The University of Hartford was chartered in 1957 as a university for the city of Hartford, focused on the needs of its immediate community. Now, more than 50 years later, the University has maintained the early mission of its founders even as it has grown in size, reputation, and outlook.

Today, the University of Hartford, like many other colleges and universities, is working to prepare its graduates for a world that is growing ever smaller. The importance of thinking globally rather than nationally or locally in business, medicine, engineering, education, technology, and many other areas cannot be questioned.

This special section focuses on a few of the University’s international connections, including projects in India and Kenya, faculty/student exchanges with universities in Afghanistan and China, and the Barney School of Business’s new global perspective.

“As a private university with a public purpose, we value and promote our students, faculty, and staff becoming engaged with learning activities around the world,” says President Walter Harrison. “Educating international students has been a central part of our mission since our founding, and today that mission has expanded to include connecting American students with nations and peoples around the globe. I see that as an increasingly important part of a University of Hartford education in the years ahead.”
On July 22, 2009, a team of students, faculty members, and administrators from the University of Hartford, the University of Rhode Island, and Brown University left for Kenya. It was the second visit for some, like University Provost Lynn Pasquerella, who was part of an initial fact-finding trip in 2008. The University’s participation was spearheaded by Pasquerella in response to a call for assistance from Clarice Odhiambo, founder of the Africa Center for Engineering Social Solutions, or ACess. Her organization’s mission is to bring college students to African villages to improve the lives of residents by creating and implementing simple, viable technical solutions such as simple irrigation and sanitation systems. Moreover, Odhiambo aims to reduce the poverty level in the continent by creating and sustaining successful enterprises that employ local residents.

Mention Kenya to Westerners and most will think of safari parks filled with exotic animals or perhaps the Maasai, nomadic cattle herders on the wide Serengeti plains who shun modern life. In fact, tourism built on a much-romanticized Kenya brings in close to $1 billion each year. For many, however, the reality of life in Kenya is a far cry from safaris, luxury beach hotels along Kenya’s coastline, and game fishing in Lake Victoria.

Poverty, AIDS/HIV, lack of clean drinking water, widespread malaria, and a poor diet are the trappings of life in rural Kenya. It has been estimated that 150,000 people die of AIDS each year. Three-quarters of Kenya’s population are farmers, many of whom live on less than a dollar a day. Erratic weather patterns, vast regions of desert, and a weak infrastructure mean that nearly all rural populations must rely on their own subsistence farming for their food and any monetary income.

The team has made an initial five-year commitment to address issues such as sustainable access to safe drinking water, improved food production, and the establishment of microbusinesses using local resources. “From initial plans to address water filtration and rain catchment,” says Pasquerella, “the project has expanded to focus on amaranth production and harvesting, tilapia farming, health-and-safety promotion through visual media, resource development, and the assessments of human rights and human dignity.”

The team has selected three sites/communities in the Nyanza Province in southwest Kenya on which to focus their efforts. While in Kenya, they stayed at Moseno University in Kisumu, the capital city of the province, on the shore of Lake Victoria.
Engineering Solutions

Last year, David Hamilton ’10 chose as his fourth-year engineering project the development of a small granite mill to grind the amaranth seeds and millet grown by the farmers in western Kenya. David Pines, associate professor and chair of the Department of Civil, Environmental, and Biomedical Engineering, oversaw Hamilton’s project.

Amaranth is a highly nutritious crop that tolerates heat and drought well, is virtually disease free, and easy to grow. The seeds, which are high in protein, can be cooked as a cereal or ground into flour for bread. The young and tender amaranth leaves can be used like fresh spinach.

Hamilton demonstrated his small mill in several villages last summer and received some helpful suggestions from local farmers. He hopes to return to Kenya with a revised version of the mill. Right now, farmers have to transport grain to a diesel-powered mill and pay to have it ground. Hamilton and the team hope that their small, hand-cranked mills will help families provide nutritious meals for babies and children, many of whom are now malnourished.

