

## CREATING A WORLD CLASS STEM HONORS PROGRAM

Good Morning. My name is Sally Reis and I live in Mansfield Center, CT and am a lifelong resident of Connecticut, born in Torrington, a product of the public schools in my state. I have been a faculty member at UConn since the mid 1980's and am currently the Vice Provost of Academic Affairs for UConn. I am here to ask you to support Next Generation CT-- you have heard and will continue to hear from students and faculty but today, I ask you to support Next Generation CT for all of the reasons that others will mention and because it gives us the ability to create the premier Stem Honors program.

Our Honors Programs provide opportunities to deepen and broaden the undergraduate experience through curricular and co-curricular means at the University of Connecticut. Through experiential learning, mentorship, and opportunities for research and creative scholarship, excellent students from every school, college, and campus at UConn are able to enhance their college education. The following information summarizes just a few of our Honors achievements during the past academic year:

**Our Office of Undergraduate Research** distributed over \$329K in funding for research and scholarship to undergraduates in 2011 - 2012. This figure includes \$258K to support 65 students in the SURF (Summer Undergraduate Research Fund) program, \$44K for OUR grants during the academic year, \$20K to support the SHARE (Social Sciences, Humanities, and Arts Research Experience) program, and \$7K in Life Science Honors Thesis Awards. In addition, the annual poster exhibition, *Frontiers in Undergraduate Research*, had its highest number of posters and participants, totaling 161 and 198 respectively. Last year our Honors Program hosted the largest number of exhibitors at our annual *Frontiers in Undergraduate Research Poster Exhibition*.

**Our Office of National Scholarships** supported 55 applicants for prestigious international and national scholarships such as the Rhodes, Marshall, Mitchell, Udall, and Goldwater. Through increased collaboration with schools and colleges educating students about prestigious scholarships, the ONS has continued to see a rise in student applications for graduate fellowships. This process of supporting national scholarship applicants benefits students regardless of the outcome, and finalists and winners bring great prestige to UConn. In 2012, the ONS had 1 winner and 1 Honorable Mention in the Goldwater, 3 NSF GRFP winners and 6 Honorable Mentions, 1 Phi Kappa Phi winner, and 1 NCHC Portz winner. The ONS has nominated 5 students for the Rhodes scholarship, 8 students for the Marshall scholarship, and 3 students for the Mitchell scholarship in the 2012 – 2013 competition, and this year we have a Marshall winner, about whom I shall be speaking next.

**Our Individualized and Interdisciplinary Studies Program** supports students in a rigorous process of creating individualized plans of study. With about 150 students and 63 graduates in 2012, the IISP works with students with particular interdisciplinary interests. The largest number of majors is in the social sciences. In 2012, 50 students completed an individualized major as a second major, with 101 using the individualized major as their sole major.

**The Pre-Law, Medicine, and Dental Medicine Centers** assist students and alumni in learning about and preparing for law, medical, and dental school. The center is staffed by two experts in law and medical/dental school admissions. They support the work of other faculty and staff in helping students select appropriate schools, complete competitive applications and make decisions after returns are in. They also manage the Special Program in Law and the Special Program in Medicine and Dental Medicine, which provides conditional admittance to the UConn Law School, Medical School, and Dental School upon freshman enrollment.

**The Honors Program** welcomed 429 incoming students in Fall of 2012, and now has approximately 1,750 students enrolled in the Honors Program. This met our goal of matriculating 425 students to the Honors Program with an average SAT (verbal and math) of 1396 and a high school class rank of 96%. Many students entered UConn with advanced standing through AP/ECE/IB credits; 57% of students had second semester standing or above, and 23% of students had sophomore standing or above, saving their families money and enabling them to graduate sooner or earn a double major. The four Honors Living Learning Communities have also continued to grow and thrive, with 58% of all Honors students living in one of these communities, and our success rate is staggering: 301 students graduated with Honors in 2011 – 2012, the highest number in the history of the Honors Program.

We have many very successful Honors Graduates. Here are just a few:

**Andrew Tan '10** Engineering is Senior Vice President of Innovation at TAN2000 International Holdings Corporation, an entrepreneurial company that provides support and resources to entrepreneurs no matter the stage of their business. TANHC is recruiting highly talented, motivated individuals who are passionate about entrepreneurship and want to be part of a start-up revolution in Connecticut.

[Andrew.Tan@tanhc.com](mailto:Andrew.Tan@tanhc.com). <http://honors.uconn.edu/honors-class-notes-fall-2012-enewsletter/>

**Rachel Pianka '96** started Salmon River Consulting, LLC, a successful business that provides tech solutions to a wide variety of small- and mid-sized companies across many industries, offering comprehensive, cost-effective solutions that impact a client's bottom line. She also serves on numerous local boards because she believes in giving back to local communities.

**Cecelia Bucki '73** was recently appointed editor for the journal "Connecticut History." She is Professor of History at Fairfield University where she recently ended her three-year term as department chairperson. She is the author of "Bridgeport's Socialist New Deal, 1915-1936" (University of Illinois Press, 2001).

- Homer D. Babbidge Jr. Award for Best Book in Connecticut History, 2002.
- Visiting Fellow in History, Yale University, 2000.

