

UCONN Early College Experience
MAGAZINE
A PUBLICATION FOR THE UCONN ECE COMMUNITY



Doubling Down on Success
Achieving greatness in the classroom and beyond...

SUMMER 2024 • VOLUME 13



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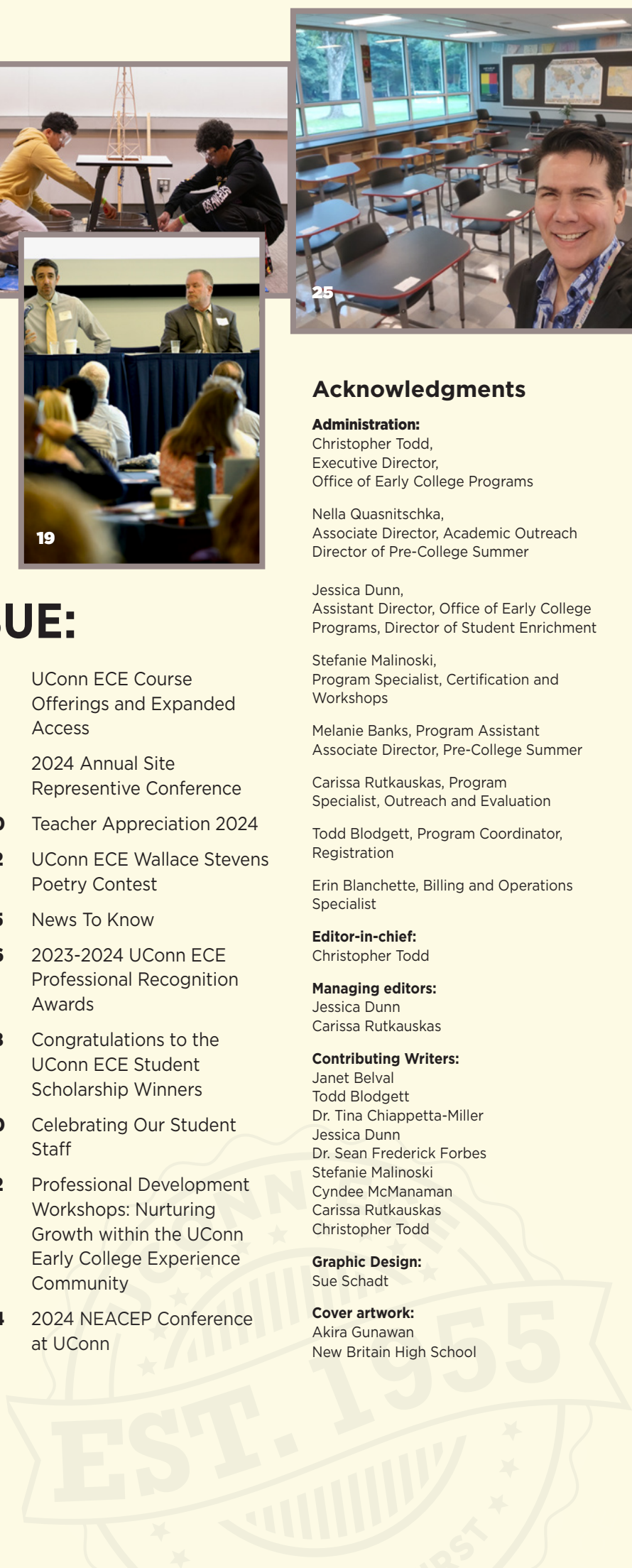
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The Director's Thoughts

Members of the UConn ECE Community,

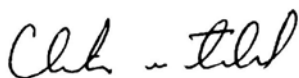
As an educational community, summer presents an incredible opportunity for all of us to take a moment to pause, take stock of the past year and rejuvenate for the academic year ahead. As each of us settles into our summer routines, I encourage you to find opportunities to reconnect with family and friends, pursue personal interests, and engage in new learning. Take advantage of opportunities that provide you with a renewed sense of motivation and excitement for the unrealized possibilities that lie ahead.

The Office of Early College Programs would be remiss if we did not take a moment to recognize the incredible work and undertakings of our community members this past academic year. In many ways, the 2023-24 academic year was a banner year for the ECE program. Student enrollment and newly certified instructors achieved all-time program highs; partner school leadership, faculty and staff engaged in frequent and on-going conversations about expanding course offerings and the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) intentional focus coupled with the allocation of grant funding on the expansion of dual credit opportunities have shifted dialogue around student access, equity, and opportunity statewide. As we pause to celebrate each of these gains, we recognize that the challenge that awaits, is not only to maintain this momentum, but to double-down on these successes in the year ahead.

The entire country watched Coach Hurley and UConn basketball double-down on success with back-to-back national championships. While the Huskies' dominant tournament run made this feat look easy, a multitude of challenges had to be overcome to put the Huskies in that position. Repeating success, in any modality, is incredibly difficult. However, the rewards of succeeding are substantial. It brings heightened recognition, solidifies legacy and ultimately leaves a lasting impact on the entire community.

Next academic year presents an opportunity for the entire ECE community to double-down on their success. To push boundaries that advance access, to re-imagine structures that have created unintentional barriers to success, or simply challenge ourselves to try something new. We hope that this edition of the UConn ECE magazine provides inspiration, or sparks your imagination, as you reflect on what will be your impact, your story, your legacy this upcoming year.

With gratitude,



Christopher M. Todd
Executive Director



Investing in Continued Success:

Reflections from our 2023-2024 Course Enhancement Grant Winners

By Christopher Todd

UConn Early College Experience recognizes that educators across the state have limited access to funds, but do incredible things on behalf of students. As educators, each of you looks to leverage grant opportunities and the UConn ECE program is proud to offer *Course Enhancement Grants* for courses taught in partner high schools. The purpose of these grants is to create opportunities for classroom and community development for UConn ECE courses. Instructors currently teaching courses at their high school can submit proposals for books, technology, equipment, or other materials that enhance the subject matter taught in the classroom.

UConn ECE also funds Community Development submissions to solicit funds for projects that have a large impact on the surrounding community, including plans to repurpose or allocate space, make communities healthier, or to foster creativity, research and build community culture. See below for reflections from some of this past year's recipients.

Christian Heritage School

ECE Instructor: Jamie Cosgrove

UConn Course: BIOL 1107: Principles of Biology I

Description: Students had hands on experience to new technology that they otherwise would not have been exposed to because of Professor Cosgrove's effort to secure funding for a new CRISPR lab set.



In reflecting on the new CRISPR lab set, Jamie thanked Dr. Abbott for his encouragement and wrote *“In this lab, they also learned how to correctly plate bacteria to obtain single colonies, how to use micropipettes, and how to use a microcentrifuge. One student, as she was taking her plate out of the warmer exclaimed, “Oh my gosh, is it white?... it’s white! That means we did it!” Many students expressed how “cool” it was to use relatively new technology in a high school classroom.”*

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Lewis S. Mills High School

ECE Instructor: Laura Faga

UConn Course: FREN 3250: Global Culture I

Description: This award allowed students to attend the French Quiz bowl in the Fall of 2023. Students returned to their school and shared the knowledge they gained with younger students.



Laura wrote “My favorite day of the year with my UConn ECE French class is always the day of the UConn Quiz Bowl. I was thrilled this year when UConn ECE was able to help us finance the ever-increasing cost of our bus to attend this amazing event by providing me with a course enhancement grant.” The ECE French Quiz Bowl was a great way for students to kick off the year and bond with their classmates. One student reflected on the day stating “I was able to bond with classmates that I wouldn’t usually have talked to, namely some of the seniors that I didn’t know beforehand which helped me feel connected to the class for the rest of the year.”

Middletown High School

ECE Instructor: UConn ECE team

UConn Courses: HIST1300: Western Traditions Before 1500, HIST1400: Modern Western Traditions; ENGL 1007: Seminar and Studio in Academic Writing and Multimodal Composition; ANSC 1676: Introduction to Companion Animals, ANSC1602: Behavior and Training of Domestic Animals; SPSS 1110: Fundamentals of Horticulture; and HRTS 1007: Introduction to Human Rights



Description: This award was used to support an all-day community event for Middletown High School students. Students were able to network with community members and explore resources available to them. Middletown High School Pride Leaders, who are students that take UConn ECE courses, lead events, directed students, and were positive role models. This event benefited all involved parties.

Leveraging their joint capacity, a team of ECE Instructors at Middletown High School helped host a Community Day Planning event where Middletown’s partnership with the UConn ECE program was celebrated along with numerous other community and school partners. Jason Boyle, ECE Site Representative wrote “Aside from the great community building, the event also helped our ECE students learn about required steps for registration. As a result 97% of students in ECE courses finished their registration on time.”

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Newington High School

ECE Instructor: Carla Toney

UConn Courses: ILCS 3239 & ILCS 3240: Composition & Conversation I & II

Description: With the goal of increasing opportunities for students to access authentic materials, funds have been provided to create a readers' library in the classroom.



In reflecting upon the grant funds Clara wrote *"In just a few months, my ECE students have had opportunities to read some of the stories and improve their literacy skills. The books are appropriate for their ability and ages – something that was lacking with my previous library. The book covers are appealing with colorful images that spark their curiosity about the stories inside."* These sentiments were also highlighted by some of Clara's ECE Students, one of whom wrote *"The stories we read so far are entertaining, better than what we were reading before."*

University High School of Science and Engineering

ECE Instructor: Caryn Baseler

UConn Course: MARN 1001E: The Sea Around Us

Description: Students in the UConn ECE Marine Sciences class visited Meigs Point Nature Center and participated in their Three Shoreline Ecosystems program so students could visualize and apply what they learned in class to the rocky shore, sandy beach and salt marsh ecosystems.



