

Keeping in Touch

University of Vermont
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College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
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Teaching and research in Microbiology and Molecular Genetics thrive under Wallace



Dr. Susan Wallace and Research Associate Vishy Bandaru discuss the results from an autoradiogram showing the activity of a novel DNA repair enzyme isolated in their laboratory.

Susan Wallace was seven when she first knew what she wanted to be when she grew up. A scientist.

Although raised in Brooklyn, N.Y., she spent summers in the country, which gave her ample opportunity to explore the outdoors and hone her keen interest in biology. Today she is professor and chair of the UVM Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics (MMG), a job she loves, in part because of the strong commitment of her faculty.

"When I came to UVM in 1988, two separate departments, one in the College of Medicine, the other in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, were combined to form this new Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics," Wallace explains. "What sets us apart is that we have been a unified department since our inception. The faculty bought into this, that their mission is not just their own research but the needs of the University—their students, colleagues, and the college."

Departmental research spans the gamut from basic molecular, structur-

al, and computational biology to cellular, pathogenic, and environmental microbiology. It has application for many real-world health and environmental concerns including cancer and infectious diseases like AIDS. Wallace's own internationally acclaimed research involves the repair of oxidative DNA damage, work that may lead to a better understanding of radiation therapy and radiation cancer risk. In addition to chairing MMG, she serves as director of the Vermont Cancer Center's Genome Stability and Expression Program.

"When I walked in the door 16 years ago, our department funding was \$700,000 per year. This year it was \$8 million, placing us in the top 20 percent of university microbiology departments. This is an extremely competitive area. The increase in research dollars is definitely due to the quality of the faculty."

The department's facilities also have expanded during Wallace's

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New institute helps Vermont cheesemakers

As interest in producing artisan cheeses has grown in Vermont, so has the need for technical assistance and targeted information on production, quality control, and regulatory requirements for producers of these handcrafted old world specialty cheeses. The creation of the Vermont Institute of Artisan Cheese (VIAC) at UVM earlier this year has helped meet the needs of this burgeoning industry in Vermont.

"Vermont has more artisan cheesemakers per capita than any other state," says Dr. **Catherine Donnelly**, a UVM nutrition and food sciences professor who co-founded the institute with Dr. **Paul Kindstedt**. "Every time we offered a cheesemaking course, it was oversubscribed. This was a clear indication of the interest by Vermonters in producing cheese."

Kindstedt, also a UVM professor of nutrition and food sciences, notes that, "These artisan cheesemakers blend art with science, using scientific tools with traditional practices. Although cheese research has been conducted for a



century, until recently, it was directed at the large cheesemakers. We recognized that the smaller producer needed technical help and cutting edge research aimed at their problems. Same needs, different scale." (See related "Green

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Message from Dean Rachel Johnson

Investing in people, programs, and places

The traffic jams, crowded bookstore, and competition for parking spaces are telltale signs that the fall semester has arrived. More important, the students I care so deeply about have returned and many have already found their way to the Dean's Office here in Morrill Hall to say hello and to seek assistance. For example, one of my advisees in the dietetics program peered into my office and forlornly asked, "Can you please help?" After 30 minutes, we had solved a vexing course schedule problem and discussed her options for a community-based field experience. She left exhilarated and ready to tackle her senior year.

I am pleased to report that by every measure CALS is making progress towards our strategic goals. Enrollments are up—both undergraduate and graduate. CALS graduate enrollment of 118 students is the highest ever. This is driven in part by the success of the Master of Public Administration program, recently moved to CALS and the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics. Program Co-directors Dr. **Christopher Koliba** and Mr. **Kenneth Becker** have worked tirelessly to build and promote the program, resulting in one of the largest enrollments of 38 students (see related article on page 5).

Funding from competitive grants and contracts is at an all-time high—

\$8.4 million. These funds in combination with the funding for the Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station from USDA and the State of Vermont mean we are operating a research enterprise of more than \$12.3 million. This is a testament to the quality, dedication, and out-and-out hard work of our faculty, staff, and graduate students.

