Engineering Graduate Wins Top ASME Prize for NASA Project

Michelle Jarzyniecki ’06 spent her final year at the University working on a NASA-funded project called the spacesuit snorkel. That work led to her receiving the top award at the Hartford-area American Society of Mechanical Engineers Senior Paper Night in April. Other schools competing were the University of Connecticut, Trinity College, and Central Connecticut State University.

Jarzyniecki, who worked with Jesse Berube ’06 on the project, helped develop a small breathing device to be used by astronauts preparing for a space walk. The small size of the mask, which provides 100 percent oxygen, allows the astronauts to don their bulky spacesuits while wearing it, thus reducing the time needed to purge their systems of nitrogen prior to a space walk. Ronald Adrezin and Thomas Filburn, associate and assistant professors of mechanical and biomedical engineering in the College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture, served as advisors for the project.

Describing herself as a strong math and science student with a passion for art, Jarzyniecki first attended Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston, where she majored in industrial design.

“After a year and a half, I discovered I wasn’t good at being creative on a deadline,” she says about her transfer to Hartford. “My grandfather was an electrical engineer, and I spent a lot of time with him as I was growing up. I think that influenced me a lot.”

Jarzyniecki graduated in May with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering magna cum laude and with University honors. After completing five summer internships at Pratt & Whitney, she accepted a job there in July in air systems design and integration analysis.

And what about her artistic side? “I took up knitting,” she says with a smile.

Michelle Jarzyniecki ’06 holds the prototype of the spacesuit snorkel she helped develop during her senior year on a NASA-funded project. Photograph courtesy of Hamilton Sundstrand.
New Dean of Graduate Studies Marks a University First

Peter Diffley, who had been associate dean of the graduate school at the University of Notre Dame since 1990, joined the University of Hartford on July 1 as the first full-time dean of graduate studies. He says he understands the challenges facing graduate students. “Some graduate students teach, many take courses at night, and most do research. This presents challenges that full-time undergraduates do not face. It’s my job to help graduate students meet these challenges and to present their point of view within the University.”

The new dean will provide academic, administrative, and fiscal leadership for graduate programs. Working with the collegiate deans, he also will develop and implement policies and procedures to recruit and retain graduate students.

“Graduate students play a central role at the University of Hartford. They catalyze faculty scholarship, serve as role models to undergraduates, and upon graduation, become important members of our community,” says Diffley. “As dean of graduate studies, my job is to be an advocate for these students and for the programs that train them. I can’t wait to get started.”

Diffley received a Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Massachusetts and was a postdoctoral fellow at the Yale Medical School before joining the faculty at Notre Dame in 1984. He is a co-author with Joseph Russo of Paying for Graduate School Without Going Broke (Princeton Review, 2004) and has published extensively on the consequences of experimental infections with human pathogens. Diffley is also an executive committee member and past chair of the Association of Graduate Schools in Catholic Colleges and Universities and of the Midwest Association of Graduate Schools.

First Regents’ Honor Awards for Graduate Students

Eight graduate students from across the University were the first to receive Regents’ Honor Awards for Graduate Students at a reception following the second annual Graduate Research and Creativity Symposium in May. Chairman of the Board of Regents Peter Eio presented the awards. Pictured above (l–r) are award winners Cheryl-Ann Resha and Minna Choi with Chairman Eio, Provost Donna Randall, award winner Ellen Voth, President Walter Harrison, and award winner Lori Bindig. Also winners but not pictured: Apurup Reddy Chevuru, Stephanie DiPaola, Michelle Silva, and Richard Wojtowicz.
The Legacy of Hartford College for Women

WOMEN’S EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP CONTINUE IN NEW FORMS

“This is an exciting time for women’s education at the University of Hartford,” said University President Walter Harrison about progress made in developing two components of Hartford College for Women’s legacy—the Women’s Education and Leadership Fund (WELFund) and the Center for Professional Development.

The Women’s Education and Leadership Fund will provide grants to faculty, staff, and students who propose new initiatives that support women’s education and leadership across the University.

WELFund is headed up by Jennifer Sanborn, who joined the University in late July from Wheaton College in Massachusetts, where she developed innovative women’s programming and partnered with faculty to develop curriculum content emphasizing diversity.

“Jennifer’s experience, energy, and commitment to women’s education and empowerment make her the perfect choice for this position,” said WELFund board chair Lucille Nickerson.