Upon reflecting on the grant, Caryn wrote *"Thanks to the UConn ECE Course Enhancement Grant, the UHSSE MARN 1001E class was able to travel to Hammonasset State Park to participate in the Meig's Point 3-ecosystem program. The students expected just a day at the beach, some of the students having never been to the beach, but experienced so much more!"*



The sandy beach was most familiar to them, but the rocky shore and salt marsh were not places that they had previously experienced."

One student wrote the day was *"Surprisingly educational (I didn't think I would learn so much) yet fun experience which allowed me to interact with the beach environments and learn more about why our beaches and marshes are so important."*

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Waterbury Career Academy

ECE Instructor: Frank F. Marcucio, III
UConn Course: AH 4092: EMT Training

Description: Funds for this award went towards the purchase of cardiopulmonary resuscitation mannequins that records their performance and interface with AEDs. This provided immediate feedback to Mr. Marcucio's students.

The mannequins allow students to develop and hone their skills and address inadequacies in a scientific method based on recorded performance.

With the help of the funds, Frank commented that the program *"trained and certified over 100 students in our health strand with this equipment during our academic year."*

The Woodstock Academy

ECE Instructor: Sharon Geyer
UConn Courses: CHEM 1127Q & CHEM 1128Q: General Chemistry I & II

Description: This classroom enhancement was awarded for the acquisition of Go Direct sensors and probes that allowed the implementation of science experiments in UConn ECE courses. The sensors were used throughout all UConn ECE science courses, allowing approximately 160 students annually to benefit.

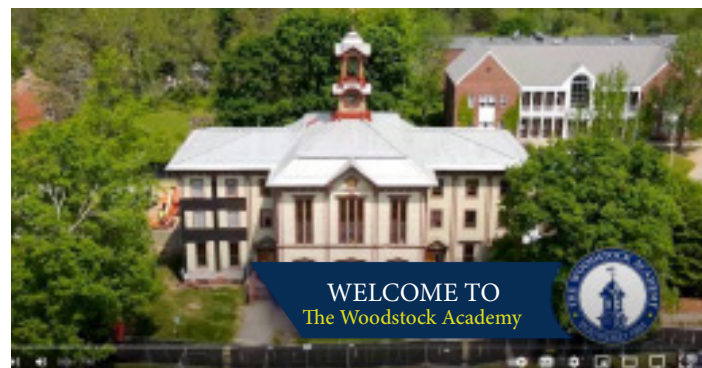
advantage of the 90-minute class blocks to engage in college-level experiments. The acquisition of six pH probes, six temperature probes, and three conductivity probes has helped to expand our laboratory program. The chemistry 1128Q students had a positive experience with buffers this spring because we could give each student a pH probe for more in-depth exploration. The additional pH probes, coupled with the student iPads, turned the buffer lab into one of the highlights of the semester. These same students were able to conduct a more accurate identification of molar mass using freezing point depression. The physics students used the high temperature probes to confirm Newton's Law of Cooling. Our biology students made good use of the pH problems in their enzyme studies. The grant allowed us to start the transition to GoDirect sensors that will connect directly to the student iPads. Vernier GoDirect sensors has given our ECE science students a similar data collection experience and analysis to the college courses taught at UConn."

Sharon wrote *"Woodstock Academy supports a wide breadth of ECE science courses including Biology (BIOL 1107); Chemistry I and II (CHEM 1127Q, CHEM 1128Q); Biotechnology (PLSC 3230); Physics I & II (PHYS 1201Q & 1202Q) and Environmental Science (NRE 1000). The ECE Instructors have developed a rich lab program for each of these ECE science courses offered at the Academy by taking*

The Woodstock Academy

ECE Instructor: Sara Dziedzic
UConn Courses: HRTS 1007 & HRTS 2200: Introduction to Human Rights & Introduction to Genocide Studies

Description: This community enhancement grant helped offset the essential financial demands of arranging a 300-350 person conference. Primarily, the grant helped support part of the cost of lunch and scholarships for various school's busing needs. The program is designed with equity in mind and hopes to bring together a diverse student population from the eastern Connecticut region.



the student produced video. Scan the QR code to link to the video.



To learn more about the Human Rights Conference hosted at The Woodstock Academy, we encourage you to watch

UConn ECE Student Events

Another amazing year!

By Jessica Dunn | Photos by Gordon Daigle and Mike Illuzi



Marine Science Symposium, UConn Avery Point

May 13, 2024

On May 13, 2024 students from University High School of Science & Engineering and Marine Science Magnet High School attended the annual UConn ECE Marine Science Symposium on the UConn Avery Point campus. Dr. Claudia Koerting, UConn ECE Marine Science Faculty Coordinator, organized and led the event as she has for the past 10 years with the goal of extending student learning outside of the classroom and building relationships between students, instructors, and UConn faculty. This end-of-year event celebrates the academic achievements of the students throughout their UConn Marine Sciences courses taken through UConn ECE and exposes them to the UConn Avery Point faculty and facilities.



Although this year there was less representation from high schools across the state than we have had in the past, we had an extremely scholarly group of students who were able to experience an intimate and interactive day. In the morning session,

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the students presented their yearlong research and scientific findings to their peers and UConn faculty in oral and poster presentations, heard from graduate students on their personal research and life as a UConn student, and then took to the campus in the afternoon to explore.

In their ventures around the Avery Point campus, students went to the docks where they pulled up submerged lines colonized by local

marine invertebrates. While examining the lines, they found animals such as mussels, sea squirts, tiny crabs, sponges, and shrimp all tucked into the seaweed. They went to the tidal pools where they discovered it to be dominated by the seaweed, *Enteromorpha*. To a passerby, the *Enteromorpha* may just look like green slime, but the students learned it is more than that and supports healthy barnacle and snail populations. To conclude their exploration, students

toured the UConn research vessel, the R/V Connecticut, and then returned to the campus buildings where they were able to get up close to equipment scientists deploy on buoys and from the research vessel to get important oceanographic data.

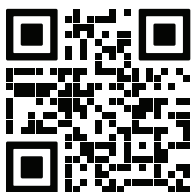
We congratulate all students on their hard work and dedication this year and thank them for participating in the UConn ECE Marine Science Symposium. ■

2024 UConn ECE Chem Day

May 23, 2024



As highlighted in the official online news source of the University, **UConn Today**, the UConn Early College Experience Chemistry Day was a great success on May 23, 2024. Sarah Al-Arshani, Communications Manager in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, wrote about the event in depth in her article, “High School Students Get Hands on Experience at UConn Chemistry Early College Experience Day,” published on May 31, 2024. ■



Scan QR code for the full article from UConn Today



The Language of...

A Multimedia Competition for Italian UConn ECE Students

May 2024

By Dr. Tina Chiappetta-Miller
UConn ECE Italian Faculty Coordinator

For UConn ECE Italian, I wanted to offer a contest for prize money to students for creative work in Italian. Since creativity takes many forms, I decided on a multimedia contest in which individual students would create pieces based on the concept of language itself, “*Il linguaggio di...*”, in a combination of written, visual or audio components. This year’s concept was “The Language of...Friendship.”

Students were asked to submit a pair of original and complementary pieces in two of the three categories.

I was thrilled to have a class of high schoolers from the Istituto Agrario di Firenze be the judges of the submitted work. The 10th grade class of Italians enjoyed evaluating the work of their American peers and very judiciously chose the contest winners. The three prizes were awarded to Claudia Wilson of Newington HS (1st place, \$300), Alex Gavrilis of Newington HS (2nd place, \$200) and Jade Gaud of Bristol Central HS (3rd place, \$100).



The plan is to change the given concept year to year. Next year’s? “*Il linguaggio... della natura*” — “The language of...Nature.” Look out for more info early next school year (or [see this year’s info](#)). Please encourage your students to submit!

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Il linguaggio di... Un concorso multimedia per studenti di ECE italiano



Scan QR code for
more information.

Per gli studenti di UConn ECE italiano volevo stabilire un concorso di lavoro creativo in italiano con premi in denaro. Dato che la creatività “va coltivata in tutte le direzioni”, come diceva Gianni Rodari, ho deciso di offrire un concorso multimediale basato sul concetto del *linguaggio* stesso in cui studenti possono creare opere creative con



Il cielo è il limite
Sei il sole della mia vita
Il mio mondo ruota intorno a te
Come se le stelle si fossero allineate quando siamo nati
Avevo bisogno di te, l'universo lo sapeva

Non ci sono abbastanza parole per descriverti
Le stelle non bastano per eguagliare la tua luminosità
Gli esseri umani sono su questo pianeta da sei milioni di anni
Ma siamo qui allo stesso tempo

Le nostre anime sono connesse
Accoppiati insieme per affrontare la vita
Forse e perché hai salvato il mio
Perso nello spazio senza il mio migliore amico

1° posto
CLAUDIA WILSON
Newington High School

Cosa farei senza di te?

