

DOWNTOWN HARTFORD CAMPUS OPENS

# UConn

MAGAZINE

FALL 2017





**SNAP!**

### UConn Class of 2021

The 5,230 freshmen who make up UConn's Class of 2021 include 3,650 who will make Storrs their home. This class includes a record-breaking 184 valedictorians and salutatorians, and 54 percent of these newbies were in the top 10 percent of their graduating high school classes. Outside Storrs, one-third of incoming freshmen chose to attend regional campuses. UConn Stamford saw a 50 percent increase in enrollment thanks in part to its new student housing so close to New York City. Meanwhile, a move downtown for UConn Hartford drove its enrollment up 14 percent. Congrats to all of this year's freshmen, who were competing in a field of some 36,900 applicants.



**SNAP!**

### **Welcome Back, Coach**

Randy Edsall is back on the UConn sideline. Edsall is the most successful football coach in UConn history with 74 wins in 11 seasons, from 1999 through 2010. He led the team from NCAA Division I-AA to Division I-A to full Division 1 status. UConn's three bowl wins all came under Edsall, who also oversaw consistent academic success. During his tenure the University regularly posted Academic Progress Rates well above the national average and at one time led all Division I-A public schools in graduating more than 90 percent of its student-athletes. "It is an honor to have the opportunity to rejoin and lead the UConn program," says Edsall. "It is my goal to get us back to that level of success, and I hope that all of the Husky fans out there will be along for the ride."



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**WEB EXCLUSIVES**

magazine.uconn.edu

**STAMFORD VIDEO**

Campus dorms just made life at UConn Stamford even better. Get a student's-eye view of the action on campus and in the city that's so close to The City. [s.uconn.edu/stamfordvid](http://s.uconn.edu/stamfordvid)

**BIRDS OF STORRS**

Our eight pages this issue couldn't begin to contain all that we hoped to share from the mind of ornithology professor Margaret Rubega. So we added more photos, more links, and more Rubega wisdom on our site. [s.uconn.edu/birds](http://s.uconn.edu/birds)

**IT ALL STARTED WITH A SQUID**

Find out how to connect scientists and schoolkids with Skype a Scientist and see the incredibly cute bobtail squid that started it all. [s.uconn.edu/skype](http://s.uconn.edu/skype)

**GETTING PAID TO TRAVEL THE WORLD**

Olivia Balsinger '14 (CLAS) recounts her journey to travel blogging and the journeys it's taken her on. [s.uconn.edu/olivia](http://s.uconn.edu/olivia)

**Cover photo by:** Peter Morenus  
**Snap! photography by:** Sean Flynn and Peter Morenus  
**Table of Contents, clockwise from bottom left:** Kailey Whitman, Peter Morenus (2), Mark Szantyr, Courtesy of Huedo-Medina and team

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**FROM THE EDITOR**



Sean Flynn

**LOCAL HEROES**

Peter Morenus (*above*) is the magazine's photographer. But that job title doesn't even begin to cover his secret-weapon status here. He seems to know everyone on campus, on all campuses in fact, and can tell us exactly where anything is and what it will look like before we get there. I guess that's not surprising since he's been University photographer for 22 years and counting, through at least four iterations of this magazine.

He's also the soul of the place, always ready with an anecdote or a backstory that makes our work more exciting and more meaningful. We joke that “he knows where all the bodies are buried.” But, it turns out, he does not. Or did not until we sent him on assignment to the Storrs Cemetery this issue, tasked with taking a landscape shot for the Birds of Storrs piece that begins on page 34.

He went at the end of the day “when the light would be shining on the trees on the east side of the cemetery,” he told me. “I meant to start at the top and walk down looking for the right view to show bird environment.” But he quickly became distracted by the cemetery environment, starting with the Storrs family obelisk at the very top. Seeing the names “Charles” and “Augustus,” he says made him giggle a little when “Chuck and Augie” popped into his head. Then he noticed the “Augustus Brundage” stone. “The pool at the Field House is named in honor of two of his sons who were killed during WWII,” recounts Pete. “And then I saw ‘Waugh’ like the sundial and right near ‘Waugh’ is ‘Gentry,’ the name of the building next to the Waugh sundial. There was Carolyn Ladd Widmer, the first dean of nursing who we just named a new nursing wing after. A few steps away is George Safford Torrey who the Life Sciences building is named after. And photographer Jerauld Manter, in many ways my predecessor. By this point I'm regretting calling the founders by nicknames they surely never were called. I realize I'm walking through the history of the university.”

As he moved downhill he found more recent stones, including “latter-day heroes” he'd photographed, like soccer coach Joe Morrone, engineering professor Marty Fox, and political science professor Howard Reiter.

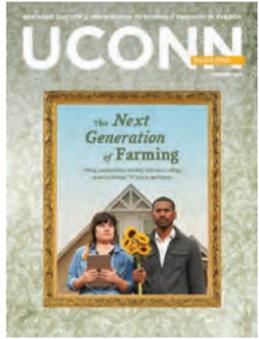
“There was John Tanaka, professor of chemistry. I met his son, Peter, then a UConn police officer, on my first day of work while lost near the Gentry Building. And cloning pioneer Xiangzhong (Jerry) Yang — I'm here at UConn because of him.”

That story is too convoluted to relay here, but I guarantee Pete will be happy to share it if you see him around campus (he's the one with the UConn cap and the cameras). Returning to the office from this assignment, he reminded me of the spiritual role he plays here when he talked about his walk downhill and admitted to being “misty-eyed” by the end. “I was just very much in awe to think a lot of these people are there not because of any church or religion, but because of their affinity to this place. It made me feel like I was part of something,” Pete said, then added: “I also felt like I'd been here a long time. But I'm not done yet. I still have a lot of pictures to take!”

*Lisa T. Stiepoek*

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LETTERS

Much of this issue's mail either lauded the UConn Health doctor seeking a cure for the rare GSD disease or lambasted us for the headline "In Russia, you simply couldn't be a writer if you were Jewish." The fact that the headline was in quotes did not make it clear to all that it was Litman's personal point of view. See her response below along with a sampling of the letters we received on many subjects.

Have something to tell us? We'd love to hear it! Email the editor at [lisa.stiepoek@uconn.edu](mailto:lisa.stiepoek@uconn.edu) or post something on our website at [magazine.uconn.edu](http://magazine.uconn.edu).

Free to be Imperfect

Thank you for this article and Gayle — if you read this, thank you for persevering and getting Dr. Weinstein to Connecticut. My son is 6 and has GSD 1a, and this gives me so much hope that there will be a cure by the time he is a teenager.

Tara Marchetti  
Deptford, New Jersey, via our website

Thank you for this great article. We have a grandson who is 1 year old and has GSD 1a. We would love to see him get in to see Dr Weinstein at UConn; he is on a waiting list now. What can we do on the West Coast to help with the cause?

Robert Ford, via our website

**Editor's Note:** To inquire about seeing Dr. Weinstein, call his program coordinator: Traci Resler at 860-837-7800; to donate to the cause, visit [www.GlobalCenterForGSD.com](http://www.GlobalCenterForGSD.com) or [www.AlyssasAngelFund.org](http://www.AlyssasAngelFund.org).

"In Russia, you simply couldn't be a writer if you were Jewish"

That is so biased and so not true! No one cares if you are Jewish in Russia. Actually, it is quite the opposite. There were and are so many accomplished Jewish scientists and artists in USSR and now Russia. I don't agree with the points made on migration and the discrimination of Jewish people. No one has his/her nationality stamped into their passport.

Kirill Karpenko '19 MBA  
Hartford, Connecticut, via our website

**Associate Professor of English Ellen Litman replies:** It seems that the comments are about life/conditions in the present-day Russia, whereas my experience dates back to the eighties and early nineties. In those days, one's nationality was absolutely recorded in one's passport. I am glad to hear that this is no longer the practice now. On the point about discrimination of Jews. Once again, I'd like to believe that the commenter is referring to the present-day conditions and that the discrimination my generation experienced is a thing of the past. While he is correct that there are and have been prominent Jewish writers, artists, and scientists, the path was by no means clear or obvious, at least in my experience.

I would like to suggest one of the books mentioned to my book group. Are they available at Barnes & Noble in Storrs or through Amazon?

Kathy Pepin (SFA) Springfield, Massachusetts, via our website

**Editor's Note:** Litman's books are in the Storrs Center Barnes & Noble, on [BarnesandNoble.com](http://BarnesandNoble.com), and on Amazon.

UConn Nation

I read the article on "UConn Nation Giving Back" and want to be involved next year.

Rick Leino '64 (CLAS)  
Fairfax, VA, via email

Rebecca Lobo

Congratulations to a wonderful, talented athlete and an unparalleled role model. A well deserved honor!

David Bostic '83 (CAHNR)  
Granby, Connecticut, via our website

Dispatch from Iraq

Great article. I hope that the author took proper care to ensure that Gibreal or his family could not be targeted from the information in this article. It was probably unnecessary to insinuate that Gibreal was doing anything other than his duty as far as his relationship with US forces.

Joel Angle '09 (CLAS)  
Washington, D.C. area, via our website  
U.S. Marine Lt.-Col. (ret.) Michael

**Zacchea replies:** The reason we included Gibrael's picture is he was killed in combat in Nov 2004 on the way to Fallujah. We remain in contact with several of the other Iraqis featured and have taken great care to hide their identities.

ON CAMPUS



There were classes today for sure, but there was also ice cream--thank you Dairy Bar! Great way to start the year. #uconnstamford @uconnstamford

Correction:

It is the 75th, not the 50th, anniversary of the UConn School of Nursing.



ON CAMPUS

ECLIPSED

Days before students returned to campus for the fall semester, community members flooded Horsebarn Hill and the area around the Dairy Bar to watch the solar eclipse on August 21. Physics professors shared four high-powered solar telescopes, handed out safety glasses, led workshops where kids crafted cardboard box pinhole viewers, and shared knowledge in traditional lecture formats as well as with live to-scale demonstrations with local kids playing the parts of the planets.



#ONEUCONN

At convocation, freshmen wore shirts with "#oneuconn" on the front and on the back this Nelson Mandela quote: *No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.*



Peter Morenus

Peter Morenus, Jack Templeton '18 (CLAS)

During a July episode of “Scraps” Gamoran and longtime friend Sally Hiebert foraged along Sonoma, California, roadsides to prepare a found feast for locals there.



CHECKING IN WITH...

## JOEL GAMORAN, HOST OF FYI'S “SCRAPS”

For chef Joel Gamoran '07 (CLAS), scrappiness is a state of mind. “Why does cooking always need to be so perfect?” he asks. “The best meals at home aren’t when you buy the expensive cut of meat. It’s the pasta with the leftover anchovy oil and some chili flakes. Not having the fancy ingredients — it forces you to get inspired.”

The charming, affable scrap-proselytizer has just parlayed his lifelong passion for imperfection into a cooking show, “Scraps,” which debuted on the FYI network in May.

Each half-hour episode of “Scraps” follows Gamoran in his 1963 VW bus to prepare a meal with a local chef, using their favorite typically tossed kitchen scraps. As he says over the show’s opening credits, “I see flavor where the world sees waste.”

Take pickle juice, shrimp shells, and broccoli stems for example. Chicken thighs soak in that briny pickle juice before being fried, drizzled with honey, and showered with cilantro (just the stems, natch). Shrimp shells become a rich sauce for oysters that Gamoran has inexpertly and comedically chiseled from the South Carolina shoreline. Broccoli stems are shredded into a sweet and crunchy slaw.

But given that it’s such a zeitgeisty moment for sustainability and reducing food waste, the show was a surprisingly tough sell — even with co-executive producer (and huge Joel Gamoran fan) Katie Couric on board.

“Networks just didn’t think there was a place for food waste to be interesting to people,” Gamoran says, with nearly comical disbelief. “I

was like, ‘But it’s super-hacky and understandable and completely digestible for people — and it will save them money.’” Eventually FYI bit.

“We got the order to make the show on February 1,” says Gamoran, “to deliver 10 episodes on May 21st. We had no guests, no cities, no plane tickets, nothing. We filmed the whole thing — 10 cities — in six weeks. We decided to embrace it, get scrappy, and really make it part of the show!” This meant cooking in the rain if it rained. It meant sticking with the original plan, even if an ingredient turned out to be a little bit yum-resistant.

“That spent grain!” Gamoran reminisces about some particularly stubborn waste gleaned from an Asheville brewery, which he turned into biscuits he describes as a “major fail at first.” Eventually, though, they got it right.

“I stand for the bruised, the forgotten, and the back of the fridge!” is the tag line of the show, and it seems to be Gamoran’s ethos in general. When I ask him about his favorite aha moments, he says, “I had so many moments where I was like, ‘I can’t believe you can even do this!’ Like in episode two, when the guest tosses the scallion roots right into the dish. Now I’m obsessed with them.”

I bond with him over our shared love of celery leaves (“A free herb!” I say, and he says, “I know, right?”) and ask him about his favorite everyday scrap: “I don’t peel my garlic! I really think the outer paper is really special and it’s the unsung hero of the garlic.”

Gamoran himself is self-effacing, excited, quick to laugh. And he brings out

the best in the chefs he works with — they can’t seem to help being infected by his vibrant good humor. Mostly, though, he just makes them laugh and laugh. It’s clear that they adore him. Everybody does.

Gamoran’s day job is National Chef for Sur La Table, the kitchenware retailer and cooking-class giant based in his hometown of Seattle. This seems more cushy than scrappy to me — in a good way — although Gamoran is quick to point out that it’s a job he invented himself and pitched to the company, which I have to admit is pretty scrappy after all.

It’s the same resourceful mentality he brought to UConn, after he was recruited as a tennis player. In short order he realized first that he wanted to be a chef, and then that UConn didn’t offer a course of study that would

help him do that. So he pulled together a hodgepodge of classes and made his own major. “I learned how to craft something out of nothing. And they supported it. I graduated with a degree in restaurant management and a minor in communications. It was my first win! The first time I got to get scrappy.” Gamoran has moved his Sur La Table gig to Brooklyn, where he lives with his wife and rides a little Vespa around.

“What’s next?” I ask. “What’s the dream?”

“I think when people cook, it really enhances their life,” he answers. “Cooking builds connection and draws us together and draws us to the table. I want to motivate and inspire people to cook. I want to be known as the guy that made the kitchen a little more accessible.”

—CATHERINE NEWMAN



To see how Gamoran’s 1963 VW bus becomes a modern kitchen, go to [s.uconn.edu/gamoran](http://s.uconn.edu/gamoran)

Courtesy of Scraps and the FYI Network

UCONN TALKS

On being the first legal advocate to testify in court on behalf of an abused animal:

**“It showed the animals do have a voice.”**

Taylor Hansen, UConn Law student, in *Smithsonian*, June 6, 2017

On comparing measures each state is taking to prevent sudden death in school sports:

**“If these rankings can get more kids home for dinner instead of to a hospital or morgue, then we have succeeded.”**

Douglas Casa, director of UConn’s Korey Stringer Institute, in *The New York Times*, Aug. 8, 2017

On removing Confederate statues:

**“These Civil War monuments are not historical artifacts. They were primarily erected during the Jim Crow era to reestablish the historical social order in the face of Blacks attempting to gain equal rights.”**

Monnica T. Williams, associate professor of psychological sciences, in *Psychology Today*, Aug. 17, 2017

On getting breast cancer from street lights:

**“Electric light is one of the signature inventions of an inventive species. But its overuse has caused an obliteration of night in much of the modern world. The loss of night has consequences for all forms of life, including us. And the mounting evidence for a connection to breast cancer is alarming.”**

Richard G. Stevens, professor of Community Medicine and Health Care, in *The Associated Press*, Aug. 18, 2017

On why most of us should just drink water to rehydrate:

**“Virtually no studies have shown benefits of sport drinks or carbohydrate-containing beverages unless you’re exercising continuously for more than 50 or 60 minutes.”**

Lawrence Armstrong, director of UConn’s Human Performance Laboratory, in *Time*, July 26, 2017

On why drivers in Europe are nicer:

**“The philosophy that emanated from the US was that we needed to separate people and machines, which gives priority to vehicles and makes the environment less friendly for people.”**

Norman Garrick, associate professor of engineering, in *The Guardian*, May 24, 2017

On the UConn Hartford campus moving from West Hartford to downtown Hartford:

**“I think it’s true of Connecticut that we have not always cared for our cities. Those days are over.”**

Dannel Malloy, governor of Connecticut, in the *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 23, 2017

**“The campus is going to connect parts of Hartford that have been disconnected for many years, and I think it’s a critical piece of the puzzle to making our city the vibrant, active downtown that we all want it to be.”**

Luke Bronin, mayor of Hartford, in *The Associated Press*, Aug. 23, 2017



COLLECTIONS

POINSETTIAS

As the holidays approach, UConn’s Floriculture greenhouses fill with hundreds of flowering poinsettias sold to faculty, staff, and community. The deep red ones are most popular, but you’ll find as many as 90 varieties. For the past 20 years, the College of Agriculture, Health, and Natural Resources has served as a trial site, growing new breeds for a season to test a plant’s hardiness and popularity with consumers. A fave is retired horticulturalist Robert Shabot’s “Cinnamon Stick,” with light-gold leaves and pink and red specks. —EMMA CASAGRANDE '18 (CLAS)

To see Cinnamon Stick and more, go to [s.uconn.edu/poinsettia](http://s.uconn.edu/poinsettia).

