MAKING A DIFFERENCE

As dean of the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, I am always amazed and humbled to see how our faculty, staff and students are “making a difference” in teaching, research and extension, not only in Connecticut but around the world. Watching that story unfold on a daily basis is one of my greatest pleasures.

This past year we received two significant gifts of scholarships as part of the University’s Scholarship Initiative. The first gift, made by an anonymous donor, was used to fund several “Difference Maker” Scholarships. The awards were made to students in the College who have made a difference in the world throughout their undergraduate years both in and outside the classroom. We have featured some of their stories here in Pathways and on our the College’s blog, Naturally@UConn. The students’ stories are amazing and inspiring.

The second gift came from the Tony Yurgaitis and George Malkemus, the owners of Arethusa Dairy and Creamery and the lead executives of Manolo Blahnik. The Arethusa Farm Scholarship is now the second-largest endowed scholarship in the College and will support students with an interest in pursuing a career in the dairy industry. This gift will create a lasting legacy for generations to come. The first recipients will be selected in the spring of 2016. In recognition of their generosity and their success in both their business ventures, we have invited Tony and George to give the 2016 commencement address.

Each of our more than 2,000 undergraduate and more than 300 graduate students has a remarkable story to tell about their own UConn journey. I truly believe the remarkable enrollment growth in the College can in part be attributed to the care and attention our students receive from our dedicated faculty and staff and the generous support provided by our donors.

Similarly, our faculty scholarship continues to grow despite the challenging funding environment. This past year, CAHNR faculty received the largest total amount of research funding ever awarded to the College. In many cases, their research addresses issues that touch the lives of Connecticut citizens and the economic well-being of our state, such as obesity prevention, sustainability, food security, protecting the environment and responding to climate change. As a college, we focus on the nexus between food, environment and health, where many of the great challenges of our time lie.

Through Cooperative Extension, we continue to touch the lives of nearly every Connecticut resident in some way. Our county-based programs reach into every community in Connecticut and make a difference in people’s lives. Recently, Jiff Martin, our extension educator in sustainable food systems, was honored at the White House as one of twelve Champions of Change for Sustainable and Climate-Smart Agriculture. More and more we are embracing technology to reach Connecticut citizens and civic leaders. A number of our programs reach well beyond the borders of Connecticut. For instance, our rain garden phone app has now been adapted in collaboration with other universities to make it available in other regions of the United States.

UConn and the College are truly making a difference. We thank you for your support and partnership!

Dean Gregory Weidemann
College of Agriculture, Health & Natural Resources Advisory Board

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PATHWAYS is published annually by the College of Agriculture, Health & Natural Resources for alumni & friends of the college. Due to the costs of printing and mailing the magazine, PATHWAYS will now be found at cahnr.uconn.edu/Pathways. To read more news and information about the teaching, research and extension outreach programs and activities of the University of Connecticut’s College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, visit our blog at naturally.uconn.edu.
Dear CAHNR Alumni,

This has been a year of change in UConn alumni relations. As you have heard, the UConn Alumni Association is in the process of being dissolved as a separate entity. Organizational activities and resources, as well as UCAA assets, are being transferred to the UConn Foundation. With this new alumni relations model, all UConn graduates are invited to engage in alumni activities and access alumni resources without the obligation of annual dues. As a result of this change, all graduates have the opportunity to make a difference in connecting alumni, supporting students and strengthening UConn.

In regards to what this means for UCAHNRAA, our mission will remain the same. We will continue to support alumni, students and the College as we have always done.

As a means to encourage alumni university-wide to reconnect with one another, we co-hosted Husky Brews, a beer and wine tasting event held as part of Huskies Forever Weekend this fall. We also continued to support the CAHNR Career Night and the networking of students and alumni. In addition, CAHNR alumni are mentoring students as part of a new career advising program.

The group’s existing assets will be held at the UConn Foundation, with the UCAHNRAA board overseeing disbursement of funds. In fact, this year we increased our support of scholarships for students in CAHNR. In order to generate income to support these scholarships and our activities we organized two small auctions that were held at Husky Brews and Little I.

UCAHNRAA continues to seek participation from new members. With the addition of the graduates of 2015 as well as more than 18,000 College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources alumni, we can continue to make a difference at UConn. Please consider what your role may be; opportunities for engagement include assisting with planning an event, serving in a leadership role on the UCAHNRAA board, sharing information with other alumni in your professional network, mentoring a student or attending College or University events. Each of our alumni can make a difference for UConn students and alumni through their involvement with alumni-sponsored activities. Please contact me or check us out on Facebook at UCANRAA or visit us at www.ucanraa.

Find us on Facebook!

Sincerely,

Jennifer (Elman) Cushman, ’07, ’08, ’12
President
For the next two years, CAHNR will be helping pave the way for some undergraduates’ futures with a new scholarship initiative called Difference Makers, which will award a total of $150,000 to fifteen student scholars pursuing majors in the College.

This noteworthy scholarship will provide each recipient with $10,000 for one year toward the cost of their education. The scholarship is for rising CAHNR seniors who have financial need and who have made considerable academic and co-curricular achievements at UConn. Eight students have been selected to receive the Difference Makers scholarships during the 2015-16 year and seven are expected to receive them during 2016-17. The eight student recipients selected this year come from six departments in the College. They are Dominique Dimaria (Allied Health Sciences), Kimberly Grendzinski and Olivia Korte (Animal Science), Carl Underwood (Kinesiology), Bailey McNichol (Natural Resources and the Environment), Kacey Hale (Nutritional Sciences), and Diana Corjuc and Monica Ambrozej (Pathobiology and Veterinary Science).

The Difference Makers scholarship program was made possible in December 2014 when the UConn Foundation received an anonymous donation of $150,491.53 for the purpose of supporting CAHNR students in pursuing and completing their education. The School of Pharmacy and the Foundation also received $150,000 gifts from the same anonymous donor. The scholarship was developed shortly after receipt of the gift by Cameron Faustman, associate dean for academic programs, Gregory Weidemann, dean of the College, and Amy Chesmer, the College’s liaison to the UConn Foundation.