Amico, cosa farei senza di te?
Migliaia di memorie, avventure
Illumini la mia vita, sempre
Con te, non ci sono brutte giornate
I viaggi, i sorrisi, le risate...
Zero limiti alle storie nostre
Il tuo supporto ferma ogni dolore
Avrei una vita vuota senza di te

Il mio mondo gira intorno a te
Supera il sole la tua luminosità
Il nostro futuro sarà bellissimo
Le nostre anime sono collegate
Migliori amici per l'eternità
Un futuro per cui sono gratissimo

2° posto
ALEX GAVRILIS
Newington High School

componenti di scrittura, arte visiva o audio. Il tema di quest'anno è stato “Il linguaggio... dell'amicizia.” Gli studenti dovettero inviare dei lavori originali e complementari in due delle tre categorie.

Sono stata molto contenta di poter invitare la classe seconda B dell'Istituto Agrario di Firenze a giudicare i lavori consegnati. I ragazzi italiani si sono impegnati a valutare i lavori dei loro coetanei americani e in modo molto giudizioso hanno scelto i premiati: Claudia Wilson della Newington HS (primo posto, \$300), Alex Gavrilis della Newington HS (secondo posto, \$200) e Jade Gaud della Bristol Central HS (terzo posto, \$100).

Il tema centrale del concorso cambierà ogni anno. Quale sarà quello dell'anno prossimo? “*Il linguaggio...della natura.*” Arriveranno ulteriori informazioni all'inizio del prossimo anno scolastico (o vedete [l'annuncio di quest'anno](#)). Vi prego di spingere i vostri studenti a partecipare! ■



CT High School Students Excel at the

2024 State Science OLYMPIAD

By Janet Belval

COMPETITION April 20, 2024

UConn ECE welcomed back the 2024 CT State Science Olympiad Competition on the UConn Storrs Campus this past April. This prestigious annual event brought together some of the brightest young minds from across Connecticut to demonstrate their scientific prowess, problem-solving skills, and teamwork. The Storrs campus was charged with excitement and collaboration as the aspiring teams competed fiercely for the top honors.

Science Olympiad is a renowned competition that tests students in a wide range of scientific disciplines, including biology, chemistry, physics, and engineering. With twenty-three challenging events, participants showcased their extensive knowledge, creativity, and analytical abilities. This year saw an impressive turnout, with forty-two teams from across the state displaying remarkable dedication and months of rigorous preparation.

Participating in the Science Olympiad offers students more than just a chance to compete; it provides a platform to delve into their love for science and spark their curiosity. Teams faced challenges in building and engineering projects, written tests, and experimental designs. The campus buzzed with activity, from glider planes soaring in Hawley Armory to forensic investigations in the Chemistry Building. These experiences create lasting memories for high school students and inspire them to pursue careers in science.

South Windsor High School successfully defended their title, emerging as the State Champions. They proudly represented Connecticut at the National Tournament in Michigan in May. Other top-performing schools included Glastonbury High School and Hopkins School, both of whom

delivered exceptional performances. Canton High School was recognized as the “Best New Team”. The camaraderie among team members was evident as they encouraged and supported each other, epitomizing the spirit of the Science Olympiad. Their passion for science shone through in every event, with their hard work and commitment to excellence driving them to success.

The success of the Connecticut Science Olympiad competition underscores the importance of fostering scientific curiosity and encouraging students to follow their passion for science. This event would not be possible without the unwavering support of our donors, coaches, parents, community volunteers, and the generosity and hospitality of the UConn’s Early College Experience Program. ■



Introduction by Christopher Todd

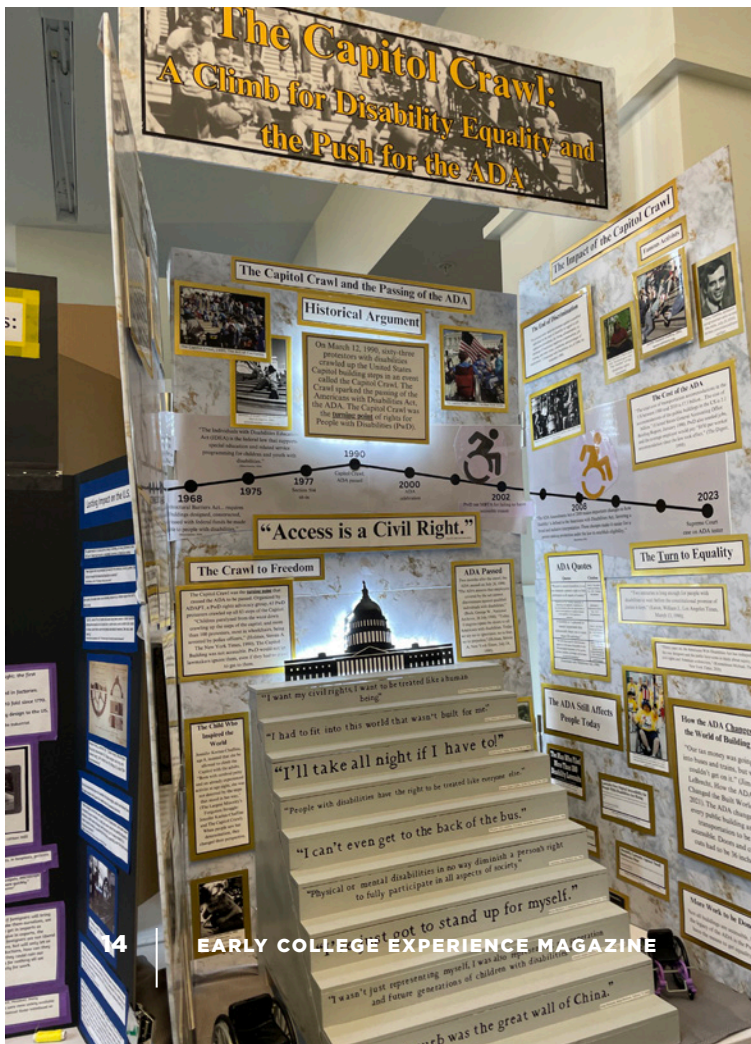
Body and participant data by Cyndee McManaman,
CT History Day Regional Coordinator

—“Turning Points in History”—

Connecticut History Day Celebrates 50th Anniversary in Storrs

March 2, 2024

On a beautiful Saturday in early March, more than 300 students accompanied by family, friends, and educators descended upon UConn’s Storrs Campus to participate in the Connecticut History Day’s Mansfield/Storrs Regional Contest. Organized by the Connecticut Democracy Center, in partnership with the Department of History at UConn, as well as UConn’s Office of Early College Programs, Connecticut History Day (CHD) built upon the program’s legacy of success. Students tackled this year’s theme, “Turning Points in History”, bringing to life the ideas, topics, and actions that directly and/or indirectly brought about change.



Connecticut History Day

Connecticut History Day (CHD) is an affiliate program of National History Day (NHD) which annually engages nearly 5,000 middle and high school students in historical research, interpretation, and creative expression through project-based learning. As stated by the CHD, the program seeks to bring students, teachers, museums, and scholars together to support young people as they engage in history. Led by the Connecticut Democracy Center, CHD is presented with major funding and partnership support from CT Humanities.

CHD offers a wide array of free resources for teachers and students to assist them with the History Day process, including:

- Teacher Handbook (English and Spanish)
- Student Handbook (English and Spanish)
- Educator Workshops
- In-class student workshops
- Digital resources for research and writing

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Mansfield/Storrs Regional Competition

Throughout the Northeastern Connecticut Region, 32 teachers representing 27 schools brought History Day into their classrooms during the 2023-2024 school year. The Northeastern region supported 868 of the statewide 4,392 school-level participants, with 272 students attending the Mansfield/Storrs Regional Contest at UConn on Saturday, March 2nd. In all, CHD held 5 regional contests around the state with the state contest held at Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) on May 4th. The Mansfield Region was strong and represented a large portion of the medals and special prizes awarded: 23 entries won medals (first, second, or third place) with 18 of those qualifying for the National Contest, and 6 entries received special prizes. At the National Contest, held at the University of Maryland-College Park campus June 9-13, 2024, students from the Mansfield region shined. The following students received medals, special prizes, or honorable mention for their entries:

- **Maura Armstrong & Teagan Dieterle (Ellington High School):** 1st Place overall for their Senior Group Documentary *The Creation of Sesame Street: A Turning Point in Educational History*
- **Julianne Pashe & Katie Smith (Ellington Center School):** Outstanding CT Entry, ranking 4th overall, for their Junior Group Exhibit *The Capitol Crawl: A Climb for Disability Equality and the Push for ADA*
- **Ishanvi Mahopatra (Timothy Edwards Middle School):** ranking 8th overall for her Junior Individual Documentary *William T.G. Morton's Ether Day: A Turning Point in Surgical History*
- **Aarush Kalia (South Windsor High School):** Outstanding CT Entry, ranking 10th overall, for his Senior Individual Documentary *The Great Swamp Fight: The Battle That Transformed American History*
- **Aaron Aldrin (Timothy Edwards Middle School):** received the Discovery or Exploration Special Prize for his Junior Individual Website *Cogito Ergo Sum: Rene Descartes' Cartesian Revelation* (5th place overall)

The following students' entries received Honorable Mention (each of these projects placed second in their judging room for the preliminary round of project evaluation):



