Chemists announce nanotech breakthrough

BY COLIN PONTIKA

Imagine you are looking through a very high-powered microscope at the smallest tube in the world – a single-walled carbon nanotube so tiny that a million can fit on the head of a pin.

Imagine too that the exterior of the tube is covered in small irregular bumps caused by oxygen molecules that cling to the outside like barnacles on a pier. Now imagine trying to slide something – a slightly larger tube perhaps – over the bumpy tube to smooth out the surface.

In this molecular, microscopic world, it isn't easy; a near impossibility, in fact, that has proven a barrier to scientists for years.

But now, chemistry professor Fotios Papadimitrakopoulos and a team of researchers in the Nanomaterials Optoelectronics Laboratory at the Institute of Materials Science have found a way to smooth the surface of nanotubes, in what Papadimitrakopoulos describes as a major nanotechnology breakthrough that could have significant applications in medical imaging and other areas.

By developing a process in which a chemical ‘sleeve’ tightly wraps itself around the nanotube, Papadimitrakopoulos managed to not only create a smooth new surface on the nanotube but also to ‘clean’ its underlying exterior of defects in a way that has never been accomplished before.

Carbon nanotubes have traditionally been very poor emitters of light because of their bumpy exterior defects and have therefore been limited in some of their technological and medical applications. As a result of the newly discovered wrapping process, Papadimitrakopoulos managed to increase the luminescence efficiency – the light emitting capability – of the nanotube 40-fold. That accomplishment has proven a barrier to scientists for years.

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“The nanotube is the smallest tube on earth and we have found a sleeve to put over it,” says Papadimitrakopoulos, whose discovery is featured in the March 6 issue of Science magazine. (http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/short/323/5919/1319) “This is the first time that a nanotube was found to emit with as much as 20 percent luminescence efficiency.”

Medical student organization receives national award

BY CAROLYN PENNINGTON

The UConn chapter of the American Medical Student Association (AMSA), the nation’s largest independent medical student organization, has been awarded the prestigious 2009 Paul R. Wright Award for Excellence in Medical Education.

It’s the first time UConn medical students have received this award, which was presented at the AMSA’s annual convention in Arlington, Va., earlier this month.

The Paul R. Wright Award recognizes a medical school, chosen by the nation’s medical students, whose exemplary achievements in medical education foster the development of socially responsive physicians. The area of concentration changes each year to highlight a different dimension of medical education.

The 2009 award focuses on local advocacy and activism.

The UConn medical students were honored for their initiative toward achieving high quality, affordable health care for all. In October, they presented an event that raised awareness in the community and provided important leadership training for local medical students. The event gathered a cross-section of the Hartford community, including health care providers, students from a wide range of disciplines including the health professions, state legislators, city officials, teachers, community leaders, and individuals from the creative arts community.

E-mail upgrade for faculty, staff

BY ELIZABETH OMAA-OJUHNU

Faculty and staff University e-mail is undergoing an upgrade that will increase mailbox size, provide added security to e-mails that are sent, and offer greater flexibility in managing out-of-office and mobile device functions.

HuskyMail, the student e-mail service, will not be affected.

Beginning March 30 and throughout the month of April, the service will move from Exchange 2003 to Exchange 2007. The transition will be implemented remotely by University Information Technology Services (UITS) for Windows users; Mac users will need to have some settings adjusted. Users will be notified of the change department by department.
Ethicist to speak about human embryos

Professor Paul Laurntronn of John Carroll University will give a presentation titled “Reflections on the Morality of Adopting Frozen Embryos” on Wednesday March 25, at the St. Thomas Aquinas Center, 46 North Eagleville Road, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

The event, part of this year’s Loyola Colloquium series, is hosted by the Aquinas Center, the Roman Catholic Campus Ministry at UConn, and St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel. It is free and open to the public.

Laurntronn graduated with a B.A. in political science and religious studies from the University of Virginia, where he also earned a master’s degree in religious studies. He earned his Ph.D. at Brown University. Since 1985, he has been on the faculty of John Carroll University in University Heights, Ohio. He has served as director of the Program in Applied Ethics at John Carroll since 1997, and was chair of the Department of Religious Studies for four years. He also has been a visiting faculty member at St. John’s University in New York.

