The next time you swat away a pesky fly, picture this. Thanks in part to UConn alum Mark Smith ’13 MS, ultra-high-resolution images like this one may very well guarantee you’ll never look at anything the same way again — whether it’s the intricate eyes of a flesh fly or the otherworldly surface detail of tattooed human skin.

As co-founder of high-tech startup Macroscopic Solutions, Smith is offering an entirely new view of the world through an imaging technology called the Macropod. The device, which captures two- and three-dimensional images of items minuscule or massive in stunning detail and focus, also is portable, having been designed for scientists documenting specimens abroad or out in the field.

“You can take this anywhere,” he says. “You can set it up outside and image the night sky and shooting stars, but we’ve advanced the optics so much that we can also image objects that are as small as one micron.”

Although he once knew next to nothing about running a business, Smith — a scientist at heart who enjoyed photography as a pastime — acted upon a longstanding hunch that this kind of macrophotography technology held enormous potential for fellow researchers far and wide if it could be made easily transportable.

Smith was a geosciences graduate student at UConn when he decided to enter the University’s Innovation Quest competition, which invites aspiring student entrepreneurs to propose their ideas for commercial ventures. “I thought, ‘Why not try it?’ Let’s see how the idea takes in the world of business,” he says. “And I ended up winning it!”

With $15,000 in first-place prize money, plus business support, he launched the company in 2013, and has since been selling the Macropod to scientists worldwide — as well as donating one of the devices to high school classrooms or nonprofits for every 10 Macropods sold.

“I always had the idea that this could be a commercialized product, but never the idea that it could be a business — especially a business that I could operate,” says Smith. “Now I see that there’s a high potential in advancing science through this technology.

“There are a lot of different ways that people can spin this — ways we haven’t even thought of yet.”

View a mind-boggling photo gallery of specimens imaged by the Macropod on our new website, magazine.uconn.edu. Or, watch a video about the Macropod’s technology at s.uconn.edu/macropod.
Retired U.S. Navy Capt. Cornelius "Neil" Guinan ’89 (CLAS) recently concluded 30 years of decorated military service, which included leading several Navy SEAL teams, as well as his most recent post as Deputy Commander, Special Operations Command Europe. Guinan now serves as executive director of Camp Trident, a nonprofit camp program held in locations around the country that seeks to increase self-confidence, maturity, initiative, and teamwork skills in teenage boys.

What was your journey to the Navy SEALs like?

I joined the Marine Corps after high school, after deciding that I wasn’t quite ready for college. While stationed in Beirut with the Marines, I met some Navy SEALs — after working with them, I decided I wanted to be one. When I finished my time in the Marine Corps, I decided to go to UConn ...

I graduated in 1989 with a BA in political science and went straight into Officer Candidate School in Rhode Island, then to SEAL training.

What got you through SEAL training, and what life lessons did you take from that experience?

Perseverance and, most importantly, the desire to not let yourself, your family, or your friends down — those are the things that drove me. Also, when I went through SEAL training, I was older [at 27] than most of the candidates, so I had the benefit of many life experiences to lean on. One of the biggest lessons I learned was that your body can go much further than you think it can — if your mind will let it. SEAL training is more about mental strength than about physical strength.

Stay connected with what’s happening at UConn via our online resources at social.uconn.edu.
10 questions

How did your UConn experience impact your career?

My political science degree from UConn certainly provided me with a valuable background and understanding of geopolitics, which has been critical in all my roles. Whether in Latin America, Africa, Europe, or the Middle East, I had a much better understanding of the region as a result of my education. Even if I hadn’t studied a specific country, I had the tools to quickly get up to speed on the current geopolitical situation when I was sent there.

Additionally, the team environment we had at the UConn Rugby Club was second to none. We had one heart in that club, and we were all part of it. That same team culture, camaraderie, and attitude are very prominent in the SEAL teams as well.

After leading SEAL teams, you took on a much different role in Europe — was that a difficult transition?

During most of my tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, I would control multiple operations from a command center (and) would periodically go into the field with the troops, to stay tied in with the operators and the environment on the ground. Going to Europe was a change of role and environment; I had spent the previous 10 years in Central Command (Afghanistan and Iraq) and then had to get to know Europe. There are 51 countries under the area of responsibility of European Command, (where I was) meeting with military and civilian leaders in different European countries, trying to encourage their continued support for joint special operations forces.

So I went from a command and control combat role to political-military discussions with military and civilian leadership. I didn’t join the SEALs to work in an office, but it was an important role, and I’m proud of the work we did.

What was your motivation for starting Camp Trident?

My wife, Mia, and I believed that I had something to offer young men. I wanted to try to help kids deal with some of the challenges of growing up today. Back in the ’70s and ’80s, if you got into a little trouble, it wouldn’t necessarily ruin the rest of your life. The world is a bit harder for kids today. Camp Trident is an effort to help boys realize that they are turning into men, and to help them start to take on responsibility and become more mature. We try to help them transition from that awkward 12-year-old into a mature 17-year-old — but not necessarily take five years to get there.

What is the philosophy behind the camp’s work?

We strive to give the boys an exciting outdoor experience, away from electronics and the everyday pressures of teenage life. We do some fun, cool things while overcoming some fears — whether it’s heights or being out at night or on the water. During the process of becoming more confident in this environment, they become open to messages about being more responsible and maintaining integrity.

What do you see the kids getting out of the camp?

We hear [from parents] that the kids seem to have a much greater awareness of responsibility. Some of those who benefit most are from troubled backgrounds or single-parent homes. They get the message that it’s not mom and dad’s fault anymore. You can be whatever you want to be, but to do that you have to start taking responsibility and determining your direction.