- **Emmett Smith (Ellington High School):** Senior Individual Exhibit *A Battle of Rights for the Incarcerated: The Legacy of the Attica Prison Riot*. Emmett's entry also represented CT in the National History Day Exhibit Showcase at the Smithsonian Museum of American History.
- **Andrew Doyle & Avishkar Kasiliya (John F. Kennedy Middle School):** Junior Group Website *Stalingrad: How the Triumph of the Red Army Turned the Tide of War in the East*
- **Enaaya Mohammad & Musfira Bhuiyan (Madina Academy):** Junior Group Website *The History and Evolution of the Smallpox Vaccine*
- **Bhaavni Krishna (South Windsor High School):** Senior Individual Performance *From Protest to Progress: Helena Hill Weed and the Birth of a New Activist Movement*
- **Kalyani Tihaiya, Kayla Lin & Mia Chen (E.O. Smith High School):** Senior Group Performance *From Asian Exclusion to Inclusion: The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965*



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—“Turning Points in History”— Connecticut History Day Celebrates 50th Anniversary in Storrs

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Comments from *students* at the Mansfield Regional Contest:

“I decided to participate in CT History Day because it will help me learn how to do research better and will help me grow as a learner and it will be fun to present all my hard work. I will also get to try something new.” (middle school student)

“I decided to participate in CT History Day to explore historical events and innovations in further depth than I have traditionally in classes and gain new insight on how they have affected the present day.” (high school student)

Comments from *parents* at the Mansfield Regional Contest:

“This is my daughter’s 6th year competing. History day has been the single most influential factor in her personal and academic growth; from her writing and research skills to the confidence she now has when presenting or speaking.”

“This whole experience with National History Day has taught my children to care about people whose experiences are different from theirs. They are looking around the world with a critical eye to what these events mean, how they affect people, and what we can do about it. I love that!”

Comments from *teachers* at the Mansfield Regional Contest:

Juanita Richardson, Carmen Arace Middle School, Bloomfield CT: “This year was my first time coaching students through the History Day process. There was a lot to learn and consider, but between the coordinators and the website, I felt confident that my students had the tools to be successful. I’m very proud of my students for taking on this new, unfamiliar opportunity. Not only did they place Top 3 at the Regional Contest for junior exhibits, but they also learned invaluable skills that they are carrying with them into high school next year!”



Matthew Sivo, E.O. Smith High School, Storrs, CT: “History Day helps students build more social awareness and historical empathy

and also furthers their understanding of their civic duties and other communities.”



and also furthers their understanding of their civic duties and other communities.”

Comments from *judges* at the Mansfield Regional Contest:

“Every year I leave the History Day contest impressed by the enthusiasm for learning shown by the History Day students. I love seeing what students choose as topics. The in-depth research and analysis that these students do to complete their projects requires perseverance and dedication. History Day is a special day!”

“At this past year’s Mansfield, Connecticut, History Day regional competition, I was so pleased to see such good work in the senior papers that I and my co-judges read, as well as the diversity of participants and their topics, and the enthusiasm among the students. The quality of research and writing was remarkably good overall, and outstanding in some cases. And the diversity of student topics was impressive, ranging from war and politics to biography and popular culture, and across different societies all over the world. Most importantly, the students were quite enthusiastic about their papers, which they readily shared with each other in a seminar including all paper writers at the end of the competition. Several parents attended the seminar, and they were enthusiastic, too. As we co-judges left the seminar, a father and son stopped and thanked us for the opportunity to allow the son to present in a rigorous competition on his interests. It was great to witness such enthusiasm for history and good historical work.” ■

UConn ECE Upcoming Events

Registration

- **Registration Open**
September 16, 2024 – October 16, 2024
- **Fall, Full-Year, and Spring Course Adds & Drops**
September 16, 2024 – October 16, 2024
- **Spring Course Adjustment Period**
February 3, 2025 – February 7, 2025

Withdrawals

- **Fall Courses**
October 17, 2024 – December 12, 2024
- **Full-year Courses**
October 17, 2024 – May 1, 2025
- **Spring Courses**
February 8, 2025 – May 1, 2025

Student Events

- Cardboard Boat Race September 20
- Italian Immersion Day and Quiz Bowl October 24
- Neag Early College Experience Day October 25
- French Immersion Day and Quiz Bowl November 14
- German Immersion Day and Quiz Bowl November 20
- Science Olympiad March 22
- CT History Day March 29

Instructor Workshops

Tentative schedule, subject to change.

Additional workshops will be added throughout the year.

- Philosophy September 25
- AMST/MAST/US History September 27
- Western Traditions before 1300 October 4
- Natural Resources and Economics October 16
- Economics October 23
- Sustainable Plant and Soil Systems October 29
- Physics October 30
- English November 1
- Human Rights November 5
- Chemistry November 25
- French March 14, 2025
- Earth Science March 17, 2025

(additional workshops are still being planned)

Course Evaluations

- Fall 2024 courses
Jan 2 – Jan 31, 2025
- Spring 2025 and Full-year
May 1 – May 31, 2025

Miscellaneous

- Faculty Coordinator Lunch & Learn October 9
- NACEP National Conference October 27-29

Welcome Back to OECP, Erin Blanchette



We are excited to share that Erin Blanchette rejoined OECP in May 2024 as the Billing & Operations Specialist. Her responsibilities include managing student billing and financial records for UConn ECE students, as well as overseeing financial operations for ECE and the UConn Pre-College Summer Program. Erin originally joined UConn OECP in 2006 and just recently returned after a tenure from 2020 to 2024 at UConn's Office of Accounting. Erin is well-known among OECP veterans for her active involvement in student and instructor events. Whether you've seen her helping at the Cardboard Boat Race on Avery Point's Campus, assisting Faculty Coordinators with contracts, or ensuring smooth financial operations for PCS, Erin consistently demonstrates her value to the OECP team. We look forward to her continued contributions as we resume our collaboration as colleagues and friends. ■



UConn ECE

Course Offerings and Expanded Access

By Christopher Todd

ece.uconn.edu/courses



One of the most important fundamental principles in public policy is that the more complex a change, the less one can force that change upon stakeholders. Look to any state or federal education mandate, and one can understand the complexity of change. Simply mandating or forcing students to take advantage of the multitude of dual credit opportunities their school provides doesn't lead to success. However, creating a robust catalog of offerings that allows for choice, and aligns with student interests will ultimately shift the landscape of dual credit opportunities in Connecticut.

In his book "Inquiry Mindset", Trevor Mackenzie writes *Passions create opportunities for deeper learning as students are highly motivated and willing to explore them further. Their proper knowledge of the topic accelerates and amplifies their inquiry.* Student interest and passion must drive the opportunities we look to create in an expanded course catalog. As the UConn ECE program quickly approaches 100 unique UConn course offerings, the program stands on the precipice of determining which new courses to add to our catalog, and as such, advocates with the appropriate university leadership within corresponding disciplines. The program will continue to look for disciplinary gaps in our course offerings and will work to bring in new course offerings that align with partner school needs, relevant career pathway pursuits, and most importantly student interests and passions.

Taking this into consideration, the UConn ECE program is excited to share new course offerings available during the forthcoming 2024-25 and 2025-26 academic years. These courses align with the program's strategic vision of expanding course offerings in a way that addresses both disciplinary gaps and student interests and needs.



ASLN 1102: Elementary American Sign Language II (4 credits)

Continued development of basic knowledge and understanding of conversational ASL.



CHIN 3210: Chinese Conversation and Composition I

(3 credits)

Development of ability to communicate in Chinese, orally and in writing.



BUSN 2235: Personal Financial Literacy (3 credits)

Introduction to essential topics in personal finance for individuals and entrepreneurs. Financial literacy, personal finance topics including recordkeeping, budgeting, risk, insurance, credit, purchasing decisions, savings/investment options, income taxation of individuals and small businesses, and retirement savings.

CHIN 3211: Chinese Conversations and Composition II (3 credits)

Development of ability to communicate in Chinese, orally and in writing.



CSE 1010: Introduction to Computing for Engineers (3 credits)

Introduction to computing logic, algorithmic thinking, computing processes, a programming language and computing environment.

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UConn ECE Offers Additional Courses

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Knowledge obtained in this course enables use of the computer as an instrument to solve computing problems. Representative problems from science, mathematics, and engineering will be solved.



KINS 1100: Exercise and Wellness for Everyone (3 credits)

Overview of the five pillars of health (exercise, nutrition, sleep, stress and relationships); role of exercise in health promotion and disease prevention across the lifespan; impacts of exercise in leisure time, culture, community, careers and the workplace.



MATH 1070Q: Mathematics for Business and Economics (3 credits)

Linear equations and inequalities, matrices, systems of linear equations, and linear programming; sets, counting, probability and statistics; mathematics of finance; applications to business and economics.



PUBH 1001: Introduction to Public Health (3 credits)

This course describes the history, philosophy, and science of public health. Students will identify biological, environmental, and social determinants of health from a comprehensive perspective. They will apply these principles to define health problems, evaluate possible causes, and recommend effective public health responses to health concerns. By doing so, students will learn about career opportunities and the complementary role public health plays with health care and voluntary and governmental organizations in protecting the public's health.

