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UConn Traditions



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## College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

### Two UConn studies break new ground

Two recent breakthroughs have placed UConn at the forefront of regenerative biology research.

For the first time, UConn regenerative biology researchers have generated a stable line of embryonic stem cells from cloned cattle embryos that can morph into cells for nearly all bovine body tissues and organs. The results of this research may offer a breakthrough for scientists studying use of stem cells to treat conditions such as diabetes and Parkinson's disease.



UConn researchers have generated a stable line of embryonic stem cells from cloned cattle embryos for the first time.

"The bovine stem cells we generated are different from all previously reported lines," says Xiangzhong (Jerry) Yang, a professor of animal science and director of the University's Center for Regenerative Biology. "This is the first report demonstrating morphology similar to those of established stem cells in humans and mice."

These researchers, led by Yang, include Cindy Tian, also with the Center for Regenerative Biology, and Enkui Duan of the Institute of Zoology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, China. They reported their findings in the March edition of the scientific journal *Biology of Reproduction*.

Another UConn study team, working with a Japanese group, has found the strongest evidence to date that beef and dairy products from cloned cattle are safe for human consumption.

The beef and dairy products study, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Connecticut Innovations Inc., is the first to examine specific proteins and nutrients in the milk and meat from somatic cloned animals. It fills an important gap in the

scientific literature and may lead to regulatory approval of clone-derived food.

Yang and Tian also led this group of researchers and worked with Chikara Kubota of the Kagoshima Prefectural Cattle Breeding Development Institute. They reported their findings in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* in April.

The new study comes as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration is poised to rule on whether to allow food from cloned livestock to be sold for human consumption.

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## School of Allied Health

### ***Genetic differences may affect muscle training***

Overweight and obese people may have to pump more iron or clock more time in the gym than their healthy weight counterparts if they hope to see comparable gains in muscle strength partially due to genetic differences, suggests UConn School of Allied Health research findings presented to the American College of Sports Medicine in June.

The study of 449 healthy weight and 238 overweight or obese men and women was conducted by UConn's Exercise and Genetics Collaborative Research Group as part of a larger, multi-site examination of which genes and genetic variants influence an individual's response to resistance training.



*Photo: Peter Morenus*

Linda Pescatello, associate professor of health promotion and allied health sciences, with a test subject during a weight training exercise.

UConn is one of 10 institutions involved in the obesity research, a four-year study funded through a \$430,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health. The "Functional Single Nucleotide Polymorphisms Associated with Human Muscle Size and Strength" study, or FAMuSS, is led at UConn by Linda Pescatello, associate professor of health promotion and allied health sciences.

As part of the obesity study, Pescatello and three UConn graduate students collaborating with her — Bethany Kelsey, Gary Gianetti and Matthew Kostek — measured how their healthy weight and overweight subjects, as determined by body mass index measurements, responded to the same 12-week resistance training regimen using the non-dominant arm.

The researchers found that their subjects experienced comparable increases in muscle size, but not in muscle strength.

"Bigger people have bigger muscles, so you would expect that their strength response to resistance training would probably be greater, but when you adjust for body size, we found the normal weight group had bigger strength gains," Pescatello says. "It appears that being overweight or obese blunts the beneficial effects of training on muscle strength."

Pescatello says further study using a full-body training regimen is needed; however, she believes the study has implications for how strength training exercise might be prescribed for overweight or obese people.

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## School of Business

### *Accelerating on the GE fast track*

After only 12 months on the job, Irina Tsikhelashvili '04 M.B.A., a risk analyst for GE Consumer Finance in Stamford, Conn., was named as one of 10 recipients worldwide of General Electric's Edison Award, the company's most prestigious technical honor bestowed by the leadership teams from their respective businesses.



*Photo: Peter Morenus*

Irina Tsikhelashvili '04 M.B.A. received one of General Electric's most prestigious honors, the Edison Award.