Are there any success stories from campers?

We have had two campers who have recently been admitted to the U.S. Naval Academy, and many who were admitted to other colleges and universities. This camp is not at all about recruiting kids for the military, but about letting kids know that they can be whatever they decide to be, and building the confidence and responsibility to get there.

What are the plans for Camp Trident’s future?

We’re going through the process of becoming a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and also expanding to four separate camps — Virginia, Massachusetts, Colorado, and a fourth to be determined. The goal is to provide the opportunity to as many teenagers as possible.

What are your post-retirement plans?

I plan to home-school my three daughters [aged 6 to 11] for a year, continue to run our camps, and take time to plan the next steps in my career. There are many opportunities out there, but I’m not going to rush into anything.
I am a researcher, community leader, and global citizen. The recipient of UConn’s Nutmeg Scholarship, as well as the University’s first-ever Stamps Scholar, I have enjoyed challenging coursework ranging from physics to organic chemistry to English. Even outside the classroom, several opportunities have helped me develop as a student and thinker.

Last spring, I began working with a biomechanics professor on an ergonomic knife-handle design project in a musculoskeletal systems modeling laboratory. This coming summer, I am looking forward to conducting medical research on a certain type of thyroid cancer.

As I continue on through my undergraduate years, I am confident that I will be learning how to solve the current, complex problems in medicine and biomedical engineering in creative ways.

Beyond my focus in the sciences, technology, engineering, and math — or STEM — fields, I have also been able to develop my interest in French language and culture through a minor in French. Last summer, between my freshman and sophomore years, I spent four weeks in Toulouse, France. Through unexpected conversations at the bus stop, classes at a language school, daily trips to the boulangeries and pâtisseries, dinners with my host family, and day trips to nearby villages, I lived my childhood dream of living in France. Today, I am achieving one of my goals of traveling to France. The Stamps Scholarship’s enrichment funding made this amazing experience possible, and I cannot thank the Stamps Family Charitable Foundation enough for supporting my goals.

On campus, my sorority Phi Sigma Rho — a social sorority for women in engineering — has been a constant source of encouragement and opportunity, allowing me to grow as a leader and member of the greater UConn community. In addition to becoming involved through service projects such as teaching middle school girls about engineering, I have also been able to invest payroll into the community itself through my position on the sorority’s academic board. Encouraging my sisters in their academic endeavors in engineering has been incredibly rewarding, and, in the next year, I look forward to developing further as a leader on our executive board.

I am also incredibly grateful and fortunate that Phi Rho exposed me to HuskyTHON, a yearlong fundraising effort culminating in an 18-hour dance marathon benefiting the kids at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center. In my freshman year, I was eager to stand on my feet for 18 hours to dance for those who cannot. At HuskyTHON, I was amazed to see just how a few thousand college students can change the lives of so many families when we all come together to work for a common goal. Serving on the management team this year, I am already achieving one of my goals of using my own skills and time to help others.

As I reflect on my past four semesters here at UConn, I have come to the same conclusion that I did after my first semester: I would not be the person I am today without the generous support from my scholarships. Their value goes beyond the funding itself by providing me chances to develop my personal qualities, and I would like to pass this opportunity on to future students. After graduation, I know I will find a way to give back so that someone else can come to love UConn as much as I do.

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In the decade since Carmona’s testimony, the statistics have grown even more grim. More than one in three American adults suffers from obesity, as do nearly one in five American children. Obesity leads to osteoarthritis, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and several types of cancer. In the past 35 years, the rate of obesity among children ages 6 to 11 has more than tripled, leading Marlene Schwartz, director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at UConn, to call the trend “a national disaster.”

A PERSONAL MISSION
Schwartz should know. As the director of one the nation’s few public policy centers focused exclusively on obesity-related issues, she leads a team of researchers and policy experts dedicated to reversing the troubling trend. The Center, which in January left its longtime home at Yale and moved to Hartford to become part of the Center for Health, Intervention, and Prevention (CHIP) at UConn, differs from many scientific research centers in that its mission extends far beyond the walls of academia. The Rudd Center doesn’t just do research; it puts that research into action.

“[Articles] are written for scientific journals,” Friedman says. “Often the conclusions need to be pulled out and put into English.” In 2006, that work of translating scientific findings into useful legislative information scored its first major victory. Working with Don Williams, then-president of the Connecticut State Senate, Rudd researchers were instrumental in helping craft legislation that banned the sale of sodas and other sugary drinks in all Connecticut public schools. The law was one of the first in the nation and remains one of the strongest such laws anywhere in the country, helping trigger a policy shift nationwide. Today, 24 states have similar laws on the books.

In 2004, then-Surgeon General Richard Carmona appeared before a U.S. Senate subcommittee to testify about a growing public health crisis in America. The problem had multiplied in the past few decades, becoming particularly acute among children. The threats posed by this crisis, Carmona warned, were so grave that America was at risk of seeing the first generation in its history have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Carmona wasn’t talking about tobacco, or drugs, or violent crime. He was talking about obesity.

IN THE PAST 35 YEARS, THE RATE OF OBESITY AMONG CHILDREN AGES 6 TO 11 HAS MORE THAN TRIPLED.

As obesity rates in America surge, a growing group of UConn researchers and policy experts works to stem the rising tide.
Schwartz stresses that the research that helped power the legislation was greatly facilitated by Connecticut’s unique structure of government. “Even in a state as small as we are,” she says, “we have 159 school districts.” That means there may be hundreds of different policies to compare and contrast against one another — an advantage from a research perspective, according to Schwartz.