The importance of the UVM Campaign has never been more evident. In order to assure the continued vitality of CALS, we need support for investments in people, programs, and places. Our number-one priority for the campaign is support for students, and we are making progress towards creating a broad and deep pool of scholarship funds. Gifts like the recent pledge of \$50,000 to the CALS CREAM campaign from **George and Sue Klein** and their family foundation provide support for the operation of our highly successful CREAM program in the Department of Animal Science as well as substantial funding for the Brett Klein Memorial Scholarship Fund. For more information about the College campaign, please visit: www.uvm.edu/cals/alumni/?Page=calscampaign.html.

To make a gift to the College, please contact CALS Development Officer **Howard Lincoln** at (802) 656-2509 or Howard.Lincoln@uvm.edu.

I invite you to keep in touch with me at (802) 656-0137 or calsdean@uvm.edu.

CREAM program welcomes alumni support



CREAMers (from left to right) Kristen Bernarsky, Sarah Messmer, and Amber Blodgett enjoyed visiting with a number of CREAM alumni at the 2004 Champlain Valley Fair in Essex Junction, Vt.

Students, faculty, and staff associated with the CREAM program (Cooperative for Real Education in Agricultural Management) welcomed more than 40 alumni back last May for a special event marking the 16th anniversary of the establishment of the CREAM program and the launching of the CREAM Alumni Association. A committee of alumni volunteers led by **Kevin Kouri '00** and **Reid Richardson '01** provided leadership for the event and essential groundwork for the new CREAM Alumni Association.

Jim Gilmore, CREAM program faculty advisor, is pleased to see the CREAM alumni become organized. "They are a tremendous

resource for our students and the program," acknowledges Gilmore. "I think we will see many good things come from the CREAM Alumni Association." Longtime CREAM advisor **Don Maynard** agrees, "Whether it's networking help, internship placement, mentoring roles, financial contributions, or informal support, the CREAM alumni are contributing in many ways."

In addition to the Alumni Association, CREAM alumni are playing a leadership role in CREAM's "Rising to the Top" fund-raising campaign.

—Howard Lincoln

“Green” expansion planned for Marsh Life Sciences

The George Perkins Marsh Life Sciences Building is getting a facelift, a move that includes renovation of existing offices and the addition of 14,122 gross square feet of laboratory, classroom, and office space. When completed, it will bring the UVM Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences one step closer to being under one roof for the first time.

The impetus for the expansion is UVM President **Daniel Fogel’s** 10-year vision for the University. Under this plan the Carrigan Dairy Science Building, current home of the food science program, will be deconstructed to make room for the new University Commons student center. Rather than moving the food science faculty and staff to temporary quarters, the expansion is being fast-tracked to be ready for occupation by June 2005.

The two-level addition will be located at the south end of Benedict Auditorium and the current Marsh Life Sciences Building. John Anderson Studio, the Burlington-based architectural firm selected for this project, has designed the new wing to be energy efficient in keeping with the president’s mandate to make this an environmental university.

“We are creating a ‘green’ building,” says Dr. **Donald Foss**, senior advisor to the CALS dean, “which will qualify for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. This certification is given to buildings that meet many criteria



to be considered environmentally friendly. Buildings must be holistically designed to consider site design, water conservation, energy efficiency, and material conservation, and promote a high quality indoor environment. The addition’s southern exposure provides abundant natural light to the interior, while special glazing reduces glare and harmful heat rays.”

The new entrance leads into the building’s central core where the administrative offices will be located. Employees and visitors will enter through a welcoming atrium where colorful graphics will tell the story of food and nutrition and how it relates to research and teaching in the department.

“It’s the farm-to-fork perspective,” says Dr. **Jean Harvey-Berino**, chair of the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences. “We hope to create a sense of our food system—how food

is grown, cultivated, and manufactured for the table.”

The new wing will house state-of-the-art food science research laboratories and offices on the upper level. Additional offices, a teaching lab, and public space are planned for the lower level along with a cheese lab, pilot plant, and product test kitchen. The newly established Vermont Institute of Artisan Cheese will use some of these new departmental facilities.