IN GOOD HEALTH

IT MAY TAKE ONLY A LITTLE EXERCISE TO MAKE YOU A LOT HAPPIER

You don’t have to spend hours at the gym or work up a dripping sweat to improve your mood and feel better about yourself. If you lead a sedentary lifestyle — spending large parts of your day sitting at home or at work — simply getting out of your chair and moving around can reduce depression and lift your spirits, says Gregory Panza, an exercise physiologist at Hartford Hospital and a doctoral candidate in UConn’s Department of Kinesiology.

“What is even more promising for the physically inactive person,” says Panza, lead author of a new study on the subject, “is that you do not need to exercise vigorously to see these improvements. Instead, our results indicate you will get the best bang for your buck with light- or moderate-intensity physical activity.” Light physical activity is the equivalent of taking a leisurely walk around the mall with no noticeable increase in breathing, heart rate, or sweating. Moderate-intensity activity is equivalent to walking a 15- to 20-minute mile with an increase in breathing, heart rate, and sweating, yet still being able to carry on a conversation.

The study found that people who led sedentary lives and engaged in light or moderate physical activity showed the greatest improvement in overall sense of well-being.

“The ‘more is better’ mindset may not be true when it comes to physical activity intensity and subjective well-being,” says Panza. “In fact, an ‘anything is better’ attitude may be more appropriate if your goal is a higher level of subjective well-being.”

Broader studies are in the works. “If it doesn’t make us feel good, we don’t want to do it,” says Beth Taylor, associate professor of kinesiology and a member of the research team. “Establishing the link between different types, doses, and intensities of physical activity on well-being is a very important step in encouraging more people to exercise.” —COLIN POITRAS '85 (CLAS)

For more on this study’s results, go to [s.uconn.edu/reps](http://s.uconn.edu/reps).

Peter Morenus



Chris Moore

COVETED CLASS

## HDFS 3042: BASEBALL AND SOCIETY: POLITICS, ECONOMICS, RACE, AND GENDER

**The Instructor:**

Steven Wisensale remembers listening to the 1952 Republican National Convention on the radio. He was 7 years old. “Growing up, I always had an interest in politics,” says the professor of public policy in UConn’s Department of Human Development and Family Studies. “My parents engaged my interest at an early age.”

The ’52 convention was where Dwight D. Eisenhower became the GOP presidential candidate on his way to winning the White House. That same year, the New York Yankees defeated the Brooklyn Dodgers in seven games to capture their fourth straight World Series. Baseball was no less a presence on the Wisensale household radio.

The diamond interest of young Steven Wisensale ramped up in 1954, when the St. Louis Browns moved to Baltimore, not far from where his family lived in southeastern Pennsylvania. Five decades later, he remains a devout fan of the Baltimore Orioles.

For many years, as he was pursuing his studies and establishing himself in the world of academia, Wisensale kept his interests separate. His scholarly interest was in family policy, particularly as it relates to aging and family leave. His baseball fandom was curtailed off for his leisure time.

*Wisensale spent the spring semester as a Fulbright Scholar in Japan where he taught “Baseball Diplomacy in Japanese-U.S. Relations.” He visited all 13 of Japan’s major league ballparks, including the Chiba Lotte Marines’ stadium in Chiba City.*

But that changed once he was promoted to full professor. “I felt like I had more freedom,” said Wisensale, “and as I began to think about what I wanted to do inside the classroom, I decided I wanted to teach a course on baseball.”

Wisensale had heard of baseball-related courses at around 20 other universities. Harvard and Tufts offered courses that were quantitative in nature. Stanford and San Francisco State had courses that focused more on baseball in society, which was what Wisensale was after. “I wanted to delve into history,” he says.

**Class Description:**

Baseball and Society: Politics, Economics, Race and Gender explores the connections between historical events and the history of baseball. A discussion of labor relations, for instance, digs into the evolving business of baseball as it runs parallel to the ever-changing circumstances surrounding the U.S. workforce in general. “I hit the Curt Flood story pretty hard,” says Wisensale, referring to the ballplayer who in 1969 refused to abide by a trade, instigating a contractual challenge that made it all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court and led to player free agency throughout the game. The drawing of historical links goes all the way back to the origins of baseball.

“A lot of students would prefer that we get right to the current day or recent history,” says Wisensale, “but they’re surprised by how rich the dead-ball era was.” It was the time of World War I, which is when baseball became directly connected with its time in history.

“When the war broke out,” says Wisensale, “baseball owners were nervous: Do I want my right fielder being hit by a landmine? They had to figure out how to protect their assets.” So the owners cut a deal under which players could remain in baseball as long as, during the offseason, they worked in a defense plant or in some way contributed to the wartime effort.

“This is going to be fluff,” was the concern Wisensale heard when designing the course for its 2012 debut. He understood the reluctance, so he took pains to design

a curriculum about baseball that wouldn’t be a softball.

Wisensale puts prospective students through a screening process in which they answer questions about their goals for the course. They also must write an essay on what baseball means to them. And Wisensale checks out every applicant; typically there are 180 to 200 for the 50 spots.

“I don’t want slackers in the class,” he says.

**Wisensale’s Teaching Style:**

“Baseball news! Anybody have any baseball news?”

This is how Wisensale begins each class. A discussion of current events takes up just the first 5 to 10 minutes of class. Then the professor digs in at the plate and starts swinging. The connections he draws aren’t always obvious. An example: baseball’s steroids scandal.

“Maybe I’m the only one who thinks this way, but I believe that what the ballplayers did is the same as what Bernie Madoff did,” he says, referring to the financial advisor who cheated investors (including the New York Mets ownership) with a Ponzi scheme.

“They all basically conned the system and made a lot of money, with so-called regulators not regulating. There were so many people making so much money within a corrupt system — why police it?”

The challenge in teaching this course, for Wisensale, stems from the diverse student enrollment. “Students come for different reasons,” he says. There are accounting students “who want to work for Billy Bean” and understand all the sabermetrics — or statistical analysis — but may have no interest in history. Then there are the history majors, who are deeply interested in the origins and development of

the sport. And journalism students “who think in terms of writing stories about current events,” says Wisensale. “I try to get them to read Roger Angell’s stuff and John Updike’s essay about Ted Williams’s last game, things like that.”

**Why We Want to Take It Ourselves:**

Three strikes and four balls. Nine innings, each with three outs. Baseball has a rhythm to it, one that harkens back to what we tend to reminisce about as simpler times. But were they really?

Baseball and Society delves into some dramatic twists and turns that the game and its surrounding culture shared. Race comes up in discussions of the Negro Leagues and Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier.

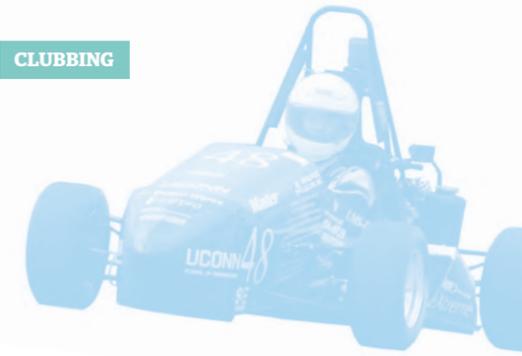
Gender is at center stage when the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League comes on the scene during World War II. And then there’s the steroid era. “That last item generates the most discussion in class,” says Wisensale.

If putting historical events into context isn’t enough of a draw, how about the opportunity to have your own baseball card? During the enrollment process, Wisensale instructs students to create their card. “It can be a childhood dream come true for some,” he said.

That includes the professor himself. He creates a Wisensale card before each semester, a reminder that for him this course represents a second wind after many years of teaching and writing. “This really has energized me,” he says. “It has taken me back to my youth.”

Who wouldn’t want to be in a classroom with a professor who feels that way? —JEFF WAGENHEIM

CLUBBING



## BUILDING A BETTER RACE CAR

What’s the best part of being a member of UConn’s Formula Society of Automotive Engineers (FSAE)? For many it’s a day in mid-July.

Most of the year, the student club toils away doing everything you could imagine goes into designing and building a Formula-style race car — except driving it.

Just one member gets behind the wheel for the club’s two competitions, in Michigan and Canada, at the end of each spring semester.

But, after all the races are done (this past spring UConn’s car ranked number 22 out of 109 teams in Michigan and number 8 out of 25 teams in Canada), the engineering students get together for a team drive day, in which all members get to take their baby for a spin. “It’s a lot of excitement because we get to see the car from nothing but some metal tubes all the way to a race car that competes. Then comes the next wave of excitement where you realize you’re going to get to drive the car and kind of feel the power behind something you’ve built,” says the club’s lead powertrain engineer **Kenneth Brown ’19 (ENG)**. —EMMA CASAGRANDE

’18 (CLAS)

THIS JUST IN

## A HIGHER MINIMUM WAGE COULD MEAN A LOWER RATE OF CHILD NEGLECT

Increasing the federal minimum wage by just one dollar could decrease the number of reported cases of child neglect per year in this country by nearly 10%. A new study by Kerri Raissian, assistant professor in the Department of Public Policy, and co-researcher Lindsey Rose Bullinger at the University of Indiana found that the number of child neglect cases would decline by 9,700, or 9.6 percent. The team looked at maltreatment reports from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System for 2004 to 2013. Within that period, more than 30 states had minimum wages exceeding the federal requirement by an average of \$1, so the team was able to track the effect of those wages on the number of child maltreatment reports to child protective service agencies.

“Policies that increase incomes of the working poor can improve children’s welfare, especially younger children, quite substantially,” wrote Raissian and Bullinger in their report summary published in the *Children and Youth Services Review* earlier this year.

Read more at [s.uconn.edu/wage](http://s.uconn.edu/wage).

Courtesy of the UConn FSAE club

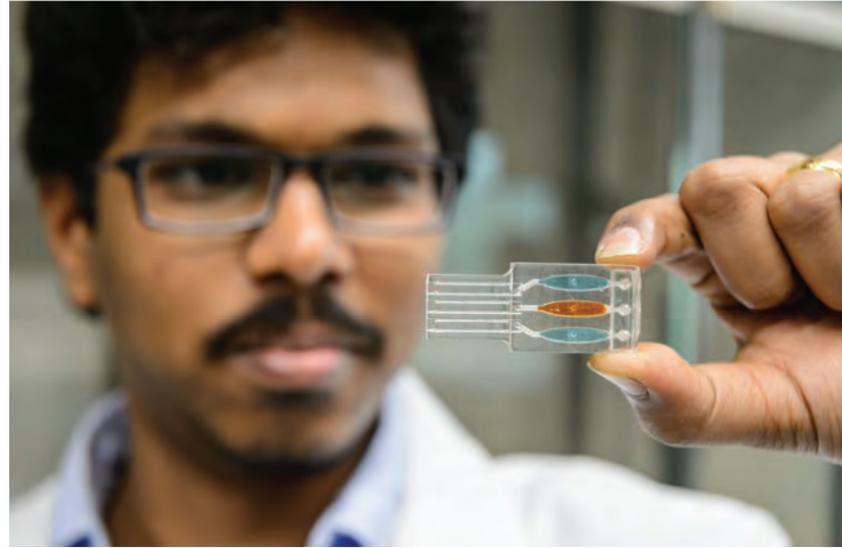
THIS JUST IN

ARE E-CIGS JUST AS BAD AS TOBACCO?

“From the results of our study, we can conclude that e-cigarettes have as much potential to cause DNA damage as unfiltered regular cigarettes,” says Karteek Kadimisetty, a chemistry postdoctoral researcher and lead author of a new study published in the journal *ACS Sensors*.

Using a new low-cost, 3-D printed testing device, UConn chemists found that e-cigarettes loaded with a nicotine-based liquid are potentially as harmful as unfiltered cigarettes when it comes to causing DNA damage. They also found that vapor from non-nicotine e-cigarettes caused as much DNA damage as filtered cigarettes, possibly due to the many chemical additives present in e-cigarette vapors. Cellular mutations caused by DNA damage can lead to cancer.

Kadimisetty and his team decided to look into whether the chemicals in e-cigarettes could cause damage to human DNA while testing a new electro-optical screening device they developed in their lab. The small 3-D printed device is believed to be the first of its kind capable of quickly detecting DNA damage, or



Peter Morenus

Kadimisetty with the 3-D printed sample chamber of his genetic toxicity testing device.

genotoxicity, in environmental samples in the field, the researchers say.

The team targeted three known carcinogenic chemicals found in tobacco cigarettes. They then loaded their device’s microwells with specific enzymes that would convert those chemicals into metabolites. If these chemicals were in the sample, the test gave them a reading for genotoxicity. The results caught Kadimisetty by surprise.

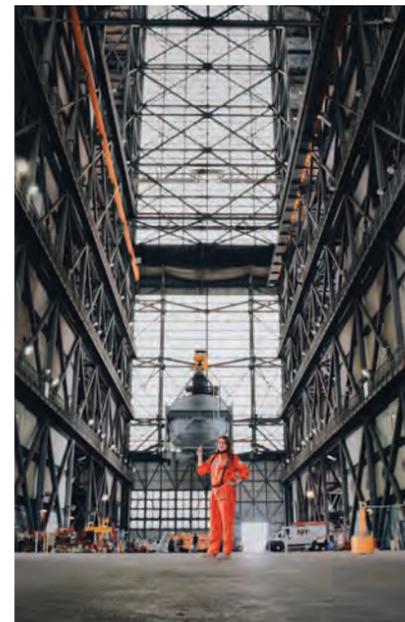
“I never expected the DNA damage from e-cigarettes to be equal to tobacco cigarettes,” he says. “I was shocked the first time I saw the result, so I ran the controls again. I even diluted the samples. But the trend was still there — something in the e-cigarettes was definitely causing damage to the DNA.”  
—COLIN POITRAS '85 (CLAS)

For more on this study, go to [s.uconn.edu/ecigs](http://s.uconn.edu/ecigs).



**Above:** Brian Martel '19 (CAHNR) spent part of the summer in New Zealand working with this endangered lizard, the tuatara. “The tuatara needs constant protection from predators like possums, weasels, ferrets, stoats, hedgehogs, feral cats, and rats,” he says.

**Right:** Rafeed Hussain '17 (CLAS) was one of a select few college students invited to visit NASA in Cape Canaveral, Florida, and post about it. “Words and even pictures can’t effectively depict how gargantuan the inside of the Vehicle Assembly Building is,” he wrote.



For more photos from Hussain’s NASA experience and Brian’s internship, go to [s.uconn.edu/FallFieldNotes](http://s.uconn.edu/FallFieldNotes).



Peter Morenus

Demi Rice '21 (CLAS) makes use of the new dorm’s second floor lounge during the second week of classes.

THIS JUST IN

UConn STAMFORD OPENS DORMS

UConn Stamford’s first residence hall opened this fall. The six-story, 116-unit building at 900 Washington Blvd., just two blocks south of UConn Stamford, will house almost 300 students annually and will operate in the same way as the Storrs residence halls, with resident assistants and study lounges. It is half-way between the main campus and the Stamford Transportation Center.

It is the culmination of several years of work that responds to student demand at that campus, which is UConn’s largest regional location, with 1,700 undergrads and 600 graduate students. Although the campus has been growing, the vast majority of students had to commute from other communities because they could not afford Stamford apartment rents.

President Susan Herbst said at the opening that the housing also will help students have a genuine urban university experience, in which they can take advantage of Stamford’s many offerings

while creating community with others who live in the hall.

“With an array of internship opportunities, cultural offerings, prominent employers, and the unique aspects of city life right outside their front door, the students who choose to live here can enjoy a dynamic urban university experience,” says Herbst.

“This experience will pay dividends long into the future for our alumni, the University, and the city,” she added.

Governor Dannel P. Malloy, a former Stamford mayor, has been a strong supporter of UConn’s plans for student housing there.

“With leading programs in digital media and business, a location in a vibrant city, and access to an established transportation hub linking students to the entire eastern seaboard, it is no surprise UConn Stamford is growing and thriving,” said Malloy.

“We are thrilled this new residence

hall will connect hundreds of students to their campus, internship opportunities, and cultural experiences right here in downtown Stamford,” he said.

UConn has had a presence in Stamford since 1951, when it began offering extension courses in the former Stamford High School. UConn Stamford moved to its current downtown location in 1998.

—STEPHANIE REITZ



For more photos and a 360-degree video of a dorm room and more, go to [s.uconn.edu/stamfordvid](http://s.uconn.edu/stamfordvid).

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

# BRITNEY REYNOLDS '19 (BUS, CLAS)

A new U.S. citizen, this psychology and business major still has a scholarship in her name in Jamaica.