Laurntronn is the author of four books, including Pursuing Parenthood: Ethical Issues in Assisted Reproduction (1993) and Cloning and the Future of Human Embryonic Research (2001). He also has authored more than 30 research articles and book chapters, and more than 30 professional reviews of the work of other scholars. A member of many prominent professional societies, he serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Religious Ethics, and has a collection of interviews archived as podcasts on the Commonweal Magazine web site. For more information, call 860-429-6436.

U.S. civil rights historian to deliver Sackler Human Rights Lecture March 31

U.S. civil rights historian Adam Fairclough will deliver the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Distinguished Lecture in Human Rights on Tuesday, March 31, at 4 p.m. in the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center. His talk is titled, “The Last Best Hope of Earth? American Democracy and the Right to Vote in Historical Perspective.”

Fairclough, who holds the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Chair in the History and Culture of the United States at Leiden University in the Netherlands, was one of the first historians to study the American civil rights movement and is recognized as one of the leading scholars in this field.


In addition to these research monographs, Fairclough has published Martin Luther King, Jr. (1995), a short biography of the civil rights leader, Teaching Equalit y: Black Schools in the Age of Jim Crow (2001), and Better Day Comin: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000 (2001). He also edited The Star Creek Papers: Washington Parish and the Lynching of Jerome Wilson, by Horace Mann Bond and Julia W. Bond.

He has received fellowships from the National Humanities Center, the Carter G. Woodson Center of the University of Virginia, and the American Council of Learned Societies. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and a member of the Southern Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, the American Historical Association, and the History of Education Society. He is currently chair of the Netherlands American Studies Association.

Born in England, Fairclough holds a B.A. in modern history from Oxford University, and a Ph.D. from Keele University. He taught at the University of Wales, Lampeter, and has held a Chair in Modern History at Leeds University, and a Chair in American Studies at the University of East Anglia. In 2005, he was appointed to the Sackler Chair in American History at Leiden University.

One of those taking part in this year’s relay will be Keith Bellizzi, an assistant professor of human development and family studies, who was diagnosed with Stage 3 testicular and kidney cancer just shy of his 25th birthday. After multiple surgeries, aggressive chemotherapy, and the removal of one kidney, Bellizzi survived, quit his business consulting job and devoted his career to cancer research. An avid bicyclist who has toured cross-country with Lance Armstrong to raise cancer awareness, Bellizzi lives near Storrs with his wife and three daughters.

“If we are to prevent and control the many diseases we call cancer, we need to employ a multi-faceted approach, including high quality research, policy changes, increasing advocacy community, and empow ering the general public,” Bellizzi says. “The American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life not only raises money needed for biomedical and behavioral research, but the event brings cancer awareness to the community.”

Freshman Kelly Foy will also be a participant. Foy was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL) when she was seven. After two and a half years of chemotherapy, hospital stays, in jectons, and blood draws, she was declared in remission in October 1999. The cancer returned a few years later. Only one bone marrow transplant provided by her five-year-old sister allowed her to fi nally leave the hospital on Thanks giving Day. Foy says she will never forget the image of her sister lying in a hospital bed with needles stuck in her back throughout the transplant. She regards her sister as her hero, and hopes to pursue a career as a child life specialist, helping children and families in challenging circumstances.

E-mail: advance@uconn.edu

U.S. Sen. Christopher Dodd, left, with U.S. Rep. Chris Murphy, center, and Dr. Cato T. Laurencin, vice presi dent for health affairs, during a news conference at the Health Center on stem cell research on March 14.
Academic Achievement Center helps students hone study skills

BY SHERRY FISHER

Students who want to improve their academic skills and strategies have a new place to go for help: the Academic Achievement Center.

The Center, part of the Office for First Year Programs and Learning Communities, is located in the CUE Building, Room 130. Hours are Monday through Thursday, from 5 to 9 p.m. Students may come on a walk-in basis, and are coached individually or in small groups.

The Center is staffed by undergraduate coaches, who take a course that teaches them how to mentor other students in basic skills and strategies. The training course is taught by Kevin Sullivan, director of academic support.

Sullivan says the Academic Achievement Center was created to help all students, not just those who are struggling or may be on probation. It also, for example, serves students who need to perform at the highest levels to be eligible for competitive scholarships, majors, or postgraduate opportunities.

“There are many bright students at the University who want to enhance their performance,” Sullivan says. “Many don’t do well on tests, some have time management issues, and others have problems managing stress. Our goal is to help them develop the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors so they can achieve at the highest levels.”