Edison Awards are presented annually to individuals for technical contributions that have made a significant impact on the current and future vitality of GE businesses.

Tsikhelashvili was recognized for developing a macroeconomic risk assessment model for the GE Consumer Finance Global Mortgage Program. The model applies options pricing, economic theory, econometric principles and simulation methodology to measure and manage the risk of real estate secured loan portfolios. The model has already been launched in Hungary and Poland and was instrumental in extending a cross-currency mortgage lending program in central Europe by \$900 million.

Tsikhelashvili graduated from UConn's M.B.A. program with a 4.0 GPA in her finance concentration. She already has been inducted into the UConn School of Business Hall of Fame because of her outstanding academic achievements and involvement in extracurricular organizations.

She was actively involved in UConn's edgelab, a learning laboratory created by the School of Business and the General Electric Company at UConn's campus in Stamford. She praised the assistance provided to her by Norman Moore, UConn associate professor of finance, and James Marsden, professor of operations and information management.

"Edgelab is a learning accelerator. It is a unique opportunity to learn by doing and it provides challenging projects," says Tsikhelashvili. "Edgelab is one of the best things that happened in my career, and my success today would not be possible without it."

"The Edison Award winners embody the GE values of imagine, solve, build and lead, and their outstanding contributions and commitment to innovation have truly made an impact on their businesses," says Scott Donnelly, senior vice president of GE Global Research.

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## College of Continuing Studies

### *Taking a lead role in homeland security*



Photo: Peter Morenus

Medical and fire department personnel process and decontaminate simulated terrorist attack victims outside the emergency department at the UConn Health Center.

UConn had a significant role in what was described as the largest counter-terrorism exercise in North America, involving more than 10,000 participants from more than 275 government and private sector organizations in Connecticut, New Jersey, Canada and the United Kingdom.

The Homeland Security Education Center (HSEC), a part of the Workforce Development Institute (WDI) within the College of Continuing Studies, helped to plan TOPOFF 3, which took place in New London over four days in early April. Under the Connecticut exercise scenario, mustard gas was dropped onto

a waterfront festival, followed by a car bomb that dispersed more of the deadly chemical.

The UConn Health Center, as well as 30 other hospitals throughout the state, served as a treatment center for victims of the attack. The exercise was designed to test the policies and procedures of emergency responders from the local to the national level for any terrorist attack or major disaster.

Roy Pietro '77 (BUS), '03 M.P.A., who serves as the executive director for both the WDI and the HSEC, was responsible for Connecticut's program coordination and fiscal administration of the state's \$1.5 million TOPOFF 3 budget.

Although the federal objective was to test decision making, how the event is managed on the state and federal level, and what the federal government needs to do to support state and local government, all participants benefited from the exercise.

UConn's high-level participation in the national exercise was the latest in a series of educational programs developed in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. UConn has provided educational programs for managers from various agencies that merged into the department's Bureau of Customs and Border Protection and has developed a bio-terrorism and emergency training program for the state's emergency and health care professionals.

Soon after TOPOFF 3 was concluded, the UConn Board of Trustees approved a new master's degree program in homeland security. The two-year, 36-credit online program is designed for emerging leaders in the Department of Homeland Security.

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## School of Dental Medicine

### ***Reorganization encourages collaboration***

School of Dental Medicine has reorganized into three main departments with the goal of increased collaboration among the school's 160 students, 110 residents and graduate students, and 120 full- and part-time faculty.

"This reorganization will result in taking an outstanding dental school to an even higher level of performance," says Peter J. Robinson, dean of the school.

Nine departments have been restructured into three new departments—oral rehabilitation, bio-materials and skeletal development, led by Thomas Taylor; oral

health and diagnostic sciences, led by Maurizio Tonetti; and orthodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, pediatric dentistry, and advanced education in general dentistry, led by Ravindra Nanda.

“This is an exciting and challenging time,” says Nanda. “We’re in the process of identifying areas in which we can develop new programs and improve some clinical efficiencies. The synergy of combined divisions and departments is stimulating.”