“This puts a brilliant new face on the whole college,” Harvey-Berino says. “It’s the first new building CALS has had in many years. It will be a showcase for the college, drawing in more students and possibly leading to expansion of the cheese institute.” (See “Cheese” article on page 1.)

Foss adds, “We’re excited about the potential for increased synergy between the food science and nutrition faculty once they’re in the same building. Merging the programs has been challenging while they have been located in two separate buildings.”

The permitting process for the addition is expected to be completed by late fall with construction starting in December. Offices in the current Marsh Life Sciences Building, which was built in 1965, will be renovated by 2008.

—Lisa Halvorsen



Neher named chair of Plant and Soil Science

We warmly welcome Dr. **Deborah Neher**, new chair of the Plant and Soil Science Department! Dr. Neher started on September 1, along with her laboratory group, all of whom arrived from the University of Toledo in Ohio. Dr. Neher received her Ph.D. from the University of California, Davis, in Plant Pathology, and her research foci

are in soil ecology and environmental monitoring. More to come about Dr. Neher, her research, and vision for her new department in the Spring 2005 issue. In the meantime, check out her website at www.uvm.edu/~pss.



John Hoogenboom (left), president of Friends of the Horticulture Farm, hands Associate Professor **Mark Starrett** the keys of a truck the group donated to the Department of Plant and Soil Science this past May.

Department Kudos

Animal Science:

At the American Dairy Science Association annual meeting in St. Louis, Mo., in July, three Animal Science students won awards: **Ana Barndollar** (Russ Hovey's lab) won 1st place in the National Undergraduate Original Research Competition; **Diana Martinez** (Tom McFadden's lab) won 2nd place in the Northeast Division of the Graduate Research Paper Competition; and **Emma Wall** (Tom McFadden's lab) won 3rd place in the National Graduate Research Paper Competition.

Botany and Agricultural Biochemistry:

Matt Kolan, pursuing a master's degree in the Field Naturalist Program, was awarded this summer one of only 20 Environmental Fellowships given by the Switzer Foundation, based in Belfast, Me. These national awards are given to emerging environmental leaders who pursue graduate degrees and are dedicated to positive environmental change in their careers.

Due to the innovative efforts of Research Technicians **Brian Stowe** and **Mark Isselhardt**, the Proctor Maple Research Center surpassed the "holy grail" of 0.50 gallon mark per tap and yielded 0.60 gallon per tap this spring 2004! A normal yield per tap ranges from 0.25-0.35 per gallon, but through their success in replacing the entire tubing system and designing a new cleaning system for the evaporator, it eliminated the use of chemicals, required less labor, and resulted in a lighter syrup and higher yields.

Heather Driscoll received the prestigious Karling Award from the Botanical Society of America this summer to support her graduate research on the evolution and biogeography of Hawaiian Holly Ferns.

Community Development and Applied Economics (CDAE):

For fiscal year 2003-04, CDAE's research grants totaled over \$1.5 million, 24 times (!) from only three years ago. Successful research grants include several risk-management projects for farmers (**Robert Parsons**), transfer of sugaring technology to Honduras (**Daniel Baker**), several contracts to evaluate action projects ranging from microenterprise development (**Jane Kolodinsky**, **Michelle Cranwell**) to developing expertise in using technology by the not-for-profit sector (with Cyberskills Vermont, Jane Kolodinsky, **Rashmi Narsana**), and research related to Food Education Every Day (FEED) (with NOFA, Jane Kolodinsky, **Erin Croom**, **Rashmi Narsana**). Also, U.S. Housing and Urban Development funded a graduate work-study program to bring minority and economically disadvantaged students into CDAE, linking them with local non-profits while earning their degree (Jane Kolodinsky, **Richard Schramm**).

Nutrition and Food Sciences (NFS):

Professor **Paul Kindstedt** has been named the first Honorary Lifetime Member of the Vermont Cheese Council at its annual meeting on April 15. Kindstedt was recognized for his outstanding commitment and service to the Council and Vermont cheesemakers. In addition, Kindstedt received the 2004 Bickford Keystone Award in NFS to support collaborative research with an NFS undergraduate, **Elissa "Elie" Valentine**.