To learn more about each course offering and UConn ECE Instructor requirements, we encourage you to visit our entire course catalog here: ece.uconn.edu/courses. ■

2024 Annual Site Representative Conference

By Todd Blodgett



The annual Site Representative Conference was held this May at the UConn Storrs campus. The Early College Experience (ECE) program staff hosted 190 Site Representatives from 155 of our partner high schools. The morning kicked off with a plenary session focusing on Promising Practices at Partner Schools. Representatives from Glastonbury Public Schools, East Lyme High School, Rockville High School and University High School of Science and Engineering discussed ways they are expanding their concurrent and dual enrollment opportunities at their schools. They shared an approach that focused on creating diverse course offerings to meet the unique needs of their high school populations. Site Representatives attended breakout sessions which focused on high school specific program data, expanding access to course offerings, registration 101, a Q&A with a panel of former UConn ECE students, and information from UConn's Center for Students with Disabilities. The conference ended with a barbecue lunch on the Student Union Terrace for attendees to enjoy a beautiful, sunny day on the Storrs campus. We look forward to having everyone back on the Storrs campus next year! ■





Teacher APPRECIATION 2024

By Carissa Rutkauskas

National Teacher Appreciation Day was May 7 and National Teacher Appreciation Week was May 6-10. For UConn ECE, we are extending our teacher appreciation and recognition throughout the summer! After receiving hundreds of instructor nominations from UConn ECE students, we are recognizing our top 15 most frequently nominated UConn ECE Instructors on our social media over the summer months. These exemplary educators also received their choice of a UConn ECE hoodie or a UConn ECE insulated picnic basket. Below is a snapshot of what students had to say about their UConn ECE Instructors.

Mrs. Altimari, Amity Regional High School, SPAN3178 & 3179: Intermediate Spanish Composition & Spanish Conversation: Cultural Topics - Mrs. Altimari is the brightest, friendliest, and warmest ray of sunshine I have ever met. She's helped me so much with my fluency in Spanish while still making sure the class is stress free, fun, and engaging. She isn't happy unless you're happy, and she's the best teacher I have had.

Mrs. Caruk, Hall High School, BIOL1108: Principles of Biology II - Her ability to plan out her entire year and execute that plan is always done flawlessly. She gives her students plenty of time to prepare for their exams while being available for extra help very often.

Mr. Condosta, Ridgefield High School, EARTH1051: Earth's Dynamic Environment - He has a personality that could light up any room, enthusiasm and a true love for the subject that is contagious. Every day I walk into his classroom, I walk in smiling, and by the time I leave it's always too soon.

Mr. Dempsey, St. Joseph High School, HIST1502: United States History Since 1877 - Mr. Dempsey is the best!! Such a dedicated teacher who puts a lot of effort into presenting slides, grading research papers, exams and projects while having the best jokes and sarcasm!!!

Mr. Fagan, Rocky Hill High School, PHYS1201Q: General Physics I - I am able to understand even the most complex topics because Mr. Fagan breaks it down in a way that makes sense logically. He is very encouraging and believes that everyone is capable of doing well!!

Ms. Field, South Windsor High School, MARN1003E: Introduction to Oceanography with Laboratory; NRE1000E: Environmental Science - Not only has she given us inspiration to lead our lives both inside and outside of the classroom, she is able to give us critical constructive criticism that improves both our writing and abilities to creatively think of different solutions for problems that we face in class.

Dr. Harvey, Wilton High School, ENGL1007: Seminar and Studio in Academic Writing and Multimodal Composition - Dr. Harvey makes UConn English one of the most enjoyable classes I have ever taken. I look forward to coming to class every day because although the course is challenging, she always makes sure that her students are enjoying learning.

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Mr. Mizak, Harvard H. Ellis Technical High School, ECON1000: Essentials of Economics - As a student who struggles to keep up, in a class as high octane as his is, I find Mr. Mizak to be an instructor who knows the value of hard work and perseverance, an instructor that can instill a good work ethic through meaningful lessons and hard objectives. Through class discussion and meaningful dialogue in a classroom that promotes a difference in opinion and an equal work environment, Mr. Mizak is hands down the best teacher I've had in years.

Mrs. Niles, Lyman Hall High School, HDFS1070: Individual & Family Development - Ms. Niles is very kind and cares about her students. She creates fun lessons that are engaging for every student to help us learn the topic at hand.

Mrs. Norige, Torrington High School, BIOL1107 & 1108: Principles of Biology I & II; SPSS 3230: Biotechnology- Science, Application, Impact, Perception - I am so grateful to have a teacher that cares for her students education as much as Mrs. Norige. She not only imparts knowledge but also nurtures a love of learning, instills confidence in her students, and prepares them for success both academically and personally.

Ms. Schager, Staples High School, HRTS1007: Introduction to Human Rights - The class feels incredibly personal and uplifting while also being a rightful challenge. The amount of writing and research I've had to do is almost unparalleled as of recently, and I love doing the work so much.

Ms. Turcotte, Jonathan Law High School, CHEM1128Q: General Chemistry II - She is really passionate about what she does and she shares/spreads that energy to us. She also makes our class really fun and feel like a family.

Mrs. Walston, The Morgan School, PHYS1201Q: General Physics I - She always teaches with so much energy and enthusiasm that makes the whole class excited and engaged to learn.

Mr. Wilson, East Haven High School, POLS1602: Introduction to American Politics - Mr. Wilson is an amazing teacher and friend to all, making our learning experience not only fun, but also engaging. His use of humor and engagement with the class is unlike any other history teacher I've had, and it's clear he loves his job.

Mr. Wisniewski, Berlin High School, BIOL1107: Principles of Biology I - Mr. Wisniewski always finds ways to connect with his classes in a more casual/personal way than any other teacher I've seen, and he encourages his students to personalize his room a bit, make it a bit more homier for everyone. He also gives the best concise notes I've ever taken for a course of this difficulty, and I'm really glad that I had the privilege of being a student of his this year!

ECE Wallace Stevens Poetry CONTEST



By Sean Frederick Forbes, Ph.D.
Director, Creative Writing Program
UConn English Department

The theme of this year's ECE newsletter "Doubling Down on Success" reminded me of the card game blackjack. My grandfathers and uncles used to play blackjack during summer family gatherings, so I was familiar with the phrase "doubling down." In blackjack, the term means to double one's original bid in exchange for only one more card; it's a move that suggests great surety of winning, despite the potential risk of losing. The Merriam-Webster dictionary offers a secondary definition of the term: "to become more tenacious, zealous, or resolute in a position or undertaking." With all that said, perhaps the theme for this essay can be: "Doubling Down on Poetry," since a poet must set to the page a sense of surety in their written creation despite the potential risk of being misunderstood by others. Writing poetry in any form or style is no easy undertaking especially in the high-tech world we live, in which digital distractions abound. There will always be poets, committed to painstakingly crafting verses to be read.

This year the ECE Wallace Stevens poetry contest received twenty-three poetry packets. My fellow judges, Sophie Buckner and Anh Le—both PhD candidates in the English department at UConn

and creative writers—and I selected four poetry packets by Brooke Vazquez, Yimin Wu, Mikayla Vazquez, and Jenny Li as the first, second, third, and Honorable Mention prize winners, respectively. On a cold, yet sunny, Friday morning in February, Sophie, Anh and I held a Zoom meeting to deliberate and select the winners, and the three of us noted how enriching, innovative, and vibrant all of the submissions were. Four poets stood out to us since each packet captivated our individual and collective poetic sensibilities.

The title of Brooke Vazquez's poem "Alphabetic Entomophobia," introduces the reader to a different type of alphabet, one in which the irrational and persistent fear of various insects, is front and center with dazzling details that act as verbal and visual somersaults when read aloud. What's most striking in these thirteen couplets is the merging of scientific and poetic language to create a rhythmic flow to the narrative: "uliodons savored her physique with silk / veins crawl with starving, matured maggots," causing the reader to engage with the dynamic lives of insects in nature.

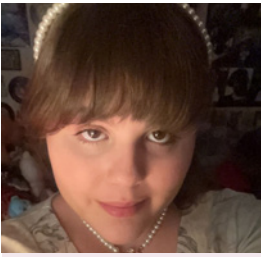
In five distinctive stanzas, Yimin

Wu's "Pomelo Peel" offers a complex and layered braided narrative as a speaker confronts cultural and social constructs regarding skin color, ethnic identity, and otherness. In the final stanza, the speaker eats a pomelo, its juices "sewing between cracks within / The rinds of my amber, pomelo heart," a heavy image to decipher.

Mikayla Vazquez's "Land of the Brave Lord" is a narrative poem written in four sequences about the Indigenous peoples of South America and the Caribbean, the Arawaks. Each sequence acts as a portal into the spiritual and ritualistic aspects of their lives. The speaker states, "The stars were crafted for the Arawak people, cultivated with crystals gathered from the darkest of caves, and the gold at the depths of their rivers;" a truly mythic-poetic vision.

Jenny Li's "Loud Whispers" offers a seemingly simple end rhyme scheme in semi-regular rhyming couplets, which upon first glance one might not detect the cascading rhetorical and sound effects established. Toward the end of the poem, the speaker thinks about the intensity of the battery of loud whispers, and states, "In the trees / With the breeze / The leaves flee / I want to be free;" with a gift of hope offered in the final image. ■

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Brooke Vazquez

Brooke Vazquez, a junior at Rockville High School, has earned numerous accolades for her work, including a platinum award in the 2020 Connecticut Student Writer contest, two Silver Keys from the 2021 and 2022 Scholastic Arts & Writing contest, an honorable

mention in the 2023 Nancy Thorp Poetry contest, and many more. Brooke’s future in the literary world looks promising as she continues to pursue opportunities to innovate and promote her work.

