either a supervised exercise program or a supervised relaxation control program. "We hypothesize that women in the exercise program will have greater abstinence rates at the end of treatment and at the end of a year than women in the relaxation program," Oncken says.

The researchers also hypothesize that the ameliorative effects of exercise on smoking cessation and depression will improve abstinence rates among women with a history of depression equal to those with no history of depression, and that exercise will improve smoking cessation by reducing nicotine craving and negative affect and by increasing self-efficacy and confidence.

The researchers will use the exercise program called Powerful Aging, developed by the Health Center's Center on Aging. The program grew out of more than a decade of research on the benefits of an exercise program that is already out in the community and has already demonstrated beneficial results for its participants.

Buddhist story illuminates physicist's new book on light

Dr. C. Roychoudhuri, in his lab at the Depot Campus.

"Buddha's story about how blind people visualize what they can't see pops up unexpectedly in physics," says C. Roychoudhuri, expert on smoking cessation, who received the grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. "Most smoking research focuses on healthy women. Our study is looking at post-menopausal women who have a greater risk of lower bone density, depression, and weight gain, and other health problems than younger women," says Oncken. About 30 percent of female smokers are postmenopausal, and the proportion is expected to grow as the population ages. Smokers generally know about the harmful effects of smoking and want to stop, but most people have a hard time quitting.

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Bioengineering honors awarded to medical dean, orthopaedist

BY CHRIS DeFRANCOSE

Two Health Center leaders have been recognized by the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering. Dr. Cato T. Laurencin, the Health Center’s vice president for health affairs and dean of the UConn School of Medicine, received the AIMBE’s highest honor, the Pierre Galletti Award; and Dr. Jay R. Lieberman, director of the New England Musculoskeletal Institute, was inducted into the AIMBE College of Fellows.

The Galletti Award recognizes contributions to public awareness of medical and biological engineering and to promoting the national interest in science, engineering, and education. The AIMBE cites Laurencin’s “seminal contribution to tissue engineering and international leadership in biomedical engineering.”

National prominence

Laurencin has achieved national prominence as a bioengineering expert and orthopaedic surgeon. He holds the Health Center’s New England Musculoskeletal Institute. Dr. Cato T. Laurencin, vice president for health affairs and dean of the School of Medicine.

Laurencin was recognized last year by the American Institute of Chemical Engineers as one of “100 Chemical Engineers of the Modern Era.”

Lieberman, professor and chairman of the Health Center’s Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, was nominated for “significant and sustained contributions to understanding the biology of arthroplasty implants, and for innovative strategies for bone regeneration using gene therapy and materials science.”

Top 2 percent

The honor puts Lieberman in the top 2 percent of medical and biological engineers, including distinguished professors, researchers, and heads of engineering and medical schools at major universities, as well as entrepreneurs, directors of research and development, and corporate leaders.

“Dr. Lieberman has been and continues to be a major contributor to the advancement of the science of biomedical engineering,” says Laurencin, himself an AIMBE fellow. “The work being done in his lab, as well as the translational research taking place at the New England Musculoskeletal Institute under his leadership, is of unquestionable benefit to the patients of today and tomorrow.”

The AIMBE aims to establish a clear identity for medical and biological engineering by promoting awareness of the field and its contributions, promoting the national interest in science, working with government and professional groups, brokering international relations and cooperation within the field, and recognizing achievements and contributions to medical and biological engineering.

The College of Fellows is one of four sections of the AIMBE and includes about 1,800 members, mostly from the United States. UConn faculty previously inducted as Fellows include John Enderle and Bahram Javidi from the School of Engineering and Michael J. Pikal from the School of Pharmacy.

Former engineering dean honored for research contributions

BY NANCY COOPER

Harold Brody, Distinguished Professor of Materials Science & Engineering, was recently honored by the Minerals, Metals & Materials Society for outstanding contributions in the field of solidification science.