Professor **Jane Ross** was instrumental in the College's Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) receiving its initial accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Dietetics Education of the American Dietetic Association this past May for its baccalaureate and master's programs. This is excellent news for DPD students. Ross also received the state's top award as the Outstanding Dietitian of the Year by the Vermont Dietetic Association at their annual meeting on May 6.

Microbiology and Molecular Genetics:

Professor Emerita **Paula Fives-Taylor** was elected this past April to the American Academy of Microbiology. This is an honor for Fives-Taylor and recognizes her research achievements in the area of oral microbiology.

Plant and Soil Science:

Research Assistant Professor **Donald Ross** was awarded the Vogelmann Award for Excellence in Research and Scholarship at the CALS Honors Day ceremony on April 16 for his innovative research studies. Ross concurrently holds the positions of Director for the Agricultural and Environmental Testing Laboratory and Co-Director of the Environmental Sciences Program.

The University of Vermont Horticulture Club was voted again this year as the "Best Small Horticulture Club" at the Annual American Society for Horticulture meetings in July in Austin, Tx. Plant and Soil Science Associate Professor **Mark Starrett** is faculty advisor. **Jessica Waite**, incoming UVM Hort Club president, placed third in the vegetable judging competition.



Research Assistant Professor **Don Ross** (upper left) assists in phosphorus filters construction at the Constructed Wetlands Center (CWC) at the Paul Miller Research Center on Spear Street. **Aleksandra Drizo**, research assistant professor in Plant and Soil Science and CWC project manager, states "During the first eight months of its operation, the aerated systems were capable of achieving a very high performance rate: 85-99% removal of organic matter, suspended solids, and E. coli. However, nitrogen and phosphorus removal still need to be improved."

MPA program enjoying a renaissance

Two years ago, the University moved the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The program is formally housed within the Community Development and Applied Economics Department. In existence since 1984, the MPA has graduated over 170 present and future public and nonprofit sector leaders. Program alumni serve in leadership capacities within nonprofits; federal, state, and local government; higher education administration; and the business sector. The UVM-MPA program has been housed within four different colleges during its twenty years of existence. Through it all, program faculty champions, supportive alumni and, ultimately, UVM's administrative leadership have come to appreciate the value of offering an MPA degree.

The decision to keep the program going and infuse new resources was the culmination of several years' worth of work to study the efficacy of the program. Over the course of the past two years, new administrative leadership has stabilized the program, admitting 14 incoming students for the fall 2004 semester. A steady stream of existing and new public administration courses is now offered throughout the year, both on the main campus and within the state capital of Mont-

pelier. The program now has 38 matriculated students, up from 20 when the college received the program in 2002. It appears that the UVM-MPA program is enjoying a renaissance. Its students, faculty (both new and veteran), and advisory board feel positive about the program's future.

Some highlights of the program:

- Over the last two years, the MPA program has entered into a partnership with the Snelling Center for Government to jointly offer policy research internships.
- In a recent survey of program alumni, "83% indicated that their MPA degree was somewhat important to extremely important in obtaining their position after graduating from the program."
- Recent efforts to recruit students from diverse backgrounds into the MPA and CDAE masters programs resulted in the receipt of a HUD Federal Work Study Fellowship grant awarded to people from under-represented groups who are interested in pursuing community development opportunities. Of the five slots to be awarded, two have



Rob Hofmann, Vermont Commissioner of Finance and Management, speaks to an MPA class recently.

been given to new MPA students.

UVM President **Daniel Fogel** has stated that, "the University has a living commitment to the ethical foundations of democracy and to values long-associated with the state of Vermont: fairness, social justice, environmental stewardship, openness, independence, lack of pretense and the achievement of practical results." This may be especially true of faculty, students, and staff of the MPA program who are committed to public service, engaged in current public policy debates, and helping to solve genuine challenges faced by governmental and nonprofit entities across the state.