“I love writing, specifically the genre of poetry as it is a major outlet for me and a way to express my feelings on greater issues, primarily for women. For me, writing is the ability to paint a picture of a moment in time using words, and I try to implement that notion in my own work.”

Alphabetic Entomophobia

arachnid limbs pry through resting lips
bicuspid dig into her swelling tongue

cicadas sing beneath her unscathed skin
dung beetles writhe in her cheekbones

emerging from masticated holes in flesh
fly larva gnaw into her sockets and she

gouges the parasites from her pupils
hornets swell her suffocating esophagus

insect innards exude a caustic liquid
june bugs uproot her eyelids and

knotted antennas trace her trachea
lungs are clogged with harvester ants

mandibles tear into delicate tissue
nits wade through follicles of her scalp

orifices are itched open and stretched
parasites pour from the deepest crater

quiet crickets nestled in her eardrums chirp
russet cockroaches uproot the floorboards

swarming dermestids polish the epidermis
to iridescent bone as serrated teeth indulge

uliodons savored her physique with silk
veins crawl with starving, matured maggots

worms in coiling clumps fertilize her figure
xanthic irises dart as proboscises dry her out

yelling falters as the room is silent, still, and dark
z’s of comfort are caught as insomnia insects return



Yimin Wu

Yimin Wu is a junior at Hall High School and the Vice President of the school’s Creative Writing Club. He enjoys writing poetry, reading manhua, and listening to music.

“Through writing poetry, I’ve formed a stronger sense of self-identity and shared my cultural heritage. My pieces often deal with envy and Chinese-American struggles, which I hope to share with the rest of the world and foster a little more understanding of the immigrant experience.”

Pomelo Peel

Every day, 祖祖¹
Sat on an antique stool,
Jabbing her jagged nails
Into the spherical pomelo fruit
With yellow, porous peels.



“Were you burnt in the oven as a baby?”
My great-aunt joked, ignorant of how those words punctured my heart.
Hoping that the char would wash away, I scrubbed my skin
Raw with a wrinkled loofah, revealing smooth flesh underneath.
Walking past whitening products plastered with thin,
Pale models sporting tall, defined
Noses, I lifted up my mask in contempt.

“What is that weird smell?”
Twisting towards my direction, dozens of gazes disdained
My favorite food. I stabbed my chopsticks into the dumpling,
stuffing
Mushy meat inside my mouth as blistering juices gushed into
My eyes. Dribbling down my chin, the salty concoction of pork
Juice and tears stained my sleeves
Yellow. I’ve preferred to buy lunch ever since.

“Why are your eyes like that?”
A boy snickered, slanting his eyes up. In response,
I laughed and shrugged and imagined
Wielding Dad’s acupuncture needles,
Harvesting that boy’s sparkling, jade green eyes to replace
My dull, swampy brown eyes. In the bathroom mirror, stretching
My eyelids wide, I poured soap in my pupils as it foamed and
swirled into a milky tint of pink.

With a crooked smile, 祖祖¹ handed me a slice of the citrus’
Lustrous, precious flesh,
Glowing gold in my irises.
Taking a careful nibble, Tangy, nectarous juices
Tickled my tongue and trickled down my throat,
Sewing between cracks within
The rinds of my amber, pomelo heart.

¹ Pinyin: zǔ zǔ, means great-grandma or great-grandpa in Sichuan dialect.

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ECE Wallace Stevens Poetry Contest

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Mikayla Vazquez

Mikayla Vazquez, a junior at Manchester High school, is most recognizable by her untamed curly hair, and visceral love for creative writing. She enjoys creating a variety of poems and prose that explore the human experience, and all the happy, strange moments within it. When she's not buried in

her comforter reading, she's either thrifting, or not drinking enough water.

"I gifted my mom a poem for Mother's Day in 2022, and it was the first time I had ever seen her cry. It made me realize just how much words are a way to make people feel a range of emotion, and poetry is the most bare, and deeply personal form."



Land of the Brave Lord

I.

The Arawak people shout and dance to the sound of tambores; we are the sons and daughters of the Caribbean, made of sand and seashells

The sun fills their lungs, it shines through their smile, souls richened to a blessing, worshipping fertility, and the fresh water that curls and foams at their shores, delicate but powerful all at once

II.

The stars were crafted for the Arawak people, cultivated with crystals gathered from the darkest of caves, and the gold at the depths of their rivers. The moon sparkles with affections, each wish traveling through the milky way

III.

Their farms blossom with nectar of the gods, cassava root, the soft starchy flesh of the vegetable rots into good fortunes, bringing plentiful harvest

"Guakía Baba, Turey Toca" They would sing, prayer a hum at the base of their throats

"Guariko"
Come to us

IV.

Language of the Arawak are branded into common dialect, calling hurricane by the name of jealous, evil, spirits; twin brothers crackling like lightning and thunder, fogging the island with fury

They break apart when warm water dissipates, mother earth ending her children's squabbling



Jenny Li

Jenny is a high school senior at Montville High School. At Montville, she studies various AP and ECE classes in order to feel prepared for her future pursuit in nursing. Although writing isn't one of her passions, she does spend some time whenever she is free to write down

ideas and poems that come to her. For the most part, she spends her free time either studying, at work, or through social media consumption.

Loud Whispers

Beneath the beaming moonlight glow
The world moves on in an unbothered flow
The glooming life below
The pitiful humans who live in low
I stand alone among the vast crowd
Would my parents be proud?
In the sea of stars
I look afar
I question my existence
Plan my distance
I want to run away
A cold gust of wind
Tells me to unwind
Blowing in my ears
Its loud whispers
You don't need to wander
You don't need to ponder
In the trees
With the breeze
The leaves flee
I want to be free
Perhaps one day the tides will rise
And I won't hear the cries
The light will shine
And I will be fine



The 2025 Wallace Stevens Poetry Contest will open in November 2024 and is open to UConn ECE Students in any discipline. Look for e-mail correspondence sent through your school.

News To Know

By Carissa Rutkauskas

Congratulations on your retirement!

Congratulations to Glenn Lewis from Berlin High School on his retirement. Mr. Lewis has taught UConn SPAN 3178 and SPAN 3179, Intermediate Spanish Composition and Spanish Conversation: Cultural Topics, since 2012. His unique gift to ECE classrooms was bringing alive the



language, culture, and history through his storytelling based on his extensive travel experiences in the Hispanic and Portuguese worlds, and his Chilean heritage. In his retirement, Mr. Lewis will move on to his third career teaching Buddhist philosophy and practice, and eventually living part time in the White Mountains and in Chile.

Congratulations to Maria Vilardo from Crosby High School in Waterbury on her retirement. She entered teaching as a second career and has been teaching for 19 years, nearly 12 of them in Waterbury. Ms. Vilardo has taught UConn's History 1502: US History Since 1877, since 2020 and describes her affiliation and partnership with UConn ECE as her "crowning achievement as an educator." In her retirement, she plans to enjoy life, relax, read, and travel. She has already traveled to Europe and South America and extensively throughout the

Caribbean. In the future she would like to visit Japan and Singapore.

Promotions

Congratulations to Dr. Evan Perkoski, one of Early College Experience's Faculty Coordinators or his promotion to associate professor and tenure.

Conference Attendance

Franklin Academy (East Haddam) UConn ECE Political Science and Human Rights Instructor **Fahd Rafiq** was awarded UConn ECE Instructor Conference Funding to attend the 2024 International Studies Association Annual Conference in San Francisco, CA in April, where he presented a research paper on Nationalism and identities in South Asia, an article version of his dissertation. He also co-presented on forming national identities, mass culture, and land rights. Dr. Rafiq was able to attend several sessions, including foreign policies, using role theory and Arab Spring 2.0, and civil war research.



UConn ECE Student Successes

Congrats to **UConn ECE Student Maya Bynoe** from Pathways Academy of Technology and Design for: being a nine-time scholarship winner; admission to University of Connecticut School of Business Honors Program; achieving 28+ credits by fall enrollment; having started a business



which now has product placement inside of a local store; served as secretary for the Greater East Hartford Community Fund.

Hanh Tran, Saint Thomas More School. "Thanks to the amazing courses from UConn ECE, I am able to discover my new interest in economics, especially microeconomics. Initially, I didn't think economics was an exciting subject to take but it was great to finally learn something practical and I figured out that what I've learned can be applied positively to my consumption habit. As a result, I received an Excellence in Economics Award from Saint Thomas More high school!"



UConn ECE Student Perspectives

Jia Yi Lu, Bristol Eastern High School. "Recently, I passed my Calculus final with an exceptional score. I don't think I would've been able to achieve this without the help of my ECE Instructor."

Reygina Pierre, Ledyard High School. "Having gone through the ECE experience I have more confidence in myself in the field of animal science classes I took."

Jonathan Plona, Wolcott High School. "I did really well in my ECE courses, earning A's in them. I learned a ton from my instructors and earned college credit.



It was a great experience, and I'll be taking ECE courses again next school year." ■

2023-2024 UConn ECE Professional Recognition Awards

By Jessica Dunn



Each year, we look forward to receiving and reviewing hundreds of nominations for the Professional Recognition Awards and working with the review committees to select the winners. With that said, it is no easy task, as we have over 2,000 members of the UConn ECE community, making it very difficult to choose just a few professionals who stand out each year. But once selections are made, the hard part is over, and the celebrations begin.