### Why did you choose UConn?

I came to Bridgeport from Jamaica in 2009. I was 12. I never knew anything about college, just that it was something I wanted to do. So when the time came I applied to Connecticut colleges. When I got into Southern my mom was so excited; she was like, "Oh, you're going there!" Then I got into UConn and she was like, "No, you're going to UConn!" One great thing UConn has going for it is that as a first-generation college student I was able to live on campus the summer before freshman year to transition to college and to begin earning credits. The counselors are great and help with everything. I became a U.S. citizen this year, and they helped me get my passport.

### As a freshman you lived in Innovation House. Have you always been entrepreneurial?

I like the idea of having my own business. When I was little, I wanted to be a fashion designer, and my friends and I would draw collections. Later, I became interested in teaching. But if I was going to be a teacher, I wanted to plan the school, create the curriculum, and make everything exactly how I thought it should be. When I have an idea, I always think, "I've got to own this thing!" So Innovation House was immediately interesting to me.

### Where does psych fit in with entrepreneurship?

If I want to be a business owner one day, I'll want to know the psychology of my employees. How are they going to play together? For my research project, I decided to study impulsiveness. Because I really don't understand it. It sometimes boggles my mind when I see people making impulsive choices. Your life is going to be terrible if you keep doing that! I want to know how the brain works.

### What's been your favorite class so far?

I have two favorite classes. I really liked Psychology of Language. One thing we talked about was how someone who



Reynolds at Blue State Coffee, a Hartford café across the street from Travelers insurance company, where she worked as a summer intern in Information Technology Services.

Peter Morenus

learns sign language at age 10 won't ever be as fluent as someone who learns it at age 5. Which is just like a spoken language. American Sign Language is my minor, so that means I'll never be as good as a child. Nice to know!

My other favorite was a coding class with Alex Tung. Not because I did well in it, because I didn't really, but because I learned a lot. One of the things I learned was that when a professor gives you 10 days for an assignment, you need all 10 days. The instructions for a coding project might only be a couple of lines, but to execute those two lines requires a lot of thinking and trial and error. On our first project, my group finally left the Business School at 5:59 a.m. The sun was coming

up. This was when it really hit me that I was in college. Freshman year was pretty chill, first semester sophomore year was pretty chill. But spring semester? No. I was like, "Mm-hmm, now I know I'm in college."

### You won a First-Year Excellence in Innovation Award for work on a phone app.

Yes, as part of the Innovation House program, students pitch an idea that could be developed as a start-up. I joined with a student named Jeremy, who had the idea for encrypting personal data on your phone. When you download certain free apps, they strip your data. We worked on a security app to protect data so that it

can't be hacked or stripped. We divvied up the labor. Jeremy is a computer science major, so he was technical. I handled the business development end and put together a plan for the product.

### What's something most people don't know about you?

I'm a fan of WWE. The first time I passed the corporate headquarters in Stamford on the highway after moving here from Jamaica, I was like "Whoa!" I thought I could go over and meet the wrestlers. I was so disappointed when I found out they didn't stay there.

Last summer WWE was offering internships and I seriously thought about applying. I thought maybe they'd give me a free ticket to SummerSlam. But I had already accepted an IT internship with Travelers in Hartford. During my orientation at Travelers, a woman from the leadership group mentioned that she's a fan of the wrestler Sheamus. I said, "Sheamus?" She said, "Yeah, he used to work in IT. I love him." I thought, "We

could all bond over this." But everyone else was like, "No, not really. We're all grown-ups."

### Do you ever visit Jamaica?

I visited in May to present the Top Girl scholarship at my old school, Victoria Primary in Linstead, St. Catherine. I presented the first scholarship in 2013, but since then I've just sent the trophy and the money, so this was a little different.

### Wait, you send the scholarship money yourself?

I was the Top Girl when I graduated, so my grandmother, my mother, and I thought maybe this was something we could do to give back to the school. We started the scholarship my sophomore year of high school here in Connecticut.

### Does it have a name?

The Britney Reynolds Top Girl Scholarship. Inflation in Jamaica is very difficult. Every little bit helps a struggling family, so I add whatever I

can to the monetary award my grandmother puts together. I work on campus in the Admissions Office, and I don't really spend much, so there's a little left over from my paycheck.

### Any other great ideas in the works?

I'm an RA, and my current thing is figuring out ways to get my residents more engaged with floor programs. My first floor meeting last spring, I said, "Come to the Community Center." Nobody came. So next time I made it easier: "Come to the second floor lobby." I could capture everyone as they went to their rooms.

Then I realized people might already be in their rooms and not ever pass through the lobby. So for the next one, I knocked on doors. And I always offer snacks. I'll keep trying different things, mixing up locations and times and incentives, until we get a formula that works. That's part of being an entrepreneur, I think. You test an idea, find out where the errors are, and keep modifying it until you get it right. —KEVIN MARKEY

UConn Reads

## 3 Books



Eva Lefkowitz is the new head of the Human Development and Family Studies department, having recently moved to UConn after 18 years at Penn State. She says she does her reading via hard copy (bedtime, beach time) and listening to audiobooks (while driving, walking, or exercising).

### Just finished:



### The Red Tent by Anita Diamant

One of those books I always meant to read and finally did when it got assigned at my book club. I loved it. It looks at the Bible from

the perspective of Dinah and the other women. It was particularly interesting to read around Passover when you're reading the Haggadah. Same stories. Very different perspectives.

### Currently reading:

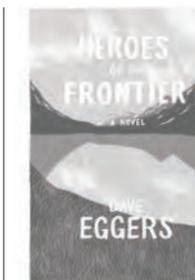


### The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

I read a lot of YA [young adult], because I have middle schoolers and because my research is on young

people and sexuality. I think this book is amazing. So much about race and class. The dialogue is very well written. Even though it's about someone whose experience is vastly different from mine I feel like I can totally relate to the character.

### On deck:

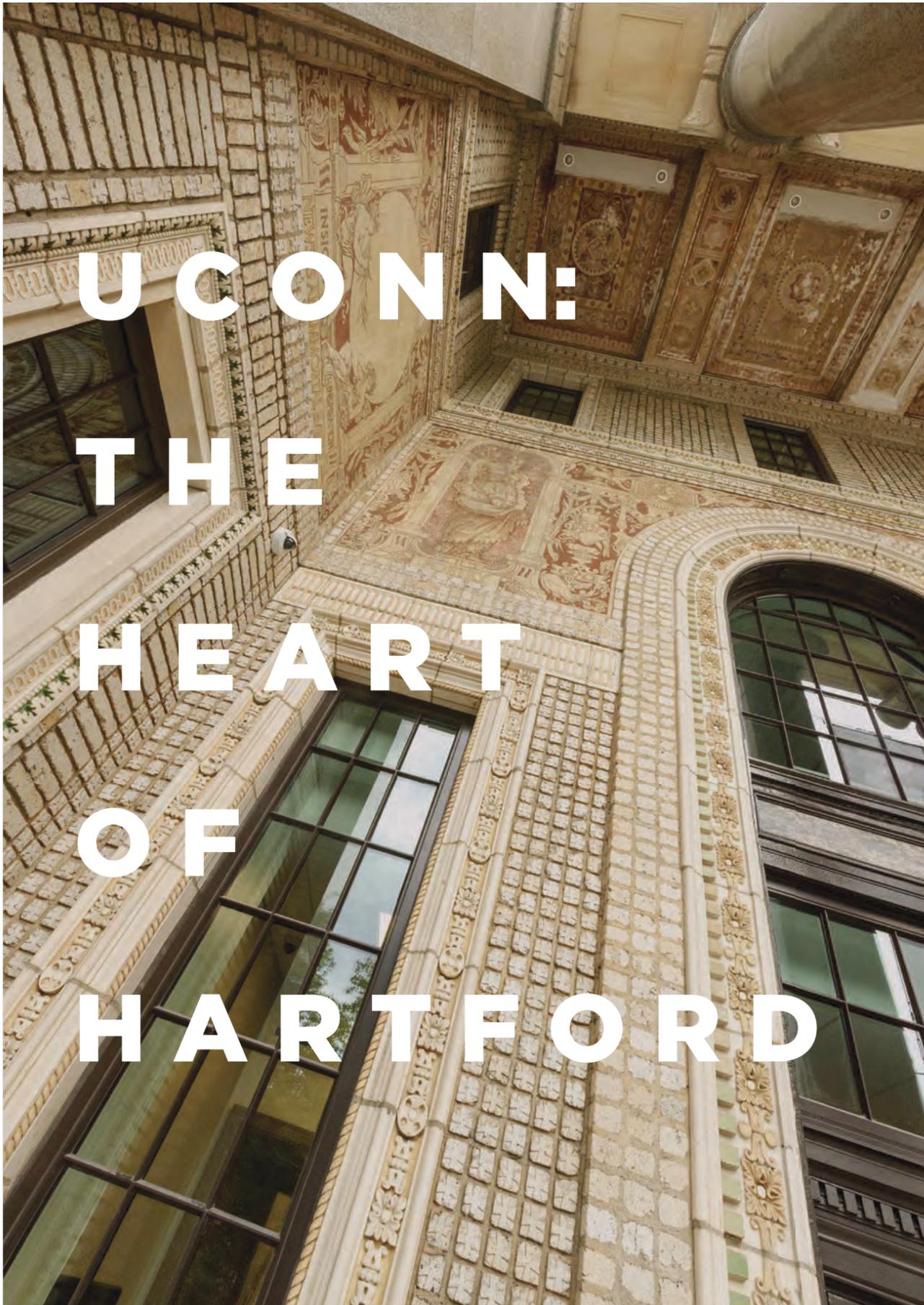


### Heroes of the Frontier by Dave Eggers

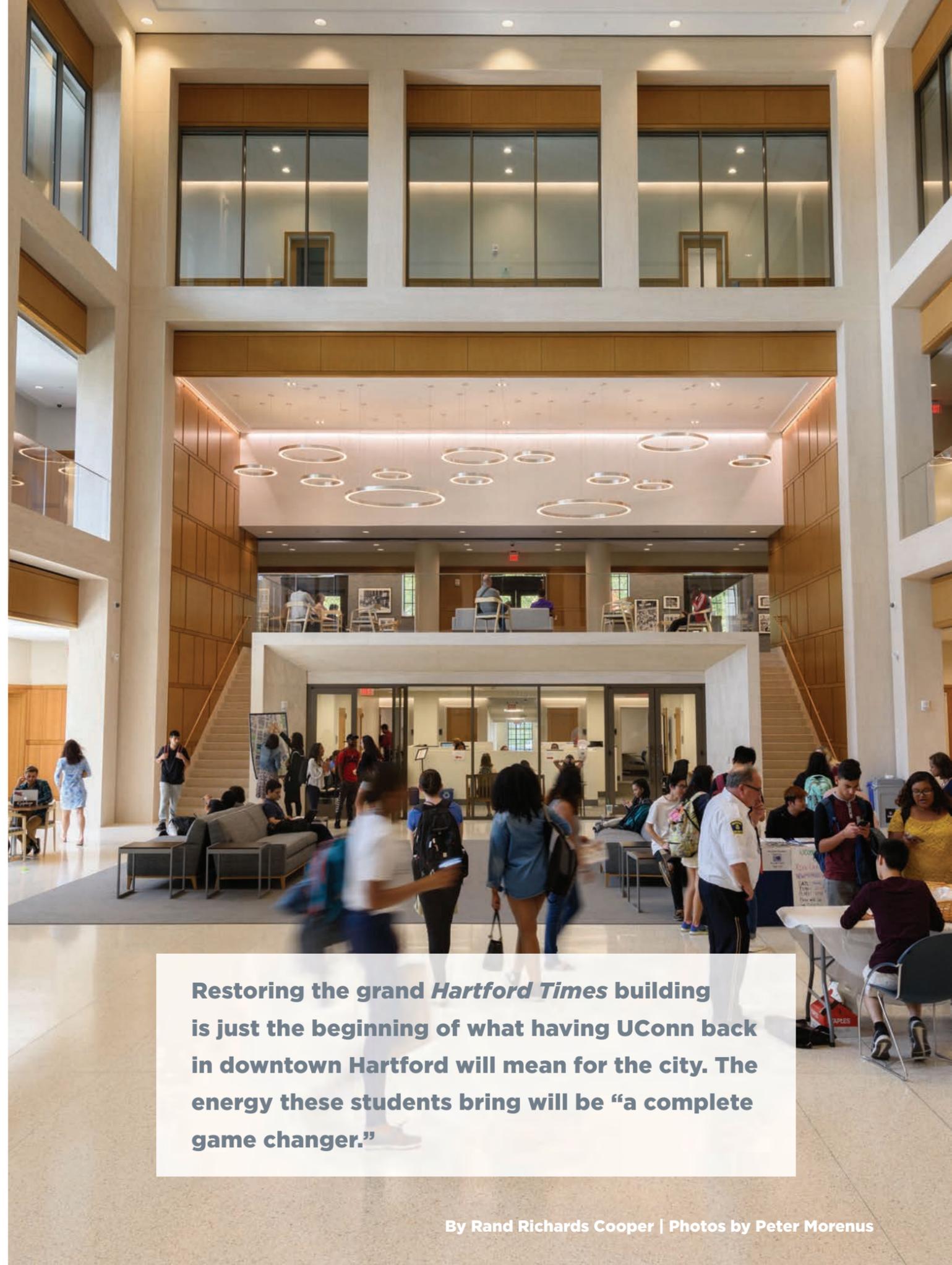
I don't know much about this book, but I love this author so want to read his latest. He's around my age

so I tend to identify with his characters and circumstances. And I love the way he writes about families and relationships; it's funny, sometimes satirical and over the top, but it also feels real.

Illustrations by Jason Raish



# UConn: THE HEART OF HARTFORD



**Restoring the grand *Hartford Times* building is just the beginning of what having UConn back in downtown Hartford will mean for the city. The energy these students bring will be “a complete game changer.”**

# THE

past half-century has not been kind to Connecticut's capital. Against a fading memory of Hartford in its heyday — a cultural and commercial center

that drew visitors from all over New England — the city languished. Thriving cities exert a gravitational force on communities around them, pulling people in. But in Hartford the force dwindled. City planners razed old neighborhoods, laid down highways to facilitate suburban access, and built gleaming office palaces. Over time the city center became a place that emptied out at 5 p.m. Fewer people came in at night and on weekends. Downtown effectively died.

Anyone hoping to revitalize a city's downtown faces a stubborn paradox. To get people there, you need amenities. To justify and attract amenities, you need people. How to break into that cycle and restore a city's gravitational force?

In August a key piece of the puzzle clicked into place, with the opening of the University of Connecticut's Hartford campus. UConn's former West Hartford branch now occupies a stretch of Prospect Street, parallel to Main Street, reaching from the Hartford Public Library north to Constitution Plaza and the UConn School of Business. The move installs some 3,400 students, faculty and staff in the heart of downtown's Front Street district, alongside the Wadsworth Atheneum, City Hall, the Public Library, the Travelers, and the Hartford Club.

For University President Susan Herbst, the decision to relocate was a no-brainer. "When I came to UConn and heard that the Greater Hartford campus was actually in West Hartford, I was surprised and, frankly, disappointed." With the campus experiencing dilapidation and facing a multimillion-dollar overhaul, the time was right for a move. Herbst knew exactly where UConn needed to go.

"We really wanted to bolster our connection to the city and be part of the resurgence of Hartford," says Herbst. She points out that before opening the suburban campus in 1970, UConn had been in Hartford, occupying several different locations, going back nearly a century. "So this is really a homecoming for us."

The project was a big push, Herbst admits. "Let's face it, people don't like to move. But I have been stunned by the gush of positivity and enthusiasm for doing this."

## A COLLEGE TOWN

"The UConn campus is a game changer for the city," says Matt Ritter, a Hartford state representative and the House Majority leader. "Adding thousands of young people downtown will bring an energy we haven't seen in some time." Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin says the move is crucial to the city's "long-awaited revitalization; the new students will be a big part of making Hartford a more lively, vibrant place."

To get why Hartford is so excited, you have to understand the special, galvanizing role colleges and universities play in boosting a city's dynamism. Students are often the first wave of an urban renaissance. Visit any number of thriving medium-sized cities across the country, from Providence to Asheville to Boulder, and you instantly see and feel the vitality supplied by students and recent graduates. Where they pop up, restaurants, galleries, and entertainment venues soon follow.

And eventually companies do, too. "Bringing UConn into Hartford is an obvious and necessary thing to do," says Bruce Becker, an architect and developer who converted the former Bank of America building into apartments at 777 Main, a short walk from the new campus. Becker is currently in discussion to relocate a suburban company to retail space in his building. "The only reason they're thinking about it is the growing reputation of Hartford as an attractive place to work," he says.