Faustman, Weidemann and Chesmer sought to create a scholarship that would have a major impact for a small pool of students facing student debt. Most CAHNR scholarships amount to one or two thousand dollars, but Faustman says Difference Makers was designed to be more substantial. “This is our way to address the challenge of the cost of higher education,” he says. “We know $10,000 makes a big difference.”

CAHNR students were required to submit a scholarship application to be qualified for Difference Makers. In March, the CAHNR scholarship committee, made up of faculty representatives from each department in the College, met to nominate rising seniors who they thought had shown strong academic and co-curricular achievement—in short, the difference makers of the College. Following the March meeting, final selections were made using information regarding financial need from the Office of Financial Aid.

The student “difference makers” who will benefit from this gift come from a wide range of backgrounds and are making a difference in the College in a myriad of ways.

Amy Chesmer, senior director of development with the UConn Foundation and CAHNR alumna, says that the anonymous donation that funded Difference Makers is one of the largest gifts for scholarships ever made to the College. “This was an unsolicited gift intended to help students without even a request for recognition,” she says. “We’re hopeful the donor will see the lasting impact of their generosity.”

Chesmer is also hopeful that in addition to providing financial support to the scholarship recipients, this gift will help teach the students the value of philanthropy and will one day inspire them to support future students.

Read more posts about the Difference Makers students and the impact the scholarship is having in their lives in the following pages and on Naturally@UConn.
Carl Underwood of Woodstock, Connecticut, always wanted to be a physical therapist. However, after a number of eye-opening experiences and opportunities both at UConn and abroad, Carl realized that his passions had shifted, and he was more interested in the outdoors. Now, Carl plans to graduate in May with a double major in exercise science and ecology and evolutionary biology. Here is what he said about his experiences as a CAHNR student and a Difference Makers scholarship recipient.

What attracted you to UConn? I chose UConn because it was close to my hometown and was affordable. Also, I wanted to be a physical therapist and UConn has a nationally top-ranked kinesiology program.

Why did you choose your particular major? I chose exercise science because I wanted to be a physical therapist and work with people with injuries and disabilities. I was accepted into the kinesiology program and completed one year before realizing that I wanted to branch out into other areas. I want to be outside in nature, rather than in an office, as a naturalist and outdoor educator. This led me to add ecology and evolutionary biology as a second major last year.

Which one of your UConn activities, internships or jobs was the most memorable? Why? During the spring of 2013, I studied abroad in Cape Town, South Africa. This was the most influential experience of my life. My personal and world views changed, and I began to think seriously about the type of impact that I want to have on the world. While in Cape Town, I interned at Eros School, a school for children with cerebral palsy and other learning difficulties. At the primary and secondary school, the children attend classes and are given physiotherapy and occupational therapy. I worked in the physiotherapy department, and I learned from and assisted the physiotherapists. The school was located in the township of Athlone. While most of the students were local, some were from far away and had to stay in a dormitory during the school year.

Name two other experiences that have enriched your studies. While at UConn, I became interested in rock climbing and am now very involved in the climbing community. I am the president of UConn Climbing Club; I worked at the Climbing Center in the Student Recreation Facility, and I now work for UConn Outdoors. I lead students in outdoor activities such as kayaking and rock climbing. I started climbing my freshman year. While it began as just a hobby, it has grown into a passion.

Also, I have lived and worked at the UConn Spring Valley Student Farm since January. At the farm, I am part of a community of eleven students. We each complete ten hours of work per week on the farm. All of the produce that we grow is used in the dining halls and the on-campus restaurant, Chuck & Augie’s. I enjoy being able to turn my mind off of academics and focus on sustainable agriculture for a few hours each week.

What was the biggest challenge in your UConn career? The biggest challenge for me was deciding to add on my second major. I knew I would need to stay an extra year to complete it, and this was a hard financial decision. When I received the Difference Makers scholarship, I was very relieved. I am thankful to the donors and to my advisor, Dr. Lee, who nominated me.

When do you expect to graduate? What then? I plan to graduate in May 2016. After that, I will probably work seasonal jobs and do outdoor education work for a few years. In the future, I want to join the Peace Corps and help improve agriculture in developing countries.

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you? My friend, Gabe DeRosa, and I received a UConn IDEA grant to build an aquaponics system. Aquaponics is a combination of aquaculture and hydroponics. It is a self-contained, sustainable system that allows waste from fish to be filtered out and utilized by plants as a nutrient source. Our new greenhouse will be built in the next few weeks, then we will begin to construct the system and begin the cycling process.

Also, I worked for the Appalachian Mountain Club this past summer as a naturalist and guide. I did environmental education work, teaching people about all of the amazing plants, animals and relationships that occur in nature. I also educated families about basic camping skills and how they need to prepare when spending extended periods in the outdoors.
MEET DIANA

Diana Corjuc of Weston, Connecticut, overcame a number of challenges during her UConn career. Despite these challenges, she plans to graduate in December 2016 with a dual-degree in pathobiology, and molecular and cell biology. As a Difference Makers scholarship recipient, Diana hopes to make a difference in the future by pursuing a career in medicine and cancer research. Here is what she said about her experiences as a CAHN student.

What attracted you to UConn? I initially decided to come to UConn because it made the most sense financially. I never could have imagined all of the incredible opportunities that I found here. My college experience would not have been the same had I gone anywhere else.

Why did you choose your particular major? I started out on the pre-pharmacy track, but I quickly switched over to biological sciences because I knew I wanted to pursue medical school. However, I was unable to find an area of biology that I was particularly interested in. During my junior year, a friend told me about the pathobiology program. Not many schools offer this unique major which brings together numerous branches of biology to study the underlying mechanisms of disease. I declared pathobiology as my major, but I became more interested in genetics after working in a molecular lab. Because I am passionate about both pathobiology and molecular and cell biology, I decided to pursue a dual-degree.