The Academic Achievement Center operates on a combination of existing resources, and builds on the First Year Programs, UConn Connects, and campus peer education programs, including the First Year Experience mentor initiative.

Sullivan, who has counseled students at UConn for some 20 years, says undergraduates or graduate students who are new at the University often get a shock after the first round of exams. Objective tests, which measure both a person’s understanding and memory for details, are particularly problematic.

“They might not do well on a multiple choice test, even though they believe they’ve studied appropriately,” says Sullivan. “When they get a bad grade, they’ll often think they are not suited for college work and become discouraged. That’s where the Center for Academic Achievement steps in.”

Faculty advisors, and peers have been referring students to the Center since it opened earlier this semester.

Sullivan says the typical student he sees say they went to every class and studied the material. “But when you sit them down and ask them how they studied and how they prepared, you can understand why they didn’t do well.”

It’s not that they haven’t worked hard, he says. They haven’t worked “smart.”

“One of the first things a coach wants to see is a student’s notes. There’s usually a real problem here,” Sullivan says. “Students may have downloaded a PowerPoint presentation from a course and think that’s enough information. It’s not.”

Students need to take better notes during classes, he says. “Even if a professor puts up verbatim notes, and a student listens in class, if he or she isn’t really actively engaged in the learning process, they’re not going to understand the material. They’re not writing down things that strike them as important.”

Coaches tell students they need to understand what’s required of them. “They need to know what their job is when they go to class, what their job is when they go over their notes, and what their job is when they read a chapter in a journal,” says Sullivan. “We’re teaching them the trade.”

He adds, “We’re trying to get them to be more conscious and intentional about how they study.”

In addition to understanding the information they’re studying, reviewing it multiple times in a focused manner is important. Studying with a classmate and creating questions and answers about the subject matter is also helpful in understanding and remembering the material, Sullivan says.

If additional help is needed, a student will be referred to the appropriate academic department, the Q-Center, the Writing Center, or other campus resources.

Sarah Melchior, a junior majoring in English and philosophy, supervises the student coaches and also works one-on-one with students who come to the Center. She has been an FYE mentor, a UConn Connects facilitator, and a peer leadership instructor.

She decided to work with the Center because, she says, peer education works. “I’ve enjoyed being a resource for other students,” she adds. “I’ve been able to succeed here, and I want to share that with other students.”

Computer program adjusts heating, cooling, and water

BY RICHARD VELLEUX

When a diagram of Gampel Pavilion popped up on Peter McQueeney’s computer screen indicating that the temperature was more than 90 degrees in the building’s dome, he wasn’t surprised.

“It’s probably because there was an event there last night,” he said.

But he was able to do something about it without even leaving his desk.

McQueeney, UConn’s energy management supervisor, guided his cursor to a box on the lower left of his computer screen, typed in the number 68, and clicked “accept.” Within a few hours, he said, Gampel would cool down.

McQueeney, who works in Facilities Operations, is in charge of the Andover Controls Building Automation System, a computer program interfaced with building mechanical systems. The system enables him to monitor and adjust a building’s heating and cooling systems, air intake, air quality, and more, all from the computer in his office.

The system has a server and a dozen workstations in constant communication with network controllers connected to “device controllers.” These controllers, installed in more than 100 buildings on the Storrs campus, receive information from more than 200,000 points and send control signals to over 13,000. The Andover system also manages systems at the Stamford Campus, either locally or from the Storrs campus.

Thomas Callahan, UConn’s associate vice president for operations and administration, says the system, which is being continuously upgraded, now covers a majority of the University’s square footage.

The system also allows McQueeney and others in his department to monitor the University’s water supply system, managing the amount of water heading into UConn’s storage tanks via the Willimantic and Fenton wellfield pumps, and monitoring the levels of chemicals in the water.

“The system increases our ability to manage and control the water – the gallons per minute we pump and how long we pump each day,” McQueeney says. “It’s a major upgrade over how we handled water use in the past.”

The system also saves the University money, says Callahan, although it’s hard to quantify.

“More importantly it helps us understand where the energy is going,” he adds, “and that helps us improve the electrical, steam, and chilled water systems.”