In contrast, many states clump several communities together under the umbrella of huge school districts, the largest of which oversee more students than the entire state of Connecticut does. Friedman, too, sees the Center’s recent move from New Haven to Hartford and from Yale to UConn as an opportunity to cooperate more closely with state government, particularly through CHIP — what she calls “a wonderful confluence of policy people and researchers.”

At the same time, adding Rudd’s impressive roster of researchers to CHIP’s already robust program of research in obesity prevention stands as yet another milestone in the University’s continued growth into a powerhouse research institution. “It adds some remarkable synergies which are just terribly exciting,” says Jeff Fisher, Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of Psychology and director of CHIP. “We began with an HIV prevention focus, and were internationally known in that area. I’d say we are now as strong in obesity prevention as we are in HIV prevention.”

BATTLING THE STIGMA OF OBESITY

In recent years, the work at Rudd has expanded into new and previously unexplored areas of obesity research. One of these, led by Rudd researcher Rebecca Puhl, is the study of how weight-based stigma affects people struggling with obesity, and what role public policy can play in helping combat those stigmas.

The first step, according to Puhl, is challenging the persistent assumption that obesity is a matter of personal choice, or the result of a defect of character. “That’s a false assumption,” says Puhl, pointing out that obesity is now officially classified as a disease by the American Medical Association. Yet many assume that people who suffer from that disease are simply lazy, a ludicrous proposition, Puhl contends, in a country where two-thirds of the population are overweight or obese.” “Two-thirds of our population aren’t just lazy,” she says.

Yet that stereotype is persistent and its negative effects are felt in the workplace, in schools, and beyond. According to Puhl, “Weight-based bullying is the most prevalent reason kids are bullied in school — more than sexual orientation, more than race.” And employees struggling with obesity are denied the kinds of legal protections given to people with other mental or physical disabilities. With the exception of a handful of state and local laws, it is legal to not hire someone, fire them, or assign them a lower salary, all based on weight.

‘AN ENEMY TO HEALTH’

These outside pressures make the struggle infinitely harder. “We’ve known for decades that disease-related stigma is an enemy to health,” says Puhl, and obesity is no exception. “When people experience bullying or stigma as a result of their weight, they are more likely to binge eat, more likely to avoid physical activity, and more likely to have depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors.”

Combating that stigma is a key component of the Rudd Center’s work moving forward, as are a host of other initiatives, including improving the way obesity is handled by health care professionals, changing the way unhealthy foods are marketed, especially to kids.

That work may seem daunting, and the challenge is formidable, but the efforts of those at the Rudd Center may be beginning to show results. National statistics on childhood obesity indicate that while overall rates remain high, the youngest demographic — children ages 2 to 5 years — recently saw a sharp decrease, with the obesity rate falling from 13.5 percent to 8.4 percent over an eight-year period.

Whether this change represents a turning of the tide in the battle against obesity remains to be seen, but from their new space in downtown Hartford, the Center’s growing team is perhaps better equipped than ever to continue the fight — from battling weight-based stigmas to partnering with legislators to shape progressive policies going forward.

For more information about UConn’s Rudd Center, visit uconnruddcenter.org.

IN THE CLASSROOM WE TEACH KIDS TO EAT FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, BUT IF THEY WALK OUT INTO THE HALLWAY AND THE VENDING MACHINES ARE FULL OF CANDY BARS AND SODA, WHAT’S THE MESSAGE THERE?”

— ROBERTA FRIEDMAN
UConn’s Insider Guide To Living Your
BEST LIFE

BY JULIE STAGIS ’10 (BUS, CLAS)
ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRIS CATER ’13 (SFA)

What’s the secret to success? How can you make the most of every day? Whether you want to be more creative or wish you could complete a triathlon, our UConn-inspired how-to manual offers insight into some of life’s burning questions.

We’ve rounded up a selection of UConn alumni, faculty, and students — from a NASA chief scientist to an acupuncturist — to share their practical advice on how you can live your own best life.

HOW TO BE MORE CREATIVE

Studies show creative people are happier, and coming up with creative solutions to problems can get you ahead at work. But finding that creative spark is sometimes difficult.

James C. Kaufman, UConn educational psychology professor and internationally respected creativity expert, is here to help
Be Open. One of the strongest personality traits observed in creative people is openness to experiences, Kaufman says. Whether it’s trying a new restaurant or skydiving for the first time, new experiences can inspire new ways of thinking.

Think: What’s the Issue? “Probably the most understated component of the creative problem-solving process is finding and recognizing what the problem is,” Kaufman says. “If all your friends tell you that you dress poorly, you can identify the problem as, ‘I need to dress better,’ or ‘I need new friends.’ And everything else depends on how you identify the problem.”

What’s Your Motivation? If you’re looking for a creative outlet, think about your goals, Kaufman says. Do you want to be creative to express yourself or to connect with others? To impress someone? To be world-renowned? There is no right answer, and often figuring out the why can lead to the how, he says.

HOW TO WATER SKI

You’ve graduated college and joined the real world, but that shouldn’t stop you from having some fun. Mike Rambone ’09 (ED), ’10 MA and Chris Nuelle ’11 (BUS), founders of Lakeside Watersports in Danbury, Conn., say gliding across the water on skis is a sure way to impress your friends and have a blast. They say the most important tip for success in water sports is to let the boat do all of the work. Read more water skiing tips on the new UConn Magazine website at magazine.uconn.edu.

HOW TO BREAK YOUR FACEBOOK ADDICTION

You’re probably not actually addicted to Facebook or your smartphone — only about 6 percent of people are clinically diagnosed as compulsive users, says David Greenfield, assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at the UConn School of Medicine and founder of The Center for Internet and Technology Addiction. But most people today do overuse or abuse their smartphones or the Internet, he says.