For Hamilton, the villagers’ joyful response to the mill and their celebratory dance of thanksgiving were overwhelming. “I never thought I’d be able to use these abstract theoretical concepts from the classroom to actually save people’s lives,” he reflects. “It was incredible to see how these people live. All of their energy and time are eaten up carrying out basic tasks. ‘Third World’—those were just words to me before I went to Kenya.”

Another area being addressed is the lack of clean water. The villagers, who live in mud huts, have no electricity and no running water. Of the half-dozen villages the team visited, only one had a well with a hand pump. Instead, children use plastic containers to scoop water out of muddied creeks. Villagers can add chlorine to kill bacteria, but many resist the idea of using chemicals.
Pines asked second-year engineering students to come up with prototypes for purifying and filtering water. Some students made systems using sand as a filter medium. Masood Dalil ’11 and Mark Turner ’11 chose to focus on a ceramic filter.

In their first attempt, Dalil dug soil from his backyard and dried it in his kitchen oven. He then separated the clay out of the soil and mixed it with coffee grounds. The grounds burn away during firing and make the clay more porous. Dalil and Turner then fired the filters in a home fireplace. In the next round of prototypes, the students worked with Matthew Towers, associate professor of ceramics at the Hartford Art School (HAS), to create ceramic filters using art clay and sawdust as the organic material.

Pines took the system prototypes to Kenya last summer and demonstrated them to the villagers. Dalil and Turner are now analyzing clay brought back from Kenya.

“We are working to find the ideal combination of clay, sawdust, and water that will offer enough porosity to provide a water flow rate of two liters per hour through the filter,” says Dalil, “without being too fragile to be practical.” If fundraising for the project is successful, he and Turner hope to take their filter to Kenya in March.

According to Pines, the team has identified a group of brick makers in the village of Maseno, Kenya, and will help them set up a small factory where they will manufacture the filters and develop a business to sell them.

Wellness Education

Last spring, Natacha Poggio, assistant professor of visual communication design, assigned the students in her Issues in Design class the task of developing a visual wellness campaign to educate villagers on four critical concerns: promotion of amaranth cultivation, the safety of women, the importance of clean water, and preventing malaria and other diseases.

Each student designed four kanga cloths, one for each of the four issues, and 10 designs were printed on cloth to travel to Kenya with Poggio and student Teagan Rosendahl ’12. The kanga is a large rectangle of cotton cloth (60 x 40 inches) with a wide border printed in bold designs and bright colors. A traditional part of Swahili culture, kangas are worn primarily by women as long skirts and to cover the head; they are also used as slings for carrying babies.

A kanga cloth designed by HAS student Kristi Grice ’10 features a farmer sowing amaranth seeds in a plowed field, with plumes of amaranth on either side of the central figure. It bears the words “Live a healthy life with amaranth.” Other kangas instruct villagers on the importance of cleanliness, the use of mosquito nets, and safety in numbers for women.

“The women loved the kangas the students designed and wanted to wear them right away,” says Poggio. “And the men asked for T-shirts with the same designs.”

This year, three students in Poggio’s Design for Global Change class are revising the kanga designs based on feedback Poggio collected in Kenya. They have also added a fifth theme on HIV/AIDS prevention. If funds are available, Poggio will send two visual communication design majors and a photography major to Kenya in March with the team.

“We will expand our awareness campaign as we discover more issues,” says Poggio. “Also, we want to work with the communities to help them market amaranth by developing good package design.”
Supporting HIV-Positive Women and Children

Jemima Odoo, the first person in Kenya to declare her HIV-positive status publicly, lives in the village of Aluor, the team’s primary study community. Odoo lost her husband to AIDS, which prompted her to get tested. She learned that she was HIV-positive, as were nine of her 10 children, four of whom have since died.