For years, Hartford residents have glanced peevishly at Providence or New Haven and said, "Well, if you took a world-class university and put it down in the middle of our city, we'd look pretty good too!" And while that hasn't



happened in one fell swoop, Hartford has been assembling a higher-education corridor at its center, one piece at a time. Trinity College is moving a graduate program to Constitution Plaza, partnering with Capital Community College, located in the refurbished G. Fox building just up Main Street. The University of St. Joseph has its pharmacy school nearby. There's Rensselaer Polytechnic's Hartford campus. And now, capping it off in a big way, is UConn.

UConn students, a large majority of them from Connecticut, represent the next generation of homegrown professionals — exactly the people a city like Hartford needs to attract. In this sense, the downtown campus represents an urban field of dreams: If you build it, they will come. And if they like it, they will stay.

## MAKING CITIZENS

The centerpiece of that field of dreams is the remarkable new building UConn has created from the former *Hartford Times* offices. The *Times* was a daily paper that operated, in fierce competition with the *Courant*, from 1817 to 1976. Built in 1920, the Beaux-Arts building that housed it for the last half-century of its run was itself already a novel reclamation project. Its architect, Donn Barber, who also de-

signed the iconic Travelers Tower across the street, salvaged granite columns, massive oak doors, and marble steps from the Madison Square Presbyterian Church in Manhattan. He redeployed these elements in the *Times'* monumental portico, conferring a sense of the sacred. The high

*Hartford Times* building as a treasure, and shuddered at the thought of its demolition. Its importance is more than mere architectural beauty. Buildings like this are a city's "good bones." They carry the city's stories in them, forming enduring points of civic reference. Four

**"WE WANT THAT 7-YEAR-OLD TO BE ABLE TO GO UP, HANDS PRESSED AGAINST THE GLASS, AND SEE WHAT THAT STUDENT IS DOING."**

**UConn Hartford Public Library  
Director Michael Howser**

walls of the portico's arcade are decorated with murals depicting allegorical figures for Poetry and Prose, Time and Space, Insight and Inspiration.

Preservationists have long viewed the

U.S. presidents spoke from the terrace of the *Times* building — including John F. Kennedy, who gave the final speech of his 1960 campaign, one day before he was elected. "We preserve historic buildings

because they give us a sense of our past and tie that past to us," says Sara Bronin, an architect and UConn Law professor who chairs Hartford's Planning and Zoning Commission (and is the wife of Mayor Luke Bronin.)

From the start, Susan Herbst was committed to saving the *Times* building, viewing it as a way for UConn to honor the state's history while situating the university's new campus in the cultural, governmental, and business nerve center of the city. Herbst also perceived an institutional continuity with a newspaper whose offices lauded "Insight" and "Inspiration."

"The building is very high-minded," she says with obvious enthusiasm. "It really fits with our own public mission as a university dedicated to making citizens."

Preserving it was not simple. The renovation involved shearing off the old structure's facade and wings, then joining them to a roughly 140,000-square-foot new building. To do the job, UConn hired RAMSA, the renowned New Haven and Manhattan based firm headed by Robert A.M. Stern, former Dean of the Yale School of Architecture, whose resumé includes Yale's recent \$500 million expansion. "Stern is a really talented designer," says Sara Bronin. "He's known for neo-traditional institutional buildings, and that's why he was the right choice for

“THE CITY HAS A LOT TO OFFER ... THIS BUILDING REPRESENTS A BIG INVESTMENT FOR UCONN AND FOR THE STATE. IT’S WORTH IT. AND IT’S FOREVER.”

UCONN PRESIDENT  
SUSAN HERBST



UConn President Susan Herbst and UConn Hartford Director Mark Overmyer-Velázquez in a fifth floor meeting space. The orange through the window is the iconic Alexander Calder “Stegosaurus” statue.

this project. It’s a super flashy project for our city.”

The building, with its bold neoclassicism, offers plenty of wow factor. Students entering from Prospect Street ascend one of two winding staircases and pass through giant arched doors to an interior that matches the facade for grandeur. At the center is a three-story high atrium, naturally lit via a steel-and-glass facade to the south, with massive square limestone columns girding the space and adding to its imposing beauty and strength. Mezzanines look down over a student collaboration area, on an elevated platform beneath circular halo lights, to the terrazzo floor below, where students will hang out. “It’s equipped in state-of-the-art ways that reflect how people learn,” says Herbst, adding with a laugh, “let’s just say that there are a lot of outlets!”

The five-story building houses classrooms and labs, meeting and work areas, and faculty and administration offices. The atrium opens to a south-facing courtyard, landscaped with trees and grass. Oversized windows in the science labs offer views so enticing, one worries about experiments gone awry. Faculty offices on the top floors boast panoramic vistas of city and countryside. A wood-paneled conference room overlooks the atrium through floor-to-ceiling windows. It’s

a soaring building, bright with natural light. Says James Libby, UConn’s Design Project Manager for the campus: “We’re setting a new standard for how these buildings look.” Architect Bruce Becker agrees. “This is a flagship type of building,” he says. “It brings a whole new educational institution not of the scale of Yale, but of the quality.”

### TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

When you tour the new building, with all its gleaming amenities, you’ll notice something that is not there: a place to eat. This omission-by-design is intended to send hungry students out into the neighborhood, and reflects lessons learned in other, similar relocations.

“We don’t want our building to be a vault,” says Herbst. “I decided early on, no food service in the building. We must have students out on the street!”

Students out on the street: the phrase surely has a different valence than it would have had fifty years ago, and its significance is not lost on Jamie “The Bear” McDonald, the barbecue impresario whose five Hartford-area restaurants include two in the Front Street business zone adjacent to the new UConn campus. McDonald says that the new building’s lack of food and function spaces will



From top: the building facade; students in a bio lab on the first day of classes; the Barnes & Noble UConn bookstore across the street.

benefit hotels and restaurants in the vicinity. “We can do the catering for small-group functions, faculty meetings, and the like. That’s the key thing about the new campus — it’s not an island. It’s integrated with the community, and we’ll get the benefit.”

The new campus has been planned and designed to maximize connection to the neighborhood in a host of ways. Students use the same parking garages everyone else does. Ground-floor retail spaces in the main building open both to the street and to the atrium. At the campus’s southwest corner, a grand plaza welcomes the Hartford community and links diagonally to the landscaped courtyard, also publicly accessible. The Barnes & Noble UConn, the first bookstore in downtown Hartford in many years, occupies the ground floor of the Front Street Lofts across the street. A new CVS is in 777 Main, a few blocks away. Lectures and perhaps classes will be held in the Atheneum across the street. Large-scale events can use the Infinity Hall concert venue or the Science and Convention Centers just down the street. And discussions are underway for a plan whereby students can use Husky Bucks at neighborhood businesses.

The emphasis on community is especially fitting for the School of Social Work, which moved into a stately brick building at 38 Prospect Street early this summer. “Being in downtown Hartford will make it really easy to connect with organizations,” notes Lauren Chapman, a 23-year-old graduate case-work student from Hebron. Chapman believes that the campus’s setting makes it more than a mere commuter school. “People will stick around and use the area, both between classes and after. You couldn’t do that at West Hartford. Here people can go into a restaurant or cafe or bar and socialize, or get some work done. It’s conducive to that.”

These sentiments are echoed by Chapman’s teacher, social work professor Lisa Werkmeister-Rozas. “It was always strange for us to be in a suburban setting,” she observes. “Our students are dealing with urban populations, and now they can see the everyday situations that their clients talk about. I think it will be a really important learning experience.” The move is practical, Werkmeister-Rozas says, since many social-work internships are based in the city. “And from a pure advocacy perspective, being able to participate in the renewal of



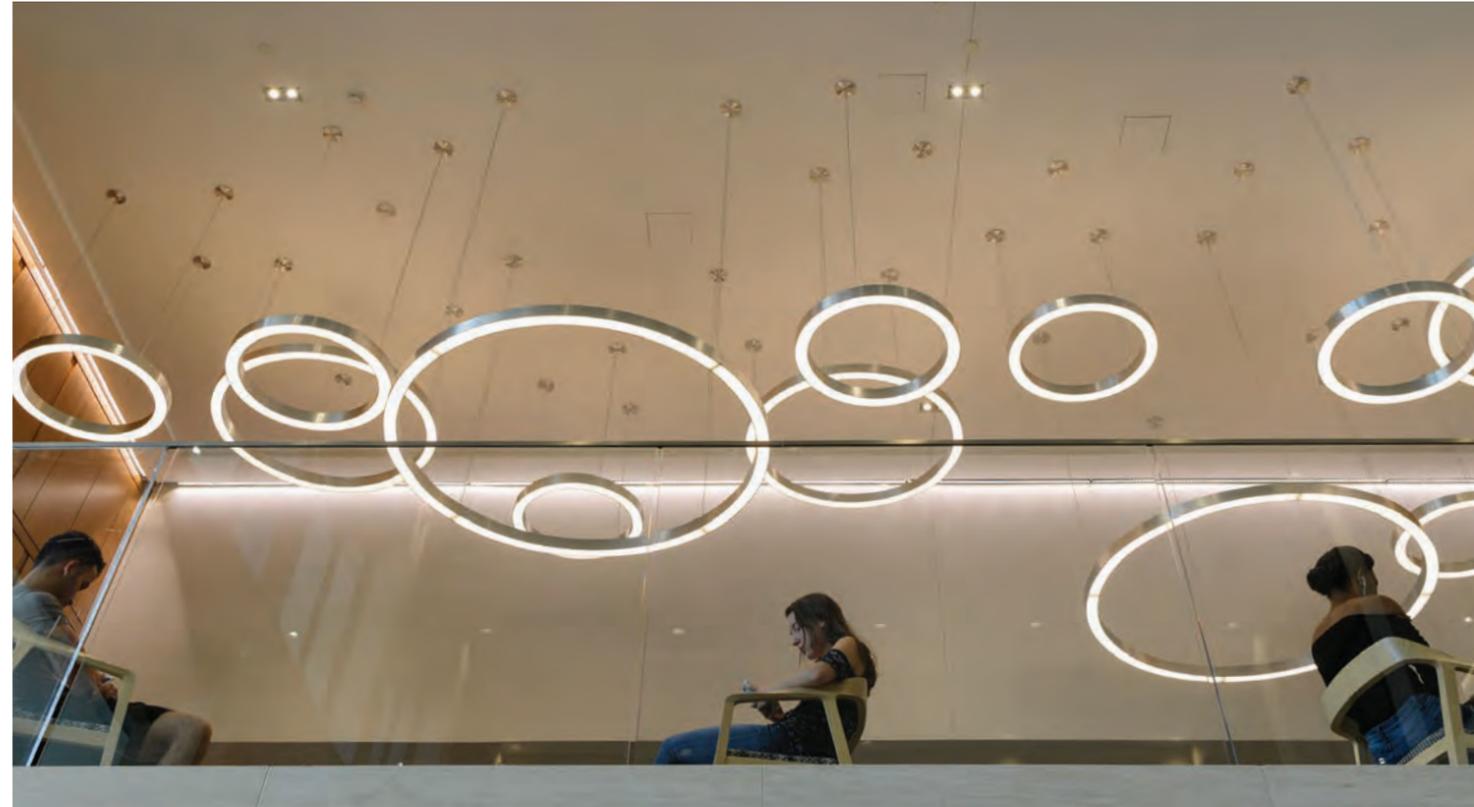
**“THE NEW STUDENTS WILL BE A BIG PART OF MAKING HARTFORD A MORE LIVELY, VIBRANT PLACE.”**

**HARTFORD MAYOR LUKE BRONIN**

Hartford is a good thing.”

No feature of the new campus better illustrates the town-gown symbiosis than the arrangement with Hartford Public Library, where a \$4 million renovation will facilitate use by as many as 1,000 students a day, with classes taking place in several new classrooms. UConn students will enter via the Arch Street entrance, passing a massive 1870 Colt’s Universal Platen Press. Inside, they’ll find an impressive array of more contemporary information technologies, like a video studio where professors can record lectures using a virtual blackboard, or the Digital Scholarship Studio, where up to 12 screens can be mosaiced together so that research teams can compare data dashboards.

Library staff on both sides are thrilled about the joint effort. “We’ve been focused on collaboration from day one,” says UConn Hartford Public Library Director Michael



**From left: Bronin in The William and Alice Mortensen Courtyard; students studying in the Zachs Atrium; the building’s rooftop sign with the Travelers Tower.**

For more pictures and information, including a list of donors, go to [s.uconn.edu/uconnhartford](http://s.uconn.edu/uconnhartford).

Howser. Brenda Miller, who heads the Hartford History Center at HPL, lists the contributions UConn has already made, from a baby grand piano for the library’s popular jazz series, to support for a Learning Lab, to a new storage unit to house the library’s historical collection. The partnership will enable a broad array of events and programming, like a recent series of discussions on the founding documents of American democracy, developed with UConn’s Public Humanities Institute and the Wadsworth Atheneum. Already the library has hosted a drop-in writing workshop conducted by a UConn professor, where city residents could bring in a poem, resume, or application letter and get help with it.

The new spaces in the library have been configured to spur interaction between UConn students and the general public. “There’s no bouncer at the door,

no gatekeeper,” says Howser. “We want to be open and welcoming.” Anyone with a Hartford Library card can borrow from UConn’s books. The new layout offers joint study areas and classrooms; there’s a conference room with glass walls on both sides, making it totally transparent. “We want people to see the students in action,” says Howser. “We want that 7-year-old to be able to go up, hands pressed against the glass, and see what that student is doing.” In addition to the many tangible benefits, the UConn presence will offer a standing role model for urban kids from non-college-educated backgrounds.

“Hartford Public Library is a cornerstone of democracy, open to anyone,” observes the library’s Director of Communications, Don Wilson. “But the one segment we haven’t had en masse is college students. There’s an ecosystem here, and when students are introduced into that, both sides will benefit. I’m very excited to see what happens.”

**GOING UP**

And so are Hartford residents — excited not merely about the library, but about the overall impact of UConn. Those of us who have lived here over the last 20 years can recite a litany of losses and failures, indignities and dashed hopes.

The demoralizing departure of the city’s only major-league sports franchise, the NHL Whalers, and the subsequent sorry attempt to lure the Patriots. The ouster of a mayor charged with corruption. The city’s designation, at one point, as the second poorest in the U.S., after Brownsville, Texas.

Amid such slings and arrows, hope has always persisted, and we have eagerly reached for Mark Twain’s celebrated line about reports of one’s death being greatly exaggerated. Now, at last, the quip seems apt. Hartford faces significant ongoing challenges, but signs of a downtown resurgence abound, reflected in rising rents and real-estate values, new residences with high occupancy rates, flourishing restaurants, and the success of citizen initiatives such as Riverfront Recapture. Months ago the historic Goodwin Hotel re-opened after nearly a decade. Come next year, true commuter rail will connect the city efficiently to New Haven, and by extension New York. Meanwhile, painters and sculptors, designers, photographers, and other arts and entertainment entrepreneurs are incubating small-business ideas and energies. From Coltsville to Dunkin’ Donuts Park, a rejuvenation is underway. UConn’s new campus puts a gleaming seal on the deal. “Lively, diverse, intense cities,” wrote



Jane Jacobs in her influential 1961 book, *The Death and Life of American Cities*, “contain the seeds of their own regeneration.” Jacobs insisted that restoring a city’s gravitational pull means building on what is already there — developing precious resources, rather than trying to obliterate them and start anew. That effort is the essence of the new Hartford campus. It represents the state’s commitment to deploy the knowledge economy in boosting its capital city’s vitality while building on its tradition.

The benefit promises to be mutual. For UConn students, Hartford provides another option, one that will excite those eager for an urban experience and all it involves. “The city has a lot to offer,” says President Herbst. “We needed a stronghold there.” Anchoring that stronghold is a building she calls a metaphor for excellence.

“This building represents a big investment for UConn and for the state,” she says. “It’s worth it. And it’s forever.”

**Rand Richards Cooper’s writing has appeared in Harper’s, Esquire, The Atlantic, and The New York Times. Cooper, who is a contributing editor at Commonweal, lives with his wife and daughter in Hartford and writes a monthly column, “In Our Midst,” for Hartford Magazine.**



# SKYPE A SCIENTIST

This program, which has grown in 8 months from one graduate student in one lab at UConn to thousands of scientists across 12 time zones and all 50 states isn't the answer to all the world's woes – or is it?

BY KIM KRIEGER

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KAILEY WHITMAN

The first thing she showed them was a large, stuffed fruit fly. This impressed them. Then she flashed test tubes full of living flies. Fascination ensued, for she was obviously no ordinary person but rather someone with a deep grasp of what was important in life: stuffed animals and bugs.

Later she told them she was a microbiologist who studied the germs living in the flies' stomachs. That was when the questions started.

"Where did you grow up?"  
"Why do moths eat clothes?"  
"Do aliens really exist?"

The teacher of these kindergarteners says she has never seen them as engaged as this, when they got to Skype a scientist.

Her kindergarten class is in Venice, Florida, and the scientist was Nichole Broderick, an assistant professor of molecular and cell biology, who was Skyping from her UConn Storrs office 1,300 miles away. Broderick is one of 497 scientists who talked with schoolchildren last semester through a project called Skype a Scientist, started by a third-year graduate student at UConn named Sarah McNulty.

