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## Sweet Science



Sugar and steam: The sap is running and the evaporator is boiling at the Proctor Maple Research Facility. (File photo: Bill DiLillo)

After skittering through the slushy ruts on the dirt road that leads up the hill to the Proctor Maple Research Center in Underhill, visitors to the woodsy temple of Vermont maple studies are greeted by a tableau of apparent contradiction.

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## The New Abnormal

Cracking the human genome promises to revolutionize psychiatry. Two UVM researchers, Dr. John Helzer and Dr. James Hudziak, are leaders in describing how increased genetic understanding will inform future diagnoses of mental illness.

## Nursing the Supply

Vermont has maple trees and dirt roads to spare, but nurses are in short supply. But the situation is improving, thanks in large part to new partnerships. This is great news for Vermont patients, who depend on nurses, and it's also a boon for enrollment here.

## THE WEEK IN VIEW

**March 13 7 p.m.**  
**Forum: "War and Resistance,"** with Medea Benjamin, founder of Global Exchange. Billings Theater.

**March 14 7 p.m.**  
**Women's NIT:** Catamounts host Holy Cross in first-round game. Patrick Gym.

**March 16 1 p.m.**  
**Seminar: "Farming, Nutrition and Traditional Diets,"** with food tasting. Registration required. Contact Sarah Flack, 933-6965.

**March 19 6 p.m.**  
**Community medical school:** "Understanding and Treating Female Sexual Dysfunction," Judith Gerber. Registration: 847-2886.

**March 21 All day.**  
**Mastering the Maze** conference. See [Events](#) for details.

**March 27 12:30 p.m.**  
**Talk: "Deutschland in Afrika: Nazi Colonial Propaganda in Film,"** Robert Gordon (Anthropology) and Dennis Mahoney (German and Russian). John Dewey Lounge, Old Mill.

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**Explaining the Watershed**

After collecting these water samples on March 8, participants in the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain's Explainers program used the UVM Rubenstein Lab to perform a rigorous array of water-quality tests. Explainers, who usually face some sort of obstacle to graduating high school, are focusing their efforts on Burlington's Potash Brook. The program aims to teach participants environmental science through field and lab work, and then have them explain it to younger students. UVM Extension Assistant Professor Jurij Homziak, along with the Leahy Center's Rachel Jolly (right), lead the program. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

**UVM Women Strongly Represented at Symposium**

Next year, maybe Castleton State College should hold its Women's Studies Symposium in Burlington. Most of the presenters at the event planned for Saturday, March 16, in Castleton are women of UVM.

"This will be our sixth symposium, and only the second year we've opened the event to other colleges," says Linda Olson, a professor of sociology and coordinator of Women's Studies at Castleton. "We received a number of outstanding papers from UVM students this year."

As a result, seven UVM affiliates and three from Castleton will lead panels on identity, power and activism.

Credit Sanjukta Ghosh, a visiting professor of Women's Studies, and Sheila Boland-Chira, who teaches an English course on Race and Ethnicity, for getting the word out to UVM students. "I never would have dreamed of submitting work for a conference without Sanjukta's encouragement," says senior Sarah Furtek. Ghosh, whose formal teaching post is at Castleton, is the former symposium coordinator.

**Faculty Senate Considers Transition, Online Catalog**

The Faculty Senate will recreate itself in April, when faculty vote on senators for the new, representative forum. At its March 6 meeting, David Dummit, chair of the faculty affairs committee, gave attendants an overview of the new Senate's format.

There will be 67 elected senators, 22 elected to one- and two-year terms and 23 elected to three-year terms. The number of elected senators from individual units is linked to the number of full-time, eligible faculty in the unit. Elections will be held annually in April and terms will expire on June 30. For a complete list of eligible faculty, see [Eligible Faculty](#). For a detailed explanation of the body's new structure, see [Bylaws](#).

In the March 6 meeting, faculty also debated the issue of UVM's catalog going online. Lauck Parke, vice provost for undergraduate education, told colleagues that the online version would save money, improve UVM's "wired" image and appeal to computer-savvy students. For the coming year, the university will use the approximately 6,000 catalogs remaining from this along with a 14-page printed addendum of new courses.