To fight the stigma of AIDS and allow her to support herself, her children, and grandchildren, Odoo formed the Aluor Widows/Women’s Group. The group’s mission is to empower HIV-positive women to live positively and to combat discrimination based on HIV status. Now a group of 32 women, they support 150 HIV-positive orphans in Aluor.

Professor Bernard den Ouden of the philosophy department in the College of Arts and Sciences is helping Odoo and the women’s group acquire cows that will provide milk for the orphanage and composted manure for improved crop production.

“The Aluor Widows/Women’s Group is engaged in self-help and collective activities that defy their tragic past,” says den Ouden. “They have created a future for themselves and for the orphans that they house, educate, and rear. My desire to work with them is based on the profound respect that I have for who they are and what they have accomplished.”

Den Ouden is working with the Heifer Project International, an organization that provides cows, goats, and other livestock to impoverished communities all over the world.

“The Heifer Project is planning to spend more than $200 million in Africa over the next few years,” says den Ouden. “A community as poor and vulnerable as the Aluor Widows Group is an ideal candidate for that funding.”

In addition, den Ouden is part of a three-person group—with Pines and Christopher Bull, senior research engineer and senior lecturer at Brown University—that is focused on increased crop production. They will be addressing irrigation methods; the use of small-scale technology to improve the threshing and winnowing of small grains like amaranth; seed planting; and soil fertility.

Working with two students from Brown and engineering students from the University of Hartford, den Ouden will oversee the redesign of a small, peddle-powered thresher-winnower.

This simple technology will enable small farmers like the Aluor Widows Group to process their harvest more efficiently and reduce postharvest lost. The machines will be made out of local materials, including used bicycle parts. The team hopes that local artisans will eventually develop businesses to sell these simple machines, thus generating additional income in very poor rural communities.
Marcia Hughes is the assistant director of the University’s Center for Social Research, a unit within the Department of Sociology. In the past, the center has engaged in applied social research projects for state and local organizations, providing internships to University students who learn to design surveys, collect and analyze data, and present the results. A previous example of this type of work is a life-stories study of vulnerable first-time parents in Connecticut. In recent years Hughes and her students have joined University projects in India (see page 19) and, now, Kenya.

“In some ways the research is different because the cultures are very different,” says Hughes. “But marginalized populations, no matter where they are, have surprising similarities.”

In addition to her research, Hughes is the program coordinator for the Kenya project, assigned the task of keeping the project running smoothly and progressing as planned. As the resident sociologist, she and her students will also be evaluating what the team is doing and its impact on the villagers throughout the team’s five-year commitment period.

“Our charge is to figure out how to make sustainable change and keep it growing,” says Hughes. “One of the things we have to ask, for example, is, how well did the farmers accept the changes that we introduced?”

Much as she did on the India project in the village of Abheypur, Hughes has developed an economic baseline survey to be administered to families, this time by the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute. The survey reflects the intercollegiate nature of the project, having been designed with input from students at the University of Rhode Island and Brown University as well as the University of Hartford.

**Long-Range Goals**

Over time, the team hopes that the innovations they are introducing—improving agricultural techniques, providing access to clean water, promoting the use of mosquito netting to help fight malaria, and improving nutrition from amaranth—will result in long-term improved health and productivity. Ultimately, the idea is to give the people of western Kenya the tools to change their lives as well as the responsibility for sustaining those changes.

**Editor’s Note:** All photographs for the Kenya article were taken by John Kuchle, husband of Provost Lynn Pasquerella, and are used here with his permission.
Some 6,500 miles away from home, Mahsa Khatibi sits on the patio outside Dana Hall one early-autumn afternoon, talking about an Afghanistan of the future: a peaceful place with a thriving educational system, a reliable infrastructure, and a government capable of keeping its people safe.

Khatibi intends to play a role in building that new Afghanistan when she returns home in the spring. With a master’s degree in civil engineering and a certificate in architecture from the University of Hartford, she will become the first female member of the engineering faculty at Herat University in western Afghanistan.