Which one of your UConn activities, internships or jobs was the most memorable? Why? My most memorable experiences have been working in laboratories on campus as a technician and undergraduate researcher. In the summer of 2013, I was involved in a car accident and suffered from a concussion. After taking a semester off to receive physical and visual therapy, I returned to UConn with an excitement to try new things. Until then, I was unsure about what I was most interested in. However, I was able to become truly passionate about my studies through my involvement in research.

Through a series of fortunate events, I ended up working in the Molecular Diagnostics Section of the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Lab. I learned how to test for pathogens commonly transmitted by ticks, such as Lyme disease, using a molecular technique called polymerase chain reaction. This job opened the door to other opportunities in research, and I was able to learn more about myself and my interests.

What was the biggest challenge in your UConn career? A few days after my car accident, my family home caught on fire and was destroyed. Nothing was salvageable except for our family photographs. The fire happened two years ago, and yet my family is still working to overcome the challenges that remain. It has been painful to watch my parents try to rebuild our lives after the fire.

I am so grateful that I can give back to them after receiving the Difference Makers scholarship. The anonymous donor has made a difference in our lives, and I thank him or her for such generosity. This scholarship has given me the drive to persevere and achieve my goals. I hope to one day be able to give back to aspiring students in the same way.

When do you expect to graduate? What then? I plan to graduate in December 2016. After that, I will take some time off to study for the MCAT, apply to medical schools and MD/PhD programs and gain work experience. I took an EMT course last spring and would like to start volunteering as an EMT.

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you? When people look at me, I do not want them to see my circumstances. I want them to see the person that I have become in spite of my circumstances, a person shaped by her experiences, both good and bad. I continuously fight every day to overcome challenges and succeed with strength from my family, friends and, most of all, God. I want to tell others, do not let your circumstances define you or hold you back from opportunities.

Name two other experiences that have enriched your studies. While in the lab of Professor Rachel O’Neill in the Department of Molecular and Cell Biology [MCB], I worked with an assistant research professor named Chu Zhang. She took me under her wing and became my research mentor this past summer. I am so thankful to Chu for believing in me and for putting in the time and effort to teach me.

This semester, I started working in Associate Professor Barbara Mellone’s lab, also in MCB. My current project investigates chromosome missegregation across different *Drosophila* species. I am learning so many molecular techniques that you simply cannot learn in the classroom.
Olivia Korte is a Difference Makers scholarship recipient from East Granby, Connecticut, with a love for animals. After she graduates in May with a degree in animal science, Olivia hopes to continue her studies in graduate school and eventually reach her goal of becoming a veterinarian. Here is what she said about her experiences as a CAHNR student.

What attracted you to UConn? Growing up, I was the biggest fan of UConn basketball, especially of the women’s team. My dad joked that I should be a sports announcer because I always gave him full reports of the games. Also, I really liked the animal science program at UConn and its reputation for helping students get accepted into veterinary school. In fact, UConn was the only school that I applied to because I had no doubt this was where I wanted to be.

Why did you choose your particular major? I always wanted to be a veterinarian. I decided that majoring in animal science would be good preparation. Also, the animal science department is relatively small, and I am able to make close connections with some of the faculty. Coming from such a small high school, I really value this.

Which one of your UConn activities, internships or jobs was the most memorable? Why? Last spring, I interned at Quinebaug Valley Veterinary Hospital in Danielson, Connecticut. On my last day, they offered me a job. Now, I am a veterinary assistant. The veterinarians there are amazing, and I learn so much by just observing them. I help run appointments by obtaining the medical history of the pet and by noting any current health or behavioral issues. I prepare all the vaccines, fill any needed prescriptions and restrain the pet for all necessary procedures. Recently, I have been learning how to draw blood. It is much more difficult than it looks!

Name two other experiences that have enriched your studies. I work at a boarding dog kennel called Beacon Ridge Pet Resort in East Granby, Connecticut. I have worked there for two years and am now the assistant manager. This job changed my life. My boss saw my potential before I did and took a chance on me. In fact, she went on vacation and left me in charge after I had only worked there for one week! This job boosted my confidence and made me realize that I am capable of doing anything that I want.

Also, I have been involved in horseback riding since I was eleven. When I was sixteen, I decided to switch from English style riding to reining. Reining is a western style of riding that is widely known for spins and sliding stops. However, it is truly about the precise control of the horse’s movements and a good working relationship with the horse. I don’t compete but I love to ride for fun and relaxation.

What was the biggest challenge in your UConn career? I grew up in a very small town so my biggest challenge was adjusting to UConn’s size. Some of my classes at UConn were larger than my entire high school. That was very overwhelming at first.

When do you expect to graduate? What then? I plan to graduate in May 2016. I always planned to go right to veterinary school. Now, however, I want to stay at UConn and get a master’s degree in pathobiology. Then, I would like to apply to veterinary school and receive a doctor of veterinary medicine (DVM) and a PhD at the same time. Right now, I am in the process of applying to graduate school. Programs in which one can gain a DVM and PhD concurrently are incredibly selective. It will be helpful to have additional experience and another degree when applying.

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you? Growing up, I had a total of nineteen pets. I had a dog, a hamster, a frog, two cats and fourteen ducks. In addition, I used to play basketball. Although I was never very good, I was sure I would end up playing for the UConn women’s team. That dream never came true, but at least I’m still at UConn where I always wanted to be!

Also, I was a recipient of the Difference Makers scholarship this year. I thought that I was going to have to take a year off from school in order to afford to finish my degree. Once I found out I received the scholarship, I was ecstatic.
MEET KIM

Kim Grendzinski of Oakville, Connecticut, is an active animal science major and Difference Makers scholarship recipient. Her love for animals is clear through her involvement in the Dairy Club, the barns on campus and her internship at a zoo. After she graduates in May, Kim hopes to become a zookeeper. Here is what she said about her experiences as a CAHNR student.

What attracted you to UConn? I was attracted to UConn because of the animal science program. I liked that freshman animal science students were encouraged to find hands-on experience and become involved with the barns on campus right away.