Studies show there are neurobiological causes behind this, according to Greenfield. When your phone buzzes, it means something is waiting for you.

The release of dopamine — a pleasure chemical — every time we see a text message from a friend or a funny email has essentially turned us into a society of Pavlov’s dogs, he says.

Try Greenfield’s Tips on Cutting Down:
1. Be aware that technology is powerful.
2. Take control of your technology. Make conscious choices about when and where you’re going to use it.
3. Have tech-free days or tech-free hours. Experiment with setting limits.
4. Turn your phone off when you’re in social environments and start a conversation.
5. Limit your use of things like online gaming. These have addictive properties regardless of where you’re using them, but combining them with an addictive smartphone “is like adding gasoline to a fire,” Greenfield says.

“What we have is a digital drug,” he says. “I’m not a Luddite. I’m suggesting more conscious use of it, more moderated use of [technology], and taking more control of it — instead of it controlling you.”

See the world through the eyes — and drawings — of UConn alum and cartoonist Chris Cater ’13 (SFA), who illustrated this issue’s cover story, in our special UConn Magazine video at s.uconn.edu/chriscater
**HOW TO WIN A CHESS MATCH**

Alexander Fikiet '16 (CLAS) has earned the title of Life Master from the United States Chess Federation by being rated upwards of 2,200 in more than 300 USCF-rated chess tournament games. Secretary of the UConn Chess Club, Fikiet says patience is the key to winning.

"Whenever I play a game, I am sure to take into account my opponent's ideas and actions first, and adjust my play towards that," Fikiet says. "I want the game to be as safe as possible, and only then do I want to take action toward winning."

Fikiet says he enters each match with a broad plan, which he tweaks as he goes to avoid his competitor's tricks and traps.

"Finally, if I feel that I have a winning advantage, I generally triple-check my next moves in order to make sure I don't make a mistake," he says. "Converting a winning advantage into a win against a good player is probably the most difficult part of chess."

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**HOW TO OWN YOUR VOICE IN THE PROFESSIONAL WORLD**

Having and expressing educated opinions on important matters is vital to getting ahead professionally. Lucy Gilson, UConn management professor and academic director of the Gano Aurieimma Leadership Conference, says becoming an expert in something is a surefire way to find your voice.

"There’s a lot of research with regard to leadership that indicates CEOs and top executives are people who have been functional specialists, who have come up through a discipline," she says. "And the people who have been sort of generalists — often women — tend not to reach these top levels, but rather stay in mid-level managerial jobs.

"When it comes to finding your voice, the key piece is to figure out what you’ve good at and what you want to be known for, and to specialize in that. Become the expert that people go to," Gilson says. "If you find something that you’re passionate about, and you can become an expert in that, you’re much more likely to be able to talk knowledably and to do well."

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**HOW TO DE-STRESS**

Everybody’s been there: Thoughts of your big presentation at work are keeping you up at night; that fight with your mom is literally causing a headache; or mulling over a daunting decision is giving you panic attacks.

"Everyone in this world has some sort of underlying stress issue that is affecting them in an unhealthy way," says Traver Garrity ’07 (BSA), a licensed acupuncturist whose practice is steps away from UConn’s Storrs campus. “One of the main ways to stay healthy is to try and find some sort of outlet to keep the stress level in check.”

Chinese medicine, of which acupuncture is a major part, is based on a theory of balance, particularly regarding qi, which means “life force.” (Qi is also known as chi or ki.)

Stressors get in the way of energy flow, causing such symptoms as tension headaches, anxiety attacks, and gastric distress, Garrity says. But there are simple ways to combat these negative effects.

Certain types of exercise, including yoga, tai chi, and qigong, are focused on balancing qi, “using Chinese medical theory to keep the channels open and moving,” according to Garrity. Daily stretching, taking some time out for self-reflection, or meditation can all help — “whatever people can do to quiet their minds,” she says. “Deep abdominal breathing is also going to help calm the nervous system.”

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**HOW TO FIND YOUR IDEAL WORKOUT**

Despite late-night infomercial claims, there is no “best exercise” out there, according to Linda Pescatello ’77 (CLAS), ’81 MS, ’86 Ph.D., Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of Kinesiology.

"The best exercise would be the exercise you continue with," Pescatello says. “The rule of thumb is: Something is better than nothing. Getting out of the chair is big.”

American College of Sports Medicine exercise guidelines — edited by Pescatello and considered the gold standard for exercise professionals — essentially amount to an hour of exercise daily, something that’s hard for even some of the fittest people to achieve, Pescatello says.

Consider what activities you enjoy, as well as your goals (whether it’s weight loss, maintenance, or muscle toning) and what time of day you are most willing to exercise to find the right program, she says. “You have to look at those things around you that are going to set you up for success.”

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**HOW TO STOP A BULLY**

If you’ve ever been teased, bullied, or harassed, you could benefit from the strategies outlined by special education professor George Sugai, director of UConn’s Center for Behavioral Education and Research and co-director of the national Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.

According to Sugai, the same basic framework can be used by people of all ages to stop unwanted behaviors. “The goal is to disengage assertively as quickly as possible — in developmentally and contextually appropriate ways — so the interaction can’t escalate, and then problem-solve strategies that prevent it from happening in the future,” says Sugai, who is also a professor of special education in the Neag School of Education and the Carole J. Neag Endowed Chair.