The reorganization was developed by a task force of faculty from various disciplines, with input from deans and directors, faculty, and administrators at all levels of the University, including the UConn Health Center Dental Council.

The goals were to bring the disciplines together to enhance research opportunities and create a critical mass of faculty in the departments to provide more effective mentoring for junior faculty, achieve economies of scale in teaching and consolidation of the curriculum, streamline faculty governance, and use support staff more effectively.

“The opportunities are phenomenal,” says Tonetti. “The faculty are meeting and engaging in discussions, and we’ve identified areas of collaboration and areas where we can use the department’s unique synergy.”

Taylor adds, “The consolidation of the departments will substantially increase the mentoring potential for younger faculty and will improve the collaborative potential among the basic scientists, translational scientists and the clinicians.”

Robinson notes that each of the three new department heads has a worldwide reputation in the international dental community.

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## Neag School of Education

### *Studying vocabulary intervention for young readers*



*Photo: Melissa Arbo*

Michael Coyne, assistant professor of educational psychology.

In kindergarten and first grade, students learn vital reading skills, but vocabulary instruction is limited. A UConn research project could change this pattern.

“Children need to know the meanings of words to be successful learners,” says Michael Coyne, assistant professor of educational psychology, who believes vocabulary skills taught as early as kindergarten can significantly help at-risk readers. He is studying the impact of vocabulary on young learners with a \$686,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

Vocabulary Intervention Targeting At-risk Learners (Project VITAL) is a three-year project to discover how to help young children develop vocabulary knowledge, especially students at risk of experiencing reading difficulties. Coyne believes this can be accomplished by providing simple, understandable definitions of words, using the words in the context of a story, and giving students a chance to talk about the words

while relating them to their own lives and experiences.

"We know from research that kids begin kindergarten with meaningful differences in vocabulary knowledge, and that gap grows wider in the early grades," Coyne says.

Reading aloud to students, common in kindergarten and first-grade classrooms, tends to benefit the children with already well-developed vocabularies, reinforcing the growing gap between them and children who have less well-developed vocabularies. He recommends incorporating more supportive vocabulary instruction into storybook reading activities for younger children.

The first phase of Project VITAL began last fall, with vocabulary intervention strategies developed and field-tested at the Batchelder School in Hartford, Conn., and the Windham Center School in Windham, Conn.

"Acting out the meanings of words and seeing pictures is helping the children learn new words in a fun way," says Pat Delaney, a reading specialist at the Batchelder School.

The next two years will involve a carefully controlled, classroom-based, experimental study that tests the intervention strategies developed this year and involve more schools in the program.

Coyne's ultimate goal is to produce strategies and tools that all early-grade teachers can use in their classrooms.

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## School of Engineering

### ***Engineer Receives Carnegie Teaching Award***

Douglas Cooper, professor and head of chemical engineering, was selected as the 2004 Connecticut Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

The State Professors of the Year Award Program selects outstanding educators in all 50 states. Winners are chosen for their dedication to undergraduate teaching, which is determined by excellence in four areas: impact on, and involvement with, undergraduate students; scholarly approach to teaching and learning; contributions to undergraduate education in the institution, community, and profession; and support from colleagues and current and former undergraduate students.

Cooper joined the UConn faculty in 1988. He holds a doctorate in chemical engineering from the University of Colorado and previously worked at Chevron. He teaches courses in numerical methods and process control, using software he designed. That software, which enables students to see how theory translates into reality in an industrial setting, is now used to train engineers at 150 schools and dozens of manufacturing sites around the world.

He also teaches a class in "engineering entrepreneurship," where students learn how to thrive in a corporate environment. Cooper teaches them everything from the need to offer firm handshakes and make eye contact to developing the ability to explain a project succinctly at a moment's notice.