Several faculty members raised concerns, including a continuing need for printed information and concerns for potential students without computer access. Don Honeman, director of admissions, told the assembly that the catalog is not a recruitment tool, and that minority students are the heaviest users of the university's online sites.

In other business, faculty made minor wording changes to proposed changes in the policy governing the admission of undergraduate students and heard from Richard Foote, chair of the research and scholarship committee, of proposed changes to the SUGR/FAME program, that includes restriction to undergraduates and base funding of approximately \$100,000 annually. The committee, he added, also is seeking a new name for the program, which he believes will be a "gem of a recruitment tool."

**Campus Rallies to Help New Professor**

Ahmad Chaudhry, a new faculty member in microbiology and molecular genetics, was only in Vermont for two days when a fire in a South Burlington condominium complex destroyed his family's new home and most of his belongings.

With help from the university, the city, and local

"She has been advising all of her students to get their work out there through publication and presentations," says Furtek, a Women's Studies major who recently interned at a local holistic health center. She will discuss, "Promoting Complete Breast Health Through the Practice of Breast Massage."

Boland-Chira urged four students to submit papers to the Castleton conference. Two were accepted.

Sophomore Caroline Zeilenga, a double major in Environmental Studies and English, will discuss her research on "Seeking Identity: Notions of Chinese Womanhood in *The Woman Warrior*."

Fellow sophomore Heidi Murphy will discuss "Zitkala-Sa's Narratives: A Criticism of Western Ideology." Zitkala-Sa was a Native American journalist and activist.

UVM presenters also include: Lynne Bond, professor of psychology, doctoral student Sheila Kirton-Robbins and senior Lynne Babchuck will discuss, "Women Giving and Growing Through Volunteer Community Leadership." The trio will share preliminary insights from a study Bond co-initiated three years ago with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"We've interviewed 17 women who are active in Burlington's neighborhood associations and grassroots organizations to understand the different ways they define leadership," says Babchuck, who is writing her honors thesis on the project.

Sophomore Caitlin Daniel-McCarter will participate in two panels, presenting her research on "Deconstructing American Masculinity by Realizing Cross-cultural Gender Diversity," and "Gender Inequality in Developing Countries."

The free, public event will run from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Stafford Academic Center on the Castleton campus. Those planning to attend are asked to call Olson at 468-1473 or email [linda.olson@castleton.edu](mailto:linda.olson@castleton.edu) so she can order enough food for a complimentary lunch.

business and charitable groups, the Chaudhrys are in a temporary new home and are steadily moving on with the work of rebuilding their lives.

To offer assistance in that effort, Debbie Stern of the microbiology department is coordinating a fund to help the family. To help out or learn more, contact Stern at 656-8258 or [dstern@zoo.uvm.edu](mailto:dstern@zoo.uvm.edu). Chaudhry has a 10-year-old girl and five-year-old boy.

### **Benefits Change is Only in the Cards**

In the midst of an economic slowdown, a mailing describing a benefits "change" is not exactly welcome news. So it's no surprise that a mailing from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont last week created some mild consternation around the campus community last week.

The concern was unwarranted. Blue Cross health coverage for UVM affiliates is remaining the same.

"There are no changes," says Tim O'Brien, assistant director of human resources. "BCBSVT is going to a new ID card system. They are replacing the old paper ID cards with plastic cards. In order to do that they needed to reissue the outlines of coverage and send out new subscriber certificates."

A reference to "changed" dental benefits in the mailing referred only to a more detailed description of UVM's existing dental surgery benefit, O'Brien says. Principal dental coverage for UVM affiliates is still administered through Delta Dental.

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The innovative Shenandoah Shakespeare Express is motoring to UVM with a performance of *As You Like It*. For details, see the story below. (*Publicity photo.*)

**As We Like It**

The Shenandoah Shakespeare Express, praised by critics for "blowing the cobwebs out of Elizabethan drama," will perform the Bard's comedy, *As You Like It*, on Wednesday, March 27, in the Southwick Recital Hall at 7 p.m. Tickets to the free performance (two per person limit) will be available beginning at noon Monday, March 25, at the English Department's main office, 400 Old Mill.