One of a group of 16 Afghans, including three women, she has come from Herat University to pursue a master’s at the College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture (CETA) through a program that is revitalizing civil, architectural, and mechanical engineering education in her war-weary homeland.

“Afghanistan needs a lot of civil engineers to rebuild our country,” Khatibi says. “We have come here to be trained. We are rebuilding our universities, and new universities are being established.”

Khatibi might seem surprising to some. Her goals and accomplishments don’t fit the image of women that emerged from Afghanistan under the Taliban’s strict social order between 1996 and 2001.

But there is a history of public life for Afghan women before the Taliban, when they made up half of the government workforce, the majority of schoolteachers, and 40 percent of doctors in the capital city of Kabul. The same year the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964 was signed into law, Afghan women were enfranchised in a constitution that also guaranteed their right to education and freedom to work.

While the status of women in other parts of her country may continue to make headlines and the percentage of women in engineering is low throughout the world, Khatibi is adamant that her accomplishments and goals are not unusual.

“In Herat City there are many women in the university,” explains the 21-year-old, who received her bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from Herat in 2007. “In my class there were 11 women. Every year the number increases.”

Indeed, there has been an influx of women attending Herat’s engineering school. Of the 400 students currently enrolled, 50 are women.

“Mahsa represents a new Afghanistan,” says M. Saleh Keshawarz, an associate professor of civil, environmental, and biomedical engineering at the University of Hartford who is responsible for creating the partnership between the universities. “Her experiences have been different than her parents’. In 10 to 15 years, maybe things will be different in Afghanistan.”

In the seven years since Keshawarz, who was raised in Afghanistan and returns often to teach at Herat University, began groundwork for the program, “a lot has been rebuilt,” he says. “You can see the progress. Security is still a concern, however.”

As the current state of Afghanistan has NATO leaders debating strategies to make the country stable, secure, and capable of looking after itself, Keshawarz is training the country’s next generation of engineers.

“Before 2008, none of the engineering faculty at Herat had master’s degrees,” Keshawarz says. “By the summer of 2010, all will have them.”

With the program’s last student expected to receive a master’s from CETA in 2011 and grant money running out, the hope is to continue the collaboration through distance learning. Keshawarz concedes, however, that the cultural-exchange aspect will be greatly diminished. It is that part of the program that Khatibi appreciates most.

“The master’s is good,” Khatibi says. “We couldn’t get a master’s in Afghanistan. But our purpose is more than getting a master’s. We all hope to become familiar with another culture. It’s always good to understand all kinds of people. We will then pass on what we have learned to the next generation.”
Six weeks before the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, President Walter Harrison and a delegation representing the University of Hartford and the State of Connecticut traveled to Beijing and Jinan, China.

“We learned a great deal about one of the world’s most important nations,” says Harrison. “Notably, we learned that increasing numbers of Chinese parents are interested in sending their children to the United States to attend our universities.”

While in China, Harrison signed a “memorandum of friendly cooperation,” forming a partnership with the China Education Association for International Exchange (CEAIE). The CEAIE will recruit a significant number of high school students from throughout China to come to the University each year. Other agreements were signed with Shandong University of Finance (SDUF) and Shandong Jiaotong University (SDJTU), which has a strong focus on engineering disciplines.

This past fall, the University hosted a visiting scholar from SDUF, Hongwei Jin. Jin is an associate professor of English in the School of Foreign Studies there, where she has been teaching since 1993. In addition to teaching, she helps prepare Chinese students for the cultural and academic differences they will encounter when studying abroad.

Jin spent her time at the University of Hartford observing classes and doing research on teaching English as a second language.

“I am interested in learning about the teaching methodology used in colleges and universities in the United States and in encouraging creative learning and interactive teaching at SDUF,” says Jin. “I’m going to be the bridge between our two universities.”