The control system provides a fail-safe, with defaults built in for maximum and minimum temperatures. Building managers can get the temperature in their building adjusted by making a quick call to facilities operations. If the adjustment doesn’t work, they know there’s something wrong with the system and facilities can dispatch a repair crew.

“It shows alarms where something isn’t working,” says Ron Gaudet, energy services manager in facilities operations. “That allows us to focus the management team where it’s needed. The system has been a great help.”
Exploring the link between gum infections and kidney disease

BY KRISTINA GOODNOUGH

For patients undergoing kidney dialysis, gum disease is more than an inconvenience. It may cause not only local, oral inflammatory responses but also systemic inflammatory responses that could put patients at higher risk for complications such as heart problems, according to research by Dr. Effie Ioannidou, assistant professor of periodontology at the UConn School of Dental Medicine.

Ioannidou is part of a team of researchers led by Dr. Anna Dongari-Bagtzoglou, associate professor and chair of the division of periodontology, who were the first to report on the relationship between gum disease and systemic inflammation that could affect the risk of organ rejection in kidney and heart transplant recipients. “Researchers have identified inflammation as a potential risk for organ transplant rejection,” says Ioannidou.

Dongari-Bagtzoglou’s research team found that interleukin-6, a pro-inflammatory cytokine that is secreted in response to infections, was present in elevated amounts in transplant patients with severe chronic gum disease compared to patients with no gum disease. “It suggests that periodontal infections may increase systemic inflammation in these patients, which may place them at a greater risk for transplant rejection,” the researchers concluded in a study published in the Journal of Periodontology in 2006.

Ioannidou noticed that the transplant recipients who had been on dialysis before the kidney transplant seemed to have more gum disease than transplant recipients who had never had dialysis. With a grant from the General Clinical Research Center, Ioannidou began a pilot study to investigate the issue more closely. Since then, Ioannidou has received several awards to support her research on the association between chronic periodontitis and chronic kidney disease.

Most recently Ioannidou received the Bud and Linda Tarrson Fellowship from the American Academy of Periodontology Foundation. The award is a $36,000, three-year fellowship to encourage periodontal clinicians to pursue an academic career.

With the latest grant, Ioannidou hopes to look at a treatment for periodontal disease and see whether it improves the health of those with chronic kidney disease.

“Af ter we provide the treatment, we’ll examine study participants for markers for inflammation and nutrition to see if their health or well being improves,” she says. The multidisciplinary research project brings together periodontology, nephrology, and behavioral sciences.

Ioannidou teaches and mentors both pre- and post-doctoral students: Drs. Eric Choudhury and Dongha Oh, residents in periodontics, are working on the project as part of their Master’s of Dental Science training, and Husham Ria fey, a fourth-year dental student, is working with Ioannidou on a systematic review and meta-analysis of the prevalence of periodontal disease in chronic kidney disease patients.

Chronic kidney disease is a growing health problem in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control, affecting nearly 17 percent of adults over the age of 20.
Social work researchers studying relief efforts for Iraqi refugees

BY SHERRI FISHER

Despite its small size and fragile economy, Jordan hosts about half a million forced migrants and refugees who have fled Iraq since the United States-led war began in 2003, according to the United Nations. Researchers Kathryn Libal and Scott Harding, both assistant professors in the School of Social Work, say the media have focused on U.S. military casualties and other costs of the war in Iraq, and the success of the “surge” of U.S. troops in the past year, while the displacement crisis has been largely ignored.

“This humanitarian crisis – both inside and outside of Iraq – has long-term consequences for Iraq and neighboring countries,” Harding says. “If you’re concerned about stability and so-called security of the region, it’s important to understand that Jordan and Syria can’t absorb large numbers of people who don’t have a means to provide for themselves. And if you have generations of young Iraqis who aren’t in school learning a trade, that poses societal and potential security issues.”

Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon have the largest numbers of Iraqi refugees. Libal and Harding are studying refugee relief efforts provided by international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies, and the U.S. government to help develop insights into the evolving nature of humanitarian support for these refugee populations.

Harding says little attention has been paid to the roles these organizations play in shaping and sustaining refugee service in Jordan.

Since 2006, the two researchers have been conducting research to identify the ways in which services are being provided to Iraqi refugees in Jordan. They conducted interviews in the U.S. with NGOs and human rights groups, and then in Jordan, interviewing representatives of organizations working on humanitarian issues.

