

NEWS BRIEFS

EVENTS

NOTABLES

SEARCH

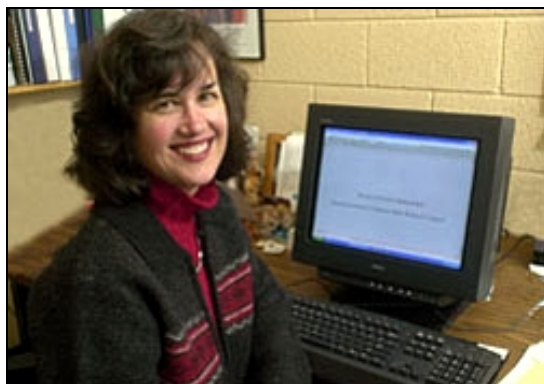
PRINT THIS ISSUE

PRINT PAST ISSUES

FEEDBACK

UVM HOMEPAGE

Challenging Care Disparities



Mary Canales, associate professor of nursing, recently won a Howard University award for her research. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

Mary Canales loves the qualitative side of her research into disparities in health care. She finds sitting down with her subjects and interviewing them in about why they do or do not seek treatment or diagnosis both enjoyable and intellectually stimulating. But recently, she has become convinced that it isn't enough.

[FULL STORY ►](#)

PREVIOUS ISSUE

[Community Medical School Opens with Stem Cell Research](#)

[Osher Institute Grant to Benefit Over 50s](#)

[Trio Lyonel to Play at Recital Hall](#)

[Unlocking Forensic Mysteries](#)

[Data 'Detective' to Speak on Gender Inequality Trends](#)

[UVM's Alternative Spring Break Program One of Best in Nation](#)

[Speech by Climber-Doctor Headlines Mastering the Maze](#)

[Theatre Company Brings Shakespeare, Kipling to Lane](#)

Sweet Knowledge

Tom Baribault and his Proctor Maple Research Center colleagues' progress towards unlocking the genetics of a strain of extra-productive maple trees may someday help make sugar makers' days and nights shorter – and sweeter. That prospect is a priority for Baribault, but he's also fascinated by the ways that human beings write their wishes in the DNA of their trees.

Trustees Review University Finances

UVM continues to close the tuition gap between itself and other universities in the region by implementing a relatively modest cost increase, though the price tag for out-of-state students will break the \$30,000 mark for the first time.

THE WEEK IN VIEW

March 25, 12 p.m.
Event: "Women at Noon: Gender Issues in Blackface Entertainment," with Willi Coleman, professor of history and vice provost for multicultural affairs. 34 S Williams St. Information: 656-4637

March 26, 4 p.m. Talk and Reception: "The Netherlandish Proverbs: A Symposium on the Pieter Brueg(h)els," with Professor Alan Dundes of UC Berkeley. Complimentary admission. Information: 656-0750

March 28, 3 p.m.
Concert: "Little Known a capella Music for Choir," with the University Choral Union, James Chapman, Music Director. Music of Dvorak, Britten and others. Southwick Music Complex Recital Hall, Redstone Campus. Information: 656-3040

March 29, 4:30 p.m.
Distinguished lecture: "Richard Rodriguez: The Browning of America," Well-known both for his multiple best-selling books and his work on PBS's News Hour with Jim Lehrer, Rodriguez is a recognized master of the intellectual autobiography. Memorial Lounge, Waterman Building. Reception following.

March 30, 11:30 a.m.
Event: "Women's

NEWS BRIEFS

NEWS BRIEFS



Sen. Patrick Leahy (left), with Marcelle Leahy (center), looks at live exam-room video that allows medical instructors to review student interactions with model patients. (Photo: Rose McNulty)

Senator Visits New Medical Assessment Center

The high-tech features of the College of Medicine's new Professional Learning and Assessment Center were at center stage March 22 during a tour attended by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), who came to see first-hand the results of a \$900,000 federal Health Resources and Service Administration grant he secured to establish the center, which opened in fall 2003.