UConn Early College Experience hosts an annual Awards Ceremony for all winners to publicly recognize and thank them for their dedication and commitment to the UConn ECE Program. Those recognized have exceeded program expectations and excelled in preparing their high school's students for the next level in their education. Candidates are nominated by their colleagues, students, administration, and UConn Faculty for their exemplary instruction and management of the UConn ECE Program.

On April 25, 2024, we hosted our annual Awards Ceremony for award winners, family, and friends on the UConn Storrs Campus. Our award winners and guests gathered at the UConn Alumni Center for an elegant sit-down dinner where they were welcomed by Office of Early College

Programs (OECPE) Executive Director, Christopher Todd as well as UConn's Interim Associate Vice Provost, Amit Savkar.

The night was filled with speeches from UConn OECPE staff along with program partners to personally recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of each winner. This year we had the great honor to recognize thirteen Professional Recognition Award winners along with six award winners of the Silver Jubilee Award (25-year partners). The night was filled with heartfelt speeches, tears of joy, laughter, and celebration as winners, accompanied by their family and friends were able to pause and acknowledge the great impact they have on the lives of their students, their community, and those who work alongside them.

Congratulations to all recipients of this year's awards. Your dedication, expertise, and outstanding contributions have truly set the standard for excellence within the UConn ECE Community. The UConn ECE Program would not be successful without the passionate and dedicated partners we are honored to work with, and we are grateful for all you do. ■

Congratulations to all!



Principal Award for Program Support & Advocacy
Keri Hagness, The Morgan School

Thomas E. Recchio Faculty Coordinator Award for Academic Leadership
Natalia Smirnova, Economics, University of Connecticut

Site Representative Award for Excellence in Program Administration
Kevin Barbero, James Hillhouse High School

Instructor Award for Excellence in Course Instruction
Kyle Candia-Bovi, English, Suffield High School
Austin Cesare, U.S. History, Joseph A. Foran High School
Gina Corrado, Spanish, Cheshire High School
Christina Hernández-Williams, Spanish, Cromwell High School
Heather Watts Mathieu, Biology, Montville High School



“Rookie of the Year” Award for Excellence in First-Year Course Instruction
Gemetta Neal-Goulet, Educational Leadership, Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts
Margaret Clifton, English, RHAM High School

Award for Outstanding Research in the Field of Concurrent Enrollment
Scott Campbell, English, University of Connecticut
Kathrine Grant, English, Connecticut Education Assoc.
Carissa Rutkauskas, University of Connecticut

Silver Jubilee Award
Julie Barker, Physics, Cheshire High School
María DiVirgilio, Spanish, Lyman Hall High School
Cathy Fedeorowicz, Mathematics, Seymour High School
Gan Manelli, European History, Masuk High School
Amy Nocton, Spanish, Edwin O. Smith High School
Tina Riccio, Spanish, Southington High School



Congratulations to the UConn ECE Student Scholarship Winners



[See Scholarship Video](#)

By Jessica Dunn

Through a rigorous review process, the UConn Early College Experience Office scholarship committee selected six outstanding 2023-2024 UConn ECE Students as scholarship recipients. Each student has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship applicable to any institution. All recipients are high school seniors, who have completed at least one UConn Early College Experience course and have demonstrated outstanding achievement in their project submissions. Additionally, applicants are evaluated using a holistic rubric that considers various factors including academic success, future academic aspirations, and demonstrated financial need. ■

Excellence in the Arts, Humanities, or Social Sciences

Winners demonstrate academic achievement and a potential for future academic and professional accomplishments in a field focusing on the Arts, Humanities, and/or Social Sciences.



ARIANNA ANDERSON
Pathways Academy
of Technology
and Design



TAINA TOLSON
Greater Hartford
Academy of the Arts

Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics

Winners demonstrate academic achievement and a potential for future academic and professional accomplishments in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Mathematics.



GIANNI DRAB
Robert E. Fitch
High School



MUKTHA RAMESH
Rocky Hill High School

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Excellence in Civic and Community Engagement

Winners are academically successful, are already making a positive difference in their town or neighborhood, and are inspiring others to do the same. The students chosen for this award are UConn ECE Students who demonstrate ambition and self-drive evidenced by outstanding achievement in both school and their community.



TESSA FABIANO
Stamford High School



DANIELLE KANTER
Fairfield Ludlowe
High School

We challenged our community to submit artwork with the prompt: *Growth Mindset: Doubling Down on Success* and received many fabulous submissions.



First Place: cover
Akira Gunawan, New Britain High School
Shooting for Success, original photo

Cultivate your life and take the shot. Jackson Forte (#2) takes a three pointer amongst his peers waiting for the game winner.



Second Place
Alexis Mastrangelo, Enfield High School
Joining the Toad Pee Club, acrylic on canvas

I created this piece centered around childhood and nostalgia... The moment captured in my painting is intended to provoke many different feelings, one being success. While it is very icky, I will always remember the day I joined the Toad Pee Club.



Third Place
Shelby Lewis, Ridgefield High School
Ocean, acrylic on canvas

The Sea at night. An acrylic painting on canvas, the sea at night.

Celebrating our student staff

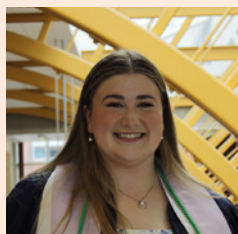
As the Office of Early College Programs works to sustain our unprecedented growth, the program continues to rely heavily on the support, insights, and dedication of our OECF student workers. Undergraduate and graduate students alike, our ECE student staff works tirelessly to provide customer service to our students and families, support student and instructor events, and keep our communication and social media presence relevant and timely. OECF has a long tradition of leveraging the power of student workers. In fact, the majority of the full-time program staff began their journey with OECF as student workers.



Yara Medawar,
Graduate Assistant
*PhD Candidate, UConn,
Civil and Environmental
Engineering*

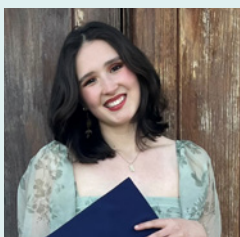
"I am very excited to join UConn's Office of Early College Programs, where I look forward to sup-

porting and inspiring the next generation of students. I'm particularly excited about the opportunity to contribute to innovative educational initiatives that bridge high school and college experiences, fostering academic excellence and personal growth among our students."



Amanda Mueller, Student
Administrative Assistant, 4 years of
experience, UConn ECE Alumni
*Rockville High School ('20); UConn,
Molecular and Cell Biology with
a Minor in Psychological Sciences,
('24); UConn, Genetic Counseling
(Rising 1st year graduate student)*

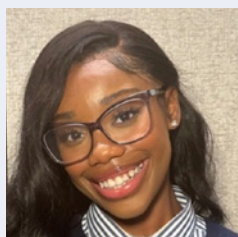
"What I enjoy the most about working with UConn ECE is the kind and supportive program staff and giving back to a program that has given so much to me!"



Caroline Lynch,
Graduate Assistant
*Master's Student, UConn, Higher
Education and Student Affairs*

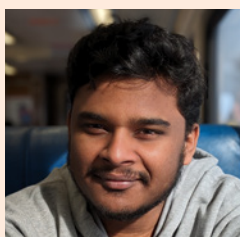
"As a former ECE student myself, I am very excited to contribute to a program that has so positively impacted my education.

Additionally, I am looking forward to the opportunity to complement my graduate education in such a hands-on and valuable way!"



Christ-Anne (CJ) Jean-Francois,
Student Administrative Assistant,
2 years of experience, UConn ECE
Alumni
*Central Magnet High School (class
of 2021); UConn, Political Science
and Psychology major; rising junior
UConn ECE Alumni*

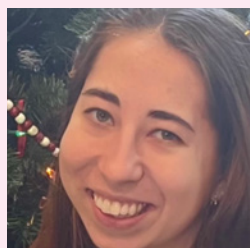
"What I enjoy most about working with the ECE program here at UConn is how understanding and kind everyone on the team is, and their commitment to helping me grow in my role and fostering my independence."



Siva Sekhar Medisetty,
Graduate Student Worker/ Data
Dashboard Designer
*Master's Student, UConn, Business
Analytics and Project Management*

"I've truly enjoyed collaborating with my colleagues and witnessing

the collective creativity and dedication that drives our work forward. Looking ahead, I'm excited about the innovative projects we'll tackle together!"



Julia Swanson, Student Adminis-
trative Assistant, 2 years of experi-
ence, UConn ECE Alumni
*East Catholic High School (class of
2020); UConn, Elementary Educa-
tion, minor in English and Speech
Language Hearing Sciences; rising
senior*

"I've enjoyed working with the ECE team because they foster inclusivity, support one another, and create a welcoming environment. ECE held a Christmas party that included all staff, featuring food and a gingerbread house competition, which the student staff won! The ECE staff are incredibly kind and caring, always ensuring everyone feels included and supported."

continued on page 31

Celebrating our student staff

continued from page 30



Whitley Sumpter, Student Administrative Assistant, 2 years of experience

Hayesville High School (class of 2022); UConn, Social Work major; rising junior

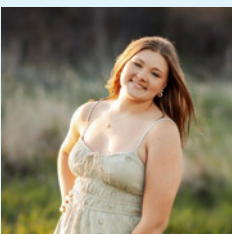
During my time working with UConn Early College Experience, I have gained many valuable skills that will not only help me in future career endeavors but in life. What I have learned has allowed me to evaluate and solve problems much more efficiently, and my confidence in my abilities to handle issues that arise inside and outside of work has grown exponentially. No matter what kind of day I am having, it is nice to know that I will be walking into a supportive work environment with staff who go above and beyond, whether I need help with a project or even just to talk. I am incredibly grateful that through UConn Early College Experience, I have met some of the most kind and genuine people who have played a large role in shaping my experience at, and love for, UConn.



