Has It Been a While Since You Visited Campus?

A clear fall day gave us the opportunity to get a bird’s-eye view of the campus, including two relatively new additions—the Mort and Irma Handel Performing Arts Center and University High School of Science and Engineering.
Tajikistan—a small, landlocked, and almost completely mountainous country in Central Asia—shares its borders with Afghanistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. Like its neighbors Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, Tajikistan was part of the Soviet Union prior to 1991. Now a republic, it is home to approximately 7.5 million people, 95 percent of whom are Sunni Muslims.

Ibragimdzhon (Ibrahim) Rustamov, the University of Hartford’s first Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellow, grew up in the ancient town of Isfara in northern Tajikistan, an important 10th-century stop on the Silk Road to China. Fluent in Tajik, Farsi, Russian, and English, Rustamov graduated with distinction from Khujand State University in 2002 with bachelor’s and master’s degrees in English and Farsi. He is currently enrolled in the Master of Education in Educational Technology program here at the University, studying with Professor Rick King.

“In my country, we are being left behind. Technology is advancing, but teachers don’t use the Internet to teach,” says Rustamov. “Now I am studying how to use 21st-century technologies, such as Interactive Whiteboard and various Web 2.0 applications, effectively.”

Rustamov learned about the Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellowship from U.S. embassy staff in Tajikistan’s capital city of Dushanbe. After several attempts in recent years, he became one of the 141 recipients—six of whom were from Tajikistan—who were chosen to receive a 2009–10 Muskie Fellowship.

“After I graduated from university, I went back to my hometown and taught English and Farsi,” says Rustamov, “but I kept looking for scholarships to study in an English-speaking country to continue to develop my professional skills. This was always a dream of mine.”

The Edmund S. Muskie Graduate Fellowship program, named for the former secretary of state, U.S. senator, and governor of Maine, is a highly competitive program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State. Established by Congress in 1992, the goal of the Muskie program is to foster democratic and economic reform in the independent states of the former Soviet Union by selecting individuals with the potential to become leaders in their countries.

A secondary-school English teacher from 2002 to 2007, Rustamov also began working for Relief International’s Schools Online (RI-SOL) as an Internet Learning Center educator in Isfara in 2004. RI-SOL is a nonprofit, U.S.-based, international education organization. He served as acting country director of RI-SOL, working with the Ministry of Education in Dushanbe to implement the Global Connections and Exchange program, funded by the ECA. In addition to increasing global educational opportunities by installing Internet access in schools and developing training for teachers and students, RI-SOL provides youth, particularly girls, the opportunity to participate as equals in a global civic education platform.

“I sent my first e-mail in 1998 and I saw at once that technology could change my country,” says Rustamov. “The Internet could connect young people in these remote villages where the schools have only decades-old printed textbooks.”

In addition to taking classes at their respective universities, Muskie Fellows must do 40 hours of community service per year. Rustamov is mentoring 5th-grade students in the Quest Program at Aiken Elementary School in West Hartford, Conn.

“It is my pleasure to give back to my community for the wonderful opportunity to study at the University of Hartford,” he says. He will receive his degree from the University in May 2011.
Thomas Filburn, associate professor of mechanical and biomedical engineering at the University of Hartford, and Ramesh B. Malla, associate professor of geomechanics in civil engineering at the University of Connecticut, learned in October that their proposal for the design of a lunar habitat and life-support system had been selected for research funding by NASA. The proposal was submitted through the Connecticut Space Grant Consortium, of which Filburn is the director. The University of Hartford is the lead institution in the Connecticut Consortium.

Malla is an expert in lunar soil and has worked on lunar structural design. Filburn has worked on various life-support systems for use in space. Students from both universities and a student from Capital Community College in Hartford will assist the two professors on the project.

The proposed project will investigate how integrating the life-support system design into the design of the lunar outpost habitation module can help meet the launch weight limit for the Ares V, the cargo launch component of the Constellation program, and minimize power needs and volume. The three-stage Ares V rocket will provide the necessary propulsion to send supplies to the moon.

Filburn and Malla will receive up to $70,000 in Phase One of three phases of the NASA Ralph Steckler Space Grant Consortium Research and Technology Development Opportunity. The purpose of Phase One, taking place during the current school year, is to establish the scientific and technical merit as well as the feasibility of the project.

NASA will then select four of the most promising projects for Phase Two, which will last two years, and provide up to $250,000 each to fund the research and technology development effort.

During Phase Three, the four projects will receive up to $275,000 each and will be integrated with NASA programs or projects over a two-year period.

The University of Hartford was one of 18 member schools of the National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program to be selected. Other recipients included Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Pennsylvania State University, and Texas Tech University.