Why did you choose your particular major? I have been interested in animals since I was young. I have always felt a connection with animals and consider myself more comfortable with animals than with people. Therefore, I decided to major in animal science.

Which one of your UConn activities, internships or jobs was the most memorable? Why? I am the president of the Dairy Club. I was voted into office last spring, and it has been an honor. I have put a lot of hard work into making the club fun and getting more students involved. One of our main events is participating in the Big E. This year, we brought eighteen cows and heifers to the fair for four days. We took care of them, milked them, did demonstrations for the public and offered educational materials about the dairy industry in order to answer some of the misconceptions that people may have about it. In addition, eight Dairy Club members went to Toronto for the Royal Agriculture Winter Fair.

Name two other experiences that have enriched your studies. I work in the livestock barn on campus. I have been trying to get a job there since I was a freshman, and I finally got my foot in the door last year. I do hands-on work with the animals. For instance, I milk the cows and take care of the sheep and pigs. I also do night checks during birthing season and basic chores, such as feeding and cleaning.

This past summer, I interned at Connecticut’s Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport for 12 weeks. This experience made me realize that I want to become a zookeeper. It was the best experience of my life, and I have never been happier than when I was at the zoo. I cared for the animals in the rainforest and hoofstock sections. Also, I made great connections with my coworkers.

What was the biggest challenge in your UConn career? My biggest challenge was taking general chemistry. It was the hardest class that I took. I got through it by studying hard and going to my professor’s office hours.

When do you expect to graduate? What then? I plan to graduate in May 2016. After that, I hope to get a job at a zoo. I am applying for an internship at Southwick’s Zoo in Massachusetts for next semester. They hire many of their interns so hopefully, I will be able to work there.

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you? I absolutely love candy. I always have candy with me, whether I am at home, in my car or walking around campus.

I was honored to be chosen as a recipient of the Difference Makers scholarship. It made me feel as though all of my hard work meant something to my professors and other people on this campus, and I am very grateful for the recognition.
Jiff Martin
White House Champion of Change
by Stacey Stearns

On Monday, October 26, a dozen people from across the country were recognized in Washington, DC, as White House Champions of Change for Sustainable and Climate Smart Agriculture. UConn Extension’s Jiff Martin was one of the recipients.

These individuals were selected by the White House for their achievements and were honored for exemplary leadership and innovation in agricultural production and education. The program featured remarks by United States Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack. The Champions have helped implement agricultural practices to promote soil health and energy efficiency, improve water quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Climate change can no longer be seen as a distant threat. It is already affecting forest, grassland and cropland systems in the United States and is threatening agricultural producers and their communities. The Champions understand the challenges we face related to changing climate and are taking steps to build resilience in the face of its impacts.

Jiff Martin is an associate educator in sustainable food systems with UConn Extension, which is part of the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources. Martin has worked for more than 12 years on food and agriculture issues in Connecticut, helping residents discover local agriculture, connecting kids to healthy whole foods and researching community food security in Connecticut’s 169 towns. Her recent work includes leading a team of extension educators to assist new farmers in production and farmland management; directing two AmeriCorps service learning programs; and educating consumers through BuyCTGrown.com’s 10% Campaign, under which residents and businesses are asked to pledge 10 percent of their food and gardening budget to locally-grown products. Martin was previously state director for the American Farmland Trust and food policy director at Hartford Food System.

The Champions of Change program was created as an opportunity for the White House to feature individuals who are doing extraordinary things to inspire and empower members of their communities. To learn more about the White House Champions of Change program, visit www.whitehouse.gov/champions. You can also follow the conversation at #WHChamps and #ActOnClimate.

First Place in Storytelling with Maps

At the Esri International User Conference in San Diego in July, Emily Wilson and Chet Arnold from UConn’s Center for Land Use Education and Research’s (CLEAR) received the First Place Award in the Science/Technology/Education category of the Esri Storytelling with Maps Contest. There were over 400 submissions to the contest and only five first place winners. Over 16,000 GIS professionals from around the world attended the conference. As a result of the award, Wilson was asked to present in two sessions with audiences of about 500 and 300 people, respectively.

A story map is a simple yet powerful way to engage an audience that combines interactive maps, data, text, graphics and images. Story maps have become a major focus of Esri, the industry leader in GIS technology. CLEAR’s story map, called Connecticut’s Changing Landscape, highlights information from the 25-year land cover series produced at CLEAR. See the winning story map at the link: http://s.uconn.edu/ctstory
2015 Augustus and Charles Storrs Award Recipient

When Norman Freyer graduated in 1958 from the University of Connecticut, he could not have imagined the places his degree would take him and Winnie, his wife and fellow Norwich native.

Mr. Freyer originally intended to become a veterinarian, but when a vet school was not established in the state, he decided to change course. His advisor, Prof. Charles Helmbolt, urged him to major in poultry science with Prof. E.P. Singsen and minor in agricultural economics, under the direction of Professor Stanley Seaver. The combination, said Mr. Freyer in a phone interview from his home in Homosassa, Florida, “molded me in the way I would go.”

Mr. Freyer's first job was with Eastern States Farmers’ Exchange, which later joined with GLF to form Agway, Inc. He was placed in charge of a grow-out poultry operation in Willimantic, with over 14 million broilers and thousands of other birds. It was the beginning of a successful career in animal health that took the Freyers around the country and, in Mr. Freyer’s case, to leadership in sales, marketing, product management and business development on an international level.

With a resume that includes senior positions at Ciba/Gland-o-Lac Animal Health, E.R. Squibb & Sons Animal Health and Solvay Animal Health, a division of Solvay S.A. Brussels, Norman Freyer put his technical and interpersonal skills to good use. Always on the cutting edge of technology, as the director of new product development at Solvay Animal Health in Minnesota, Mr. Freyer implemented a new system using Microsoft project management software and used outside resources to conduct project management training for all levels of executives in the company, with the goal of efficiently coordinating research and marketing activities in the launch of innovative products.