—Ken Becker and Chris Koliba

Wallace, from page 1

tenure. Originally housed in 10,000 square feet of space in two separate buildings, today the department has tripled that amount of office, classroom, and research space in the multi-level Robert T. Stafford Hall, built in 1991 specifically for the department.

These state-of-the-art facilities have led to enhanced student recruitment, especially of graduate students, many of whom are accepted for post-doctoral positions at top research institutes and universities or senior positions at pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies upon completion of their doctorates.

Under Wallace's direction, an undergraduate degree program was established offering majors in microbiology and molecular genetics with research emphasis on medical and biological sciences. This year the department includes 40 undergradu-

ates, 60 percent of them Vermonters. Many are Vermont Scholars, reflecting the high caliber of students accepted into the program.

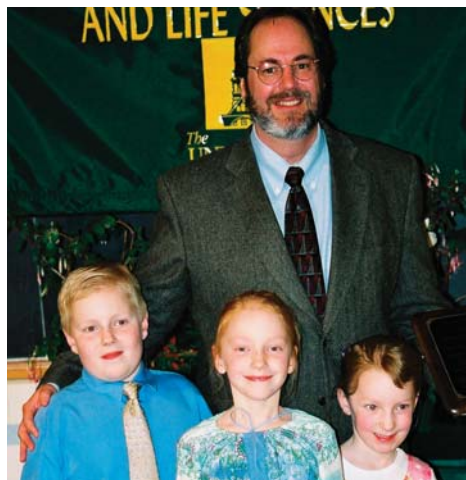
"All our undergraduates do research in departmental labs," she says, "giving them a competitive edge in the job market. They are mentored not only by faculty but by graduate students and postdoctoral fellows."

The quality of the teaching faculty is evident by the number of individuals singled out for prestigious teaching awards, including Dr. **Douglas Johnson**, who received the 2004 Carrigan Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching. Wallace also has received numerous awards from the University and outside organizations, including the National Institute of Health, for her research and teaching.

"Something new is happening every day," Wallace says. "There's

always an answer to every question. That's why I find science so fascinating."

—Lisa Halvorsen



MMG Professor Douglas Johnson, accompanied by his children, receives the 2004 Carrigan Award at the April 16 CALS Honors Day ceremony.

Outstanding alumni recognized in 2004



2004 recipients of the CALS Outstanding Alumni Award, from left: Leon Graves '73, James Lampman '72, Cynthia Danaher '80, and Robert Davis '41, with Dean Rachel Johnson at the 11th Annual CALS Alumni and Friends Dinner on Saturday, May 1 at The Inn At Essex.

Robert Davis '41: Under Davis' leadership, the Cabot Farmers' Cooperative Creamery expanded into a company with a national reputation for excellent cheese; from 1952 until his retirement in 1984, sales increased from \$1.0 million to \$50 million. Davis has been an influential representative for the Vermont and national dairy industries.

James Lampman '72: Lampman's UVM degree in Home Economics prepared him well to be owner of the Pierre Restaurant in Colchester and the acclaimed Ice House Restaurant in Burlington. As owner of Lake Champlain Chocolates since 1983, Lampman has seen the company grow and his products are sold nationally in over 2,000 specialty-food retailers.

Leon Graves '73: Graves is current Director of Industry Affairs for Dairy Marketing Services in St. Albans, Vt., and formerly held the position of VT Commissioner of Agriculture, Food and Markets from 1995-2003. Graves was known for his agricultural leadership in the Vermont legislature before being appointed as Commissioner.

Cynthia Danaher '80: Danaher was the Vice President and Group General Manager of the Healthcare Solutions Group at Hewlett Packard from 1995-1999, responsible for five healthcare divisions, 5,300 employees, and a \$1.4 billion budget. Danaher is active on numerous boards and serves as a medical products consultant.