Upon learning of NASA’s decision, Filburn discussed the importance of this opportunity for students. “I am excited that University of Hartford students will continue to support NASA research missions. Our students have been collaborating with NASA on interesting and challenging projects for nearly 10 years. This latest grant is evidence of the confidence that NASA has in the ability of our students to produce technically accurate, novel solutions to very difficult engineering tasks.”

Former College of Engineering Dean Dies

Thomas Skipwith “Skip” Lewis, a former dean of the College of Engineering who played a key role in the construction of United Technologies Hall on the University of Hartford campus, died on Oct. 10 at his home in Virginia. He was 72.

Lewis served as dean of the college for 15 years, until he was recruited in the early 1980s by the Hartford Steam Boiler Insurance Company to serve as executive vice president of the firm’s engineering department. During his tenure at the University, Lewis organized and implemented the capital campaign that resulted in the construction of United Technologies Hall.

“Skip Lewis was an outstanding academic dean,” said Charles Condon, former general counsel and secretary of the University of Hartford. “A passionate and effective advocate for the College of Engineering, he was admired and respected by his faculty and by his colleagues in the administration. Skip was one of the most extraordinary human beings I have ever known.”

Back to the Moon and Beyond

UNIVERSITY ONE OF 18 SCHOOLS TO RECEIVE NASA GRANT

An artist’s illustration, provided by NASA, shows possible inflatable buildings for use on the moon.
More than 230 people attended The Hartt School’s annual gala, Hartt Celebrates: The Future of Performing Arts, at the Mort and Irma Handel Performing Arts Center in November. World-renowned flutist Eugenia Zukerman served as mistress of ceremonies for the event, which raised more than $55,000 for Hartt. Guests enjoyed an opening reception and seated dinner; music, dance, and theatre performances by Hartt students; silent and live auctions; and a jazz cabaret-style after-party.

Breakfast Raises Funds for Hartford Scholars

Former Hartford Scholar Anthony Carter ’01, now assistant director of mutual funds at The Hartford, was the emcee of a breakfast celebrating the 19th year of the Hartford Scholars program. The Travelers was the premier sponsor and Aetna was a platinum sponsor of the event, which raised more than $65,000 for the program.

During the breakfast, two current Hartford Scholars received Mayor’s Scholar Awards of $500 each. Peter Stevens, president of J.C. Architecture, and Hartford Mayor Eddie Perez presented the awards to Omar Crosby ’11, who is pursuing a bachelor’s degree in computer engineering technology, and James Ogwu-Weekes ’11, an economics and finance major.

The Mayor’s Scholar Award was created by J.C. Architecture in response to Perez’s initiative to increase the number of city students who attend college. It is funded by J.C. Architecture and Stevens.

At the breakfast Stevens received the first-ever Hartford Scholars Program Leadership Award. The new award honors individuals and companies that have supported the Hartford Scholars program, both financially and through internship and employment opportunities for students.

In addition to the award presentations, the breakfast included remarks from three current Hartford Scholars: Ogwu-Weekes and fellow Hartford Scholars Yashswini Devi Naraidoo ’11 and Aja Wilson ’10, who shared their experiences and successes in the program.

The Hartford Scholars program provides half-tuition scholarships to Hartford residents who graduate from a public high school in Hartford or a Project Choice school and go on to attend the University of Hartford.

Hartt Celebrates!

Hartt School students Peter Scuderi ’12, Patricia Guadagnoli ’11, and Michelle Stockman ’12 were the winners of three cash prizes totaling $18,000 in the 10th annual van Rooy Competition for Musical Excellence in November.

The competition, which is open to all undergraduate instrumental performance majors at Hartt, was established in 2000 by Jean-Pierre and Marie-Claire van Rooy. The van Rooy’s, generous University benefactors, created the competition to help young musicians pursue their ambitions.

The $10,000 Grand Prize winner was Scuderi, a double major in clarinet performance and music education. He currently studies with Hartt faculty member Curt Blood and is a member of the notable Performance 20/20 honors chamber music program at Hartt.

Guadagnoli, a Brazilian pianist who studies with Professor Luiz de Moura Castro, was the Second Prize winner and received $5,000. Third Prize of $3,000 went to Stockman, a flute performance major under Hartt faculty member Janet Arms.
Approximately 165 students, the largest group ever to take part in the ceremony, celebrated the completion of their degrees at Fall Commencement on Dec. 6.

“Become involved with mankind, . . . become engaged. . . . I know we are sending you into the world, as the Jewish tradition says, to repair it. Repair the world. You can do it,” urged President Walter Harrison in speaking to the graduates.

In another first, the University provided a live webcast of the ceremony, which allowed relatives and friends who were unable to attend the event in Lincoln Theater to view Fall Commencement online.

Linda Greenhouse, an award-winning journalist who covered the U.S. Supreme Court as a reporter for The New York Times for nearly three decades, received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters during the ceremony.