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**“QUESTION EVERYTHING; BE OPEN TO THE UNUSUAL AND THE EMERGING, TAKE INFORMED RISKS, AND BE AUDACIOUS.”**

— DENNIS BUSHNELL ’83 (ENG), UCONN ALUM AND NASA CHIEF SCIENTIST, ON HOW TO DREAM BIG

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**HOW TO PUSH YOUR LIMITS**

Mike Ryan ’88 (EHS) is quite familiar with going beyond his comfort zone.

A six-time Ironman triathlete, the 51-year-old has completed the Empire State Building Run-Up and Escape from Alcatraz Triathlon three times each. He has run with the bulls in Spain — twice. Lately, he’s spent a lot of time on “mud run-type things,” like the Tough Mudder races.

“Look for your ability to excel in everything,” says Ryan, who recently left a 26-year career as an NFL athletic trainer and founded Mike Ryan Sports Medicine in Jacksonville Beach, Fla. He also serves as the sports medicine consultant for NBC Sports Sunday Night Football.

“People just have to stretch their imagination,” he says. “Don’t think of the limitations, the job, the kids, the mortgage, things like that — What’s really going to get you excited? What do you really want to do?”

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For extended versions of these segments and more UConn-inspired advice on life, including our featured video, go to UConn Magazine’s new website at magazine.uconn.edu.
Early spring mornings on Coventry Lake come with a certain beauty — the fog blanketing the water and the sun peeking through the surrounding trees as it rises. The picturesque setting almost makes one momentarily forget the icy chill that accompanies a springtime dawn in Connecticut.

This is where Jennifer Wendry, head coach for the UConn women’s Division I rowing team, feels most at home. Coaching rowing is her family business: Wendry grew up in a home above a boathouse in upstate New York, where her father, Bill Sanford, served as the rowing coach at Syracuse University for 37 years. Two of her uncles, her sister, and a cousin have all been college rowing coaches.

Wendry came to Storrs in 1997, ready to lead UConn’s first varsity women’s rowing program and take advantage of the growing opportunities that the Title IX ruling had created in the sport.

TESTING THE WATERS
When passed into law, Title IX of the United States Education Amendments of 1972 wasn’t immediately viewed in the context of intercollegiate athletics. But after numerous legal interpretations and court rulings over the subsequent 25 years, one of the outcomes was that Title IX stipulated that all federally-funded colleges and universities were required to provide athletic opportunities to both men and women on a “substantially proportional basis.” This prompted the UConn administration to establish a women’s rowing program to achieve the required proportionality of men’s and women’s varsity athletic teams offered by the University.

“While the University was mandated to start the program,” Wendry says, “they didn’t do it begrudgingly. They embraced it and supported it.”

However, that didn’t mean that it was smooth sailing from the start. Initially, there wasn’t a full understanding of what establishing a varsity rowing program entailed, including the unique equipment requirements that went with it.

“I was hired a week before classes started,” says Wendry, “and when I arrived, I asked, ‘Where’s the erg [ergometer, or rowing machine] room?’” Discovering that there was no equipment in place, she had 10 ergometers purchased and installed in a repurposed storage room in the Greer Field House, a new boat purchased, and a truck rented for trips to races.

With the stresses of getting a new varsity team off the ground, Wendry says “there was no place to go but up” that first year. And regardless of the hiccups, her newly minted student-athletes were appreciative of everything they had, having come from a club sports team where the students had handled all of the organizational duties and personally covered many of the costs, including travel and uniforms, while sharing most other gear with the men’s crew club.

‘AN EASY SELL’
Since those early days, the team’s results under Wendry have steadily improved. Most recently, the team finished third at last year’s inaugural American Athletic Conference Championship and won the Frosh/Novice 8 race at the Head of the States Education Amendments of 1972 wasn’t immediately viewed in the context of intercollegiate athletics. But after numerous legal interpretations and court rulings over the subsequent 25 years, one of the outcomes was that Title IX stipulated that all federally-funded colleges and universities were required to provide athletic opportunities to both men and women on a “substantially proportional basis.” This prompted the UConn administration to establish a women’s rowing program to achieve the required proportionality of men’s and women’s varsity athletic teams offered by the University.

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However, that didn’t mean that it was smooth sailing from the start. Initially, there wasn’t a full understanding of what establishing a varsity rowing program entailed, including the unique equipment requirements that went with it.

“I was hired a week before classes started,” says Wendry, “and when I arrived, I asked, ‘Where’s the erg [ergometer, or rowing machine] room?’” Discovering that there was no equipment in place, she had 10 ergometers purchased and installed in a repurposed storage room in the Greer Field House, a new boat purchased, and a truck rented for trips to races.

With the stresses of getting a new varsity team off the ground, Wendry says “there was no place to go but up” that first year. And regardless of the hiccups, her newly minted student-athletes were appreciative of everything they had, having come from a club sports team where the students had handled all of the organizational duties and personally covered many of the costs, including travel and uniforms, while sharing most other gear with the men’s crew club.

‘AN EASY SELL’
Since those early days, the team’s results under Wendry have steadily improved. Most recently, the team finished third at last year’s inaugural American Athletic Conference Championship and won the Frosh/Novice 8 race at the Head of the title waves

By rob chudzik ’91 (clas), ’15 ms
photography by peter morenus

Carrying on a family legacy, Coach Jennifer Wendry has been the force behind UConn’s Division I women’s rowing team since it was established.

“Our philosophy is this: obviously, we want to win. But it’s really about working with kids and helping them grow, from the time they get here until the time they graduate.”

— coach jennifer wendry

huskymania

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Schuylkill Regatta in Philadelphia this past fall. Those results, coupled with the recent addition of 10 scholarships on top of the four that were already available, bring a palpable sense of excitement about the future of the program.