"Doug Cooper works tirelessly with students to help them craft accurate, eye-catching résumés and cover letters that will distinguish them as they enter the job market," says Amir Faghri, dean of the School of Engineering. "He works one-on-

one with them to develop job leads and refine interview skills in an effort to ensure they present the best possible professional image.”

Cooper was also named a University Teaching Fellow in 2003.

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## School of Family Studies

### *Helping keep the lead out*

A novel approach to raising awareness about the danger of lead for Native American children, developed by UConn’s Healthy Environments for Children Initiative (HEC), was recognized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

A joint initiative of the School of Family Studies and the Cooperative Extension System, HEC has created a series of children’s books to teach those most at risk how they can protect themselves from the dangers that lurk in lead, including permanent brain damage. The third in this series of books published with support from the Penobscot Indian Nation in Maine, *How Mother Bear Taught the Children about Lead*, received a 2005 Children’s Environmental Health Recognition Award from the EPA.

“Lead poisoning is a problem around the country, but especially in New England, because the housing stock here is so old,” says UConn’s HEC Coordinator Joan Bothell, who authored the book along with Maureen T. Mulroy, associate dean of family studies and Mary-Margaret Gaudio, cooperative extension educator.

Lead paint, a common source of lead poisoning, has been banned from houses since 1978, but many New England homes are much older than that, Bothell says.

Complete with checklists, quizzes and a board game, *How Mother Bear Taught the Children about Lead* is a curriculum for Native American children in grades Three and Four.

Mother Bear is a guide figure who tells children lead can make them very sick and shows them the most common sources of lead in their everyday environment at home, including water from old lead pipes and soil contaminated by peeling paint or gasoline.

The authors divided Mother Bear’s lessons by season because of the important role nature plays in Native American life, Bothell says. No matter the season, Mother Bear offers children simple ways they can protect themselves—from washing their hands and removing their shoes before they go inside to eating healthful foods and letting faucet water run until it’s cold before drinking it.

HEC’s award-winning curriculum is now being distributed to Native American nations through the U.S.

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## School of Fine Arts

### *Staging the story of Prudence Crandall’s school*



*Our Short Stay*, by Carlton Molette, professor of dramatic arts, was performed earlier this year for the first time at Miami's African Heritage Cultural Center.

About a dozen years ago Carlton Molette, UConn professor of dramatic arts and senior fellow of the Institute for African American Studies, and his wife, Barbara, first learned about the Prudence Crandall School, New England's first academy for black girls located in Canterbury, Conn.

"We decided it had enough drama to have potential for a play," says Molette, who researched and read about the school's history.

Crandall, a white Quaker, founded the private school in 1831 for the daughters of the local gentry. When she admitted a black girl to classes, most of the white students withdrew from the school, which Crandall closed and then reopened as an academy for black girls in 1833. That school closed 17 months later after a state law was passed requiring local permission to educate black children, which resulted in three trials and violent attacks on the school, including a fire.

The resulting drama, *Our Short Stay*, directed by Molette and produced by the M Ensemble Theatre Company with support from the National Endowment for the Arts, was performed earlier this year for the first time at the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center in Miami. The play was also performed as a reading at the Frank Silvera Writer's Workshop at the Harlem Theatre Company in New York City.

*Our Short Stay* focuses on two students who attended Crandall's academy and includes three actors who portray 23 different characters by putting on or taking off small articles of clothing, such as hats and shawls.

"I hope *Our Short Stay* puts one more piece of fuel on the fire to inspire students to get a formal education," Molette says. "Students need to realize how important it is. I hope they're inspired by what these women were willing to sacrifice in order to get that education."

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## School of Law

### ***Lending a helping hand on tax law***

Most people view tax law as a highly technical subject. But for Diana Leyden '82 J.D., associate clinical professor of law, it is one of the best areas of law to work directly with people and to help them.