He received the 2009 Bruce Chalmers Award during the society’s annual meeting in San Francisco in February.

Research on alloys

Solidification science is the study of the processes by which materials change from a liquid to a solid state. Many everyday objects – from high-end cookware to bicycle frames – as well as sculpture, turbine blades, and automobile components, are produced using a solidification process in the manufacturing sequence.

Brody’s research has focused on the solidification of alloys. To make an alloy, metallurgists may heat two or more elements to a liquid phase, mix them together at a proportion that provides a uniform solution, and transfer the molten alloy to a mold, where it solidifies in a manner that produces desired properties in the cast product.

“Think of tea,” says Brody. “Hot tea accepts more sugar than iced tea, with the sugar remaining bound in solution, to a critical tipping point: the solubility limit. When sweetened hot tea is cooled, sugar crystals can begin to form as precipitates. The solid crystals are richer in sugar than the sweetened liquid tea. When we blend metals in an alloy, the alloying elements, in general, are more soluble in the liquid than the solid phase.”

Brody notes that “solidification takes place over a range of temperatures, and the composition of the solid differs from the composition of the liquid from which it forms.”

Branched structures

Typically, to efficiently redistribute alloying elements between the liquid and solid phases, the solidifying crystalline solid develops tree-like, highly branched structures called dendrites. The distinctive “jack frost” that forms on windows in winter is a familiar example of dendritic crystal formation.

Brody says the Chalmers Award is a very personal honor. Chalmers (1907-1990), a renowned professor of applied physics at Harvard University, is regarded as the father of solidification science. As a graduate student at MIT, Brody belonged to a research group overseen by Professor Merton Flemings, who collaborated with Chalmers. Flemings and Chalmers regularly brought their research groups together for seminars. Brody says he was impressed by Chalmers’ skill in translating complex research into simple terms.

“He was a model for what a great professor should be,” he says. “I’m probably one of the last people to receive the award who was influenced directly by Dr. Chalmers.”

Brody says one of Chalmers’ principal contributions was in understanding how to solidify alloys to achieve a smooth, unbranched interface between the solid and the liquid that yields a nearly defect-free structure, providing superior properties in semiconductor and magnetic materials.

Much of Brody’s work, by contrast, has focused on fostering and manipulating dendritic solidification to attain optimum properties in structural materials.

Automotive industry

His recent work relates to the casting and thermal treatment of engine blocks for the automotive industry. With support from an automotive consortium led by General Motors and the Department of Energy, Brody and his colleagues are developing computer-aided routines that simulate the evolution of dendritic structures.

The results will be applied in the design and manufacture of high-quality components. To achieve this goal, he says, he and his team must discover and understand the behavior of complex commercial alloys and develop a practical database of the thermodynamic and kinetic properties of different materials.

Brody was dean of engineering from 1991 to 1997. He joined UConn from the University of Pittsburgh, where he was a faculty member and administrator for 25 years.

Dr. Cato T. Laurencin, director of the Health Center’s New England Musculoskeletal Institute.

Harold Brody, Distinguished Professor of Materials Science and Engineering, works with liquid aluminum in his lab.
The following grants were received through the Office for Sponsored Programs (OSP) in December 2008. The list represents only new proposals awarded, and excludes continuations. The list is supplied to the Advance each month by OSP.