“UConn is the easiest place in the world to recruit,” Wendry says. “We have a beautiful campus, and the academic offerings are fantastic. Our team dynamic is great, prospective students see the athletic success we’ve had in other sports, and it’s exciting for them. But in the past, when it came to offering a scholarship, I couldn’t say ‘We’re going to pay for your education.’ UConn may have been their first choice, but if the next school offered them a full scholarship, we’d lose them. Now, being able to offer a full scholarship, it’s such an easy sell.”

In the first years of the program, many of the team members were walk-on athletes who found out about the team while on campus and had competed in other sports in high school, but saw an opportunity to compete in an NCAA Division I athletic competition.

While about half of the team’s rowers are still walk-ons, the team is now able to recruit more experienced rowers, something the coach partially attributes to the effects of Title IX.

“I think Title IX really helped the sport of women’s rowing take off nationally,” Wendry says. “In the late ’90s, high schools were seeing the scholarship opportunities for their student-athletes and wanted to take advantage of the opportunity. So there were many more women’s rowing programs starting up at the high school level, and we’re seeing more experienced rowers coming through.”

HER GROWING LEGACY

Over the past 18 years, Wendry has been quietly building more than a rowing team: she’s been building a UConn rowing family, watching student-athletes come in as freshmen and working to help them develop both as athletes and as people.

“Our philosophy is this: Obviously, we want to win,” she says. “But it’s really about working with the student-athletes and helping them grow from the time they get here until the time they graduate. They have a family at home, but we try to create an environment of a second family here in Storrs and provide them with a support system for the good times and the bad. By their senior year, they can go out and become whatever they want to be. That’s what makes it fun, seeing that growth.”

Since coming to UConn, Wendry has seen her own rowing legacy grow even beyond Storrs; at last count, eight of her former rowers are now coaching at the intercollegiate level. “There have been so many opportunities through this sport over the last 18 years, not only for athletes, but for coaches as well,” she says.

Historically, the origin of the UConn varsity women’s rowing program may be forever linked to Title IX, and Wendry summarizes the effect of Title IX in one word — opportunity.

“Because of our program, the opportunity arises for athletes who wouldn’t have otherwise had the experience of competing at a Division I level,” she says. “It really does change their life — it really changes everything about their college experience, and it changes who they become in life because of what they’ve accomplished.”

At the same time, she realizes that opportunities can go unrealized without hard work. “With the growth of the program, I feel like I have a new job,” Wendry says. “The focus has changed, because now we are confident that we can win a conference championship. Realistically, in the past, that would have been much more of a challenge. Everything is starting to fall into place.”

“IT REALLY DOES CHANGE THEIR LIFE — IT REALLY CHANGES EVERYTHING ABOUT THEIR COLLEGE EXPERIENCE, AND IT CHANGES WHO THEY BECOME IN LIFE BECAUSE OF WHAT THEY’VE ACCOMPLISHED.”

— COACH JENNIFER WENDRY
To celebrate our on-campus arena’s 25th anniversary this past January, we asked our UConn Facebook fans:

Here are a few of their answers.

Read more about magic Gampels moments at uconn.edu/gamps.

“I was one of the coordinators for the Gampel ushers when the first game occurred. The most amazing thing I could see was when the first UConn basket happened. You could see the roar of the crowd louder than any. No one had heard a roar before and it was amazing.” —Maria A. Szlach '10 MA

Matthew "Jerre" (Yenowich) Dumbrell '72 (CLAS) is a writer of the Dr. Seuss mystery series with author of "The Case of the Genghis Kong." Jerre is the founder of "Hobble, a website that provides humorous articles on topics ranging from movies to music to news stories.

Philip F. Nohrer '64 (BUS), '67 JD, managing partner of the law firm GrayRobinson PA, in Jacksonville, Fla., was named to the 2017 Best Lawyers in America list of "Outstanding Attorneys." He also was reappointed in November by Florida Gov. Rick Scott to the Judicial Nominating Commission.

Alan M. Cohen '67 (CLAS), '70 JD, MD, former chief medical officer for McDonald’s, worked in locations from Hartford, Conn., to Haiti, offering free health care to migrant farm workers.

Every year, UConn students, faculty, and staff give back to the community in a variety of ways — from a student-led annual, all-night dance-a-thon to raise money for a nonprofit children’s hospital to health care professionals who volunteer their time to offer free medical and dental screenings to migrant farm workers.

UConn’s Migrant Farm Worker Clinic offers medical care to migrant farm workers. The clinic is located on the UConn campus in the Graduate Student Union Building.

Amount raised through '12 
'13 
'14 
'15 
'16 
'17 
'18 
'19 
'20 

Kevin H. Stackhouse ‘98 MBA, president at Segal Rogerscasey, a financial services firm, was named the “Best Radio Sponsor” in Connecticut.

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UConn has been named to the President’s Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll for three consecutive years.

2020

The year through which UConn has been designated as a Community Engagement Institution by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

25

Community Engagement Institution

Community Service at UConn

Every year, UConn students, faculty, and staff give back to the community in a variety of ways — from a student-led annual, all-night dance-a-thon to raise money for a nonprofit children’s hospital to health care professionals who volunteer their time to offer free medical and dental screenings to migrant farm workers.

Economic impact of UConn’s economic vitality to the state, for the

Amount raised through 2013.

$650,401

Amount raised through the HuskyTHON annual dance marathon, the largest student-run philanthropy in the state, for the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center in 2015.

28,800

Hours served each year by UConn students during Alternative Spring Breaks in locations from Hartford, Conn., to Haiti.

UConn’s Migrant Farm Worker Clinic offers medical care to migrant farm workers.