The professional touring company provides a theatrical adventure akin to what Shakespeare's own audiences would have experienced. Lights remain on, since in Shakespeare's era performances were usually during the day in open air theatres. Interaction between players and audiences abound. In fact, a few patrons are often called up to sit on the stage.

The company's past performances at UVM include *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Macbeth*, *Twelfth Night* and *Measure for Measure*.

For information, call Andrew Barnaby, associate professor of English, at 656-3054.

**Bring on the Cabbage!**

The Lane Series, along with the Flynn and the Burlington Irish Heritage Festival, is presenting a Saint Patrick's Day concert on Sunday, March 17 at 7 p.m. at the Flynn.

The event features Lúnasa, a Celtic quintet, and acclaimed vocalist Cathie Ryan.

**Mastering the Maze Coming Soon**

Picking up new skills and strategies to succeed on the job may be as easy as attending the 10th annual "Mastering the Maze" conference on March 21, 2002.

The one-day event offers financial, human resources, computer and supervisory training. Workshops and lectures also will introduce UVM policies and practices, and offer suggestions of how to streamline the way your office does business. This year's theme is "Amazing People, Amazing Possibilities," and the keynote speaker is Anna McDonald, vice president of human resources.

About 500 members of the UVM administrative staff are expected to attend the conference, which is organized by volunteers. The event will take place at a variety of campus sites, including Ira Allen, Old Mill, Lafayette and Cook Commons. In addition to the workshops and lectures, attendees will enjoy a free lunch, an exhibit of staff art and "prizes galore."

For more information or to register, see [Mastering the Maze](#) or contact Michelle Devino at 6-9956. The deadline for registration is March 15.

**String Quartet to Perform**

The award-winning Miró String Quartet will perform on Wednesday, March 20 at 7:30 p.m. in the UVM Recital Hall. They will play Beethoven's Quartet in F Major, Opus 18, Shostakovich's Quartet No. 8 in C Minor and Grieg's Quartet in G Minor.

Since its 1995 formation at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, the quartet has rapidly established itself. Tickets for the Lane Series concert are \$18 or \$5 for students at the door and are available by calling 656-3891 or logging on to [Lane Series](#).



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*March 13-March 26***Awards and Honors**

**Michael Zvolensky**, assistant professor of psychology, is one of two national recipients of a junior faculty research grant from the Anxiety Disorders Association of America (ADAA). The \$30,000 grant supports independent research that promotes diagnosis, treatment and awareness of anxiety disorders. Zvolensky's research project is "Panic Disorder and Cigarette Smoking." He will receive his award at ADAA's national conference in Austin, Texas later this month.

**Adel Sadek**, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering, recently received a Faculty Early Career Development Award from the National Science Foundation. Sadek joined the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering in 1998. The NSF program recognizes and supports the early career-development activities of those teacher-scholars who are most likely to become academic leaders. The NSF granted Professor Sadek \$375,000 over five years for course development and research. His project proposal, titled, "Harnessing the Power of Computational Intelligence for Infrastructure Systems Management and Control," incorporates developments in computational intelligence and information technology in the mainstream curriculum for civil and environmental engineers.

At the invitation of Laura Bush, **Jill M. Tarule**, Dean of the College of Education and Social Services, joined leaders in education from across the country at "The White House Conference on Preparing Tomorrow's Teachers" last Tuesday, March 5, 2002. The plenary discussions focused on the impact of the new ESEA Bill "No Child Left Behind" for educator preparation programs.

*Publications and Presentations*

**Maynard Glitman**, adjunct professor of political science, contributed a chapter on "U.S. Sub-Strategic Nuclear Forces with NATO," to the book *Controlling Non-Strategic Nuclear Weapons: Obstacles and Opportunities*, published by the U.S. Air Force Institute for National Security Studies.

**Helga Schreckenberger**, professor of German, published an article titled "Vortragstätigkeit der Exilschriftsteller in den USA: Ernst Toller, Thomas Mann, Klaus Mann, Erika Mann, Emil Ludwig" in *Deutschsprachige Exilliteratur seit 1933*, (München: Saur, 2002). The article investigates the travels and lectures of German-speaking U.S. exile writers in Nazi Germany. Schreckenberger shows that these lectures were of great importance in helping Americans to understand what was happening in Germany at the time.