Aliens loom large in kindergarteners' minds, and Broderick was pleased to use the alien question to introduce the kids to invasive species, which, she explained, are just like aliens but from other ecosystems

instead of other planets.

In other classes in other places, other scientists discussed the social lives of ants with middle schoolers, introduced fourth graders to the extreme environment of a Yellowstone geyser, and talked with high schoolers about the environmental consequences of war. The researchers hailed from all over this country and the classrooms from as far away as Kyrgyzstan. But in every case they had been introduced by McNulty.

## BLACK INK AND BLUE BLOOD

McAnulty spends most of her time studying bobtail squid in Associate Professor Spencer Nyholm's biology lab. She loves science and is, in Nyholm's words, a phenomenal graduate student, a self-starter who raises money and bobtail squid with the same dedication, for the lab depends on a steady stream of both. Late last year, McNulty began thinking about politics, too. Because politics had begun to impinge on science.

The country was divided like never before in her lifetime. Anti-intellectualism seemed to be on the rise, and even truth itself seemed under attack. Academic research in the U.S. depends on public funding, and public funding depends on the goodwill of the people. And somehow, that goodwill seemed to be eroding.

"As a community, we were realizing that people view scientists as aloof and cold," says McNulty. "Even suspecting we had ulterior motives for sharing our data!"

She says this with shock, as if comparing scientists exchanging data sets to Big Tobacco manipulating medical trials is unthinkable. And until seven or eight years ago, it was. But something has changed in the public's perception of scientists.

"There's a feeling that for U.S. science to survive, we really need to get people trusting scientists again," says McNulty. She's chatting with me near the entrance to her lab in the Storrs biophysics building. Right next door is where she raises the bobtail squid. Bobtail squid are adorable, as cute as an invertebrate can be. Only a few centimeters long, with big eyes and eight short little legs, they can even glow in the dark, thanks to the colonies of bioluminescent bacteria that live symbiotically inside them. Nyholm's lab focuses on the relationship between symbiotic bacteria and their hosts.

McAnulty's part of the research zooms in on the squid's immune system and why it tolerates the glowing bacteria. Bacteria live in our guts, too, although they don't make us glow in the dark. Studying the squid's relationship with their symbionts could tell us more about ours. McNulty has become an expert at drawing blood from the little mollusks. She says she doesn't mind it nearly as much as she did when she worked with mice.

"I felt bad doing experiments on mice. Something about their red blood. I don't feel as bad with squid. And they usually



## “KIDS NEED TO SEE THERE’S A BIG BRIGHT WORLD OUT THERE.”

scientists who study bobtail squid unless you’re already interested in squid. Most people are firmly ensconced in their own little bubbles.

### WHO HAS THE MOST QUESTIONS? KIDS.

But kids are different. Before grad school, McAnulty spent a year working in a diabetes biology lab in the Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine in Berlin. The university hosts a “Long Night of Science” each summer, when it opens up the labs to the public and families participate in science activities until late in the evening. The kids were always curious about everything. What if she could talk to school-aged children, children who were probably apolitical and just interested in cool ideas?

One day she was chatting with a bunch of biologists on Twitter when the idea of reaching out to classrooms via Skype came up. “We just decided to do it. What’s the worst that could happen? We make some teachers mad at us,” she recalls. And so Skype a Scientist was born.

McAnulty began reaching out to teachers through Facebook. Would you like to have your class talk to a scientist? she asked. She aimed especially for teachers in geographic areas that might be pretty remote from real-life scientists, but she replied to any teacher who inquired. It quickly became apparent that making teachers mad was not going to be an issue.

“I can’t wait to do it again! I’d recommend it to anyone in the school,” says Cathleen Francis, the kindergarten and first grade teacher in Venice, Florida whose class asked about aliens.

“Skype a Scientist is great for me,” says Trudy Fadden, a middle school science teacher in Vermont. “You have to build

come right back,” swimming off into their tank, leaving nothing but a vial of bluish-green blood behind.

Wait — squid have blue blood?

“It’s because of the hemocyanin,” she tells me. Like hemoglobin in our red blood cells, hemocyanin uses a metal to bind oxygen. But where we use iron, squid’s hemocyanin uses copper. As she explains this, the Pharmacy Building looms behind her. Its copper roof has oxidized to a rich bluish green color from exposure to rain and air. A similar chemical reaction accounts for a squid’s blue blood.

### “ASK ME ANYTHING.”

McAnulty put up a Tumblr page when she joined Nyholm’s lab. She posts about her research, science books she likes, marine biology in general, and loads of cute squid pictures. She also has an “Ask Me Anything” section. Readers ask all kinds of questions, as earnest as “How do you ethically source cuttlebone?” or “How do you pick the animal you want to study for the rest of your life?” and as ridiculous as “Do squids pass gas?” Sarah replies to that last with, “Well, yes and no. They do get air trapped in their mantles when they swim over a bubble, but they don’t pass gas from their digestive tracts as far

as I know!”

She says she enjoys the back-and-forth with readers, and her answers are always informed by her own experience.

McAnulty has spent a lot of time talking to colleagues about the public perception of science. The problem seems clear: How can scientists remake their public image from aloof to approachable? Many scientists aren’t all that great at talking about their work with nonscientists. Sometimes it’s because they think no one else will be interested in hearing about it. Other times they’ve been holed up in their lab talking only to colleagues for so long they’ve forgotten how to communicate with regular folks. Get two researchers from the same subfield talking to each other excitedly, and even other scientists from another field can quickly lose the thread as the two specialists descend into a rarified dialect of Deep Geek.

McAnulty, however, likes talking about her research with nonscientists. She also has an intuitive grasp of marketing and outreach. She’d started the Tumblr so she could share her work more broadly, and she’d picked Tumblr because it reaches a younger, more female audience than other social media favored by scientists. Still, she knew that her Tumblr page was preaching to the choir. You don’t seek out

a relationship. And you don’t want it to be a dog and pony show, you have to make connections between the kids and the science,” she says. That real person helps tremendously, she adds, even if they are only on a screen. Fadden had two scientists Skype her class, one from Rutgers University and the other from UConn, a graduate student in the Klassen Lab for molecular and cell biology named Emily Green. She has kept in touch with both researchers and plans to Skype them again next year.

### ANSWERING CURIOSITY IN EVERY LANGUAGE

Fadden and Francis were early adopters, part of the first wave of teachers who simply answered Facebook inquiries. McAnulty would manually match them with a scientist in the right discipline and time zone. The requests kept coming. And then a teacher mentioned Skype a Scientist publicly at a conference in Texas and the Google sign-up form McAnulty had slapped together “just blew up,” she says.

Overnight, 200 classrooms signed up. Scientists showed equal enthusiasm. One would tell another, who would tell another, and by the end of July McAnulty had more than 1,740 classrooms signed up and 1,755 scientists, with participants hailing from 17 countries and all 50 states. More press followed, including a feature on NPR’s “Science Friday.”

UConn scientists continue to be major players. CAHNR graduate student Mauri Liberati did a total of nine sessions with one school. Three UConn biology professors — Nichole Broderick, Susan Herrick, and Ken Noll — have participated, signed up for more sessions, and involved more professors for this fall. They all say it’s fun, and it’s easy. Broderick says she enjoyed her Skype session with the kindergarteners as much as Francis did. “Having to explain concepts to 5- and 6-year-olds really makes you think,” she says.

Can it really be this easy to change the public’s perception of science? Other scientists are running for political office, or demonstrating in political rallies like the March for Science last April. McAnulty attended the march. She says she wasn’t sure how she felt about it going in, but thought it was important to attend.

“Finding truth is impartial, as far as left and right. But as long as the government funds science, and you have a political system opposed to truth, being on the side

of truth is a political act,” she explains.

But how does she, or anyone in science, know they really are on the side of “truth”? Science corrects itself and reverses course constantly. Bubbles burst. Paradigms shift. It’s an intrinsic part of the scientific endeavor that science is self-correcting. But this also is part of what makes the general populace distrust scientists; one day something is heralded as empirical truth that we should all heed. The next, it’s contradicted by a new piece of evidence.

And it’s true that even though Skype a Scientist has national reach, one could argue it’s not reaching kids who need it most. Just to start, you need to have a science-positive teacher who’s comfortable bringing a scientist “into” the classroom. One teacher admitted that her colleagues and school administrators regularly discuss what they would do if a parent questioned what they were teaching. But she’s never seen anything from students but love for science. And just because you can’t help everybody doesn’t mean you shouldn’t try. A Vermont parent put it very bluntly:

“This town is in the thick of the opiate epidemic. Three people died down the street from me this year. We’re a very rural school. Kids need to see there’s a big bright world out there.” People might distrust scientists as elitist, she continued, but people also want their kids to expand their horizons.

McAnulty gets it. One summer she worked surveying bat populations in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, scoping out the site of a proposed wind farm. She saw the economic challenges in the re-

gion. She chatted with some of the locals. She knows that any national distrust of scientists is part of a much bigger malaise.

“I don’t think this is *the* problem with the U.S. But this is *a* problem. I feel equipped, and I’ll try to fix it,” she says.

And with a little luck, these Skype sessions will make an impression. And some school kids in West Virginia and Missouri and Florida and Vermont and all the other classrooms will grow up with



the knowledge that science is a quest for truth about the natural world. It’s done by real people just like them. And because of that, science is imperfect and can always be worked on. If the kids believe it, they’ll grow into adults who support it.

Maybe they’ll participate in the research enterprise, or use the scientific method in their daily lives. Or maybe they’ll just remember that day in fourth grade that they got to ask a real scientist whether squids fart, and that she laughed with them, not at them. And that might be the best outcome of all. ☺



Sarah McAnulty is a Ph.D. candidate in molecular and cell biology.

For more pictures of Sarah and the bobtail squid she works with, as well as to find links to her Tumblr page and to the Skype a Scientist program, please go to [s.uconn.edu/skype](http://s.uconn.edu/skype).

# Staying in College to Help Others Graduate

Mentors and guidance counselors helped Hines, an assistant professor of educational psychology, find his path. Now he is paying it forward.

by Julie (Stagis) Bartucca '10 (BUS, CLAS), photos by Peter Morenus

**E**rik Hines is passionate about helping black male students succeed at UConn. The assistant professor in the Neag School of Education says he is on a mission to help attract and retain African-American male students.

As faculty director of the new learning community SchOLA<sup>2</sup>RS House, Hines hopes to gain a deeper understanding of the variables that influence positive academic and career outcomes for black males, the subject at the heart of both his day-to-day counseling work and his academic research. (SchOLA<sup>2</sup>RS stands for Scholastic House of Leaders in Support of African-American Researchers & Scholars).

"He is all in," says Sally Reis, the former associate provost who brought Hines in to work on the newest of the University's learning communities. "He is completely dedicated to these young men, focused on their graduation from UConn and their success in graduate school and work. He is passionate, committed, and a remarkably strong mentor."

Born and raised in Tampa, Hines decided to become a school counselor while attending community college there. He went on to earn his bachelor's in social science education at Florida State University, his master's in education for school

"All I think about now is solutions for improving the graduation rate for black males."



counseling at the College of William & Mary, and his Ph.D. in counselor education at the University of Maryland. He joined the UConn faculty in August 2014.

Hines says he is doing the work he set out to do at age 19. “My career feels purposeful, fulfilling, and empowering. All I think about now is solutions for improving the graduation rate for black males, recruitment of black males in STEM and career fields in which they are underrepresented, and how we help first-generation and other vulnerable populations be successful, too.”

We caught up with Hines over the summer in his Gentry Building office, which overlooks a grassy, tree-lined knoll next to The Benton.

**Q: You work with graduate students, preparing them to become school counselors. How has educating them changed with new challenges, such as social media, cyber bullying, and climbing rates of suicide in adolescents?**

**Hines:** Counselors’ goals still are variations of making sure students get their needs met socially and emotionally, even outside the school walls, and accountability — ensuring that students not only understand what they need to know to get to the next grade, but also think long-term: What will life be like post-high school?

I would say school counselors are needed now more than ever. When we were in the space race, after Sputnik, the federal mandate came to put in school counselors to identify the best and brightest in science and math [Title V of the National Defense of Education Act, 1958]. Now, we want to cultivate *all* of our students to be the best and brightest.

**Q: Neag’s school counselor program emphasizes working with underrepresented students. What are some of the tools that you teach to specifically work with those populations?**

**Hines:** We train students to look at the data, as well as how to collect data of their own through observations in classrooms, surveys, reading articles. We teach them to find literature that supports what they want to do and to address what the data is telling them.

**Q: Can you share an example of how that works?**

**Hines:** In my School Counseling Development and Evaluation course, students do a mock advocacy project. They use

“We want to cultivate *all* of our students to be the best and brightest.”

the U.S. Department of Education’s Civil Rights Data Collection website to look at a local school district. They look for gaps, disaggregating the data by factors such as race, socioeconomic status, and gender.

Say an AP algebra II class has 20 students, and 5 are female. There’s obviously a gender imbalance. So students try to figure out why: they can interview teachers and students and look at the process by which students are chosen to take the class. We discuss best strategies for how to advocate for all students to be eligible for these types of programs and courses, maybe advertising the course to girls, or encouraging the school counselors to talk to students about it. Maybe the teacher needs more culturally responsive training to understand how to promote equity in the classroom.

Imagine an educational pipeline from pre-K all the way to graduate school. We are trying to make sure that we close all the leaks in the pipeline. The leaks can be under-resourced schools, teachers not adequately helping students get their needs met academically, and so on. We want to partner with teachers to help them best work with students, and vice-versa.

**Q: What sort of pipeline got you to where you are?**

**Hines:** I am forever grateful for the education I received in the great state of Florida. I went to mostly public schools. I went to a community college. And I think being in community college helped me really reflect on my life, because I didn’t do so well my first semester, but it encouraged me to think about what I really wanted to do that could be impactful as a job or career. Of course, my mother was on top of me saying, “You can’t be in college forever.”

**Q: You proved her wrong, didn’t you?**

**Hines:** Yes, I did. Yes! Even at times from my bachelor’s to master’s, she told me I needed to get a job. Don’t think she didn’t say that. “You’re going back to school again? You need a job!”

I thought about my strengths, I thought about what I could do, I thought about what I would be fulfilled by doing. I was helping in my local church at the time as a Sunday School teacher. And I was like, oh, I like kids. And then I really thought about my life and what I felt I didn’t get or I needed more of [growing up]. I think in high school, if I really had more people to push me, or I knew about more of the programs available to me, I could have been more successful.

My junior high school counselor, Mr. Robert Davis, stands out though. He was always trying to provide opportunities. He was very engaged with students. He took students on field trips to New York, for instance. Remembering that helped me think, “I want to be a school counselor.”

**Q: Was it a straight path?**

**Hines:** I started by going through computer science and business as majors, thinking I wanted to make a lot of money. Then I realized what I really wanted to do was help students develop their potential.

**Q: Who do you consider your biggest mentors?**

**Hines:** At Florida State University I met two of my mentors, Dr. Lee Jones, who has since passed away, and Dr. James L. Moore III. [Moore is now interim vice provost for diversity and inclusion and chief diversity officer at The Ohio State University.]

Because of them, I was in the Brothers of the Academy, an academic organization for black men who aim to be tenure-track faculty or academic administrators. That helped me think about how we best help African-American students, and students in general who need help.

**Q: How did the idea for ScHOLA<sup>2</sup>RS House develop?**

**Hines:** Administrators looked at the data — when we talk about advocating, again, we have to look at what the data is saying. And the data told them that the graduation rate for black males at UConn was 55 percent, where our other populations — men, women, Asian, Latinx, white, black women — they were hovering in the high 70s and low 80s. And UConn’s overall



Hines teaches his students how to use data to identify areas that need improvement and discover ways to make those improvements. He says he does the same thing when developing programming as faculty director for ScHOLA<sup>2</sup>RS House, a living-learning community for black males.

graduation rate at the time, 2012–2013, was at 83 percent. They decided that a black male learning community could be instrumental in helping black men.

Currently, at any given time, there’s between 450 and 500 black males on campus, from freshmen to seniors, and there’s 18,000 to 19,000 students on the Storrs campus. So you can imagine, the population is that small, and only half of them were graduating. Something needed to be done.

**Q: When you first heard about it, did you think a learning community was a good idea?**

**Hines:** Yeah! I was focused on the academic achievement part. So I was like, “Oh, this is great!” Because it was crazy that the graduation rate was 55 percent. Nationally for black males, it’s 34 percent, so we’re actually doing better because our institution is more selective, and a lot of our black men are coming from the top of their high school classes. Still, imagine that you graduate salutatorian or valedictorian from your high school, and then you look

at that rate and think, “UConn may not be a viable option for me to complete.” That’s problematic.

I was naive to the fact people would be concerned about black men living together.