After retiring in 1997, the Freyers moved to Florida, where he began a new career as an artist. Taking courses at the Withlacoochee Technical Institute, he honed his talent for watercolor painting. His work is shown at norman-freyer.artistwebsites.com. Mr. Freyer donated one of his paintings to the first UCAHNRAA auction, reconnecting with the College and with his college friend, Herm Weingart, who long ago had helped him move to Woodward House, which became Alpha Gamma Rho.

Norman and Winnie Freyer have created an endowment that provides scholarships inspired partly by Mr. Freyer’s own story. He received two scholarships, one from Sears Roebuck and another from Berkman Grain. “Those scholarships saved me and allowed me to finish my last semester,” he said. The endowment also supports agribusiness and animal health programs.

After a recent visit from Dean Gregory J. Weidemann and Director of Development Amy Chesmer, Mr. and Mrs. Freyer summarized their feelings about the Charles and Augustus Storrs Award in this way:

“Receiving the Storrs Award was a surprise and humbling to both of us. Attaining success in one’s chosen field does not occur by happenstance. The cornerstones of such success are the opportunities provided by a good education. I was indeed fortunate to graduate from the University of Connecticut with an education that prepared me for entry into the corporate world. In the future there will be many qualified individuals who may not be privileged to attend the University of Connecticut because of insufficient resources. This endowment will provide for financial help through educational scholarships. Further, it is expected that there will be need of support for the study of future agribusiness/animal health programs. We continue to have a ready willingness to share some of our good fortune through an agribusiness endowment to achieve these objectives. ‘Learning for a Sustainable Future’ should remain the theme for the future.”

Norman and Winnie Freyer enjoy their lives in Florida, but have not forgotten the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources and the faculty and friends who helped them lay the foundation for success. Now they are giving back to future generations.
For twenty-seven years, Dr. Patricia Jepson has been dedicated to the UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources Office of Academic Programs (OAP). She has coached faculty and staff and directly advised students.

As Advisory Center director, Dr. Jepson takes a big picture view of advising in the College and at the University. Her detail-oriented approach, breadth of knowledge and general sense of fairness has led to her advocating for policy changes that improve the advising function. Dr. Jepson and OAP have provided leadership in proposing options to the University Senate for by-law changes that will result in greater fairness for students across the University and will help ensure timely campus changes so that students can progress to degree with a smooth and seamless transition.

In addition to advising, Dr. Jepson is the OAP resource for secondary school agricultural science and oversees the admissions process for the Ratcliffe Hicks School of Agriculture. Dr. Jepson attends state meetings of high school instructors and keeps them updated on changes in the College and University, and she represents the dean on the State Agriculture Consulting Committee, which makes recommendations for program improvement. Dr. Jepson is also the primary contact for the community college and regional campus advisors.

Dr. Jepson’s high level of commitment to the College and its academic programs demonstrates that she engages with her responsibilities as a lifestyle rather than just a job. She is the “go-to” person for institutional knowledge and insight concerning all manner of student-centric rules and regulations.

UCAHNRAA EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD Cristian Schulthess, Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture

Cristian Schulthess, a soil chemist and associate professor in the Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture, is an outstanding classroom teacher and graduate student mentor. In 2014, he was recognized by Provost Mun Choi and Vice Provost Sally Reis for SET scores that placed him among the select group of university faculty who excel in teaching. Dr. Schulthess has been successful in creating student enthusiasm around soil and soil chemistry, and that is related to the time and effort he devotes to student learning. He finds ways to combine lessons with fun activities, such as using knowledge from class to solve a mock crime on Horsebarn Hill.

Dr. Schulthess wrote the textbook that he uses in the Soil Chemistry Components course, and he has developed a number of software programs that he uses in laboratory exercises to assist students in understanding specific concepts of analytical processes. In total, Dr. Schulthess has developed seven software packages for research and educational use, and these programs are also downloaded by users outside the University.

The undergraduate and graduate students that Dr. Schulthess mentors are always extremely well trained and they greatly appreciate the interest and concern he shows for their educational and skill development. His passion for soil science and his high regard for education translate into a non-stop commitment to improve the educational experience for his students.

UCAHNRAA OUTSTANDING PHYSICAL THERAPY PROFESSIONAL Mike Ryan

Mr. Mike Ryan earned his degree in physical therapy from UConn in 1988. After graduation, he began his career in the National Football League as an assistant athletic trainer/physical therapist with the New York Giants. His time with the Giants included a Super Bowl title in 1990. In 1994, he became the head athletic trainer/physical therapist for the newly formed Jacksonville Jaguars. For 20 years he served in this role until his retirement from the NFL in 2014.

During his tenure in the NFL, Mr. Ryan served on numerous committees and advisory boards. He was president of the Professional Football Athletic Trainers Society’s (PFATS) Research and Education Foundation for 14 years and also filled leadership roles on the NFL Foot and Ankle Committee, NFL Collegiate Athletic Trainers Committee and Sports Concussion Medical Advisory Board. In 2008, Mr. Ryan served as a volunteer athletic trainer and physical therapist at the
United States Olympic Training Center, assisting staff and athletes prior to the 2008 summer Olympics. In addition, he has served on the Korey Stringer Institute Medical and Science Advisory Board since 2009. For his work, Mr. Ryan has been recognized with various awards, including the 2004 Thomas J. Pike Athletic Training Alumni Award (UConn) and the 2015 PFATS Alumni of the Year Award.

In July, 2014, Mr. Ryan joined NBC Sports as sports medicine analyst and is currently president of Mike Ryan Sports Medicine, Inc. Mr. Ryan, an avid fitness advocate and extreme sports enthusiast, is a six-time Ironman triathlete.

**UCAHNRAA OUTSTANDING KINESIOLOGY PROFESSIONAL**

**Dino Costanzo**

Mr. Dino Costanzo received his BS in recreational therapy in 1981 and his master’s in exercise science in 1986. Currently, Mr. Costanzo is manager of employee health and wellness for Hartford HealthCare.