In addition, Jin met weekly with international students in a program called Conversation Partners at the University’s English Language Institute, where she helped students improve their English skills and offered general support. In existence since 1974, the English Language Institute tests incoming international students for proficiency in English and determines how many semesters of instruction in vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension, and oral and writing skills the students will need before achieving a proficiency suitable to begin work on an academic degree.

Clara Fang, assistant professor of civil, environmental, and biomedical engineering, and part of the delegation to China in 2008, is working on a partnership between the University of Hartford and Shandong Jiaotong University. It is hoped that students at SDJTU who have completed their first and second years of study in China will spend their third and fourth years at the University of Hartford. In addition, plans call for faculty from SDJTU to be invited to the University to explore educational exchange and research collaboration.

“As the program unfolds,” explains Fang, “we’ll send University of Hartford students and faculty to China for seminars, classes, and real-world engineering projects. This is an amazing opportunity to learn about China’s language and culture firsthand, and to help our students explore career opportunities they never would have considered otherwise.”

I’m going to be the bridge between our two universities.

— Hongwei Jin
**Observer** readers have followed engineering students in the College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture (CETA) as they formed a student chapter of Engineers Without Borders and traveled to Abheypur, India, to install a solar-powered well and storage system (2008) as well as a rooftop rainwater-harvesting system (2009) for use during the monsoon season. Also part of the 2009 trip were students from the Hartford Art School (HAS) who unveiled their visual campaign to help educate the villagers on cleanliness, sharing, and respect for the new water technology.

A third and equally important component to the India project is the work of Marcia Hughes, assistant director of the Center for Social Research, part of the Department of Sociology, College of Arts and Sciences. Hughes was asked by CETA Associate Professor David Pines, project leader, to document the effect improved clean water availability has on the village in general and particularly the lives and routines of the women in Abheypur.

"Many people reported that the tanks have made a big difference in terms of time/efficiency in collecting water," says Hughes, "and they expressed their appreciation. Women and teachers also reported that the children are bathing on a regular basis."

Prior to her first trip to Abheypur in August 2008, Hughes worked with students Kyle Simmons '09 and Daniel Hultgren '09 to design questions for the interviews with the villagers. They then sent the interview questions to one of the team’s Indian partners in the project for a final review prior to Hughes’s second trip to Abheypur in March 2009.

"Ujala Bedi, director of the Rural Development Center, Navjyoti NGO (non-government organization), reviewed all the proposed interview questions, gave feedback, and helped with the piloting,” says Hughes. “Her input was invaluable, as she and her staff have a better understanding of how people in the village will respond.”

In addition to gathering information about the impact of the solar-powered well and other projects, Hughes and her students are collecting data to document change over time in village and family life, engage people in Engineers Without Borders activities, and inform project development.

During the 2009 trip, Hughes and her students conducted 26 interviews with families and uncovered concerns on several issues, such as the inconsistent availability of electricity and high rates of alcoholism among men in the village.

"From these interviews we developed a survey format that we have sent back to Navjyoti for review," explains Hughes. “The new format will make the data collection much more standardized and will allow Navjyoti and our team to collect information from a much larger sample size.”

In assessing the impact of the visual education campaign at the girls’ school, Hughes reports that the mural painted by HAS students last January is intact, and children seem to be experiencing a sense of pride in their school.

"The headmaster asked if we could design a similar visual campaign aimed at the youth in the high school," says Hughes. “We identified several possible topics, such as gender roles, discrimination, and equal opportunities for young women, and discouraging smoking, drinking alcohol, and gambling among the young men.”

Hughes’s research is especially focused on women’s roles and how those roles are affected by changes in society.

"Women, who are already marginalized, are even more marginalized by economic growth. Suddenly their roles are diminished and their contributions less valued because they don’t earn money," says Hughes. “The government is trying to address the situation by encouraging women to form collectives where they can pool their money and other resources and give each other support.

“One woman who had joined a collective said she had borrowed money from the group three times and had been able to pay it off. Now her family looks at her differently.”