As director of the UConn School of Law Tax Clinic, Leyden trains and supervises law students who represent low-income taxpayers in federal and state tax controversies. Her commitment to helping people led her to bring together a coalition of community organizations to form a group aimed at helping eligible working families in Hartford to benefit from use of the Earned Income Tax Credit, a tax credit aimed at reducing poverty of working families. Since its launch, the coalition has grown into a



Photo: Peter Morenus

Diana Leyden, director of the UConn Law School Tax Clinic.

statewide effort.

Leyden's work on behalf of low-income families was recognized earlier this year by the American Bar Association, which presented her with the Tax Section Pro Bono Award at a national meeting held in San Diego.

The law professor was nominated by two of her students, June Gold '05 J.D. and Sandra Dawson '05 J.D., who detailed Leyden's dedication to public service, her teaching and her advising.

"We are charged with the highest level of honesty and encouraged to practice our craft with integrity," the students say in their nomination letter. "We are challenged with the task of researching the fine points of the law and then encouraged to seek alternative solutions to tax problems . . . It's an amazing experience."

Leyden's interest in tax law began when she took the federal tax law class taught by Richard Pomp, Alva P. Loiselle Professor of Law. During her career, she clerked for the Hon. Herbert Chabot, United States Tax Court, has worked in private practice and as a lawyer for the tax revenue divisions of the states of Massachusetts and Connecticut. She joined the UConn faculty in 1999.

"Tax law is like an umbrella. It covers everything we do. It intrigues me," she says. "It is especially very satisfying to see that my peers and my students recognize my efforts and that I can serve as a model for them to uphold the duty of lawyers to provide pro bono service."

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## College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

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### ***NEH Fellow studies health system in Puerto Rico***



*Photo: Melissa Arbo*

Blanca Silvestrini, professor of history and director of UConn's Puerto Rican/Latino Studies Institute.

Blanca Silvestrini, professor of history and director of UConn's Puerto Rican/Latino Studies Institute, was named a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow for 2005-06. Scholars are selected by their peers from other educational institutions to pursue research activities.

Silvestrini will use her year as a fellow to complete a book describing how the public health system in Puerto Rico from 1898 to 1940 reflected the developing early relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico in the years following the end of the Spanish American War.

At the time, Americans found in Puerto Rico well-established laws, an educated medical community, and big hospitals in San Juan. Amid the tension and opposition that might be expected in a colonial relationship, American and Puerto Rican medical practitioners shared ideas

and developed new public health policies.

Silvestrini says that given the quality of medical knowledge discovered when they arrived in Puerto Rico, Americans were surprised to find widespread anemia, noting that Bailey K. Ashford, a U.S. Army surgeon, led a team of Puerto Rican scientists and health practitioners to uncover the cause of the disease. They determined that the cause was a hookworm, an intestinal parasite that can be picked up by direct skin contact with contaminated soil.

Through what she calls a “rich repository” of archival material in Puerto Rico, Silvestrini is reconstructing the relationships among American and Puerto Rican scientists at the Institute of Tropical Medicine’s Center for Research, which was established in 1913. She has studied Ashford’s memoir, field notes, correspondence, journals, and meeting notes, as well as other historic resources.

Silvestrini says her research has united two of her long-time interests, gender history — she is gathering oral histories of women who worked as nurses — and the history of health care.

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### ***Balancing civil rights and evidence collection***

Mass collection of DNA samples to rule out potential crime suspects and the use of fingerprint evidence are among the topics being examined in DNA Fingerprinting and Civil Liberties, a new course in molecular and cell biology.

An increasing number of defense attorneys and prosecutors are using biological identifiers to either bolster or challenge cases. Among the questions raised in the seminar-style course: From whom can or should the government require DNA samples? Should DNA be collected from everybody or only from people who have had legal troubles, and for which crimes? How long should DNA information be kept?

Linda Strausbaugh, UConn professor of molecular and cell biology who initiated the course, says the class encourages students to think about the use of biological evidence in law enforcement and the civil liberties implications of obtaining this kind of evidence.