23,500

Hours of community service donated by the UConn Extension program’s Master Gardeners with a value of $664,110 to the community.

54

Connecticut-based agencies partner with UConn to offer semester-long placements for student volunteers.

UConn’s Migrant Farm Worker Clinic offers medical care to migrant farm workers.

$39.7 million

Economic impact of all UConn faculty, staff, and student volunteer activities FY2013.

2015

Spring 2015
Swimming Hall of Fame in 2014

Orangeburg, N.Y.-based principal financial officer, and is vice president of finance, where he has worked since 1996.

Health Services of Connecticut, and a facilitator with the
is an alumnus of the Leadership
Western Data Systems Inc., '79 (BUS)
Virginia College Building Authority Financial, was appointed in
across the Sound, and, as an
as marathon director for the St. Vincent's Medical Center Foundation's SWIM,
H. O'Deaillers '82 (BUS) is executive development officer at family
Continent. Services centered on four

Deborah A. Full '82 (BUS), the former executive director of the Community Health Council of New York City, served as the New York-based managing partner of the law firm Brown & Welsh PC.

Dennis Sharpe '84 (BUS) is chief financial officer at Capital Region Medical Center, headquartered in Portland, Ore. Previously, he served at University of Florida in August 2013.

our heads, David Schreiber '03 (SFA),

readers, and his
has written eight other novels
titled
his wife, Michele.

denial that we could come back after surgery to

Dennia Rulla '82 (BUS) (CLAS)

is executive
directorate of the National Science Teachers Association, and is chief information officer, at the University of Florida in August 2013.

Craig C. Ferraiolo '84 (BUS) is managing partner of Midwest Legal Solutions in Medfield, Mass.

benefits for the women's teams play from the

years. She is a member of the American

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Dennis Sharpe '84 (BUS) is chief financial officer at Capital Region Medical Center, headquartered in Portland, Ore. Previously, he served at University of Florida in August 2013.

When both the men's and women's teams play from the press table on the sidelines, it was awesome to be in the middle of that worldwide experience covering games for the New York Times.

Micheal O’Connor '80 (CLAS)

is chief information officer, at the University of Florida in August 2013.

Frank Catalano '85

is director of finance for the Community Renewal Team and is a member of the Real Estate

a certified public accountant and previously worked as financial director for the town of Old Lyme.

is chief financial officer of Commercial Real Estate

dedicated to the National Capital Development Association, where he has been an active member for more than a decade.

Eric J. Kaplan '90 MBA is a robotics consultant on the National Team of Rev, a global, mainland-based, high school robotics competition organization.

is CEO at Luminar, an integrated and software solutions for tactical and defensive aviation management headquartered in New York, N.Y. And, David C. Ostrak '70 MBA serves as a vice president of First National Bank of Colorado, managing director, and head of S&L Banking Risks & Strategies.

is CEO at Smartpay Financial, which serves clients across 40 states. He has been working in both fields since graduation from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, where he has been president of the National Science Teachers Association.

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Our campuses statewide continue to evolve, with projects that will allow UConn to house more talented students, integrate with Connecticut’s capital city, and continue to provide top-quality medical care.

GETTING OFF THE GROUND

STEM RESIDENCE HALL

Construction has begun on the new $79 million, 210,000-square-foot, multistory residence hall for students in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. The dormitory is the first project awarded under the ambitious Next Generation Connecticut program, which aims to put UConn at the forefront of research and innovation. The residence hall, to be located near the Hale and Ellsworth dorms, will include STEM educational facilities along with 727 student beds, including 23 that are fully compliant with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. The project began in November, with completion slated for Summer 2016.

SOUTH CAMPUS GATEWAY

As travelers arriving at UConn from the southern end of the Storrs campus have noticed since the fall, it’s no longer possible to just suddenly “find yourself” on campus. Thanks to a visionary re-imagining of the area, there’s no mistaking that you’ve arrived at UConn.

Wider sidewalks to encourage pedestrian traffic, new landscaping features, and distinctive signage to promote upcoming events and performances in the School of Fine Arts and other venues are all part of the new “gateway” to the campus that complements the adjacent Storrs Center Development.

Developed for roughly $1.5 million, the new streetscape helps tie the campus to the burgeoning development at Storrs Center, which includes the Co-op Bookstore, the Ballard Museum of Puppetry, and an urgent care clinic operated by UConn Health.

The improved look at the corner of Route 195 and Bolton Road, near the entrance to the Music Library, is one way in which UConn is helping to fulfill the original vision of the Storrs Center project by creating a vibrant mix of academic, artistic, and commercial pursuits at one of the most visible and visited sections of campus.

HARTFORD

DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

When UConn’s Hartford campus moves downtown in the capital city in fall 2017, it’s going to mean a lot more than just a change of address.

As dynamic new renderings show, the planned Hartford campus will be a milestone for the University and for the city, anchoring the continued growth of UConn’s academic mission while contributing to the revitalization of downtown.

The new location will bring students closer to potential internships, service projects and jobs in urban K-12 schools, government agencies, businesses, nonprofits, and other entities.

About 2,300 commuter students and 250 employees will be based at the campus, which will return UConn to its urban roots; although located in West Hartford since 1970, the regional campus was first established in Hartford in 1939.

The center of the campus will be the restored Hartford Times building, which will retain its iconic façade. A new, attached five-story building will offer state-of-the-art classrooms and labs for University students and faculty.

The nearby Graduate Business Learning Center will be consolidated with the other programs at the new campus, including the Department of Public Policy and School of Social Work.

The University will also add a master’s degree program in engineering at the campus, along with expanded public policy, urban studies, and education programs.