“We thought that some of the established humanitarian organizations would have a more visible presence there,” Libal says. “We thought they’d be providing a lot of services to a lot of refugees, but that wasn’t the case. There were few refugee camps, because most of the people were urban refugees.

A significant number were doctors and medical professionals, which will have a long-term effect on the health and well-being of people living in Iraq. Iraqi refugees do not have legal refugee status in their host countries. Libal says: “Life is difficult for them. Most will not be granted permanent residence in the United States or other resettlement countries, and they can’t work legally.”

Harding says that under pressure from the NGOs and the U.S., during the past year, the Iraqi government has begun allowing Iraqi children to attend public school. But even though the children are now eligible, for a variety of reasons school attendance is uneven. “There’s still a fear of being visible, again linked to the issue of not having legal status,” he says.

The organizations the two have interviewed say that Jordan and Syria are ill-equipped to handle large populations for a long period of time, says Harding.

Adds Libal, “They’re both developing countries. They have their own vulnerable populations, so to absorb another large population makes it even more challenging.”

While continuing to examine how NGOs are working to meet the needs of Iraqis on the ground in Jordan and Syria, the researchers are also interested in the work done by these groups in Washington. They’ve been interviewing resettlement agency officials in the U.S. to understand how they’re working to help Iraqis settle here.

“We’re interested in the struggles they face in this country, and what resources are available to them through agencies and state policies,” Libal says.

Harding notes that the NGOs had some success in getting the Bush administration to support the refugee cause: the U.S. set a formal target to admit about 15,000 Iraqis per year over the next five years. But globally, Iraqi refugees are stymied, he says. “Even though more are registering with the UN to be resettled, there are few who are actually resettled.”

Libal says the organizations interviewed say that resettlement will never be a viable option for most Iraqis. “They don’t see the world community being willing to take huge numbers of refugees.”

Many of the NGOs have said the U.S. President has a key role to play in assuring the continued funding of addressing refugee and displacement needs, she says. “They’ve said if the president doesn’t take a leadership role, it’s very difficult to get other countries to participate in the endeavor.”

Harding adds that while there is a debate in social science literature about the role of humanitarian groups, their own research shows that these groups play a vital role: “Because of the pressure and political advocacy of these groups, U.S. policy has changed significantly and the United Nations has done more. Advocacy does work, even on a global level.”

Political theorist calls for recognition of environmental human rights

BY SHERRI FISHER

Clean air, water, and soil should be viewed as environmental human rights of present and future generations, according to political science professor Richard Hiskes.


The book offers a new set of concepts and a new language that melds politics and environmental protection together in an effort to preserve a legacy of clean air, water, and soil.

Hiskes says it presents a new theoretical foundation for human rights as the product of human relationships, and offers an argument for what philosophers call “justice across generations.”

“Justice across generations has always been called a logical impossibility,” he says, “because justice is about reciprocity, and how can you have reciprocity with people who don’t exist?”

“It’s an involved argument, but I say that environmental human rights, by their nature, are forward looking; they involve protecting the future,” Hiskes says. “And if human rights are about relationships, and we view those rights as the rights of people we care about, then we should protect the environmental rights of our own future generations.”

Hiskes says countries around the world should amend their constitutions to add an environmental human right that would have legal standing in court.

“I argue for the incorporation into the U.S. Constitution and all other constitutions around the world a new right, an environmental human right, which would cover future generations,” he says.

“It makes sense to do this, because constitutions are cultural and political artifacts that are multigenerational.”

But, he says, that idea is controversial, because human rights are supposed to be universal, not national.

“I’m saying it’s difficult for people to care about the human rights of anybody who is not close to them, whether it’s in another country or somewhere else in time,” Hiskes says. “It’s hard to care about the environmental human rights of people who aren’t alive yet, who are going to be living on the other side of the globe. But we need to find a new avenue for caring that allows us to think about such a global issue as the health of the environment in a close-to-home kind of way.”

Environmental human rights, and all human rights, depend on countries around the world reaching consensus about what human rights mean, Hiskes says.

“At the moment, that’s not happening,” he says. “Cultures are very diverse, but what every culture has, that it shares with every other culture, is a vivid sense of its own future generations. If you could build, in every society, a sentiment to protect the environmental rights of its own future generations, not only would that go a long way to protect the global environment, but it would be a foundation on which to build a global consensus on human rights.”