Many of the students who take the course are from the professional science master’s in applied genomics program. In addition to ethical and civil liberties issues, the course also familiarizes science students with legal procedures.

The idea for the course was suggested by two of Strausbaugh’s former doctoral students — Carl Ladd ’90 Ph.D., now director of the DNA Unit for the Connecticut state police laboratory, and Michael Bourke ’92 Ph.D., director of CODIS (Combined DNA Index System) for the state lab.

Nancy V. Gifford, a former assistant U.S. attorney who teaches the course, says the increasing use of genetic material as evidence in legal cases requires a balance between individual rights and the common good.

The issues the course confronts are surfacing more frequently in the courtroom, says Gifford, as the use of DNA evidence grows and statutes are passed about how genetic information can be used.



A double helix illustration of DNA, the molecular basis for heredity and a method for identifying people.

"The law is not static; it's being challenged all the time. We could teach out of the newspaper because there is so much going on," she says, noting a murder case was solved earlier this year with new DNA evidence obtained after police requested DNA samples from 800 male residents of a town in Massachusetts.

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## School of Medicine

### *Getting an early look at medical school*



*Photo: Melissa Arbo*

Victoria Williams '07 (CLAS) talks with Michelle Cloutier, UConn professor of pediatrics, as part of the mini-med school program for pre-med undergraduates in the honors program.

A new lecture series is giving UConn honors students who are considering careers in medicine an early look at what to expect in medical school.

"You can see that it's not going to be a walk in the park," says Alberto Distefano '05 (CLAS), one of 80 students who participated in weekly lectures by UConn Health Center physicians.

The rationale behind the 10-lecture series for top undergraduate students is "to give students a clear understanding of the depth, complexity and speed that material will be presented to them in

medical school," says Joseph Crivello, professor of physiology and neurobiology.

He says the students are attentive during the lectures, and UConn faculty demonstrate considerable skill in animating topics that might otherwise be ponderous.

Students are not tested at the end of the lecture series because the purpose is less about learning specifics and more about recognizing the breadth of the subject matter and how it will be presented in medical school, he says.

"The lectures are a good idea because they let newer students see if this is a career path they really want to pursue," says Distefano. "It's good not to have to worry about absorbing everything that's presented."

The lectures are mostly centered on the science of medicine rather than its social aspects, although the concluding lectures do explore the current and future state of health care and the doctor-patient relationship. The topics, which may vary from one year to the next, require some previous course work by the students or some advanced reading. Recent topics have included molecular genetics, principles of the immune response, angiogenesis and tumor growth, and electrophysiology of the heart.

"The value of this program is profound in terms of the way it is motivating students," says Lynne Goodstein, director of the honors program. "The turnout has been fantastic, and all indications are it's going great."

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## School of Nursing

## ***Tracking the long-term effects of chemotherapy***

With breast cancer survival rates improving, a UConn School of Nursing professor is turning her research attention to the quality of life patients have both during and after chemotherapy.

For years, breast cancer patients whose treatment includes chemotherapy have reported memory, attention and concentration problems, says Amy Laufer Kenefick, associate professor of nursing, who recently received a \$200,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Defense to study the phenomenon known colloquially as “chemo-brain.”

“Patients describe their experiences, but right now we don’t have enough research to understand the phenomenon,” Kenefick says. “Any advice nurses give patients now is based on their experience and best intentions, not on scientific evidence.”

Kenefick and research assistant Joyce Thielen, a doctoral candidate in nursing, will measure the neurocognitive function of 25 women undergoing chemotherapy for breast cancer over the course of nine months. Because chemotherapy can induce early menopause, which has been linked to similar symptoms, they will also monitor 25 women experiencing early menopause after having a hysterectomy. She is studying both groups of women to determine if reduced levels of sex hormones might be related to the chemo-brain phenomenon. The study will be one of the first to follow breast cancer patients before, during and after treatment. Previous studies have not addressed menopause induced by chemotherapy.