**Richard Jesse** and **Larry Shirland**, professors of business administration, presented a paper, "Determining Attribute Weights Using Mathematical Programming," at the school's monthly research seminar on March 8.

*March 6-March 12***Awards and Honors**

**Paula Fives-Taylor**, professor of microbiology and molecular genetics, is the 2002 recipient of the Research in Oral Biology Award presented by the International Association for Dental Research. Fives-Taylor is internationally recognized for her pioneering research in adhesion and invasion mechanisms of microorganisms associated with tooth decay and gum disease. This highly competitive award for significant and sustained peer-reviewed research

a special session on the role of boards of trustees in university governance.

#### *In Memoriam*

Several members of the UVM community died in recent weeks.

**George Crooks**, chemistry professor from 1930 to 1971, died on Feb. 25.

**Dr. Douglas McSweeney**, professor of surgery from 1977 to 1994, died last week.

**Julius Dwork**, professor of mathematics from 1954 to 1981, died last week.

**Kate Svitek**, alumna of the class of 2001, died sometime in February. She disappeared on Feb. 9 while snowbarding in Oregon, where she lived. Her body was found on March 4.

**Ruth Kramer**, retired staff member, died last week.

**Veronica Sinkew**, retired staff member, died last week.

**Vernon Riley**, recently retired assistant facilities manager for residential life, died on Feb. 25.

*Feb. 27-March 5, 2002*

#### **Publications and Presentations**

**John Gennari**, assistant professor of English, published an essay on "Miles and the Jazz Critics," in the book *Miles Davis in American Culture*. Gennari's article on "Bridging the Two Americas: LIFE Looks at the 1960s," appears in a book titled *Looking at Life Magazine*.

**Emily Bernard**, assistant professor of English, chaired a panel on "Langston Hughes and Cultural Formations" at the conference, Langston Hughes and His World: A Centennial Celebration, at Yale University, Feb. 21-23.

**Tony Magistrale**, professor of English, has been invited to give two lectures on Stephen King's work at Cecil College in Maryland.

**Bret Golann**, visiting assistant professor of business administration, presented a paper, "Achieving Responsiveness: Process Management and Market Orientation in Small and Medium-Sized Firms," at the school's monthly research seminar, Feb. 22.

#### **Awards and Honors**

**Stephen J. Cutler**, professor of sociology and the Bishop Robert F. Joyce Distinguished University Professor of Gerontology, has been selected to receive the 2002 Clark Tibbitts Award from the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education. The Tibbitts Award recognizes those who have made a significant contribution to the advancement of gerontology as a field of study in institutions of higher education. Cutler will receive the award at the associations's annual meeting in Pittsburgh Feb. 28-March 3. He will present a lecture at the meeting on March 1, "In the Country of the Old: Population Aging and Gerontological Education."

*Feb. 20-Feb. 26*

#### **Publications and Presentations**

**Kathleen Liang**, associate professor of community development and applied economics, presented an article, "Our Dreams Shall Come True: The Impact of Optimism in New Venture Creation On Entrepreneurs and Their Families" at the National Small Business Institute Directors' Association Conference, in San Diego, California, Feb. 8-10. Liang also conducted a symposium at the conference, "Service Learning and Teaching Entrepreneurship To Youth Groups: Exploring Different Approaches and Comparative Experiences."

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## Sweet Science

### UVM maple researchers blend theoretical and applied studies to unlock the tree's flavorful mysteries

By Kevin Foley



Sugar and steam: The sap is running and the evaporator is boiling at the Proctor Maple Research Facility. (File photo: Bill DiLillo)

After skittering through the slushy ruts on the dirt road that leads up the hill to the Proctor Maple Research Center in Underhill, visitors to the woodsy temple of Vermont maple studies are greeted by a tableau of apparent contradiction.

Graceful old trees are festooned with plastic tubing, micro-taps and advanced real-time monitoring equipment. A silvery instrument tower

punctures the forest canopy. An expansive, concrete-floored sugar house features both the archetypal wood-fired evaporator and a [Webcam](#) linked to the Internet's backbone with fiber-optic cable.