FARMINGTON

UCONN HEALTH

In September, the final steel beams were put into place on the 11-floor hospital tower at UConn Health, scheduled for final completion in early 2016. The brand-new facility will include 169 private patient rooms, a 43-bed emergency department, and 11 state-of-the-art operating rooms. The hospital tower is one of the most dynamic results of the Bioscience Connecticut initiative, which has also resulted in the new Outpatient Pavilion and The Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine, both located on UConn Health’s campus.
He’s shirtless when he steps into the camera frame, late 30s, brown hair with a mustache. He swings his arms out to the side and down, then straight up and down.

“That guy’s amazing. He was hit by a train,” says Augustus D. Mazzocca, chairman of UConn’s department of orthopaedic surgery and director of the Musculoskeletal Institute at UConn Health. As if he heard Mazzocca’s words, the man in the video drops and does a one-armed pushup.

After the train accident, Mazzocca’s team repaired the group of muscles and tendons known as the rotator cuff that kept the man’s arm firmly in his shoulder socket. The video was taken half a year after that surgery. It’s impressive. Watching the guy, you’d never know he’d had a traumatic injury.

He’s one of the lucky ones. Rotator cuff injuries are very common, due to overuse, sports injuries, and other unknown reasons. They don’t always heal, leaving patients unable to lift or move their arms, and doctors don’t always know why. Sometimes muscles degrade faster than they regenerate. Sometimes tendons don’t reattach to the bone, or mysteriously atrophy until they’re too short to do anything.

“The patient with a bad outcome is the patient that drives us,” Mazzocca says. He leads a team of researchers at UConn searching for better ways to heal stubborn rotator cuff injuries. They’re testing the physical limits of surgical repair, comparing physical therapy techniques to find the fastest, most effective regimens, and cultivating the body’s ability to heal itself with its own adult stem cells.

MECHANICAL REPAIRS

In a lab down the hall from Mazzocca, research engineer Elifho Obopilwe is sitting next to a workbench outfitted with a clamp. A Dremel tool lies nearby. The lab feels like a high-end auto body shop, except for the human shoulder bone mounted to what looks like the business end of a giant nutcracker.

Obopilwe is testing how much strain a newly-repaired shoulder can take. The giant nutcracker is really a Material Testing System (MTS) machine. The MTS presses down or pulls up with a certain force, over and over and over again. Sensors attached to the bone and tendon can report exactly how much strain the shoulder feels. And if the repair fails — if a tendon tears or a bone breaks — the sensor record will tell exactly how much force was too much. Obopilwe has set to 100 newtons of force, about how much you would feel if you extended your arm straight out and lifted it to be parallel with your head. The video was taken half a year after that surgery. It’s impressive. Watching the guy, you’d never know he’d had a traumatic injury.

Obopilwe performs the tests on pieces of cadavers, since it would be unethical to strain a living person’s repair until it failed. Cadavers don’t heal or change. When the surgeon tries out a new repair on a cadaver, that repair has the strength and resilience that it would on a live person the moment they come out of surgery, before they start to heal. Although patients don’t move their arms right away, these tests give an idea of the minimum strength a patient would have post-surgery.

That will give the surgeon the confidence to tell the patient, “Start moving.” Obopilwe says.

Getting patients to use their arm safely and comfortably is the goal. Part of Mazzocca’s team focuses on the results, tracking the clinical outcomes of the surgeries as carefully as they test the physical repair. They test different physical therapy regimens to see which ones help patients recover fastest and most completely.

“True success is determined by what the patient can do and how good they feel. A successful surgery not only repairs torn tissue and gets the patient moving his arm again, but also improves his quality of life.”

HEALING AT THE CELLULAR LEVEL

But some patients, about 15 percent, just don’t heal. The UConn team suspects a biological reason, a failure of the body to communicate at the cellular level.

To jumpstart the body’s healing process, they do something unusual. They harvest the patient’s own stem cells during the surgery, concentrate them, and then deliver them into the repair. These adult stem cells, harvested from bone marrow within the patient’s humeral bone, have the potential to turn into bone, tendon, or cartilage.

“They’re confused cells,” which have not yet differentiated into a specialized cell type, says Mary Beth McCarthy, a research associate. She knows how to nudge them so they reliably turn into a specific tissue type in a petri dish. But FDA regulations classify such modified stem cells as drugs, and right now there is no clear path to getting them approved for use in humans.

Instead, McCarthy is working on a scaffold that can be sutured to the footprint on the bone where the tendon should reattach. The scaffold itself is made of the patient’s own blood plasma and adult stem cells. Down the road, McCarthy sees more studies being done on “smart” scaffolds, where one side of the scaffold will be imbued with molecules that signal stem cells to turn into bone, and the other with signals for tendon. The team hopes that the patients’ stem cells will get the message and grow appropriately, so that even stubborn rotator cuff injuries will heal.

Rotator cuff surgery is a big sacrifice, in time and in pain. Mazzocca is the first to admit it. But if someone has trouble moving his arm, he’s in pain when he moves, eats, and tries to sleep, he’s usually eager to try to fix it. Fixing it, healing those torn tendons and muscles in the rotator cuff, is the team’s ultimate goal, Mazzocca says.

“Someone who hasn’t used his or her arm in 10 to 15 years and you’re able to return that function to them — that’s the big thrill.”

Augustus D. Mazzocca, chairman of UConn’s department of orthopaedic surgery and director of the Musculoskeletal Institute at UConn Health. Spring 2015

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Save the Date for
HUSKIES FOREVER WEEKEND
Welcome Home to UConn!
October 10-11, 2015
HuskiesForever.uconn.edu