Principal Investigator | Department | Sponsor | Amount | Award Period
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Anwar, A. | Electrical & Computer Engineering | Dept. of Defense/Navy | $55,000 | 12/08-12/09
Behnuiak, P. | Educational Psychology | Conn. Dept. of Education | $750,000 | 10/08-9/11
Best, S. | Political Science | Univ. of Minnesota | $40,000 | 9/08-12/09
Bogner, R. | Pharmaceutical Sciences | Nat’l. Insts. of Health | $9,294 | 9/08-9/09
Bucklin, A. | Marine Sciences | Dept. of Interior/NOAA | $85,000 | 1/09-11
Bucklin, A. | Marine Sciences | Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution | $17,000 | 12/08-12/09
Bullack, K. | School of Social Work | Nat'l. Insts. of Health | $110,618 | 7/08-6/09
Callegan, B. | Mechanical Engineering | United Technologies Corp/Pratt & Whitney | $70,000 | 12/08-12/09
Couch, K. | Economics | Dept. of Labor | $323,405 | 1/09-12/09
Conahan, A. | Public Policy | Dept. of Homeland Security/CTIC Inc. | $71,136 | 11/08-12/09
Fernando, G. | Physics | Reaxent Exploration & Production Inc. | $50,638 | 12/08-10/09
Frank, H. | Chemistry | Nat’l. Aeronautics & Space Admin/Marine Biological Lab | $129,302 | 7/08-7/11
Gray, P. | Extension | Windham Public Schools | $63,948 | 7/08-6/09

**Economic impact (continued from page 1)**

The study analyzed four components of the proposed partnership: the benefits of replacing the outdated 224-bed John Dempsey Hospital, the second smallest academic hospital in the nation, with a new 250-bed hospital in Farmington and the expansion of the schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine; a new research and educational collaboration between UConn and five regional hospitals; a partnership between UConn Health Center Farmington and at Hartford Hospital; and expanded clinical trials that would result from the partnership.

The report was discussed last week during a hearing of the General Assembly’s Committee on Higher Education and Employment. It is nationally recognized for projecting the Connecticut Department of Economic Analysis. By Regional Economic Models Inc. of Amherst, Mass. The model provides detail on Connecticut’s eight counties and is used to project economic benefits. Built from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s national input-output matrix, it is nationally recognized for projecting economic impacts and is the basis on which the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development evaluates projects.
English professor draws major writers to Torrington Campus

BY KAREN A. GRAVA

At four feet 10 inches tall, Davyne Verstandig can easily type on her computer while standing. But author Frank Delaney pictures her on a football field with the entire offense of the football team barreling toward her. "She just puts her hand out and stops them by force of will," he says. "She has the kind of personality that could stop a lynch." And that, he says, is precisely why she has been able to nurture the Litchfield County Writers Project (LCWP) so successfully that major writers speak with students and readers at the Torrington Campus on a regular basis.

Reaching out

The Writers Project is well suited to Litchfield County, where there are "more professional writers per square inch than any other county in the United States," says Delaney's wife, Diane Meier, a novelist and an advertising agency. "It takes an enormous, courageous and audacious person to reach across the fence to say to Saddam, "Yours is surely a want you to be a part of this project," and Davyne does it." Verstandig sees Litchfield County as a 21st century Bloomsbury and herself as the life force making the connections, adds Meier. The LCWP program consists of a 1,300-volume library with signed copies of works by Litchfield County authors – including the late Styrion and the late Arthur Miller – and a display of photographs on loan from the Inga Morath Foundation. Meier was the wife of Miller and the mother of actress Rebecca Miller, also a part-time Litchfield County resident.

The photographs focus on artists from Litchfield County. LCWP also offers courses each semester on writing and a well-attended public lecture series. After the program received a gift of $100,000 last year, it expanded to include gallery space, and has begun a new focus on the creative process and the visual arts. "Davyne's support of local writers and artists is unparalleled," says Julia Bolus, a literary assistant working with Arthur Miller's papers, who is also a published poet and a teacher.

Verstandig is not unlike the people she pursues as speakers for the program. She is a painter, published poet, playwright, and novelist, and has been a secondary school teacher and college professor. In 1995, she was hired at the Torrington Campus as an adjunct professor of English and soon began working on the Writers Project, since it was clear that Litchfield County is characterized by a high number of writers, and a project focusing on them would provide a way for the campus to distinguish itself. Verstandig's day includes an hour or more of reading – concentrating on Litchfield County authors, especially contemporary novels and memoirs – and time spent at Marty's Café in Washington Depot, where many of the people she encounters are authors. One of them is Frank McCourt, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of Angela's Ashes and "Tis, who has spoken several times for the LCWP and will be speaking again on April 15.