A key component of the college's newly launched Vermont Integrated Curriculum, the assessment center provides an environment where medical students receive their first hands-on education in the art of patient care. Here, medical students sharpen their patient interviewing and physical exam skills using standardized patients – members of the community trained to perform as patients who then evaluate students' skills – and computerized patient simulator mannequins, which are able to emulate nearly-perfect humanlike characteristics in all kinds of medical situations. The center is also where medical students are assessed regularly during their medical school years with standard performance examinations.

"One goal of our new curriculum is to integrate basic science and clinical learning from the outset, and the assessment center provides an environment where medical students can train and practice their patient-care skills early on," said medical school Dean John Evans.

While Senator Leahy watched on one of several new exam room video monitors in the center's hallway "command center," fourth-year medical

Athletic Department Plans to Boost Scholarships, Resume Men's Track

In its second major realignment in three years, the athletics department is substantially increasing scholarship support, reinstating the men's track program and eliminating four varsity sports.

"As difficult as it is for the athletes in sports we're cutting, these are hard, tough decisions that had to be made in order for the program to advance," said Robert Corran, director of athletics. "It gives us greater capability to fund all programs at a higher level. Our basic objective is to make all our teams competitive right now. There are a lot of teams that are under-funded and extremely limited."

Scholarship support will increase from 82 scholarships totaling \$2.4 million distributed primarily across 8 sports to 124 scholarships totaling \$3.7 million distributed across 20 sports in five years under the plan. Anticipated increases in revenue and private support will fund the planned increase, Corran said.

The realignment strategy will result in the reinstatement of men's indoor and outdoor track and field and the elimination of men and women's tennis, men's golf and men's swimming. Program eliminations will affect 45 student athletes. The reinstatement of men's track and field will bring 30 student athletes back into the program.

Corran said the department decided to reinstate men's track because he sees strong potential for a men's program to emulate the success of the women's team. He also said that the sport enjoys a high level of participation among Vermont high school students, is relatively inexpensive to compete in and supports the ability of the men's cross-country team to compete at a high level.

The plan also involves strengthening recreational sports opportunities, providing more adequate operational assistance to teams to help with their recruiting and travel expenses, and eliminating a tier system that previously set different expectations per sport and allocated resources accordingly.

UVM Poll Shows Majority of Vermonters Support Civil Unions

A poll conducted by the Center for Rural Studies shows that 61 percent of Vermont residents are supportive or very supportive of civil unions almost four years after the bill allowing them was signed into law. Of that 61 percent, about 33 percent say they are very supportive with about

student Tom Manchester visited with standardized patient Laurence Dugan, whose character, Lou Levine, is 58 years old, has a family history of heart disease and has been suffering chest pains. After a 15-minute interview and physical exam, Laurence evaluated Manchester's communication and physical exam skills, later discussing his feedback in person with him. Dugan, a jazz pianist, is used to performing, but enjoys the opportunity to help medical students train to become better doctors. "It's one of the only times they get feedback from a person they are working on," said Dugan.

"One reason that Vermont has good doctors is because we have a great medical school," Leahy said. "Dean Evans and the entire medical school faculty are shaping the future of medicine by introducing patient contact from the beginning. The new curriculum, and the use of the assessment center, is giving students more hands-on training than ever before."

The Professional Learning and Assessment Center is located in the Given Building on the UVM medical campus, adjacent to the planned education center, which will link the College of Medicine with teaching hospital Fletcher Allen Health Care. The Assessment Center features 12 exam rooms equipped with video cameras, four computer stations, a patient waiting area, and a lounge.

Distinguished Lectures Offer Two Views of America: Multiracial Melting Pot and Empire

The President's Distinguished Lecture Series presents essayist Richard Rodriguez and historian Walter LaFeber on March 29 and 31, respectively.

Rodriguez, best-selling author and essayist for the *PBS NewsHour* with Jim Lehrer, will discuss "The Browning of America" on March 29 at 4:30 p.m. in Memorial Lounge, Waterman. The discussion will take on issues of race from Rodriguez's book, *Brown: the Last Discovery of America*, published in 2002.