"Brothers of the Century"

Alpha Gamma Rho recognized seven AGR alumni from UVM as "Brothers of the Century" at their 100th Anniversary event on Saturday, April 17, for their extraordinary dedication and commitment: **Erwin Clark '61; Donald McFeeters '63, G'86; Henry Atherton '48, G'50; Larry Myott G'92; Walden "Wally" Rooney '65; Laurence Jost '80; and Todd Pritchard G'98.**

In addition, Larry Myott G'92 was inducted on May 15 into the North American Maple Museum's "Hall of Fame" in Croghan, N.Y., for his outstanding leadership with the Vermont, national, and international maple industries.

The 2004 Lawrence K. Forcier Outstanding Senior Award was given to **Kathlyn "Kat" E. Coughlan**, a Biological Sciences major with a Microbiology minor at the CALS Honors Day ceremony on April 16. Coughlan's accomplishments are many. She maintained an excellent GPA while pursuing a rigorous pre-veterinary curriculum, completed her college requirements within a three-year time frame, and is the first Justin Morrill Honors Scholar to graduate from CALS.



Seeking 2005 Nominations

**New Achiever Alumni Award
Outstanding Alumni Award**

Due Friday, February 18, 2005

Nomination forms available at:
www.uvm.edu/cals/alumni
or call (802) 656-0321

Awards presented at the
CALS Alumni and Friends Dinner



Professor Emerita Valerie Chamberlain (right); Dr. Katsuko Makino (left), who studied at UVM eight years ago under Professor Chamberlain; and interpreter Dr. Akiko Ueno.

Dr. **Valerie Meyer Chamberlain** was invited to speak at the Japanese Home Economics Education Association meeting held in Tokyo this past June on the topic of "The History of Home Economics in the United States: Its Leaders, Past,

Present, and Future." (Yes, she did speak in English!) She also served as a visiting faculty member for a graduate class at Ochanomizu University. Dr. Chamberlain, now professor emerita, and the 1995 CALS Outstanding Alumni Award winner, served for many years as Director of the Family and Consumer Sciences Education (FCSE) Program. FCSE has recently hired a new Director, Assistant Professor **Michelle Krehbiel**, who resides in the Department of Integrated Studies in the College of Education and Social Services. Dr. Krehbiel can be reached at (802) 656-4050.

Cheese, from page 1

Expansion” article on page 3.)

In June the institute offered its first educational program on grading and evaluating cheese at Shelburne Farms. A two-day course on hygiene and food safety will be offered this November.

The institute is funded through the John Merck Fund, an anonymous private donor, and federal appropriations secured through U.S. Senator James Jeffords (I-Vt.). The latter monies are specifically targeted for research on the microbial safety of aged hard cheese made from raw milk.

“Artisan cheeses are currently commanding high prices in metropolitan marketplaces,” Donnelly points out. “For Vermont’s dairy farmers, the ability to make cheese on their farms has provided an important new source of revenue. Many have been economically challenged with the declining milk prices in recent years. This is one way of keeping dairying sustainable.”

For Dawn Morin-Boucher, a Highgate Center dairy farmer and



Vermont cheesemakers perform training exercises with a battery of sensory samples to enhance their ability to identify and describe subtle nuances of aroma and flavor.

artisan cheesemaker, VIAC is a godsend. She’s already contacted UVM’s Dr. **Monserrat Almena-Aliste**, who provides technical support for cheesemakers through the institute.

Since 1999 Morin-Boucher has produced farmhouse blue and other specialty cheeses under the Green Mountain Blue label, using recipes she has developed, as a way to supplement income on the Boucher Family Farm. She sells the cheeses directly to Vermont restaurants, by mail order, at the farm, and through farmer’s markets and a Chicago-based distributor.

Although the venture has been

successful, things haven’t always run smoothly. With the start up of VIAC earlier this year, the cheesemaker finally has a place to go for help with her questions.

“Cheesemakers on small farms are a growth industry in Vermont,” Morin-Boucher says. “VIAC is going to be an important resource for us. It will help increase income off the dairy and bolster the industry.” She believes that the institute could serve as a model for other states to provide assistance to farmstead cheesemakers, which will keep the working landscape open.