**Q: What were some of the things you heard after it was announced?**

**Hines:** Some students were hesitant; some wanted to see what it was about. Of course there was some racist propaganda, some students who were African-American who thought it was segregation. I had to combat the stereotype. What is problematic with black men living together? We have other groups living together on campus [WiMSE, or Women in Math, Science, and Engineering, is an all-female learning community, for example.]

To me, [if that’s seen as a problem], then we need to challenge our paradigm of what we think about black men. This should be something that — and I applaud the University of Connecticut — we have to jump on, be at the forefront. We have to take on some of these challenging issues that may not make everyone happy.

**Q: Our University spokesperson said she was so shocked by some of the nastiness that you heard from people on the internet. But she said you weren’t shocked by it.**

**Hines:** I’m not. I live and breathe being an African-American man every day. Sometimes I do get those looks; I have been searched unlawfully; I have been questioned about my intellect. I stick with data and I look at the bigger picture: How do we as a community, how do I as a professor, a father, a teacher, a mentor, an African-American male, help other young men be successful, transcend some of these issues, and not get too bogged down? I’m not saying ignore it, because I’m not doing that, but sometimes you have to be the bigger person to challenge it.

I believe the University of Connecticut is on the verge of doing something very innovative and I believe we can be pioneers in improving the graduation rate of black men, and showing our fellow institutions how to do that as well. ☺

# Flocking to Storrs

## A BIRDER'S TOUR of CAMPUS

Ornithology professor Margaret Rubega told us  
“birds are everywhere.” Then she proved it. By Lisa Stiepok

**H**ardcore birders like to get out into the world early, which is how this magazine's art director and I found ourselves meeting associate professor Margaret Rubega for the first of a series of campus bird walks at precisely 6 a.m. at a Storrs Center café.

All three of us clutching extra-large coffees, we stepped into the parking lot at 6:06 just as a magnificent red-tailed hawk swooped over street and sidewalk some 10 yards across the parking lot and at eye level — as if on cue.

“That's amazing,” I said. To which Rubega replied, “No it's not. Birds are everywhere.”

If there's one message this 20-year UConn professor is trying to impart to her students and, as Connecticut State Ornithologist, to the community at large, it's this one: Stop to look, and not incidentally to listen, and you will find birds, literally, everywhere.

A breakthrough teaching moment came for Rubega when she decided to take the technology that was keeping students from observing the world around them, aka their cellphones, and turn it into a weapon for her side, the side of good, of nature, of looking out and up.

She decided to give her students a graded assignment to find birds in their day-to-day lives and to tweet about what they see. “At first they think the assignment is boring and I'm a crazy lady,” says Rubega. But about four weeks into the semester she gives them a pop quiz asking whether having this assignment has changed anything in their day-to-day lives.

“Overwhelmingly the response comes back, ‘Now I see birds everywhere!’” she says, with a smidgen of smugness. “They'll post how they never noticed how little a gull flaps while in the air or that the feeding behavior of turkey vultures is fascinating. They turn into observers and that's the whole point.”

Rubega chose Twitter not because of its bird-friendly branding, but because it appeals to this age range and the 140-character limit forces students to really think about how they are describing birds, to focus on the characteristics that are key.

“People deride Twitter for being 140 characters as if the content itself must be trivial because it's brief,” says Rubega. Every good writer knows it's much harder to pack meaning into short

statements. And there's no question that it is possible to be trivial at great length.”

What counts, she says, is what you do with the medium at hand. “And what I see students doing with Twitter is experimenting and then reporting to the rest of the world. What more can we ask from students whom we hope will turn into scientists?”

Enough Twitter talk, it's time now for the three of us to get moving. Six a.m., it turns out, is for amateurs. “All the birds start singing before sunrise,” says Rubega, who is about to show us her favorite birding spots. Though birds are indeed everywhere, there are places where the number and variety of birds is bigger and better, which is why we are headed first to what Rubega calls “the big Kahuna” of Storrs campus birdwatching: Horsebarn Hill.

### Horsebarn Hill

Punctuated by the snorts and whinnies of horses anticipating breakfast we hear a cacophony of shrill red-winged blackbird whistles and shrieks. The birds are, says Rubega, “on territory” in the grasses of a small wetland at the base of the meadow that is the largest UConn horse field.

“Look at me, check me out,” chirps Rubega channeling a male with particularly brilliant red and yellow epaulets who has just flown past and perched on a nearby fence, unseating another male redwing. “Check me out,” she says continuing to channel the bird. “Sooo sexy, look at my epaulets. Hear my cry: I'm a man and this corner is *my* territory.”

Rubega points out a female redwing, which is shorter, squatter, and all spackled brown with no epaulets. To us, it looks more like a sparrow than a relative of the red-winged blackbird. In this species the female has no need for flash, explains Rubega. She is looking for a space for youngsters and to have food. She's looking

Deep in the woods behind Discovery Drive lies a pair of wooden platforms protruding into wetlands that are home to the barred owls, red-bellied woodpeckers, red-winged blackbirds, and northern flickers pictured at right, among many others.

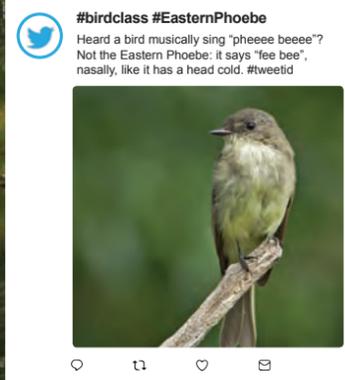


Twitter posts like those at right and on the following pages are indicative of the tweets Rubega and her students post about birds they discover on campus and elsewhere. Other schools have gotten in on the act and you can, too — at #birdclass.





Horsebarn Hill is “the big Kahuna” of birding on Storrs campus, says Rubega. Besides the barn swallows, bluebird, kestrel, pigeons, and killdeer shown here, you easily can find various warblers, starlings, sparrows, cardinals, robins, jays, wrens, finches, doves, crows, grackles, snipe, flickers, catbirds, phoebes, nuthatches, hawks, and more.



for signs of vigorousness in a mate, proof he can hold the territory for her — the brighter the epaulets the healthier the male.

An iridescent bird swoops low in front of us. “That’s a barn swallow and it is fabulous,” says Rubega. “Everybody who does not care for bugs in their eyes and ears should be fans of swallows.”

We are moving toward the barns and the Horsebarn Hill Arena parking lot, because a few days prior I had seen what I thought was a kildeer on the tarmac there and a bluebird on the telephone wires nearby. Neither would be unusual, says Rubega. Why would a kildeer crouch at the curb of a parking lot that’s surrounded by grassy fields? It likes ground that’s sufficiently disturbed, says Rubega. This plover species has bold black neck bands that serve as what is called disruptive coloration, a trait that breaks up an animal’s coloring so that a predator’s eye doesn’t perceive it as an actual animal. “So they don’t dislike edges of paving or places that used to be paved and are now all broken up.”

Though she confirms the ID by looking at a picture on my phone, the kildeer itself does not appear for us. Which is too bad, because it is nesting season now and kildeer are known for dramatic “broken wing displays” in which they pretend to be easy prey to lure predators away from their nests. It’s a display Rubega seeks out to show appreciative students.

Meanwhile, however, an accommodating bluebird has landed on a telephone wire just above us. Amid describing the “exceedingly pleasing nature” of the bird’s red and blue hues, Rubega interrupts herself with an exclamation of “Oh, look — pigeons!” She follows this with a laugh and then a serious declaration: “People should not disdain pigeons. Pigeons are a fine example of what I mean when I say birds are everywhere. People overlook them because they’re common, but there are always really interesting things going on in the bird world and even pigeons are fascinating.”

**Mirror Lake is rich bird habitat any time of day, any time of year, says Rubega. In addition to the phoebe, mallard, cedar waxwing, goldfinch, and great blue heron shown here, a quick lunchtime stroll can turn up black-capped chickadees, nuthatches, tufted titmice, egrets, herons, all manner of ducks, geese, or gulls, and even a passing-through osprey.**

For instance, “they are not just sitting on the building, they can hear it,” says Rubega of the flock that has just landed on a silo.

Pigeons hear infrasound, too low-pitched for humans to hear (the opposite of high-pitched ultrasound), and that includes the sound of air hitting buildings. These wayfinding superheroes also use magnetic fields and celestial landmarks like stars to navigate. And, like all birds, they have extra cones in their retinas so they see colors that humans cannot.

“People look at the sky and try to imagine themselves as a bird, right” says Rubega. “You imagine birds seeing the world the way you would if you were up there. They are completely *not* experiencing the world the way you are; the world looks completely different to them.” Rubega pauses, then lets her binoculars drop and says, “If you want to contemplate your existence, to just come down here and look at pigeons would be enough. But UConn is blessed with so many good bird spots.”

This is a direct result, she says, of getting its start as a land grant University. There remain swaths of grassland habitat and open space you might otherwise not have. As she says this, we are walking toward the cow barns with fields full of starlings and grackles to our left and barns alive with house sparrows and barn swallows to our right. There’s a nesting box along the fenceline here that’s home to a family of kestrels, smallish hawks. The University lets a local enthusiast install boxes for the endangered bird.

## “For a student to come out here and see an enormous woodpecker with a bright red head? It blows their mind because it’s not somewhere else. It’s right here!”

“Kestrels are a pretty good farm bird,” says Rubega, “They eat nothing except for small rodents and insects — and what else could a farmer possibly want a bird to do?”

She spies one atop the tallest branch of the tallest tree in the field, just below the ridgeline “just sitting up there waiting for a mouse or a big juicy grasshopper to go by.” Before we’ve had a chance to train our binoculars on the kestrel, Rubega turns our attention further skyward. “And here comes a great blue; he’s big and molting — see the break in the wing,” she says of a great blue heron who looks like little more than a far-off silhouette to our untrained eyes.

### Mirror Lake

The heron may well have been on its way to or from Mirror Lake, where you can often see them statue-still amid the cattails, oblivious to the the cruising mallard ducks, patiently waiting to spear a trout or carp.

A successful reclamation project that included digging out invasive plants and adding fountains for aeration has brought the cattails back and, along with them, some beautiful birds and insects. “It provides a really nice band of habitat for the sort of things that need a little bit of vegetative intensity to build a nest and not be right out where predators can see them.” This includes red-

winged blackbirds, sweet-singing Carolina wrens, and of course ducks.

“This is a very birdy place. Mirror Lake is well worth a circuit at any given time,” says Rubega, watching a duck preen. “Ducks spend a good deal of their day preening to stay waterproof. Birds are always dry, even though they’re touching the water, they’re dry. If you see a water bird that’s wet it’s about to be dead,” she says in the matter-of-fact way of a scientist.

Elegant gray-and-white birds are performing aerial gymnastics above the lake as we talk about ducks. They are phoebes catching bugs right off the surface of the lake, Rubega tells us, pointing out “a pile of them” in a tree behind us. These are juveniles trying to get fed, she says. “Listen. It’s ‘feed me-feed me-feed me.’ Not unlike college students, they’re trying to extract as many resources from their parents as they can before they get kicked to the curb for good. It’s a stable phenomenon in the animal world.”

Just then we get a glimpse of a bird that makes everything else we’ve seen, even the bluebird, pale in comparison. “That is a beautiful cedar waxwing,” says Rubega. “They are the most incredible looking birds. They are so freaking gorgeous.” Indeed the red, yellow, and green colors and the Zorro-style eye mask are stunning. “The subtlety of their color scheme, if you could reproduce that in textiles you would be so rich,” says Rubega.

Incredibly, this bird is not uncommon and is here year-round. “They’re an excellent example of the kind of bird that once you get

students to actually look at the bird, they get an eyeful, put down their binoculars, and say, “That bird was *not* here all along.’ But, yes, it is *that* fancy and, yes, it has been here your whole life!”

The first year Rubega did the Twitter assignment, a student turned in what is perhaps still her favorite post: “Holden Caulfield once asked where the ducks go in winter and never really got his answer. He should have walked by Mirror Lake at UConn today.”

“I looked at that and said to myself, ‘There it is — a liberal arts education in 140 characters,’” she says.

## The Platforms

It is another early morning for civilians and we are traipsing through knee-high grass and weeds, serious tick territory, behind Discovery Drive. This is no barrier to Rubega’s birding. “Get some tickproof clothing and get out there,” she says. “There are plenty of hazards to staying indoors!”

This territory is much less daunting at other times of year, but even now in early summer our trek proves worthwhile when we come to the first of two wooden platforms built over wetlands and see, within seconds, a pileated woodpecker. This is the real-life Woody Woodpecker, enormous and brilliant.

“I think the pileateds are very exciting,” says Rubega. “My students were beside themselves when we came out here and there was a pair of them actively courting — displaying and calling.”

These are the moments Rubega hopes will jostle students out of what she calls “the BBC effect.”

While television has gotten people excited about wildlife, Rubega believes that the proliferation of animal shows has had a negative impact as well. “People love to watch the type of show with the British announcer intoning while the eagle takes down some big piece of prey and it does create interest in wildlife,” says Rubega. “But it also gives people the idea that natural history is taking place somewhere else, in some exotic place not near you. So for a student who goes back and forth from classes all day to come out to a place like this and see an enormous woodpecker with a bright red head and this spectacular black-and-white pattern on its body drilling big holes in a tree? It blows their mind because it’s not somewhere else. It’s right here!”

## The Loop: W Lot and the Cemetery

A short walk from the W Parking Lot we’re ensconced in woods and the baritone sounds of bullfrogs. Rubega often takes students on a loop that begins here and winds behind Charter Oak Apartments, past the cemetery and back to the lot. We’ve been stalking what turns out to be a wild turkey with two chicks. Two doesn’t seem like much of a brood.

There’s a lot of mortality in the early life of chicks, says Rubega, in part due to the number of feral and nonferal cats here. It’s a sore subject for this ornithologist, who says that nonferal cats in Connecticut are decimating bird populations. And do not make the mistake of suggesting that it’s a natural process.

“People argue that the cat is a natural predator. No. A natural predator is one who, when it eats too many of the prey base, its population naturally gets cut back because there’s not enough food to go around. So there’s a built-in control valve to keep the predator from driving the prey all the way to extinction. When

your cat goes out and kills 10 birds a week and then comes home and gets fed an artificial diet and gets taken to the vet, there’s no control valve. If I were Emperor of the World, I’m not sure there would be housecats, but there certainly wouldn’t be any outdoors.”

We are at the edge of the woods now and bird noises are plentiful. Birders seek edges because it’s easier to see birds where habitat changes. Right now Rubega says she can make out the sounds of crows, blue jays (“the rusty hinge”), mourning doves, catbirds, redwings, chipping sparrows, a distant northern flicker, catbirds, downy woodpeckers, a red-bellied woodpecker, and, far in the distance, robins.

A nearby bird seems to be making a number of sounds in a row.

“That would be a mockingbird,” says Rubega. Every semester she lectures about mimicry in birds and mockingbirds are excellent mimics. She tells us about a lecture in which she talked about hearing a mockingbird that was on territory in a campus parking lot. The bird had car alarms and cell phone tones in its repertoire. “The whole point for a male mockingbird is to pick up every novel sound that it can because female mockingbirds find novelty and size of repertoire sexy.”

One of her students was so taken with this information that as soon as class was over, he went down to the lot and tested a theory.

“Within an hour and half of class he had posted: ‘Taught a mockingbird the Jet Whistle in around 8 minutes.’ He stood in the parking lot making “the Jet Whistle” until the bird started making it back to him.

A student I had not given an assignment to went and did an experiment on his own and then reported it to the world at large — in his own backyard!

And I said to myself, ‘My work here is done.’” ☺



**Margaret Rubega, here with starlings in the Biodiversity Research Collections Room, is an associate professor and the curator of ornithology in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. She also is the Connecticut State Ornithologist.**

For more on Margaret, the birds of Storrs, and an incredible starling story, go to [s.uconn.edu/birds](http://s.uconn.edu/birds). Want to join fellow alumni and associate professor Morgan Tingley in May 2018 for a “Birding in the foothills of the Himalayas” trip? Find out more at [uconnalumni.com/birding](http://uconnalumni.com/birding).