According to Hiskes, who is editor of the Journal of Human Rights and associate director of the Human Rights Institute, environmentalism, for the most part, has failed.

“Thousands of species are disappearing annually, the air isn’t getting better globally, and being good stewards or moral people isn’t enough,” he says. “We need a language, a set of concepts that are going to stand up in court.”
The following grants were received through the UConn Health Center’s Office of Grants and Contracts in December 2008. The list represents new awards as well as continuations. The list of grants is supplied to the Advance by the Office of Grants and Contracts.

**Federal Grants**

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**Private Grants**

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**State Grants**

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**E-mail upgrade continued from page 1**

Logging on will remain the same, with the same Exchange username and password.

The transition is intended to be seamless. The new applications will have a new look and feel, says Katherine Sorrentino, assistant director of UITS, but should not require a learning curve.

Some aspects of the move have been underway during the past few weeks. Those who log in to their e-mail or online calendar from the web may already have noticed that the login screen has changed. These users are also required to designate their computer as public (shared) or private (for individual use), as an additional security measure.

For more information, go to exchange.uconn.edu

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**Medical students continued from page 1**

Medical students Erica Hinz, Teresa Doucet, Shan Shan Jiang, and Shubha Venkatesh spent a year planning the event. “At times, it was very difficult to balance event planning with our school work,” says Hinz. “However, we felt it was too important an issue at too critical of a time to give it up. Now this award from AMSA makes all the work even more rewarding.”

More than 150 people attended the event, which took place at Real Art Ways in Hartford. Along with artwork and multimedia presentations, speakers included Dr. Laurel Baldwin-Ragavem, a family physician in Hartford and human rights scholar at Trinity College, small business owner Kevin Galvin of Connecticut Commercial Maintenance, and Carlos Rivera, Hartford’s director of health and human services. They noted that the event called much-needed attention to a critical issue.

“The oft-quoted statistic that 47 million Americans lack health insurance is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in Hartford,” says medical student Doucet. “Approximately 20 percent to 30 percent of residents of the so-called insurance capital of the world are uninsured, and twice as many are underinsured. As medical students, we’re doing what we can to raise awareness and advocate for change.”

Jiang says, “For us, the event was just the first step. The award reinforces our resolve to take this further. We’re focusing on improving not only the health of the individual, but the health of the community in which the individual lives.”

The award is named in honor of Paul Wright, executive director emeritus of AMSA. Along with the organization’s student leadership, Wright helped AMSA become the nation’s largest, independent association of physicians-in-training and a powerful force in advancing the healthcare industry.

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**Tibetan monks around a sand mandala they created at the UConn Health Center.**

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**Photo supplied by UConn Health Center**
Psychologist’s book examines harmful effects of AIDS denialism

by BETH KRAANE

“HIV is not sexually transmitted; “HIV does not cause AIDS; “Anti-retroviral medications are poison.”

These are the varied claims of a small, yet growing and dangerous, group of AIDS denialists Seth Kalichman exposes in a new, popular press book, Denying AIDS: Conspiracy Theories, Pseudoscience, and Human Tragedy.

“This book doesn’t aim to refute the AIDS denialist movement. The science of HIV/AIDS is established fact,” says Kalichman, a professor of social psychology at UConn.

“This is a psychological autopsy of AIDS denialism, a rare look inside the movement’s wacky and destructive world.”

Denying AIDS is the first book to offer an American perspective on AIDS denialism and to examine its harmful influence on some of the countries hardest hit by the epidemic. In addition to “diving into the world of AIDS denialism” through books, magazines, and the Internet, Kalichman corresponded and conversed with proponents of AIDS denialism to gain insights into the movement. AIDS denialism, he writes, is akin to global warming denialism, Holocaust denial, the 9/11 Truth Movement, and other forms of denialism, in that it uses “myths, misconceptions, and misinformation to distort and refute reality and create the appearance of legitimate scientific debate.”

Most scientists are surprised to learn that AIDS denialists still exist, according to Kalichman. AIDS denialism, however, is a growing problem, and it is propped up by AIDS “pseudo science” circulating largely on the Internet through web sites, blogs, and even pseudo-scientific journals made to look like their legitimate, peer-reviewed counterparts.

Creating the illusion of credibility are a small group of professors with ties to well-regarded universities, supportive articles in mainstream media outlets such as Harper’s Magazine, and celebrity endorsements, such as from the popular rock band The Foo Fighters, Kalichman writes.