Mr. Costanzo has been an exceptional leader in the fields of kinesiology, health promotion and clinical exercise science for over 30 years. Most noteworthy is his involvement with the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), the most prestigious exercise science and sports medicine professional organization in the world. He was awarded Fellowship status by the ACSM in 2006 for extraordinary service he provided the college as well as for his scholarly achievements. He has served on the ACSM Committee on Certification and Registry Boards. In 2003, Mr. Costanzo was selected as a recipient of the New England Chapter of the ACSM Honor Award. He has also received two significant certifications offered by the ACSM—a Preventative and Rehabilitative Program Director and Registered Clinical Exercise Physiologist.

In addition to his extraordinary work with the ACSM, Mr. Costanzo has held leadership positions in other important professional societies, including the Clinical Exercise Physiology Association, American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation, Connecticut Society for Cardiac Rehabilitation and American Heart Association. He has proven to be an agent of change within these organizations, having significant impact on policies, structure and function that have directed business in the field. It is the respect people have for Mr. Costanzo’s integrity and honesty that allow business to be advanced under his leadership.

Mr. Costanzo’s outstanding efforts have been recognized with numerous awards, including the Connecticut Society of Cardiac Rehabilitation Achievement Award, the American College of Sports Medicine Healthy People 2000 Physical Activity Promotion Award and the American Heart Association National Achievement Award.

**UCAHNRAA DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD**

**Dr. Kwang-Siung (Charles) Ling**

Dr. Ling received his MS in agricultural economics from CAHNR in 1970, and he received his PhD in agricultural economics in 1973.

Dr. Ling retired as an agricultural economist from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on January 3, 2015. During his career at USDA, Dr. Ling was essential to USDA’s mission to foster the understanding and use of dairy cooperatives. For nearly 40 years, his research and technical assistance work provided valuable information to the nation’s dairy cooperatives to facilitate their service to their farmer-members.

Dr. Ling developed and maintained the database on the nation’s dairy cooperatives, surveying and reporting on the marketing operations of dairy cooperatives at five-year intervals. He also created historical series from the last 50 years of Marketing Operations of Dairy Cooperatives survey data, which he summarized in concise tables for presentation on the Cooperative Program’s website. These data are frequently referenced by the dairy industry.

In addition, Dr. Ling conducted wide-ranging research on issues that impact the operations of dairy cooperatives. He authored 26 research reports and conducted 64 technical assistance reports during his tenure with USDA.

In addition to his research and technical assistance work, Dr. Ling interpreted and commented on agency-related issues being discussed in Congress. He also regularly prepared briefing and presentation materials for the USDA Rural Development offices of the Deputy Administrator, Administrator and Under Secretary and the Secretary of Agriculture. In 1985, Dr. Ling received the USDA Award for Superior Service, and in 2010, he was recognized as the USDA Economist of the Year.
Polo Team Photo. Top: Demitra Hajimihalis, Jessica Riemann, Anders Carlton, Carly Persano, Tessa Kell, Sara Tufts
Bottom: Kevin Quan, Patrick Marinelli, Andrew Gale, Madelyn Kruger, Lauren Pfahler, Kathleen Moriarty, Benjamin Lynch
UConn Polo—a Tradition of Champions
By Pam Chudzik

Drew Gale took his first horseback riding lesson when he was in second grade, and right away he knew he was hooked. Then, in junior high school, he was introduced to the game of polo— and he’s been playing ever since. Now a junior majoring in turfgrass horticulture, Gale serves as president and captain of the UConn polo team. This is a job, he explains, that is a lot of work. “But it’s a lot of work I like doing.”

Gale and his teammates practice twice each week for three hours at a time. In addition, they are responsible for ensuring that the ponies get daily exercise, and on game days they prepare the horses for play. This is a commitment Gale takes seriously, along with educating people about the sport.

Collegiate polo is played in an indoor arena. Three riders per team play four periods—called chukkers—of seven and a half minutes each. Home teams are responsible for providing all twelve ponies for a game, with teams alternating ponies each chukker to prevent a horse advantage for the hosting school.

The UConn polo team operates as a club sport, and the horses they ride are donated by alumni to the UConn Department of Animal Science. Students from the department participate in the daily care of the animals, and the head of the department, Professor Steven Zinn, serves as the faculty advisor to the team.

Gale adds that polo also brings the camaraderie that comes with being on a team, which is made up of four men and ten women this year.

Sara Tufts has been a member of the women’s team since her arrival at UConn as a freshman. She is now a junior majoring in animal science. Like Gale, Tufts brings a lot of experience to the team; she started playing polo at ten years old, and she played in both junior high and high school. Playing this sport has taught her many things, including how to work with others. “You really need to trust and communicate with your teammates, since only three people play at a time,” says Tufts. “Polo has given me a real understanding of what teamwork is.” Polo has also provided Tufts with friends from all over the country, she says, because polo is a small community. Tufts hopes to see some of those friends this spring when UConn hosts the United States Polo Association Collegiate National Championships. The tournament will be held in the Horsebarn Hill Arena for the second consecutive year. Eight to ten teams will arrive in Storrs in April to compete for the title. UConn is aiming for a bid in the tournament and is hoping to add to the strong tradition of its program, which holds three men’s national championships and seven women’s.

“We are fortunate to have the opportunity to host nationals, largely thanks to Dr. Zinn. It is a privilege to have a nice facility and to host so many teams for this event,” says Tufts. Zinn, faculty advisor to the team, agrees. “Not only do we have a great team, but we have a nationally recognized facility. The entire University supported our efforts in hosting nationals last year.”

Coach Jon Nicholson also knows that hosting the tournament will bring both national and international attention to the program, which began in 1969. With one of the premier facilities in the nation, he is looking forward to showcasing the arena, the program and UConn. “We have a strong team and one of the older clubs in the country. We are looking forward to hosting nationals again here at UConn.”

Until then, Nicholson will be preparing the players to face off in regular season competition. He hopes that families will come out to experience the excitement of polo and emphasizes that all are welcome to cheer on the team at matches at Horsebarn Hill Arena throughout the season as well as during the national championships this spring.