# A CUBAN EXCHANGE

By Amy Sutherland

*When Tania Huedo-Medina, associate professor of biostatistics (below in UConn shirt), went to Cuba for the first time in November 2015 she had one goal — to study the island nation's well-respected public health system. That quickly proved to be a more challenging undertaking than she expected. Still, during multiple visits over the next two years — documented in these photos taken by her and her team — Huedo-Medina and others from the UConn research community have forged relationships with Cuban health workers that promise to improve data collection and overall healthcare in both countries.*



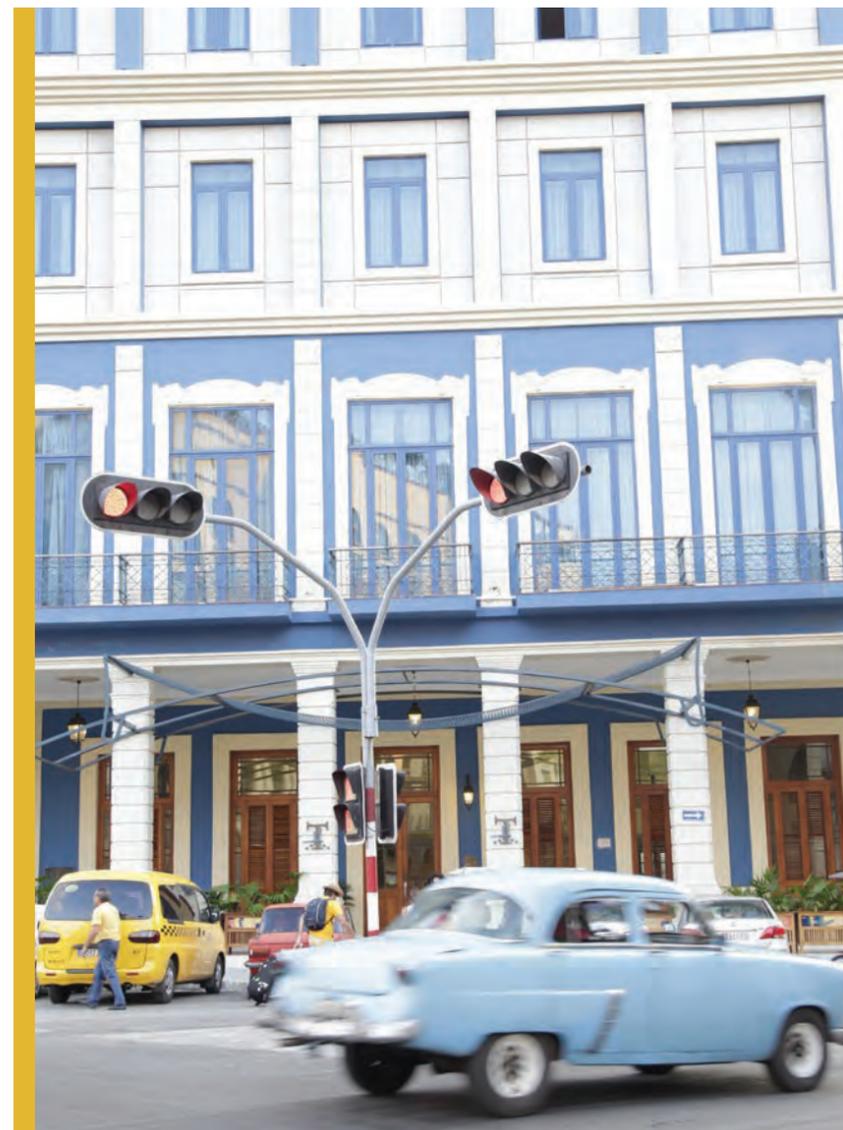


### Connections

*During her first visits to Cuba, Huedo-Medina spent much of her time forging connections. The longtime rocky relationship between Cuba and the U.S. presented a challenge in that arena. The decades-old U.S. embargo of the country made some Cubans understandably uneasy about working with a U.S. institution. People were friendly, though, and Cuban academics and researchers got the necessary permissions from higher-ups in their organizations to work with her and the UConn team. A shared desire for finding and communicating better preventive health care strategies put them on the same page.*

### Door To Door

*Huedo-Medina's persistence slowly began to pay off. She finally got a first-hand look at how Cuban health care workers knew so much about the country's citizens when she was invited to go door to door with them in Vedado, a middle-class neighborhood in Havana. Health workers routinely visit Cubans in their homes to gather information and address any medical concerns they have, a practice that seems unthinkable in the comparatively privacy-obsessed U.S., she says. But in Cuba, as Huedo-Medina saw, people readily open their doors to doctors and answer all of their questions.*



### Collaboration

*During each visit, Huedo-Medina connected with more Cubans and recognized more opportunities for other UConn faculty to get involved. Last spring, she and a team from UConn met with Cuban scientists in Havana. They brainstormed collaborative research projects around the modeling of data for efficient health policies and promotions. One project they hope to get under way soon involves the prevention of alcohol and tobacco abuse. ☺*

Go to [s.uconn.edu/cuba](http://s.uconn.edu/cuba) to watch a Science in Seconds video about UConn's work in Cuba and to see more photos from Huedo-Medina and her team.





University of Connecticut Archives

### Alumni Day Then and Now

For information on this year's Huskies Forever Weekend Oct. 20-22, visit [uconnalumni.com/events](http://uconnalumni.com/events).

In 1946, students and alums spent Alumni Day lounging in the sun on the hills and bleachers surrounding the UConn baseball diamond to root on their team. Today, Huskies Forever Weekend is the closest event UConn has to this old tradition. While the Homecoming football game still brings students old and new together for a day in the sun, this Husky Pride celebration is now a three-day event. Over the years, alumni have come from as far as Hawaii and Israel to reconnect with old roommates over Then and Now tours around campus and wine and beer tastings from alum-owned vineyards and breweries. There are events centered around 40th and 50th reunion celebrations, but also a number of happenings, such as a 5K race, that invite all alums to join the fun. —EMMA CASAGRANDE '18 (CLAS)

#### CLASS NOTES

1950s

➔ **Roland Boucher '54 (ENG)**, who bought his first plane in 1952 when he was still a sophomore at UConn, reports that he is still flying and is now a retired engineering manager in Irvine, Calif. After college, he

earned a master's degree at Yale University, then worked for Hughes Aircraft Co. in Culver City, Calif., where he designed satellites for communication, navigation, and weather observation. After leaving Hughes in 1973, he obtained a patent for an electric-powered aircraft and developed both the first electric-powered battlefield drone aircraft and the first high-altitude, solar-powered, electric aircraft. A fan of the study of ancient

civilizations, he recently presented an article he wrote on the use of the pendulum in the creation of a number of measurements during the Aerospace Systems and Technology Conference.

1960s

➔ **David S. Salsburg '67 Ph.D.**, recently released a new book, *Errors, Blunders,*

*and Lies: How to Tell the Difference*, the first in a planned series on statistical reasoning in science and society, sponsored by the American Statistical Association. Salsburg shares that upon graduation, "I was the first statistician hired by Pfizer, Inc., and was involved in the development of new drugs for almost 30 years. Before that, I taught at the University of Pennsylvania and, while at Pfizer, taught courses at the University of

Connecticut and Connecticut College. Since retiring, I have taught at the Harvard School of Public Health and have been an adjunct professor at Yale. My book on the history of statistics, *The Lady Tasting Tea: How Statistics Revolutionized Science in the Twentieth Century*, has been widely used as a supplemental text in high school and college statistics courses." ➔ **Perry Zirkel '68 MA, '72 Ph.D., '76 JD**, professor emeritus of education and law at Lehigh University, was honored with the 2016 Steven S. Goldberg Award for Distinguished Scholarship in Education Law, given by the Education Law Association. Zirkel's research currently focuses on empirical and practical studies of special education law, with secondary attention to more general education law and labor arbitration issues.

➔ **Bill DeWalt '69 (CLAS), '76 Ph.D.** was named chair of board of trustees of the Pennsylvania chapter of the Nature Conservancy. During his long and distinguished academic career, DeWalt authored or coauthored many books and articles about the relationship between humans and natural resources, advised many Ph.D. students, and won teaching and research awards at the University of Kentucky and University of Pittsburgh. He served as director of the renowned Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, where he was also Distinguished Service Professor of Public and International Affairs. He then became director of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History and, in 2007, he was founding president and director of the new \$250 million Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, Arizona. In 2014, he became executive vice president and museum director of the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the United States Senate in

Boston. Now retired, he lives in Fox Chapel, Pa.

1970s

➔ **Ed Nusbaum '70 (CLAS)**, of Weston, Conn., has been selected an America's Top 100 Attorneys Lifetime Achievement member for Connecticut. Less than one-half of a percent of active attorneys in the United States will receive this honor. He is principal and co-founder of Nusbaum & Parrino P.C., a family law firm based in Westport, Conn. ➔ **Steve Maguire '75 (CLAS), '76 MA**, has just released a Vietnam War novel, *Mekong Meridian*. Much of the story is drawn from Maguire's experience as an Airborne-Ranger Infantry officer with the 9th Division in 1969. ➔ **Tom Morganti '76 (CAHNR)**, a veterinarian living and working in Avon, Conn., has just published a first novel, *Totenkopf*, a thriller set in Germany in the final days of WWII. ➔ **Richard Boch '76 (CLAS)**, who was the bouncer at the notorious Mudd Club, a new-wave club in New York's Greenwich Village during the late '70s, reports that his memoir on the club was published this summer. The book, *The Mudd Club*, describes his life two years after graduating from UConn when he lived in Greenwich Village and worked at the door of the famous club with its eclectic core of regulars, including Johnny Rotten, Frank Zappa, Talking Heads, and John Belushi. The ultra-hip club attracted no wave and post-punk artists, along with musicians, filmmakers, and writers. ➔ Robinson+Cole lawyer **Dennis C. Cavanaugh '78 (CLAS)** has been named the Best Lawyers 2017 "Lawyer of the Year" in Connecticut for construction law. He is a member of the firm's

construction group, where he focuses his practice on construction and surety law, including transactional work and litigation. He has more than 35 years of experience handling complex construction matters involving contract procurement, negotiation, financing, and commercial-related dispute resolution and litigation.

1980s

➔ **Susie Bisulca Beam '80 (CLAS)** wrote a book, *He's Not My Husband*, published by Xlibris Publishing. ➔ Everyone in the Myers family is a Husky through and through. **Peggy (Walsh) Myers '86 (CLAS)** played on the women's basketball team, and her husband, **Norm Myers, 1985 (CLAS)**, was a football player at UConn. Their daughter, **Kelly Myers '15 (CLAS)**, who earned her undergraduate degree in psychology and

is earning her master's in school counseling, was on the UConn track and field team. Their son, **Tommy Myers '17 (CLAS)**, graduated with a communication degree and is currently on the football team. He plans to earn his master's in sports management. ➔ **Pamela Hackbart-Dean '87 MA**, director of the Special Collections Research Center at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, was inducted as a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) during a ceremony at the SAA annual meeting in Portland, Ore., in July. The distinction of Fellow is the highest honor bestowed on individuals by the SAA and is awarded for outstanding contributions to the archives profession. Hackbart-Dean, who earned a master's degree in history and archival management at UConn, was nominated for distinguishing herself as a thoughtful leader and a skilled teacher. ➔ **Marikate Murren '89 (CLAS), '96 MA** was recently named vice



Peter Morenus

#### OFF CAMPUS

### Jonathan's new vets are married alums

Veterinarians Heidi (Claus) Morey '05 and Scott Morey '06 (both CAHNR) examine Jonathan XIV at their Fenton River Veterinary Hospital in Tolland.

For more, visit [s.uconn.edu/vets](http://s.uconn.edu/vets).



Peter Morenus

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## HANS RYNHART '93 (CAHNR)

With a slight crane of the neck, peering from the corner of UConn Police Chief Hans Rynhart's second-floor office window affords a sliver of a view of an empty lot atop King Hill Road, bounded by vegetation and parking spots.

Generations of UConn students came and went over the decades as renters in a two-story red house that once stood — or, some would say, tottered — on that lot. Its unbeatable location and the warmth of roommate friendships easily compensated for its grungy floors, bare-bones kitchen, and the broken door, whose missing lock allowed genial strangers to wander in for a bathroom break after closing time at the nearby bars.

Among those renters: Rynhart, a quiet but com-

panionable undergrad whose engineering aspirations had given way to an interest in natural resources management. He never imagined that more than two decades later, his admiration for law enforcement would lead him to the top spot at the UConn Police Department, which he'd walked past regularly as a student heading to and from his modest digs.

Rynhart '93 (CAHNR) was named to UConn's top police job in January after serving in the interim role for seven months. He is also interim director of public safety, a position in which he also oversees the UConn Fire Department, Office of Emergency Management, and the Fire Marshal & Building Inspector's Office.

"Coming to UConn has

been one of the best returns on investment I've ever made in terms of the education I received as a student and the opportunities I've been able to pursue in the police department," Rynhart says.

### In the dorms

A Woodstock native, Rynhart spent his freshman year at Johnson State College in Vermont before transferring to UConn and moving into Goodyear Hall, where some of his closest friendships were forged over the family-style dinners that were served there before meals were consolidated into the Northwest complex's main dining hall.

Bryan Busch '93 (ENG), '98 MS, who remains one of his close friends, says the Hans who wears the chief's badge today is the same ear-

**UConn Police Chief Hans Rynhart at Wilbur Cross just before the start of the fall semester.**

nest and honest person he met at Goodyear and with whom he later roomed in New London Hall and that memorable red house on King Hill Road.

"The best way I can describe Hans is that he's a stand-up guy. He has your back as a friend, and he has integrity in his work and his life," Busch says.

Part of that work included several summers with the agency now known as the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. That's where his respect for law enforcement transformed into admiration — and the start of a career aspiration — as he worked closely with officers in the state's Environmental Conservation (EnCon) Police.

Rynhart worked as an environmental analyst in Vermont and Connecticut after college until 1998, when he decided to pursue his law enforcement ambitions. He was hired at the Department of Motor Vehicles and went through the Connecticut Police Academy, working as a vehicle safety inspector until he applied for a UConn police job at the encouragement of a DMV supervisor who recognized his potential.

From his first few days on the job in June 2001, the UConn Police Department has felt like home.

### Undercover

Rynhart's familiarity with the campuses and the ease with which he interacts with others has benefited UConn time and time again — including a 2002 undercover stint when he posed as a graduate student as part of a team of officers who apprehended 13 people who were using and selling heroin and other drugs

on campus.

Rynhart was so laid back that the students he was investigating assumed he was an amiable stoner and welcomed him into their fold — and to this day, colleagues never tire of teasing him about the long hair, scraggly goatee, and ratty clothes that made him appear so convincing, even as he counted down the days until a return to his clean-cut self.

### Unruffled

His talent helped him move quickly up the ranks over the coming years, earning him a spot in the FBI National Academy professional development program in Quantico, Virginia, in 2009, and he eventually became second in command at the police department in 2011. He later was appointed deputy chief, and held that job until his interim appointment as chief in May 2016.

"The people I've worked for at UConn have always looked toward the future and considered how to bring people along to cultivate the next generation of leaders. I consider that to be a very important part of this job, too," Rynhart says.

He jokes in his self-deprecating style that he's not the best at anything — not the

best shooter in the department, not the fastest runner, he says — but, "if there's one thing I believe I am good at, it's putting people in the right positions to succeed, not only for themselves but also for the organization and the community we serve."

Even through the hardest days — notifying parents of their children's unexpected deaths, manning the front lines during Spring Weekends, training to guard against acts of terrorism — Rynhart is consistently calm, rational, and unfailingly reliable in the eyes of those who depend on him and his public safety personnel for the safety of the campuses.

"Police work on a college campus requires a special set of skills and sensitivity, and Hans has always had the ability to build those kinds of trusting relationships throughout the UConn community," President Susan Herbst says. "His UConn roots run deep, and we're incredibly fortunate and grateful to have him here."

Several people who work with Rynhart say that even in the midst of stressful situations, his demeanor is calm and authoritative. He jokes that he is like the proverbial

duck who appears placid on the surface while paddling madly out of sight below the water — but it's his gravitas that stays with those who meet him.

"Even as a student in my classes, he was steady and he had a presence. He stood out as a solid individual, and that is the same kind of person he is today," says John "Jack" Clausen, a professor in the UConn Department of Natural Resources and the Environment.

"At one point when he was the police department's spokesperson, I saw him on TV one night and said, 'Oh, wow, he's doing an amazing job — he's so composed and well spoken.' At that particular moment, I had a feeling of pride that he came through our program."

### All Blue

Those who know Rynhart say that off duty, you're most likely to find him spending time with his 15-year-old daughter Emma, 13-year-old son Hans, and his wife, first-grade teacher Beth (Swenson) Rynhart '95 (CLAS), who he met in the Homer Babbidge Library when both were UConn students. He's also likely to be working on

renovations to their 1840s-era house or barn, or tinkering with an engine, or seeking out bargains to appease his frugal nature.

He certainly won't be idle. In fact, these days, you're certain to find him with textbooks and meticulous notes from the classes he's taking to earn his master's degree in human resource management at the UConn School of Business. Like his other endeavors, he's jumped in wholeheartedly.

"Being a student again, I'm taking it all in like a sponge," he says.

And while he's come a long way from his undergraduate days in that ramshackle red house on King Hill Road, Rynhart is still the person who impressed his professors with his maturity, cultivated countless friends with his sincerity, and jumped at the chance to serve the alma mater he loves.

"UConn has given me a chance to be part of something that makes a positive difference and has lasting meaning," Rynhart says. "The police department and the UConn community as a whole fit really well with who I am as a person, and I'm grateful for the opportunities I have here."

—STEPHANIE REITZ

FIRST JOBS

### Walk This Way

Maggie Quackenbush '17 (BUS) jumped at the offer of a job at Sony Music as an opportunity to leverage her degree in management information systems. And if the members of her favorite bands, Aerosmith or AC/DC, happen to walk through the doors of the Manhattan record company, that will be a bonus.