Center Director Tim Perkins (Grade A medium amber on pancakes) explains that the seeming incongruities are really a logical outgrowth of Proctor's complex mission. The center aims to conduct innovative research on the biology, physiology and ecology of sugar maple trees while demonstrating sugaring to the public and providing practical answers to the Vermont maple industry. In one lab, researchers work to crack the genetic code that marks a particular tree as sweet; outside, field technicians and professors drill "micro-taps" into trees to see if smaller, tree-friendlier spouts can produce enough sap to be economically viable.

And yes, amid all of this, the center boils some mighty fine syrup, more than 600 gallons a year worth.

#### Science at a boil

Brian Stowe (fancy grade on ice cream; amber on pancakes), Proctor's woodlands and sugaring operations manager, and I are tromping through the snow, picking our way through woods that feel 15 degrees colder than Burlington. The center is on 200 acres about 20 miles northeast of Burlington – as Perkins says, "If you want to study trees, you have to go to the forest."

Stowe loves his job on the woodlot, loves the rituals of boiling syrup and even doesn't mind the grueling stretch of seven-day weeks he works when the sap is sprinting and the Proctor staff is racing to catch up.

"This work is fun, it's quite social, especially during sugaring time," he says. "There's a real sense of camaraderie here."

There's also a strong sense that the facility, the country's oldest maple research station, is crucial to Vermont's continued preeminence in maple. The fact that, as Perkins puts it, "Vermont means maple, and maple means Vermont" is a testament first to canny marketing of environmental attributes,

#### [The New Abnormal](#)

Cracking the human genome promises to revolutionize psychiatry. Two UVM researchers, Dr. John Helzer and Dr. James Hudziak, are leaders in describing how increased genetic understanding will inform future diagnoses of mental illness.

#### [Nursing the Supply](#)

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second to the production and safety techniques that Proctor staff past and present have devoted their careers to understanding and promoting.

"We have devoted ourselves to showing sugarmakers how to produce the best and purest sugar they possibly can," Perkins says.

Current research at the center bears this thesis out. UVM researchers are studying ever-smaller spouts to see how they affect sap production and tree damage. They're also looking for sources of contamination in order to tell producers exactly what equipment or practices might contribute to tainted syrup. They're also looking into fertilization – does it make for tastier and more plentiful sap? Other projects are trying to determine the optimum point in the season to tap trees, and figuring out whether new tubing types improve yield.

The trick for center staff is to balance all this essential production-oriented work with more basic inquiries into the health and inner workings of trees. Significant ongoing Proctor projects include taking careful temperature and pressure readings to try to induce the mysterious factors that cause sap flow. Other work is looking at the effect of pollution on forests, and how various global warming scenarios might affect the maple's range.

"We try to achieve some sort of balance. Some sugarmakers want us to do all production-oriented research," Perkins says. "But if you look at most scientific fields, basic biology drives the breakthroughs. We need to understand things to help the industry. Most sugarmakers respect that."

### **Maple moving forward**

Despite some alarmist headlines about pollution and global warming, sugaring in Vermont is strong. It's undoubtedly true that pollution takes a toll, though the 1990 Clean Air Act seems to have helped matters. It's also true that global warming has pushed the start of sugaring earlier – sap ran this year as early as January, and the real season started about a week earlier than the historical average.

Climate change, Perkins says, may push that start even earlier and will probably drive the maple's range north. Under most scenarios, Vermont remains maple territory, though perhaps not the choicest part. It's uncertain how that will affect the timing and productivity of the sugaring season.

Perkins and the Proctor group plan to do their best to find out, even as they conduct less ethereal inquiries with spouts, tubing and tree fertilizers. Their goal is to examine topics concrete and abstract, with the ultimate aim of keeping "Vermont" and "maple" synonymous.

"We know that we're in front, but others know that we're in front and they come to this state to learn everything they can and narrow the gap," Perkins says. "We're very cognizant of that. Our job is to work with the producers to make sure that Vermont is always number one in maple."