To see the polo team in action, watch UConn Polo—the Best of the Best.
ALUMNI IN THE NEWS

Johnson Receives Award
Evan Johnson ’08 MA, ’14 PhD (Kinesiology) received the 2015 Young Investigator Award at the Hydration 4 Health conference, held in France this past summer. Johnson and Stavros Kavouras, associate professor of exercise science at the University of Arkansas, worked with patients with type 2 diabetes and found that dehydration negatively affected their ability to regulate blood glucose. Johnson is currently an assistant professor of exercise physiology at the University of Wyoming.

Horan Named Tree Warden
Robert Horan ’81 BS (Environmental Horticulture) has taken over as the tree warden for the town of Canaan. Horan is a state-licensed arborist and is also owner of Pauley Tree and Lawn Care.

Chiu Named SVP for Advancement at Babson
Edward Chiu ’94 BS (Marketing) ’96 MA (Kinesiology) has been named senior vice president for advancement at Babson College, where he will lead development, alumni and friends and advancement communications teams. He will also serve as a member of the president’s cabinet. Prior to joining Babson College, Chiu served as vice chancellor for university advancement at the University of Massachusetts Lowell.

Gumkowski Named Vice President
John Gumkowski ’81 BS (Natural Resources Conservation) has been named regional vice president for Delta Dental of New Jersey. In this role, Gumkowski will be responsible for the company’s new business development in Connecticut. He has been with Delta Dental since 1994, serving in various roles and positions within the company.

Gambino Named Animal Control Officer
Gina Gambino ’06 AAS (Animal Science) has been selected as Westport’s new animal control officer. Gambino holds National Animal Control Association certification and DEEP Wildlife Control certification. Prior to this appointment, she held a similar post in Bridgeport. Gambino also received the Hurricane Sandy Assistance Award for shelter evacuation efforts.
Recently, Jamie Woodside started a new job within the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA FSIS), but she says her life is not just about the occupation. She likes to be an active volunteer and use her expertise to help others. For example, Woodside is on the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health’s Food Safety Advisory Committee. This group discusses and makes recommendations to the Department of Public Health on food safety and issues related to food protection, including regulations, procedures, special issues and concerns from federal, state, local, industry and consumer perspectives. Here is what she said in an interview.

What was your major in the College? When did you graduate? With what degree? In 2007, I received a BS in animal science.

What class was most useful to you? I think of three courses, animal food products, principles of poultry science and food microbiology and safety. The last one was the most useful in what I do now, but all of them helped me see that animal science is broader than I originally thought. I discovered that an animal science background is extremely versatile and offers career opportunities beyond farming and veterinary science.

Tell us some of your fond memories of UConn. I love UConn Dairy Bar ice cream, especially mint chocolate chip milkshakes when the chips sink to the bottom. During my undergraduate tenure, I enjoyed working at the dairy and horse barns, including milking the cows and caring for the horses. In addition, I spent time hanging out on Horsebarn Hill sledding, walking and watching sunsets. Attending UConn athletic events, such as the women’s and men’s basketball games at Gampel Pavilion, was fun, too.

Please describe your current job. I have held several positions with USDA FSIS since 2010, including one year in Washington, D.C., at headquarters in the Outreach and Partnership division developing outreach and education materials for consumers, academia, industry, FSIS employees and other stakeholders in regards to food safety principles. Now, I am concluding the training phase of a new position within the organization. I work in Recall Management and Technical Analysis, which means I orchestrate recalls of USDA-regulated food products across the country.

I participate in investigating contamination incidents and foodborne illness outbreaks, and I speak to producers about voluntary recalls. In addition, I encourage the development and implementation of new food science technologies and new inspection methods. Because this is a nationwide position, Washington, D.C., is my headquarters, but I work out of Hartford. My work has a wide scope. So far in 2015, we had 124 recalls.

Are you doing what you imagined you would be doing at this point in your life? Initially, I wanted to be a veterinarian. Therefore, I chose my UConn major based on a desire to get into vet school. During my second year of college, I discovered opportunities in food science, which suited my interests better.

Do you have any advice for current students that will help them in the future? 1) Don’t be close-minded. 2) Take all the opportunities you can, such as an internship, to help you get an idea of what you would like to do. 3) Work hard. 4) Get involved in groups that interest you and are similar to your career path. 5) Check out https://www.usajobs.gov to find out about all sorts of jobs that you could do in the federal government with a CAHNR major.

Is there anything else you would like us to know about you? I visit campus to speak to students at CAHNR Career Night and in classes. I assist with the UConn Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) course for meat and poultry processors, which takes place in Storrs approximately twice per year. This course is designed to provide the processor with a basic understanding of food safety principles and the USDA FSIS regulations as they relate to designing an adequate food safety system.

I attended the course in 2007 as an undergraduate, and I have been assisting with the course as a guest lecturer since 2011. I teach the regulatory requirements pertaining to USDA FSIS meat and poultry processing to individuals attending the course. They travel to UConn from other states in New England, New York and Pennsylvania to attend. I have a Master of Public Health degree from UConn, which I finished in 2015.

I think it is important to make time for yourself and achieve a work-life balance. I love the outdoors and being out there with my three dogs. I spend time hiking, snowshoeing and running. In addition, I like to bake, especially apple pies.
PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Stormwise

by Pam Chudzik

Connecticut is one of the most densely populated states in the country. It is also one of the most forested. While the forests are an important part of the habitat and character of Connecticut, the trees become an issue for home and business owners when they fall and disrupt daily life. This is referred to as “tree failure,” and is responsible for 90 percent of power outages. Back-to-back storms in 2011—as well as a number of additional catastrophic storms in recent years—prompted a closer look at our power supply and ways to keep the lights on.

With support from CL&P (now Eversource), the Stormwise program was created within the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, involving the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment and the Department of Extension. It is a collaborative initiative that grew from the need for strategies to increase the resilience of our power supply and to reduce the risk of tree damage during storms. The program focuses on researching tree failure and tree resilience, managing roadside forests and educating communities.