"I'm very excited to be joining Sony Music," says Quackenbush. "I enjoy constantly learning new things, and I think that's what is great about the music business. There are always new genres, new artists, and new ways of producing music."

Sony Music, the world's third-largest "record" company, just launched a two-year rotational program for recent graduates interested in information systems and technology, and Quackenbush is one of the first two accepted. She expects to be working in the Manhattan and New Jersey offices for 18 months, before spending six months abroad, most likely in Munich. —CLAIRE HALL



Photo courtesy of Maggie Quackenbush



KUDOS



Courtesy of UConn Athletics, Peter Morenus

Rowe, left, coaching a '77 game against UMass and, above, in August in the Gampel office he still works from at age 88. The photo shows 1980 Team U.S.A. with Rowe as assistant coach and Dave Gavitt as coach. Though the team boycotted the Moscow Olympics after Russia invaded Afghanistan, they played a number of exhibition games against NBA players and others.

## ROWE GETS TOP HALL OF FAME HONOR

The thing about Dee Rowe, this man who long ago became a sort of living legend both at the University of Connecticut and in the larger world of college basketball, is that if you played for him for one day or for eight seasons, you became one of his guys forever.

I found that out one night in my senior year at Brown. There he was in the locker room after a game, there to say hello, there to give me a hug, there to symbolically say that I was still one of his guys, even if I had only played one year for him at Worcester Academy, and it had not been the easiest year for me.

Is there any better message a coach can send, any better message anyone can send? This is Rowe's great gift, always has been his great gift, this ability to stay connected to people, whether it's a note, a phone call, a drop-in at their son or daughter's junior high basketball game.

### Hero

Just after this magazine goes to press in September, Rowe will be awarded

the prestigious John W. Bunn Lifetime Achievement Award by the Basketball Hall of Fame. The news delighted many.

"He was a surrogate father figure," says Tony Hanson, a standout player for Rowe's Huskies from 1973 to 1977. "He was one of the first people who opened up my eyes, who told me there was a bigger world out there beyond basketball, who promised me that he would make sure I graduated."

He pauses for a second.

"He wouldn't let me get away. He's a hero to me."

"Dee Rowe is the greatest ambassador the state of Connecticut has ever had," says Tim Tolokan, former UConn associate athletic director. "There's no one else like him, not even close. This is his 49th year at UConn, and his legacy goes way beyond basketball. He's got an amazing ability to relate to people.

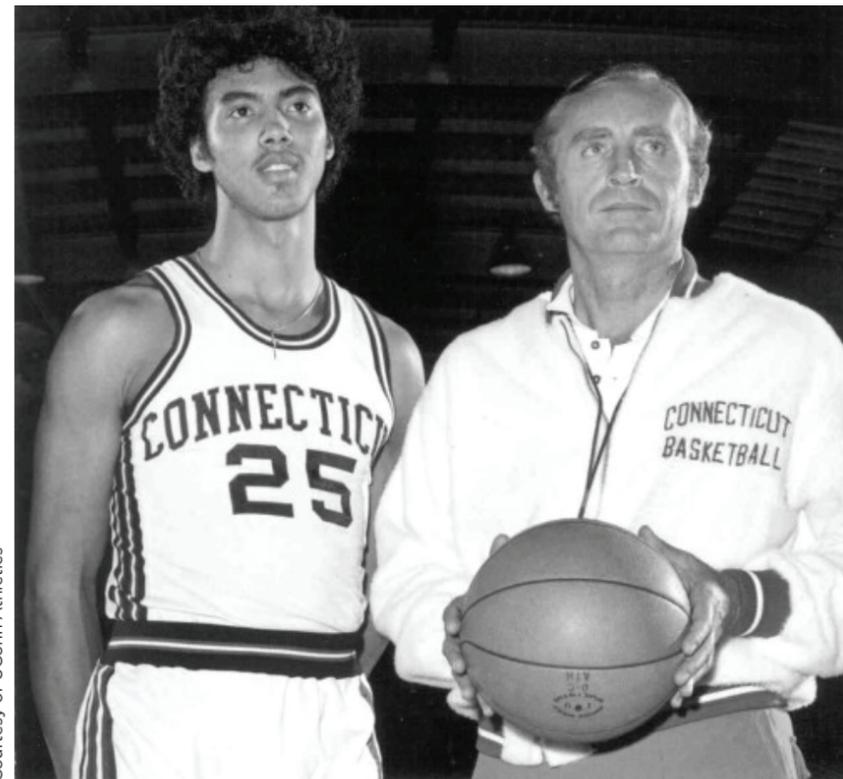
"And Jim Calhoun and Geno Auriemma? I don't think they would have been here without Dee Rowe. Because without Dee and his close relationship with Dave

Gavitt [founder of the Big East conference], you can make a case that we might not have gotten into the Big East in the first place. And without that everything turns out differently."

### Ambassador

Calhoun recognizes the breadth and depth of Rowe's accomplishments: "Coach Dee Rowe is a true basketball lifer. Dee's world has always been, and will continue to be, about family and the game of basketball. In his own special New England region of Worcester, the Cape Cod area, and UConn, Dee Rowe has always been the ultimate ambassador. Through the years, Dee has expanded his impact and influence nationally and around the globe as a superb teacher and mentor. But above all, we continue to pay him the highest honor by calling him 'Coach'."

Dee Rowe loves to say that he was "captured by the game" in the third grade of his Worcester childhood. He coached the Huskies from 1969 to 1977 and at age 88, he is still on the roster, still goes to his



Courtesy of UConn Athletics

Tony Hanson played for Rowe from 1973 to 1977 and calls him a "father figure" and a "hero." Hanson will be one of the speakers at the "Donald 'Dee' Rowe: Celebrating a UConn Legend" event in Hartford at The Bushnell on October 20 at 8 p.m.

office at Gampel, and often attends men's and women's basketball practices.

### Legend

Those of us to whom he has passed on the love of the game discovered there is justice in the basketball world when Rowe was named to receive the prestigious Hall of Fame award.

Just how big an honor is this?

Past winners include John Wooden, Red Auerbach, Bob Cousy, Dave Gavitt, Pat Summitt, and the Harlem Globetrotters. That's how big.

And I know this: it's well deserved. The innumerable people he's coached, the legions of people he's mentored, the people he's tutored at all levels of the game, and the countless people he's touched in his life outside basketball would surely agree.

Coach Auriemma recently expressed his gratitude to Dee, his recognition of Dee's continuing contribution to UConn, and his belief that even this award isn't quite big enough for the likes of Dee Rowe.

"There is no award existing today or that could be created that is going to do justice to what Dee has meant to the

countless people he has touched in his life and what he has meant to his family and the game of basketball; but the John Bunn Award comes close.

"Dee is a man who I admire as much as anyone and he has been a tremendous ambassador of the game and of UConn for as long as I can remember. He has supported me since I arrived on campus as a young coach 32 years ago and he is still there for me now. I will be forever grateful for his guidance and I am thrilled that he is being recognized with this prestigious award. I know he is very proud and we are proud that he is ours," said Auriemma. —BILL REYNOLDS, A COLUMNIST AT THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL, IS WRITING A BOOK ABOUT ROWE.

UConn honors Rowe's award on Friday, October 20, in Hartford at The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts at 8 p.m. Speakers include Auriemma, Calhoun, and Hanson, as well as emcee Bill Rafferty of CBS Sports, UConn men's coach and former player Kevin Ollie, former players Dom Perno, Bob Staak, Robert "Snake" Taylor, and former Big East commissioner Mike Tranchese. For more information and tickets, visit [s.uconn.edu/roweevent](http://s.uconn.edu/roweevent).

president of human resources at MGM Springfield in Springfield, Mass., which is due to open in September 2017. ➔ Attorney **Michael I. Flores '89 (CLAS)**, of Orleans, Mass., was elected president of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, Massachusetts Chapter, for a two-year term starting in September. The national organization has about 1,200 of the most distinguished divorce and family law attorneys in the United States.



➔ **Vladimir Coric, MD '92 (CLAS)** rang the opening bell of the New York Stock Exchange on May 9, 2017, after the company he founded, Biohaven Pharmaceutical Holding Company Ltd., went public. He reports that Biohaven raised \$195 million in its IPO and was the largest biotech IPO at the time. ➔ **Jennifer Kaysen Rogers '93 MA** was promoted to associate director of employer relations at the University of St. Thomas Career Development Center in St. Paul, Minn.

➔ **Leighangela (Byer) Brady '94 (Neag) '95 MA** was selected as superintendent of the National School District in San Diego, Calif., starting in the 2016-'17 school year. ➔ **Rob Carolla '94 (CLAS)** was named president of the College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) for the 2017-'18 academic year at the organization's annual convention in Orlando. CoSIDA is a 3,000-plus-member association for college athletics communications professionals. Carolla had served as an officer there for the past three years. ➔

**William Rice '94 (ENG)** has been appointed assistant executive director for schools and curriculum at Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES), a regional educational service center in New Haven, Conn. He oversees ACES schools and programs and works closely with ACES administrators and teachers to support innovative learning initiatives. Prior to ACES, Rice was the director of mathematics for Hartford Public Schools.

➔ **Jasmine Alcantara '95 (CLAS), '99 MBA**, owner of JLA Group, was awarded the 2017 U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce

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Submissions may be edited for clarity or length.

Innovation & Performance Award at the National Small Business Federal Contracting Summit in Washington, D.C., on March 30, 2017.

This prestigious award recognizes female small business owners who exhibit outstanding innovation and/or performance on a key contract that will significantly bolster their ability to secure future opportunities.

JLA Group provides a wide range of consulting and advisory services — such as strategic planning and communications, project management, change and performance measurement, acquisition strategy and execution, and proposal and grant development — to government clients and commercial industries.

➔ **Stefanie (Pratola) Ferreri '97 (PHARM)** was recently promoted to clinical professor at the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy in Chapel Hill, N.C. She is also the current president of the North Carolina Association of

Pharmacists and recently received the National Community Pharmacists Association Leadership Award. She lives in Durham, N.C., with her husband, **Eric Ferreri '95**, and their 9-year-old twins.

➔ **John O'Hara '97 MBA** has joined ProHealth Physicians in Farmington, Conn., as a finance director. Previously, he had been director of Medicaid financial and business performance at Tufts Health Plan in Watertown, Mass. ➔ **Lynn M. Patarini, BGS '97**, released her fifth novel, *Uncle Neddy's Funeral*, in May under the pseudonym L.M. Pampuro. ➔ **Aimée Allaire '98 (CLAS)** reports that she recently passed the halfway mark of an intensive study on the importance of motherhood in the modern world. Her work has been indirectly sponsored by various Connecticut companies, including UTC Power and, currently, Bauer, Inc., in Bristol. She lives in Mystic with her husband, **Keith Brainard '98 (ENG)**, and their four children. ➔ **Steven R. Jenkins, CPA, '99 JD, '12 MBA, '15 MA** has been appointed as a trustee to the Connecticut Laborers' Pension, Health, and Annuity Funds. He is general counsel and compliance director for regional construction firm Manafort Brothers Inc., headquartered in Plainville, Conn.



➔ **Michael Boecherer '00 (CLAS), '02 MA** and his wife, Victoria, welcomed Nora Johnston Boecherer

in June 2017. Baby Nora weighed in at 6 lbs., 6 oz. and measured 17 1/2 inches long. Mom and baby are both healthy, and Papa is happy to be outnumbered two to one.

➔ **Kate Moran Connolly '03 (CAHNR)** is a physician's assistant in the Burn Unit at Bridgeport Hospital. After graduating from UConn, she worked as a registered dietician at Bridgeport Hospital for several years. She earned her master's in physician assistant studies at Philadelphia University in 2010, recently became a mother, and just spent a year as Bridgeport Hospital's Employee of the Year. ➔ **Niamh (Cunningham) Emerson '06 (CLAS)** recently joined the Yale School of Nursing advancement team as associate director of development and alumnae affairs. She was most recently employed in Yale University's Office of the Secretary as assistant secretary for corporation affairs, where she was responsible for the logistics of all aspects of Yale Corporation (board of trustees) and University Council meetings and was the staff liaison for the Corporation Honorary Degrees Committee.

➔ **Dr. Ryan Denley '06 (CAHNR)** graduated from the School of Allied Health with a BS in diagnostic genetic sciences in 2006. He worked as a cytogenetic technologist for five years after graduation, then graduated from the New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2015. He married Dr. AnnaMaria Arias in May 2016 and, most recently, was selected

chief resident of internal medicine at Morristown Medical Center in N.J. Upon completion of his residency, he intends to pursue a fellowship in hematology/oncology. ➔ **Jesse M. Krist '08 (CLAS)** and **Kimberley A. Sadowski '09 (BUS)** celebrated their one-year wedding anniversary in April. They were married in Siena, Italy, in April 2016. ➔ **Alphie Aiken '08 MBA** was honored at the Women in Business Summit on April 21, 2017. She is president of Junior Achievement Jamaica and previously spent 15 years at General Electric Co. Most recently, she was an eBusiness Leader, overseeing \$600 million in online sales annually. She has led the GE Women's Network for Greater Hartford, as well as the GE African American Forum in the Northeast.



➔ **Kerry (Coffey) Welton '10 (CLAS)** and **Jeffrey Welton '08 (BUS)** are proud to announce the birth of their daughter, Madeline Dina, in March 2017. "Born a Husky fan!" say her parents.

➔ **Brien Buckman '12 (CLAS)** and **Alicia (Kruzansky) Buckman '12 (CLAS)** were married Nov. 20, 2016, in West Hartford, Conn. They now live in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. ➔ **Nicole Lavoie '12 (ENG)** and **Jordan Smith '12 (ENG)** were married June 4, 2017, in Bolton, Conn. surrounded by a large group of UConn friends.



Courtesy of Olivia Balsinger

**JOB ENVY**

At 24, **Olivia Balsinger '14 (CLAS)** has a passport with 75 nation stamps in it and a job as deputy editor and journalist for the travel website Oh the People You Meet. Her office spans the planet. She has lived in an Amazonian eco-lodge with the closest grocery store a three-and-a-half-hour canoe ride away, ridden an elephant in Thailand, rappelled down a 350-foot waterfall in Ecuador, eaten salted grasshoppers in Japan, gone on safari in the African bush, celebrated the new year in an Ethiopian village, laid under the gleaming aurora borealis in Yukon Territory, and hobnobbed with camels in the Masada Desert in Israel (above).

Balsinger credits another "Yukon" territory for her success: the University of Connecticut. Her journalism courses included Environmental Journalism with Professor Bob Wyss, a class she credits with her first "press trip" to the Florida Everglades reporting on ecological issues. She credits a job as campus tour guide for prospective students with improving her ability to ask good questions. And not one, not two, but three study-abroad opportunities gave the former homebody — who'd never flown on a plane until a ninth-grade trip to Disney World — the curiosity to travel. —*JESSE RIFKIN '14 (CLAS)*

➔ For more of our interview with Balsinger, go to [s.uconn.edu/olivia](http://s.uconn.edu/olivia).

**IN MEMORIAM**

Please visit [s.uconn.edu/octobits](http://s.uconn.edu/octobits) to find obituaries for alumni and faculty. And please share news of alumni deaths and obituaries with *UConn Magazine* by sending an email to [alumni-news@uconnalumni.com](mailto:alumni-news@uconnalumni.com) or writing to Alumni News & Notes, UConn Foundation, 2384 Alumni Drive Unit 3053, Storrs, CT 06269.

## CHALLENGE YOURSELF TO TOM'S TRIVIA!

Go to [s.uconn.edu/oct17trivia](https://s.uconn.edu/oct17trivia) to see if you know as much as King of UConn Trivia and University Deputy Spokesperson Tom Breen '00 (CLAS).

### TOM'S TRIVIA

1. UConn's school colors of National Flag blue and white were made official in 1952. What were the earliest colors known to represent the institution?  
A: Orange and white  
B: Red, white, and blue  
C: Imperial blue and white  
D: Midnight blue and white
2. The opening of the Downtown Hartford Campus this fall is the first time UConn has had an undergraduate campus in the capital city since 1970. How many previous locations have there been for the University in Hartford?  
A: One      B: Three  
C: Five      D: Six
3. UConn's Winter Weekend – a bright spot during the cold New England months on campus – began in 1979 with jugglers, an ill-advised parachute jump, and a “pajama party beerfest.” Only one activity has survived as a mainstay of campus life, though. What is it?  
A: The Senior Scoop  
B: A ski trip  
C: One-Ton Sundae  
D: Saturday basketball game
4. What non-Halloween costume tradition disappeared from University life after 40 years?  
A: UConn's president dressing once a year as the “Mayor of Storrs”  
B: A parade through campus led by someone dressed as the Pied Piper  
C: The football team and marching band swapping uniforms after the Spring Game  
D: Students dressing as the mascots of Yankee Conference rivals to mock their teams



In 1904, some 40 students – a quarter of the student body – posed in their Halloween garb.