This January, Hughes returned to Abheypur as part of the largest group yet of faculty and students to travel to the village. Nineteen students and faculty spent 10 days working with villagers on multiple projects, including constructing a drainage system to address standing waste water, mapping the village and the location of the wells, and analyzing the chemical makeup of the drinking water.
At its core, the mission of the Barney School of Business is global awareness. Bangkok, Singapore, Crete, Berlin, and Scotland are just some of the locales students and faculty have visited recently through study-abroad courses, internships, and lecturing engagements. In January 2010, MBA students went to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, focusing on understanding and doing business in the Middle East.

“One of the Barney School’s four key strategic initiatives is to provide more opportunities for our students, faculty, and staff to have international academic experiences as a way to foster greater global awareness throughout the school’s programs,” explains Barney Dean James Fairfield-Sonn. “Over time, we hope to provide study opportunities around the world as well as to host traveling international scholars at the Barney School as part of our quest to play an increasing role in the international business education community.”

Other courses that have taken graduate and undergraduate students abroad include Industrial Marketing, Managing Customer Interfaces, and International Services Marketing. Last spring, undergraduate students in Introduction to International Business traveled to Bermuda.

“The insurance industry is a big reason for Bermuda’s success,” says Michael Neaton ’10, who spent spring break exploring the island with six other members of Barney’s leadership council. “The companies we visited included ACE, XL, Max Re, and Ironshore. We also met with the Bermuda Monetary Authority. We learned a great deal about how Bermuda plays an integral role in international business.”

Encouraging students to pack their bags and hop on a plane isn’t the only way Barney brings an international component to its courses. In September the school extended the international opportunities it offers with the opening of the Mali Global Center. Housed in Auerbach Hall, the global center was made possible through a gift from Paul Mali, professor emeritus of management, and his wife, Mary. Outfitted with large video monitors, workstations with laptop connections for up to 16 students, and enormous computing power, the center enables students and faculty to do collaborative research and participate in synchronous classes with students and faculty anywhere in the world in a high-definition, video-conference format.

Fueled by their outrage at the genocide occurring in Darfur, Sudan, Jennifer Reynolds M’07 (A&S) and her husband, Luke Reynolds, pooled their creative ideas, talents, and determination to edit and publish *Dedicated to the People of Darfur: Writings on Fear, Risk, and Hope* (Rutgers University Press, 2009). All royalties from sales of the anthology of original essays—written by Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners and many bestselling authors—will benefit the Save Darfur Coalition.

Professor Lynne Kelly, director of the School of Communication, College of Arts and Sciences, who also penned an essay for the book, joined the Reynoldses at a book launch during Homecoming Weekend in October. “Their commitment to the project was unwavering,” Kelly says. “I’m humbled to have my essay included in this volume.”

Jennifer says she and Luke wanted to do more than just sign petitions for this cause. Now that the book is out, she says, “We pray that relief will be brought to the millions of people suffering from this genocide.”
Kishendra “Kris” Gopaul ’10 hadn’t really planned to go abroad during his third year, but things just fell into place.

“I always knew I wanted to study abroad at some point because I love traveling. I also knew that the spring semester of my third year was the last possible semester I would be able to do something like that because of my schedule,” says Gopaul, a health science major in the College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions who was born in Trinidad but grew up in Maryland. “Then a study-abroad representative spoke to my German class last fall, and I started noticing a lot of ‘Go abroad!’ posters all over school that helped push me in that direction.

“I chose to go to the Danish Institute of Study Abroad (DIS) in Denmark because it was one of the only countries that had a plethora of health-care class options. Their medical program is also known all through the United States. I met other students at DIS from Cornell, Brown, Harvard, and countless other universities. The study-abroad program [at the University] actually affiliated themselves with DIS just so I could go there, even though I was the only student interested.”

Gopaul lived on Amager, a small island bordering the capital city of Copenhagen, where he stayed in a kollegium, a dormitory for university students.