Nicoli Nattrass, a South African AIDS activist, researcher, and author, writes in the foreword to Denying AIDS: “There is a real risk that a new generation of Americans could be persuaded that HIV does not exist or is harmless, that safe sex is not important, and that they do not need to protect their children from this deadly virus. A resurgence of denialism in the United States would have far-reaching effects on the global AIDS pandemic, just as it already has in South Africa.”

Two other recent studies also underscore the harmful influence of AIDS denialism: A 2008 Harvard University study used mathematical modeling to determine that 365,000 South Africans died as a direct result of former South African president Thabo Mbeki’s refusal to provide antiretroviral medications to treat HIV-positive patients and to prevent pregnant women from infec- ting their babies. Mbeki became an AIDS denialist after exposure to American denialists through the Internet.

A 2007 study by researchers at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 40 percent of gay men surveyed in four major U.S. cities agreed with the statement “HIV does not cause AIDS, despite the fact that gay men are regarded as one of the best educated populations with regard to HIV and AIDS.”

Kalichman shines a light on the erroneous reasoning and unscientifc approaches of AIDS denialists and explains how the denialists nevertheless gain ground. They are masters of rhetorical devices and focus on communicating with the general public. Scientists, by contrast, tend to communicate better with each other than with the general public.

Denying AIDS, a trade book published by Copernicus Books/Springer Science and written with a science journalist as a coach, seeks to reverse that trend. In his final chapter, Kalichman offers tips for evaluating the claims of AIDS denialists, including: avoid falling into “single-study fallacies,” consider where informa- tion is published and how dated it is, don’t give credibility to infor- mation simply because it sounds technical, and use common sense. “Think about the gay men who never used drugs, who had been perfectly healthy and died of AIDS before there were antiretroviral medications…” he writes. “Think about Africa. Is there any rational- ity in saying that AIDS is caused by poverty, when some of the most impoverished countries in the world have no AIDS while south- ern Africa’s richest country has among the largest AIDS problems? Blaming AIDS on drug abuse. HIV treatments, and poverty is an affect to every person living with the disease.”

When he is not delving into the world of AIDS denialism, Kalich- man, a principal investigator at UConn’s Center for Health, Inter- vention and Prevention (CHIP) and director of the Southeast HIV/AIDS Research and Evaluation Project (SHARE), conducts HIV/ AIDS prevention and treatment research in Atlanta and South Africa.

He is donating the proceeds from Denying AIDS to the Family Treatment Fund, administered by Massachusetts General Hospital, to purchase antiretroviral medica- tions for people living with HIV/AIDS in Africa.

Stamford Campus gallery displaying works by faculty, students

An exhibition of paintings, photographs, and drawings by regional campus students, staff and faculty in celebration of the Year of Science is on display at the Stamford Campus Art Gallery through April 8.

There will be a public reception on Saturday, April 4, 1 to 3 p.m. The exhibition features the paintings of Guido Garaycochea, a professor of art and art history at the Avery Point Campus.

I work with icons that I have created mostly on my own, some- times using gold as an expression of our external-internal struggle between our many different selves, our private and our own ambigu- ity,” says Garaycochea. “In my work there is always a tension between different parts of the de- sign. Trying to express the internal contradiction that is always life, is why I mostly paint just mere insinuations of bodies in con- stant transformation. Bodies and organic forms that are, even after I finish my paintings, in a constant transformation like in our memo- ries after things happen. Those organic forms are always looking for a reality inside another reality which is itself a contradiction.”

Also included in the exhibit are algorithms by Sandra DeLozier Coleman, adjunct professor of mathematics at the Avery Point Campus, and botanicals by Diane Barcelo, adjunct professor of art and art history at Avery Point. Students from Chile, Germany, Ukraine, and the United States also contributed to this show.

The Stamford Campus Art Gallery supports the University’s educational mission by stimulat- ing active learning and dialogue about the arts and the creative process and aims to attract artists and members of the community to high caliber exhibitions and programs.

The Gallery is located on the Concourse level of the campus, at the intersection of Broad Street and Washington Boulevard. Free parking is available on the second floor of the UConn Stamford Campus Washington Boulevard garage.

For more information about the exhibition, go to www.stamford. uconn.edu and click on art gallery, or call 203-251-8541.