**Roger Ballentine' 85** is the President of Green Strategies Inc., where he assists clients in the energy and environmental arena with domestic and international public policy matters, investment guidance in the "clean tech" marketplace, marketing and business development strategies, sustainability, and capital formation. He is also a Venture Partner with Arborview Capital LLC, a private equity firm focused on the clean technology marketplace, as well as Lecturer on Law at the Harvard Law School teaching in the area of energy and climate policy and a Senior Fellow at the Progressive Policy Institute in Washington D.C.

Roger previously was a senior member of the White House staff, serving President Bill Clinton as Chairman of the White House Climate Change Task Force and Deputy Assistant to the President for Environmental Initiatives. Prior to being named Deputy Assistant to the President, Mr. Ballentine was Special Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs, where he focused on energy and environmental issues. He has published a number of papers, articles and opinion pieces in nationally and internationally recognized publications and has been a frequent television and radio commentator.

Mr. Ballentine is a Magna Cum Laude graduate of the University of Connecticut and a Cum Laude graduate of the Harvard Law School.

He is a member of the Connecticut, District of Columbia, and the United States Supreme Court bars. He serves on the Board of Directors of Environmental Power Corporation (NASDAQ:EPG), Perillon Software Inc., Daylight Technology, Inc. and China Energy Recovery Inc. (OTCBB: CGYV) and on the Advisory Boards of Stratos Renewables Corporation and Pure Biofuels Corporation. Roger was a founding Board Member of the American Council on Renewable Energy, and serves on the Boards of the Biomass Energy Resource Center and the International Fund for China's Environment. In 2009, Mr. Ballentine joined the International Advisory Council of the Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

<http://honors.uconn.edu/2010-distinguished-alumni-award-recipient-roger-ballentine/>

**Robert Holster, '68** ECON has been Chairman of the Board of HMS Holdings Corp. (HMS) since 2006. He was also President from 2001 to 2005 and CEO from 2005 until 2009. HMS (which trades on NASDAQ under the symbol HMSY) is a leader in providing cost containment solutions for government-funded, commercial, and private healthcare payors. HMS helps clients ensure that healthcare claims are paid correctly and by the responsible party, and that those enrolled to receive program benefits meet qualifying criteria. HMS is headquartered in New York City, employs more than 1500 associates nationwide, and this year will report revenues in excess of \$300 million. HMS was ranked tenth on Fortune's 2010 "100 Fastest-Growing Companies" list and first on Crain's 2010 list of the fastest growing companies in New York. Following graduation from the University of Connecticut in 1968 and two years as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Army, Mr. Holster received an M.B.A. from the Columbia University Graduate School of Business, where he was a Bronfman Fellow. He started his business career at Price Waterhouse, and later worked as Controller of the Pfizer Laboratories division of Pfizer, Inc., as CFO of Macmillan, Inc., and as CEO of HHL Financial Services, Inc., which at the time was the nation's largest privately held provider of hospital business office services. He formerly served on the boards of directors of NASDAQ companies HiTech Parmacal and Varsity Group. He presently serves on the Board of the UConn Foundation, continuing to give back to UCONN in this service and by a scholarship program that he started.

Mr. Holster entered UConn in 1964 as part of the inaugural group admitted to the Honors Program;<http://honors.uconn.edu/2011-distinguished-alumni-award-robert-m-holster/>

Today, because of time, I will focus on just one recent graduate in my testimony. For the second time in four years, a University of Connecticut honors student has won a prestigious Marshall

Scholarship.

**Ethan Butler**, a 2012 Chemical Engineering graduate and past president of the UConn chapter of Engineers Without Borders, will spend the next two years in the United Kingdom pursuing his graduate studies at one of Britain's finest academic and research institutions. A resident of Southbury, Conn. who grew up on a Christmas tree farm, Butler is one of 34 students in the United States to receive the highly-competitive scholarship this year. He is the third student in UConn's history to be a Marshall Scholar.

The Marshall Scholarship is Britain's flagship government-funded program for American students who represent some of the finest and brightest college graduates in the United States. It is named after former Secretary of State George C. Marshall, and was established as a gesture of gratitude to the people of the United States for the assistance the U.S. provided after WWII under the Marshall Plan.

While in the U.K., Butler will study advanced chemical engineering and innovation, entrepreneurship, and management at Imperial College London, one of the world's top engineering and scientific universities known for the discovery of penicillin, the development of holography, and the foundation of fiber optics.

Butler's long-term goal is to study entrepreneurship in engineering and start a company to develop sustainable, community-based water and energy technologies in order to supply clean water and renewable energies to people in developing countries while simultaneously creating job opportunities for those in critical need. Like the other Honors graduates I mentioned, Ethan hopes to return to CT and create his business here. Helping us to expand our Honors Program and recruit more talented STEM grads to UCONN will enable us to keep even more of these young people here in the state where they will work, live, pay taxes, and create companies here. Remember, over 70 % of our graduates remain in CT.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today and for your support for Next Generation CT. It is an honor to work in a state that understands why education matters, and in this case, why creating a world class STEM honors program will help us to keep even more of CT's most talented students in our state.