“It was a great experience for me because I lived on a floor with 10 Danes and two other Americans. I made lifelong friends there that I know I will one day see again.”

Classes were held in Copenhagen, just a 10-minute bicycle ride away. Gopaul says he will always remember the beautiful scenery he passed every time he made the journey back and forth. In addition to regular classes, DIS sets up integrated study tours related to course content.

One such tour took Gopaul and fellow students to Stockholm, Sweden, and Tallinn, Estonia, where they attended educational seminars and lectures and also went to shows, ballets, operas, and restaurants. Gopaul describes this trip as “one of the best times in my life.

“I gained a lot of knowledge on health care in other countries, especially Denmark, which utilizes a universal health-care system. And I also had the opportunity to see firsthand that system flourishing in Sweden and Estonia,” says Gopaul. “I was in the medical practice program, and we also took a class at an assigned local hospital that was taught by two emergency-room physicians. They taught us how to interview patients and then allowed us do so and develop a diagnosis from the symptoms actual patients presented. I thought this was a great teaching method because it reinforced everything they taught us in the classroom.”

In his free time, Gopaul gave his wanderlust free rein, visiting Switzerland, Germany, The Netherlands, Croatia, Slovenia, Spain, and Italy. Gopaul says that, all in all, his semester-abroad experience was something he will never forget.

“There hasn’t been a day go by that I haven’t looked back on it. Studying abroad made me a more independent person and showed me that I could survive on my own in a new and unfamiliar place. At first, I was frightened about being away from everyone I knew, but then I realized I was surrounded by hundreds of kids with the same issue. I recommend studying abroad because it gives you a whole new perspective on the world around you. My biggest regret is that I was not able to stay for a full year.”

Gopaul took this photo, which shows how popular bicycles are in Copenhagen.
Carlos Villa’s ticket from his home in Las Conchas, Guatemala, to the United States was soccer. But the young man who was invited to participate in the 2010 Adidas Major League Soccer (MLS) Combine in January, didn’t begin his collegiate career at the University of Hartford.

Villa had spent two seasons tearing up the field at San Jacinto College in the Houston, Texas, area, when men’s soccer coach Dan Gaspar spotted him. The Hawks’ coach flew to California in 2007 to watch Villa play as a member of Guatemala’s Olympic team, and he saw something the Hawks didn’t have.

“He was highly mobile,” says Gaspar, “a target player and finisher. He was the kind of player who made the most of his opportunities. I knew right away what he could bring to our team.” Villa was also the kind of talented young player who, Gaspar knew, could benefit from playing in the highly competitive America East Conference and as part of the University’s international squad, which includes talented players who cut their teeth learning “football” in Serbia, Mexico, Colombia, Liberia, Jamaica, Canada, and Scotland.

Gaspar’s assessment of Villa’s athletic gifts was spot on. A member of back-to-back conference tournament teams, he scored a conference-best 11 goals in his first season with the Hawks. Selected for the America East All-Conference First Team in 2008, he was chosen for the conference Second Team this season, after once again leading the Hawks in goals and points.

But Villa, now a senior, has brought more to Hartford than his capacity to score points. A commanding, yet understated, personal style has also accompanied him.

“Goal-scorers are often self-centered. Carlos is the antithesis of that,” Gaspar says. “He’s not only a gifted athlete, he’s also a very bright student. He’s very humble, though,” observes Gaspar, whose experience managing international teams is storied. This past summer, for example, he helped Portugal’s team prepare to qualify for the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa.

His assessment of Villa is shared by Susan Coleman, professor of finance in the Barney School of Business, where Villa is majoring in marketing. “He’s a wonderful young man,” Coleman says.

“Student-athletes have a big challenge in managing their myriad competing priorities. In that sense, especially, Carlos stands out. Not only does he do an exemplary job of fulfilling all of his responsibilities, he’s an exceptional student. He’s very bright and highly motivated, as engaged in his course work as he is in his athletic pursuits. That makes him a strong role model. He’s a hard worker and genuinely grateful for the advantages he’s been given.”