Emma Winston, Student Administrative Assistant, 2 years of experience, UConn ECE Alumni

Sacred Heart Academy (class of 2022); UConn, Majoring in Psychology and Philosophy; rising junior

“Working with the kindest and most compassionate staff at ECE. I also love contributing to a program that assists these students in reaching higher in their education and really exploring what they’re passionate about.”



Charlotte Daigle, Student Administrative Assistant, 2 years of experience, UConn ECE Alumni

Wethersfield High School (class of 2023); UConn, Major: Pre-Teaching/Elementary Education Minor: HDFS; rising sophomore

“Working in the UConn ECE office I have enjoyed interacting with parents and students and seeing how helpful this program is for them when transitioning into college. Seeing that the work we put in every year pays off when we see how grateful these students are.”



Elizabeth Hinkson,

Student Content Creator, 2 years of experience

Norwood High School (class of 2022); UConn, Nursing; rising junior

“As a Content Creator at UConn ECE I have enjoyed creating innovative content for students. The supportive staff motivates me to improve daily, which has been an enriching experience.”



Sameul Alam, Student Content Creator, 1 year of experience, UConn ECE Alumni

Wethersfield High School (class of 2023); UConn, Marketing with a minor in Business Management & Communications; rising sophomore

“As a content creator for UConn Early College Experience, I enjoyed interviewing around the UConn campus, speaking to instructors, participating in meetings, and being motivated by the supportive community within the office.”



Brayden Bloom, Student Content Creator, 6 months of experience, UConn ECE Alumni

Ridgefield High School (class of 2023); UConn, Finance; rising sophomore

“UConn Early College Experience has given me the chance to work with some amazing people and get more involved. I really enjoy getting to meet new students and staff every day, as well as getting to be more comfortable with our campus.”



Professional Development Workshops

NURTURING GROWTH

within the UConn Early College Experience Community

By Stefanie Malinoski

Throughout the 2023-2024 academic year, UConn Early College Experience partnered with dedicated Faculty Coordinators to offer 50 professional development workshops to certified Instructors. These opportunities were designed to enrich teaching practices, foster interdisciplinary connections, and broaden educators' perspectives. Some highlights from the spring semester are below. Please be sure to review the UConn ECE Professional Development Blog on the UConn ECE website for details from all spring workshops and pictures from the events.

Environmental Science

Dr. Morty Ortega, ECE Faculty Coordinator for Environmental Science, met with 32 Environmental Science Instructors for a "Journey through Ecotoxicology" with graduate student Anika Agrawal. Ecotoxicology focuses on studying the effects of toxic chemicals such as pesticides, heavy metals, and industrial chemicals on ecosystems. Anika Agrawal, a PhD Candidate in Natural Resources and the Environment (NRE) at UConn studies the effect of mercury in oysters in the Long Island Sound.

Spanish

UConn ECE Faculty Coordinators from Spanish, Profs. Gustavo Nanclores and Eduardo Urios-Aparisi met with more than 60 Spanish Instructors to listen to Prof. Maria Acosta Cruz, Professor of Spanish in the Language, Literature & Culture Dept at Clark University. Prof. Acosta shared her talk "Ecocrítica, cultura y nación: La cultura puertorriqueña a través de cinco siglos" ("Ecocriticism, Culture, and Nation: Puerto Rican Culture Through Five Centuries") with the teachers.

Educational Psychology

Prof. Joseph Madaus, our UConn ECE Faculty Coordinator from Educational Psychology, gathered with instructors for a virtual meeting and thought-provoking discussion with young adult author Terry Trueman. Trueman's novel, "Stuck in Neutral," used in ESPY 1100: Introduction to Special Education courses, offers insights into the lived experiences of individuals with cerebral palsy and sparked meaningful conversation among participants.



French

UConn ECE Faculty Coordinator from French, Prof. Florence Marsal met with 30 UConn ECE certified French Instructors to hear from Joëlle Vitiello, Professor of French and Francophone Studies at Macalester College for her talk “Enseigner les trésors d’Haïti” (“Teaching the Treasures of Haiti”). In addition, Mary Catherine Decoteau, Career Consultant from UConn’s Career Services, spoke to teachers about enhancing and highlighting career competencies in UConn French courses.

Biology

Dr. Tom Abbott, ECE Faculty Coordinator for Biology, met with a group of 34 UConn ECE certified Biology Instructors and embarked on a group campus trail walk. The theme for the day was “In the “Heat” of the Moment, Forests Move Center Stage”. The field walk took the group through small forest stands and provided Instructors with a unique perspective on ecological dynamics and biodiversity in the Storrs area.



English

UConn ECE Faculty Coordinator from English, Prof. Scott Campbell and Graduate Assistant Adam McLain curated a dynamic conference for 80 UConn ECE certified English Instructors on UConn’s Hartford campus. The theme for the conference was “Inquiring About Writing: Syllabi and Texts in the ECE English High School Classroom”. From exploring literary theory and art to engaging with inquiry and identity at the Wadsworth Atheneum, the conference fostered collaborative dialogues and innovative pedagogical approaches.

Latino and Latin American Studies

Prof. Anne Gebelein, UConn ECE’s Faculty Coordinator from Latino and Latin American Studies, met with a group of 20 LLAS 1190: Introduction to Latin America and the Caribbean Instructors on the Hartford campus. The day included a presentation and discussion with special guest Lorenzo Martinez Ruiz about challenges to indigenous sovereignty in Nicaragua. Lorenzo is an indigenous leader of the Rama-Kriol peoples in southeastern Nicaragua. His firsthand insights into indigenous rights activism underscored the complexities of sovereignty and land rights issues in the region, provoking critical reflections among participants.

New Instructor Orientation

In addition to our spring professional development workshops, UConn ECE celebrated a significant milestone by welcoming **297 newly certified instructors** into our community in May. Among them, 238 fresh faces joined us for **New Instructor Orientation** which was held on the Storrs campus, marking it as our largest Orientation gathering to date.

This comprehensive event covered essential aspects of Early College Experience from Instructor responsibilities to student engagement strategies. Noteworthy presentations by Student Success and Engagement Librarian, Ery Caswell, and Educational Technologies expert, Jordan Vinikoor, enriched participants’ understanding of available resources and technological tools. Additionally, instructors had the opportunity to connect with their Faculty Coordinators and fellow newcomers in dedicated afternoon sessions to ensure teachers are fully prepared to begin offering UConn courses in the fall.

As the academic year draws to a close, it’s evident it has been characterized by notable achievements and successes. Looking forward, we aim to double down on these accomplishments to provide our UConn ECE community with even greater opportunities for continued growth. ■





2024 NEACEP Conference at UConn

By Carissa Rutkauskas

The University of Connecticut Early College Experience Program hosted the 2024 New England Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NEACEP) annual conference on Friday, May 17, 2024 in the UConn Student Union. Approximately one-hundred dual/concurrent enrollment and early college professionals and advocates from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, as well as several experts from outside of New England were in attendance. The event was kicked off by a warm welcome by Kari Suderley, NEACEP President/ Director of Early College Programs, University of Maine and Dr. Amit Savkar, Interim Associate Vice Provost CETL, University of Connecticut.

During the Plenary Session, participants had the opportunity to hear from six program directors, a school superintendent, and a state chief performance officer as they offered insights into the landscape of dual and concurrent enroll-

ment programs in their respective states. The panel highlighted key aspects of their programs such as program structure, partnerships, goals, achievements, and advancements, sparking further discussion and idea sharing from the audience.

A total of 14 breakout sessions were featured throughout the day, covering various aspects of early college programs, research, equity, policy, and support resources. Topics ranged from stakeholder perspectives on research, alumni insights, collaborative initiatives for improving early college access, and disrupting racist systems to promote student success. Sessions also delved into advanced course patterns, educator pathways, dual enrollment policies, diverse learning landscapes, career pathways advising, support for multilingual students, recognition in early college programs, targeted support for trade occupations, and a comprehensive look at Connecticut State Community College's early college programs. The conference concluded with closing remarks from Kari Suderley, door prizes, and the distribution of certificates. Participants left with valuable insights and a growing network of connections in the field.



Special thanks to the following partners for participating in the Plenary Session:

- Christopher Todd, Executive Director, Office of Early College Programs, University of Connecticut
- Salvatore Menzo, EdD, Superintendent of Goodwin University Magnet Schools
- Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer, Connecticut State Department of Education
- Beth Doiron, Director of College Access and NHED Programs & Initiatives Community College System of New Hampshire
- Jerry Appell, Early College Coordinator, River Valley Community College - Community College System of New Hampshire
- Amy Hubbard, Executive Director of Early College, University of Maine System ■



Explore a complete list of topics, presenters, and slides on the NEACEP conference website



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To facilitate learning, knowledge, and opportunities by connecting UConn ECE Students with UConn ECE Alumni.



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