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*The author of this story likes his sugar late-season: Grade B in pie, dark amber on pancakes. Photographer Bill DiLillo also goes for the "grit" of Grade B.*

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## INTERview: Dr. John Helzer and Dr. James Hudziak Psychiatry team's new book argues for more precise definition of psychiatric illness

By Jennifer Nachbur



Dr. John Helzer's new book, which he edited with Dr. James Hudziak, argues against traditional categories of psychiatric diagnosis. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

*Cracking the human genome promises to revolutionize every branch of medicine, psychiatry included. Two UVM psychiatrists, Dr. John Helzer and Dr. James Hudziak, are leaders in describing how our increased understanding of genetics informs the diagnosis of mental illness, now and in the future.*

*The two are contributors and editors of the new book Psychopathology in*

*the 21st Century: DSM-V and Beyond (American Psychiatric Publishing), which argues that our new understanding of the genetic roots of psychiatric illness creates a need for better and more relevant diagnostic tools. Better definitions mean better diagnoses, and better treatments for patients.*

*the view spoke with the two doctors about the book, their work and how genomics is changing the terms of the old "nature versus nurture" debate.*

### THE VIEW: What is the DSM-IV and how is it used by physicians?

HELZER AND HUDZIAK: The DSM-IV is the current diagnostic manual that describes all of the recognized psychiatric disorders, the symptoms that are due to these disorders, and rules for doctors to follow on how to make diagnoses on conditions such as depression. The DSM-V, which is referred to in the title of the book, is not written yet. It will replace the DSM-IV.

### Does this diagnostic system have some shortcomings?

The current system, although remarkably improved from prior systems, is weakened by the fact that variability – caused by gender, age, and degree of severity – is not considered. For example, the same rules used to diagnose Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in a 6 year-old are used to diagnose a 60 year-old.

### Is there any difference between how diagnoses were made before the mapping of the human genome and now that we have so much new information?

Although it is unclear, and may not occur for a decade or more, the implications of the human genome in psychiatry are profound. Perhaps most dramatic is the promise of improved diagnoses and treatment. Many predict that genetic risk factors will be identified that not only contribute to our understanding of why one person may develop depression, but also lead to improved treatments. A new field – pharmacogenomics – promises to match a

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pharmacologic treatment with the genes that may have influenced the development of a psychiatric disorder.

**In your estimation, how will a new process of diagnosis affect how mental illness is viewed by society?**

We believe that the potential of a new diagnostic system is multifold - but perhaps the greatest advance will be to demystify and debunk damaging misconceptions about psychiatric illness. The new system may help society understand that illnesses such as depression, anxiety, ADHD and addiction are highly heritable and treatable conditions, much like hypertension and diabetes.

**As editors of this book, what did your roles entail?**

We were responsible for putting together the program of experts, arranging the conferences, requesting, and in some cases, badgering, contributors to submit write-ups of their work. We also wrote our own chapters, the introduction and the prologue.

**What are some of the most exciting/important areas of research in psychopathology right now?**

Neuroimaging advances are unlocking the secrets of how the brain may work, and how potential differences in brain structure and function may differ in individuals who suffer from psychiatric medical conditions. Psychiatric genetics may yield information on who is at risk for these conditions, and how best to treat these patients.

**What kind of genetic-related research is going on right now in the Department of Psychiatry?**

Jim currently is engaged in a number of twin, family and molecular genetic studies aimed at understanding the genetic and environmental contributions to common psychiatric conditions, such as anxiety, aggression and inattention. Jim and his child psychiatry team, in collaboration with Dr. Cathy Stanger and Dr. Thomas Achenbach, have recently completed the collection of family data on 220 Vermont families. Family studies help us understand how these risk factors occur in families. Jim is collaborating on a variety of molecular genetic studies, which will help us identify the genes that are at the foundation of the genetic risk. Jim works with the Netherlands Twin Study in Holland in a developmental twin study of over 20,000 twin pairs and also collaborates with researchers at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, on two additional U.S.-based twin studies of 4,000 twin pairs.

Twin studies help us understand how genetic risk factors and environmental risk factors both contribute to the development of these conditions. Much work remains to be done to understand gene-environment interaction, but it is clear that the field now embraces the understanding that psychiatric illness is not best explained by genes versus environment, but rather as due to genes and environmental influences.