For Villa, the University of Hartford has provided both a place to grow athletically and the community life that he missed in Texas.

“I had fun playing at San Jacinto,” he remembers, “but student life there was limited. Here, the campus is very vibrant. And playing for the Hawks, being exposed to so many different soccer styles, has been a great learning experience.”

“Carlos is the best all-around player in the America East Conference,” says Gaspar, flatly. “We are very pleased for Carlos [about the invitation to the MLS Combine]. He is a gentleman and an outstanding prospect for the MLS. Carlos has proven that he is goal scorer, and I am confident that he can score goals at the next level. He’s the kind of individual I’m proud to put my reputation behind.”
When Joseph “Joey” Patuleia ‘02 was a University of Hartford student, it would have been hard to miss him. A high-profile, four-year member of the men’s soccer team, he played on the 1999 team that won the America East Conference Championship and earned a berth in the NCAA Tournament.

But though his identity was strongly linked to the sport, he was hardly a “one-trick pony.” Not many knew that Patuleia also had an artistic bent. Even those who understood his passion for soccer might never have imagined where the intersection of these two talents would take him after Hartford.

Last fall, Patuleia traveled with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup tour on a breathtaking, 70-day excursion to every nation in Africa. Launched on Sept. 24, 2009, in Cairo, the whirlwind tour was sponsored by Coca-Cola, a long-standing FIFA corporate partner. Patuleia was the official tour photographer.

“I have been exposed to great art from many artists in my life,” says Patuleia, who displayed an aptitude for art early. “My parents always did whatever was needed to make sure I had opportunities to grow and learn.”

His inclination toward art took second place, however, when his father taught him soccer. Once Patuleia saw the World Cup competition in Boston in 1994, he says, “I never looked back. I was dedicated to the pursuit of a professional soccer career.”

In the 15 years since then, Patuleia’s love of soccer has taken him to more than 100 nations. While still a student in the College of Arts and Sciences, he spent summers in Europe practicing with prominent teams like the Paris Saint-Germain Soccer Club and the Football Club de Metz. After graduation, Patuleia moved to France, where he pursued a professional career until 2005.

Still, the need for artistic expression was never far below the surface. President Walter Harrison, who vividly recalls the line of “Hawk Pride” T-shirts that Patuleia designed and successfully marketed while he was a student, says, “Joey is a force of nature. He was entrepreneurial and full of ideas, extremely creative and smart. And his enthusiasm for soccer was palpable.”

“I remember that he had a very international perspective,” says Charles Canedy, associate professor of marketing at the Barney School of Business. “He was ambitious and visionary young man, always looking for the opportunity to develop himself professionally.”

“I always felt the artistic side of me would emerge,” Patuleia says. In 2005 it did. The powerful photographic portraits of people from all over the globe that he posted on his website helped him land the Coca-Cola assignment.

“I wanted to do something special for the Coca-Cola brand and show the positive side of Africa in a way that, perhaps, the rest of the world has not seen or considered,” Patuleia says. “Hosting the World Cup in Africa is a chance for the whole continent to leap forward economically. [South Africa will host the 2010 FIFA World Cup.] I wanted to capture the warmth of the African people with a book about their love of football.” The photographer’s portfolio of smiling Africans, culled from the more than 150,000 shots he took on the World Cup tour, will be published by Coca-Cola in a book called Africa Smiles.

Patuleia is also a strong supporter of the Coca-Cola Foundation’s efforts to improve access to clean water for the people of Africa. The foundation has committed $30 million to addressing the problem over the next six years. “I am very grateful to Coca-Cola,” Patuleia says. “I see so much potential for improving the lives of these wonderful people.”

To see more tour photos, go to fifa.com/world cup and click on FIFA World Cup Trophy Tour.