Sanborn earned her bachelor’s degree from Eastern University in Pennsylvania and a master’s degree in higher education from Syracuse University.

“I look forward with great enthusiasm to working with faculty, staff, and students to explore the opportunities for women’s education and leadership initiatives at the University that WELFund will provide,” said Sanborn.

Also part of the HCW legacy, the Center for Professional Development (formerly The Career Counseling Center), led by Director Gail Champlin, is implementing plans to increase its business and enhance its marketing strategies. One of the results of this work was a decision, approved in April by President Harrison, to change its name to the Center for Professional Development. The new name better describes its mission of community outreach through career counseling, continuing education, job training, and support.

“The Center for Professional Development and the WELFund will assure a bright future that will be a fitting legacy to a wonderful institution, Hartford College for Women,” said President Harrison in announcing the initiatives.

Hundreds of families came to campus on April 8 for a day of performances, kids’ activities, exhibits, book signings, and a firsthand look at everything the University has to offer. Next year’s fifth annual Community Day will be held on Sat., April 21, 2007.

Students in Premier Program Receive Downbeat Award

One student and one new alumnus of The Hartt School’s music production and technology program were recognized in the June 2006 issue of Downbeat magazine.

Shane McMahon ’07 and Robert Murray ’06 won the Best Engineered Studio Recording category in the magazine’s prestigious Annual Student Music Awards. They received the award for their recording of a studio performance by Assistant Professor Steve Davis’s Advanced Ensemble from the Jackie McLean Institute of Jazz at Hartt.
Sheehan Gets First Ace on PGA Tour at Buick Championship

Patrick Sheehan ’92 watched his ball roll into the cup on the fifth green at the Tournament Players Club at River Highlands golf course, giving him his first hole-in-one since joining the PGA Tour in 2003. Sheehan was playing in the second round of the Buick Championship in Cromwell, Conn., on June 30. His ace earned him a $20,550 Rolex watch from Lux Bond & Green. Asked about winning the Rolex, Sheehan said, “I’m scared to wear the thing. I’m afraid I’m going to lose it.”

Also participating in the tournament were fellow alumni and Hartford golf team members Jerry Kelly ’89 and Tim Petrovic ’88.

U.S. Losing Competitive Edge in Sciences and Engineering

William C. Harris, a 2006 Rogow Distinguished Visiting Lecturer, addressed an audience at Wilde Auditorium in March. He warned the group that the United States must adopt a greater sense of urgency in training the next generation of scientists and engineers.

“America and Connecticut need a new attitude toward their competitive position,” said Harris, the founding director general of Science Foundation Ireland and the founding CEO of Science Foundation Arizona. “We need the same sense of urgency that we had after the Sputnik launch.” Harris was referring to the 1957 launch of the world’s first artificial satellite by the then Soviet Union.

Emphasizing the importance of education, Harris suggested that American colleges and universities need to get more involved with K–12 education. He praised the University for its role in the development of the University High School of Science and Engineering, which opened on the Asylum Avenue campus in 2004.

$600,000 Anonymous Grant to Fund Groundbreaking Master’s Program

The University has received a $600,000 anonymous grant to fund a new master’s degree program in the College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions. It is the only such program offered in the state of Connecticut and one of only two available in New England.

The program will train educators to use new technology that allows greater numbers of children to hear and speak more normally. One such device is the cochlear implant, a complex wireless electronic device that is implanted in the skull of profoundly deaf or seriously hard-of-hearing adults and children. With technological advances that allow health care professionals to identify hearing loss from as early as birth, the program focuses on the needs of young children, their teachers, and their families.

The Soundbridge School in Wethersfield, Conn., will be the University’s partner in this innovative program. A regional school of the Hartford-area Capital Region Education Council, Soundbridge provides a variety of educational programs for children with hearing loss and will serve as a learning and laboratory site for our students. The Aural Habilitation and Education of Hearing-Impaired Children program will enroll its first cohort of candidates in the summer 2007 semester.

“This program is a perfect example of bringing together an institution of higher education, a community-based organization, and a private philanthropic organization to meet a need in the community,” says Fred Switzer, acting dean of ENHP. “It provides better services to children and makes our students better teachers. It also helps all of our students and faculty understand the needs of a wider range of children.”