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## Increasing the Care

### UVM is a key player in the successful struggle to recruit and train more nurses to care for Vermont

By Jennifer Nachbur

Vermont has maple trees and dirt roads to spare, but nurses are in short supply here, as they are throughout the country. But the situation is improving locally, thanks in large part to new partnerships between the state, UVM and private foundations. This is great news for Vermont patients, who depend on nurses for care and follow up, and it is also a boon for enrollment at the School of Nursing.

"Programs like the Freeman Nurse Scholars Program and the Nursing Loan Repayment Program are clearly beginning to pay off," says Toni Kaeding, adjunct assistant professor of nursing and coordinator of the Freeman Nurse Scholars Program. "Nursing school enrollment is up statewide, and more people are beginning to realize how valuable, satisfying and powerful it is to be in a position to help others."

The Freeman and loan repayment programs are just two of the more dramatic initiatives that have grown out of the Blue Ribbon Nursing Commission report presented by the state last January. Commission members, several UVM nursing faculty among them, developed seven strategic recommendations to address the state's nursing gap.

Three of those have already been met. In January 2001, the Freeman Foundation contributed \$3 million to establish a nursing scholarship program and four months later, the legislature agreed to allocate funding for the Nursing Loan Repayment Program to help working nurses repay education loans. In December, a center devoted to the cause – the Office of Nursing Workforce Research, Planning and Development – was established at UVM. An added plus came last month: Dean of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences Betty Rambur received a leadership training grant designed to increase nursing retention.

The Freeman grant, which awards nursing students \$7,500 a year, has sent UVM's nursing enrollment skyrocketing. The sophomore nursing class nearly doubled in size from 2000 to 2001 and numbers for 2002 first-year applications are also on a steep rise, with over 165 applications already received versus 95 applications last year. Freeman scholars must maintain good academic standing and pledge to practice in Vermont for two years following graduation – helping meet the state's need for more top-notch nurses.

#### More challenges ahead

But getting more students interested in nursing is only part of the solution. That's where the two-year, \$133,811 grant UVM received last month comes into the picture. Funded by the Helene Fuld Health Trust – the largest private funder of programs for nursing students and nursing education in the country – the grant will provide support for staffing and facilitation of a unique leadership training program for Freeman Nurse Scholars. The Snelling Center for Government at UVM will help develop the program.

"Our expectation is that students who experience extensive leadership training will influence positive changes within their work environments, and therefore, be more likely to stay in the nursing profession," says Rambur. "That's what Vermont really needs – more high-quality nurses who know how to deliver truly patient-centered care."

Keeping a pulse on the status of Vermont's nursing workforce is Mary Val Palumbo's charge. A nurse and director of the newly established Office of Nursing Workforce Research, Planning and Development located in Rowell 105,

#### Sweet Science

After skittering through the slushy ruts on the dirt road that leads up the hill to the Proctor Maple Research Center in Underhill, visitors to the woodsy temple of Vermont maple studies are greeted by a tableau of apparent contradiction.

#### The New Abnormal

Cracking the human genome promises to revolutionize psychiatry. Two UVM researchers, Dr. John Helzer and Dr. James Hudziak, are leaders in describing how increased genetic understanding will inform future diagnoses of mental illness.

she regularly communicates and collaborates with colleagues at UVM, in the State College System, Agency of Human Services, the Area Health Education Centers and health care providers. Established in December 2001, the center was funded by the Vermont Agency of Human Services.

The new office will help maintain and build on the progress made over the last year, working to overcome looming demographic threats. "Aging nurses are leaving the workforce," Kaeding says, "but we may not have enough new students to replace them yet, so the shortage may get worse before it gets better."

If that turns out to be the case, Kaeding and Rambur vow that UVM will continue to take a central role in addressing the problem.

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#### **For More Information**

- Freeman Nurse Scholars Program or the Nurse Leadership Project: [thkaeding@aol.com](mailto:thkaeding@aol.com) or 802-279-0853
- [Nursing Loan Repayment Program](#): 802-656-2179
- The Office of Nursing Workforce Research, Planning and Development: 802-656-0023
- [Blue Ribbon Nursing Commission Report](#)

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