One of her jobs is to design a new writing course every semester. And always, she is writing. Several times a week, her day ends with dinner with local authors whom she invites to participate in the program. Connecting writers and readers

One of those writers is Roxana Robinson, who recalls that at one of her appearances at the Torrington Campus, she was introduced to a fan of her writing who had, with Verstandig's help, been flown in from out of town as a birthday present to meet the author. "Davyne is very interested in the connection between writers and readers," says Robinson, novelist, biographer, and essayist, who has twice been part of the LCWP lecture series and has been interviewed on stage by Verstandig. "She is a wonderful interlocut," Robinson says. "I was struck by how much research she had done, and by how carefully she had read my work."

A varied career

Originally from Hamden, Conn., Verstandig was educated in the South, receiving her master's degree from the University of Tennessee in the 1960s. Her time there includes many recollections indicative of the turmoil in the U.S. at the time. When she marched in a civil rights demonstration in Knoxville, she was spit on by whites. And when she asked permission to take a class in the Modern African Novel being taught at a local black college, she was refused. No credit could be given, she was told, for courses at such an "inferior" institution. She took the class anyway. When Robert Kennedy was assassinated, she knew she was done with the South. Heading home from college with her mother, the two were in a car accident that killed her mother. "Everything changed in that moment," Verstandig says, and rather than heading to New York to seek a job in publishing, she returned to Hamden.

Someone suggested she might try teaching. Unaware that she needed a teaching license, she secured several jobs. She chose one in Shelton because the students were from blue-collar factory families, as different as possible from the students at her high school, Rosemary Hall, then located in Greenwich. She knew it would be a challenge. She also taught at Central Connecticut State University and Albertus Magnus College, at Newburgh Air Force Base, and Fort Totten in Queens, N.Y. And she directed and acted in plays at the Creative Arts Center – now Theaterworks – in New Milford, Sherman Playhouse, and Dramalights in Washington, Conn. She eventually opened a book store in Washington Depot, and later in Warren, Conn. It was her hairdresser, a UConn Bachelor of General Studies student, who recommended she teach the at the Torrington Campus.

Today, Verstandig sits in her office there under one of her acrylic paintings – a three-foot by five-foot abstract that proclaims, "Obstacles are the vehicles by which we move forward." She notes that at age 64, she has no plans to retire. "Teaching is the best profession there is," she says. "Every day, one can make a difference."

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word for it?"

Duelfer, an intelligence officer and former deputy chairman of UNSCOM, the UN Special Commission on weapons inspection in Iraq after the first Gulf War, said his mission in 2004 was not to find weapons of mass destruction but to find the truth.

He also wanted to learn how Saddam Hussein – whom he had debriefed after he was captured – and his regime had operated. "It was an opportunity to record things that would not exist again." And that, he says, was where his background as a student of history was helpful.

The report of his Iraq Survey Group in the fall of 2004, often called the Duelfer Report, was described by the Washington Post

"We thought Saddam Hussein would be crazy not to have weapons of mass destruction. Saddam missed the import of 9–11."

Charles Duelfer, MA '74 Head of the Iraq Survey Group

"The administration's most costly mistake was not that it was wrong about weapons of mass destruction, but that it elected not to take advantage of the CIA's understanding and judgment about Iraq in its post-Saddam planning, Duelfer said.

CIA involvement was blocked, and decisions to fire Iraqi Army officers and treat Ba'ath party members as "the enemy" caused huge problems, he said. Today, "we're in a fairly decent place" in Iraq, he said. "But we could have been there four years ago. We paid a huge price."

To hear a podcast with Duelfer, go to http://clas.uconn.edu/alum/ni/notes/duelfer/duelfer.mp3

Charles Duelfer, head of the Iraq Survey Group, speaks in the Biology/Physics Building on March 5.