The institute plans to offer both a certification program for novice cheesemakers and a credentialed program leading to a Master Artisan Cheesemaker Certificate in addition to workshops and courses for food service professionals and the public. An exchange program with expert cheesemakers from Europe and the United States will enhance the range of research information and assistance available to Vermont cheesemakers.

—Lisa Halvorsen

Celebrating an American Treasure: The UVM Morgan Horse Farm

Provost **John Bramley** and Dean **Rachel Johnson** welcomed state and federal officials to the UVM Morgan Horse Farm on August 2 to celebrate the completion of significant facility improvements and structural repairs at the historic farmstead and to recognize the major contributors who made them possible. The repair work was initiated over a year ago when the University received a \$365,000 grant from the National Park Service’s Save America’s Treasures program. Additional gifts were received from the State of Vermont, the Preservation Trust of Vermont, and numerous private donors fulfilling the matching funds requirement of the federal grant.

National Park Service representative **Christina Marts** complimented the University of Vermont for its responsible stewardship of the UVM Morgan Horse Farm for more than 50 years. Representatives from U.S.

Senator James Jeffords’ office and the Vermont legislature were on hand to offer congratulations and to see the results.

The facility improvements included the installation of a comprehensive fire suppression system, new ADA-compliant restrooms in the main barn complex, new fencing, and structural repairs to the barn’s foundation and exterior walls.

“We are grateful to Senator **James Jeffords** (I-Vt.), the National Park Service, the State of Vermont, and our private donors for making this Save America’s Treasure grant such a great success,” said Dean Johnson. “These investments will help safeguard this cherished farm, our prized herd of UVM Morgans, and the thousands of tourists who visit the farm for generations to come.”

—Howard Lincoln



National Park Service officer Christina Marts offers words of congratulation upon the successful completion of structural improvements to historic facilities at the UVM Morgan Horse Farm made possible by a Save America’s Treasures grant, private donations, and an appropriation from the Vermont legislature.

Keeping in Touch

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Fund brightens student experience

Imagine having an opportunity to attend a conference, participate in a national or international competition, or undertake a special research project at a distinctly advantageous point in one's undergraduate career. Imagine applying for and receiving a one-time-only grant to take advantage of such an opportunity.

Thanks to the support of many donors, the Fund for Undergraduate Student Excellence (FUSE) is established to help CALS students seize the moment and take full advantage of unique opportunities that augment their undergraduate academic program. Associate Dean **Josie Davis** is enthused about FUSE. "This fund gives undergraduate students from across the College an option to pursue when opportunity knocks," says Dr. Davis. "While we cannot support all requests, we can and do accept a number of very good proposals from students for which a few hundred dollars makes the difference between being able to take advantage of a meaningful opportunity and having to pass it by."

For example, Biological Sciences major **Erin Chicoine** undertook a special research project last spring with Animal Science Professor **Joanne Knapp** thanks in part to a grant from FUSE. She gained undergraduate research credit for her project that studied the polarity of ruminant-derived enterocyte cell lines to determine their functionality as models for nutrient transport studies in the dairy

cow. "I had a great experience working in Dr. Knapp's lab," says Chicoine. "The FUSE grant allowed me the opportunity to investigate this subject area more thoroughly and it gave me some excellent experience I could use for my summer job in the Biochemistry Department," she adds.

Animal Science major **Deborah Press** was among a group of four CALS students who used a FUSE grant to help pay for their participation in the National Animal Welfare Judging Competition at Michigan State University last spring. Press and her teammates did UVM proud bringing home third-place honors in what was UVM's first entry in this competition. "The trip allowed me to meet top experts in welfare science and it demonstrated our college's interest in promoting animal welfare as an important part of an animal science curriculum," says Press.

Space does not permit a recitation of numerous other illuminating experiences gained by students thanks to support from FUSE. Future issues of *Keeping in Touch* will chronicle FUSE-supported student endeavors provided, of course, charitable gifts from alumni, parents, and friends keep this fund glowing and growing.

The Dean's Office again wishes to thank the College's many contributors to the Fund for Undergraduate Student Excellence!

—Howard Lincoln