Stormwise research began in the UConn Forest tract that runs along power lines leading to the Fenton River. Trees there were outfitted with devices that measure and record tree sway. Then, based on factors such as tree age, species, overall health and root system, trees in the forest were selectively thinned. This left room for remaining trees to grow broader rather than just taller. It also exposed them to increased wind on a daily basis, allowing the trees to grow more wind resistant over time. Data regarding tree sway could then be compared to baseline data gathered prior to removing trees.

Stormwise is currently operating three such research locations throughout the state. The research done at these sites is combined with additional research and LIDAR work to devise the Stormwise approach to forest management along roadside power lines, a long-term approach that goes beyond traditional roadside trimming. It considers all trees within striking distance of power lines—as far as 100 feet from the road—removing hazardous trees as necessary and improving storm resilience of forest edges. As a result, roadside maintenance is necessary only every 15 years, rather than the 3-5 year cycle necessary with traditional trimming. Importantly, throughout the management process, the habitat and beauty of the forest is maintained, and downed trees can be used for local products.

Forest edges vary greatly from town to town throughout Connecticut. Therefore, management recommendations will also vary across the state. Stormwise is working to create ten demonstration sites throughout Connecticut, with the goal of conducting outreach and education programs for town officials, tree wardens and conservation groups. John Volin, head of the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment, explains that Stormwise is working to have “the right tree in the right place,” with the ultimate goal of decreasing the number of power outages and improving recovery time when power does go out.

In addition to the work being done in CAHNR, the UConn School of Engineering has been involved in the effort through the development of a model that predicts storm damage and resulting power outages. Most recently, Stormwise has become part of the efforts at the new Eversource Energy Center at UConn. The center, which will be housed in the new Technology Park, will cross disciplines as it works to study and improve the state’s power infrastructure.

Volin emphasizes that effectively implementing Stormwise management is a long-term process with results that can be far-reaching and long lasting. Stormwise and its collaborators will continue to work towards “Resilient Trees. Resilient Power.”
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— Bailey McNichol
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Heat stroke is a matter of life and death
By Patsy Evans

While running a race, teenager Douglas Casa suffered from an exertional heat stroke (EHS) and collapsed. The immediate treatment he received preserved his life and propelled him toward a career of helping others who fall prey to this ailment.

Now, a professor in the Department of Kinesiology and the chief operating officer of the Korey Stringer Institute (KSI), Casa conducts research and educates athletics, the military and industry about preventing and treating EHS.

KSI bears the name of a former Minnesota Vikings football player, Korey Stringer. While attending a 2001 training camp, Stringer suffered from EHS and lost consciousness, but his situation was not as fortunate as Casa’s. Stringer died the next day. In 2010, Stringer’s widow worked with the National Football League and Casa to found the Institute. The Department of Kinesiology, which Casa calls “a hosting home for a lasting legacy,” houses KSI.

Casa gets satisfaction from EHS research and education because he knows from personal experience that it can be a matter of life and death. “As part of my efforts to maximize health and safety during intense...
exercise in the heat, I have helped save 185 people who were suffering EHS at events or practices in which I was providing clinical care,” Casa said.

Organizations and companies as diverse as Gatorade and General Electric partner with Casa and his fellow scientists to preserve life. Casa manages corporate donations to KSI that total over $1.2 million in the last five years. This is in addition to $1.5 million in research grants for the same period.

EHS can strike all kinds of people who exert themselves in high heat conditions. Those at risk include amateur and professional athletes of all ages and levels, soldiers in the military and industrial workers, such as those on construction sites.

The basis for an EHS diagnosis is a core body temperature of over 105 degrees with accompanying symptoms of central nervous system dysfunction, such as collapse or altered consciousness. Medical providers measure temperature with a rectal thermistor, a kind of thermometer that indicates minute changes in temperature, or an ingestible thermometer pill that sends data wirelessly for real-time monitoring purposes.

Recognizing the symptoms and immediately intervening with appropriate treatment that rapidly reduces body temperature within 30 minutes is crucial to assure survival. Based on his research, Casa advocates cooling the patient in an ice bath and then transporting him or her to a hospital. He once treated a competitive runner whose core temperature was 112 degrees. She survived EHS without complication.

According to Casa, the work of KSI has five main components: athlete testing, research, education, policy changes and mass media outreach.

Some thermoregulation, hydration and athlete performance testing takes place in a heat chamber lab in Gampel Pavilion. Other studies happen at athletic events. For example, 30 of Casa’s team members attended the New Balance Falmouth Road Race in August to conduct research and provide clinical care to approximately 10 to 15 runners that had EHS. The data gathered helps the researchers understand how fast the athletes cool down and what factors may have predisposed them to EHS.

KSI quickly disseminates research findings to make a difference in places where EHS is most likely to occur. The Institute has given Casa a platform to bring his educational message to decision makers at the top levels. He has advised elite athletes involved with the World Cup, Summer Olympics, Super Bowl and more.

“My most rewarding work is with the US military where I can influence the health and safety of an extremely large number of individuals,” he said. The Pentagon rewrote its heat stroke policies as a result of Casa’s efforts.

High school football is another area where policies are changing and athletic trainers and coaches have greater awareness of the risks.

Currently, 14 U.S. states meet the Korey Stringer Institute minimum guidelines for heat acclimatization. KSI statistics show zero deaths from EHS in those states. This has saved more than 20 lives in the last four years, according to Casa’s estimates. In Connecticut, as mandated by the Connecticut Association of Schools, all secondary schools adopted the KSI guidelines for heat acclimatization by August 2013. Since then, there are no reported deaths from EHS in Connecticut.

Another big component of the current KSI mission is reaching out to mass media. To get the word out, Casa does podcasts and webinars and appears as a guest expert. He enthusiastically spreads the message about the prevention of sudden death to anyone who will listen. TED-Ed heeds the call. USA Today, Sports Illustrated and the New York Times pay attention. ESPN, NBC and ABC know. As a result, Casa is one of the most quoted UConn researchers, according to Colin Poitras, a university relations associate in university communications.

It seems that EHS was and is a life and death matter to Casa, and it shows.
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