The University announced in July the selection of Thomas Dorer as its new general counsel and secretary. Dorer comes to the University of Hartford from West Virginia University, where he was general counsel for the past five years. He succeeds Charles Condon, who retired after 38 years of service to the University.

“I am delighted we have been able to attract someone of Tom Dorer’s caliber to such an important leadership position at the University,” said President Harrison. “He has an unmatched combination of education and experience in education and education law.”

The departure on June 1 of Provost Donna Randall to become president of Albion College, a liberal arts school in Michigan, left an empty chair on the academic side that has been temporarily filled by Joseph Voelker, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Voelker is now interim provost of the University, and longtime faculty member Harry Workman, professor of chemistry, is serving as interim dean of A&S, both for the 2007–08 academic year. A search committee has begun identifying candidates for the provost position.
FRESHMEN ROOSTING IN NEW RESIDENCE FACILITY THIS FALL

Where once students wore a path through the woods as a shortcut from their dorms to the Hog River bridge, a five-story brick and glass beauty now stands. Tall and slender, it rises from the new Alumni Plaza like a large ship, its bow pointing toward the bridge.

To introduce the new building to faculty and staff, President Walter Harrison invited them to join him for a Hawk Hall sleepover the evening of Mon., Aug. 13. Approximately 30 members of the University community gathered in the first-floor lounge for an informal dinner before joining Harrison on an evening stroll through the residential side of campus. Fourteen people, including the president and regent Robert K. Killian Jr., spent the night.

Roz Reaback ’77, a sleepover participant and director of major and leadership gifts at the University, was clearly impressed with the new facility, saying, “I’m proud that the University has a showcase dorm like this.”

This newest facility on campus is a “residential learning community” in which each wing of the building houses students with a shared focus. Faculty and staff associates are assigned to each wing and will develop special programming related to the corresponding themes throughout the academic year. The top floor’s theme is leadership. Wings on the other floors are dedicated to honors; environmental awareness; women in science, engineering, and technology; wellness; cultural exploration; and Hawk spirit.

Officially christened Hawk Hall by faculty and staff, it is home to 204 first-year students, sharing 102 rooms, and 8 resident assistants. Lounge areas on each floor have floor-to-ceiling windows, offering panoramic views of the campus in all directions. The main floor includes a spacious lounge with a large, flat-screen TV as well as two “smart” classrooms and a kitchen.

“Hawk Hall was designed to encourage maximum interaction among first-year students,” says Irwin Nussbaum, associate vice president and director of residential life. “Students who don’t feel connected to their school through friends and common experiences are less likely to continue their studies at the University.”

Competition for rooms in Hawk Hall was stiff. First-year students who wished to live there were required to write an essay about their special-interest topic when they applied. Residents were selected based on the quality of the essays.

Windows on the west side of the building overlook Alumni Plaza, a new gathering place for students. Just across the plaza, the Hawk’s Nest is being transformed with multiple TV screens and an ESPN-like decorating theme.

“I live in the Hawk spirit wing,” says Michelle Babin ’11, a member of the Hawks women’s soccer team. “It’s really beautiful. Dean [of Students and Vice President of Student Affairs] Lee Peters is organizing a pep rally for our wing when everyone has moved in. I can tell it’s going to be a fun place to live.”

Beyond Feng Shui
UNIVERSITY OFFERS FIRST COURSE IN ELEMENTARY CHINESE

In response to requests from students and a general awareness of China’s increasing importance, the University is offering its first course in elementary Mandarin Chinese this fall semester. “We are very happy and excited to be offering this new course in Chinese,” says Jane Horvath, associate dean of curriculum and academic planning in the College of Arts and Sciences. “The initial inquiry about the course came from Barney [School], but students from across the campus have enrolled.”

The course introduces the Pinyin pronunciation system, the fundamentals of written characters, basic sentence structure, grammar, and beginning conversational skills. Additional materials on Chinese culture and the Chinese language are made available.

Feng Zhou, the instructor for the course, has taught Chinese at Boston University and Miss Porter’s School in Farmington, Conn. He has a bachelor’s from Shanghai International Studies University and a master’s from Central Connecticut State University.
In the Cool of the Night

Hartford and The Hartt School had a reason to be proud on an evening last July when two local jazz musicians opened the 16th Annual Greater Hartford Festival of Jazz in Bushnell Park.

Steve Davis ’89 came to Hartford 22 years ago to study jazz with Jackie McLean and adopted Hartford as his home. He is now a well-known trombonist, composer, band leader, and teacher at the Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz at the University of Hartford. At the jazz festival, Davis premiered selections from The Hartford Suite, a composition showcasing his love for Hartford and inspired by its people. One piece, “Uncle Moshe,” honors Moshe Paranov, a co-founder of The Hartt School. Davis is still developing the material and hopes to record it next year.

Davis and his group closed with “Mission,” a piece he wrote in memory of his mentor, Jackie McLean (Hon. ’07), who died in 2006, and McLean’s wife, Dollie (Hon. ’07). It celebrates their artistic and educational contributions to the city over the past 30 years. “Mission” will be available on Davis’s forthcoming release, Smooth.

The Jimmy Greene Quartet, led by Jimmy Greene ’89, joined Davis on the opening night of the festival. Greene, a globe-trotting saxophonist, is a Hartford native and teaches alongside Davis at the Jackie McLean Institute at The Hartt School.

Orchestrating Outreach

MAKING THE PERFORMING ARTS MORE ACCESSIBLE TO A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Mark George, a pianist, educator, and administrator, has been selected as the new director of The Hartt School’s Community Division. George comes to the University from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he held the post of director of distance learning. In that position he was a national leader in adapting interactive videoconference technologies for music performance and teaching, and developed a number of innovative arts outreach programs.

“I am so pleased to come to a community that cares deeply about its young people,” George said. “The Hartt School Community Division has a well-developed national reputation. I am honored to lead the school into a new era.”

George has also held faculty positions at Case Western Reserve University, Mount Union College, and the Baldwin-Wallace College of Conservatory Music. He has a Master of Music from Indiana University and a Doctor of Musical Arts from the Cleveland Institute of Music.

‘Gimme Five’

A volunteer congratulates a contestant as he finishes his competition at the Connecticut Special Olympics Eastern Regional Games in May. For the third year in a row, the University hosted some 1,200 athletes along with coaches, family, friends, and volunteers. Various events were held at the University, Weaver High School, and the Watkinson School. University staff members volunteered in the organizing of the event and, along with students, helped out the day of the games.