Greenhouse’s coverage of the high court has earned her numerous awards, including a Pulitzer Prize for beat reporting in 1998 and the John Chancellor Award for Excellence in Journalism from the Annenberg School for Communication of the University of Pennsylvania in 2004. Also in 2004, Harvard’s Kennedy School honored her with the Goldsmith Career Award for Excellence in Journalism. In 2008 the nonpartisan Constitution Project presented her with its annual award for constitutional commentary.

Currently, Greenhouse is the Knight Distinguished Journalist in Residence and the Joseph M. Goldstein Lecturer in Law at Yale Law School.

The Fall Commencement ceremony is for undergraduate and graduate students who complete their degree requirements in September or January but cannot attend the University’s traditional Commencement ceremony in May. The Fall Commencement ceremony was introduced in 1996 to provide these students with a formal ceremony that celebrates their academic accomplishments.

‘Repair the World’

PRESIDENT HARRISON ADVISES FALL GRADUATES

Donors in the University’s newly formed Red and White Society attended an October reception at the Connecticut governor’s residence in Hartford, Conn., hosted by President Walter Harrison. Red and White Society members have made an unrestricted gift of $1,000 or more to the Anchor Fund. Unrestricted funds allow the University to respond to unanticipated needs and challenges throughout the academic year.

More than 50 donors enjoyed a wine tasting, hors d’oeuvres, a humorous three-student panel moderated by Harrison, a ballet performance by Liz Grande ’11, and a vocal performance by Nelson Ebo ’12. The student panelists were Will Kopp ’11, Maria Sanjuanelo ’13, and Yashswini Devi Naraidoo ’11. Student representatives from each of the University’s seven schools and colleges also attended.

Several alumni provided services for the reception. Roger Castonguay ’08 was the photographer; Rebecca Dowd ’96 was the caterer; and Carol O’Shea ’85 coordinated the event for the Office of the Governor.

University Hosts Reception at Governor’s Residence
If you hold an image up to a mirror, everything is backwards—or at least that’s usually the case. But Ellen Carey, noted photographic artist and Hartford Art School associate professor, found that looking in a mirror made everything come into focus.

In 1935, Man Ray, an American Surrealist perhaps best known for his avant-garde photography, created a black-and-white self-portrait titled Space Writings. In the blurred, time-lapsed photograph, Man Ray is seated in his studio. The entire image is covered with white looping scribbles drawn in a seemingly abstract pattern with a penlight.

Seized by an idea that the loops might be the artist’s signature in reverse, Carey held the photograph up to a mirror and made a breathtaking discovery. There it was, Man Ray’s signature, hidden from view for more than 70 years.

“I knew instantly when I saw it—it’s a very famous self-portrait—that his signature was in it,” says Carey. “I just got this flash of intuition.” Her intuition was to look at the penlight writing from Man Ray’s point of view—the reverse of the conventional perspective. “I knew that if I held it up to a mirror, it would be there,” Carey says.

Merry Foresta, director of the Photography Initiative at the Smithsonian Institution and curator of a 1988 exhibit of Man Ray’s work, has known Carey for many years. In a conversation with Carey at the artist’s studio last fall, Foresta suggested that Carey take a look at Space Writings, partly because she found her working with penlights. That suggestion led to Carey’s discovery, which was the subject of an article in Smithsonian magazine (www.smithsonianmag.com).

A version of Space Writings, accompanied by mention of Carey’s discovery, is on display in the exhibition Alias Man Ray: The Art of Reinvention at The Jewish Museum in New York City through March 14, 2010.
In mid-December, University High School of Science and Engineering on the University of Hartford campus experienced quite a week. On the heels of being named to U.S. News and World Report’s list of America’s best high schools, the magnet school learned of the early acceptance of three of its seniors to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s (MIT) class of 2014.

Katie Allsop of Bolton, Conn.; Jennifer Ky of Hartford, Conn.; and Josh Sibblies of Windsor, Conn., learned they were among 590 students accepted under MIT’s early-action program in December.

“MIT released the information on its website at 9 at night on Dec. 16,” Allsop said. “We were logged on at 8:58.”

“When we called Josh to find out if he was accepted, his mother was hysterical.”

We could hear her screaming in the background,” added Ky. Sibblies’s mother, Francia Prescott, is a 1981 graduate of the University of Hartford with a degree in sociology.

“'I rejoice with Josh, Katie, and Jennifer on their success in being admitted early-decision to MIT, perhaps the nation’s foremost university of science, engineering, and technology,” said University of Hartford President Walter Harrison in congratulating the three. “Their success is just one more example—albeit a stunning one—of the success that I see every day at University High School.”

UHSSE is a public school established in 2004 as a partnership between the University of Hartford and Hartford Public Schools.