When evaluated just once, the cognitive effects of chemotherapy appear relatively subtle, but patients report them as very recognizable. Some women say they notice an extremely unsettling difference in their mental abilities, Kenefick says, so it is crucial to compare brain function in the same patients at different times.

Conventional thinking has been that the side effects of chemotherapy subside shortly after treatment ends. As cancer survival rates increase, however, it becomes even more important to study the patient’s experience of long-term side effects of treatment, she says.

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## **School of Pharmacy**

### ***A celebration of two milestones***

School of Pharmacy alumni will help mark two milestones during activities set for Oct. 20-23. The school will celebrate its 80th anniversary with four days of events that include the dedication of the new Pharmacy-Biology Building.

Faculty members will move into the 180,000-square-foot facility before the start of the new academic year, but the building will be formally dedicated as part of the anniversary celebration on Friday, Oct. 21 at 2 p.m., with a reception and tours following.

The school’s new home, which it will share with parts of the biology department and the Office of Animal Research Services, is located across from the Chemistry Building in the center of the



The new Pharmacy-Biology Building will hold its first classes in the fall.

University's Science Quadrangle.

One wing of the six-story building and two-and-a-half floors of laboratory space will be utilized by the School of Pharmacy. The proximity of its faculty members to scientists from other disciplines will allow for more frequent exchanges and will stimulate collaborative research projects.

One wing of the six-story facility and two-and-a-half floors of laboratory space will be used by the School of Pharmacy, with the rest of the facility utilized by two biology departments: ecology and evolutionary biology and physiology and neurobiology.

"This building will be one of the premier venues in the nation, boasting high-tech classrooms, state-of-the-art teaching facilities and research laboratories, and improved offices and student spaces. It is a fitting tribute that the dedication of this wonderful new facility coincides with the occasion of the school's 80th anniversary," says Dean Robert McCarthy. "This is the ideal moment to reflect upon the accomplishments of our last 80 years and to gear up for the continued growth and development of the School of Pharmacy."

Other events include a symposium Friday, Oct. 21, that will showcase collaborative pharmacy and biology research; a "Pharmacy Under the Tent" barbecue at Rentschler Field before the UConn-Rutgers football game on Saturday, Oct. 22; and the Pharmacy Alumni Gala in the Lewis B. Rome Commons Ballroom that evening.

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## School of Social Work

### *Valuing diversity in students, faculty, courses*

On a crisp fall morning, more than 100 UConn students form a line on the lawn outside the School of Social Work. They have just been introduced to the faculty and are waiting to start the privilege walk, part of a daylong diversity training program that all new students at the School of Social Work participate in.



*Photo: Paul Horton*

UConn and the Hartford public schools are working together on the Safe Schools/Healthy Schools program.

"It is important for social work students to have a strong understanding of what will be needed to work with very different populations," says Kay Davidson, dean of the School of Social Work. "Diversity is a curriculum content area required for accreditation, but that's not the only reason why we do it. We value it."

The training seeks to introduce to students from the outset of the need to be aware of the different populations they will work with, as well as recognize their own differences within the training group and school.

Davidson says the School of Social Work has worked to be a model in terms of the diversity of its student body and faculty and to create a curriculum that consciously addresses social issues relevant to minority groups. She says a great deal of effort is put into recruitment and to ensure strong support for retaining faculty and students from all backgrounds.

One such support is the areas of study, Davidson says. Students may take an area of focus such as "Black Studies for Social Work Practice" or "Puerto Rican/Latino/Latina Studies in Social Work." In addition to specific courses that teach students about various groups, there are lectures, discussions and other activities to enhance

and support the curriculum.

Although much of the diversity at the School of Social Work relates to racial and ethnic differences, it is also a place where gay, lesbian and bisexual people feel comfortable, Davidson says. "Social work is a profession that is focused on human and civil rights and social justice. The school is a receptive place for students of these populations and for learning to work with their special needs."

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