"'Brown' is profound and poetic, required reading for a society that has traditionally seen racial relations exclusively in black and white," wrote the *San Francisco Examiner*. The book was also deemed "Best Book of the Year" by the *Los Angeles Times* and *Chicago Tribune*.

A Mexican-American raised in Sacramento, Calif., by immigrant parents, Rodriguez writes about his own experiences and comments on societal issues ranging from race and religion to education and sex. In his book, Rodriguez argues that race in the United States is not a black-and-white issue, rather that our melting-pot nation is brown.

Rodriguez is an editor for Pacific News Service in California and a contributing editor for *Harper's Magazine*, *U.S. News & World Report* and the Sunday Opinion section of the *Los Angeles Times*. He received the George Peabody Award for Excellence in Television in 1997 for his "PBS NewsHour" essays on American culture and the

28 percent saying they are supportive. Approximately 18 percent are very opposed and 10 percent are simply opposed to civil unions. The remaining segment of the population, just fewer than 12 percent, neither support nor oppose civil unions.

These results show a large shift from May 2000 when a poll conducted by the *Rutland Herald*, *Barre-Montpelier Times Argus* and WCAX Channel 3 News found that 52 percent of Vermont residents disapproved of the civil unions bill. It should be noted that the results are not directly comparable due to slight differences in the wording of the questions. However, the overall shift in opinions over this time period is quite clear.

Younger people are significantly more likely to support civil unions. Among people between the age of 18 and 35, and people between the age of 36 and 65, 65 percent and 63 percent support civil unions, respectively. However, only 44 percent of people over the age of 65 are supportive of civil unions.

Vermonters are more divided on the issue of gay marriage. Respondents were asked whether the "definition of marriage should be expanded to include same-sex couples." Just over 47 percent of Vermont residents are opposed to gay marriage, while just fewer than 40 percent are supportive. The remaining portion of Vermonters neither support nor oppose it.

Significantly, among Vermont residents between the ages of 18 and 35 just over 51 percent are supportive of expanding the definition of marriage to include same-sex couples. However, only 23 percent of people over the age of 65 are supportive of this change, while 40 percent of people between 36 and 65 are supportive.

There were 607 respondents to the 2004 Vermonter Poll. The results have a margin of error of plus or minus four percentage points. Only Vermont residents over the age of eighteen were interviewed. The poll included questions on a variety of issues related to public policy in the state of Vermont.

UVM's Trinity Pioneers Discuss Making the Move

For years, a wall collage featuring black-and-white portraits of Sisters of Mercy leaders and photographs of key moments in the history of Trinity College decorated the corridor of Mann Hall on the Trinity campus. When UVM bought Trinity, and renovated the hall to house its College of Education and Social Services offices and classrooms, the future of the photographic relic became a topic of discussion.

"That piece led to some lovely conversations about honoring the women of Trinity – the educators who came before us," says Deborah Hunter, associate professor of integrated professional studies. Now, highlighted by track lighting, "we kept that poster right where it is – where the most people will see it," Hunter says.

Fraenkel Medal for Achievement in the Humanities in 1993. He is the author of two additional books, the Pulitzer-prize nominated *Days of Obligation: An Argument with my Mexican Father* and the autobiographical *Hunger for Memory*.

LaFeber, professor of history at Cornell University, will speak on "The American Empire: A Historian's View" on March 31 at 4 p.m. in Memorial Lounge, Waterman.

LaFeber's lecture will examine the current state of the American empire and how it has changed following the war on Iraq. "The idea of empire is not new in American history," but today's American empire is "quite new," says LaFeber.

A prolific writer, LaFeber has authored nine books and has contributed to numerous scholarly volumes. His book, *The Clash: U.S.-Japanese Relations Throughout History*, won the Bancroft Prize in American History as well as the Ellis Hawley Prize of the Organization of American Historians.

LaFeber is past president of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, a Guggenheim Fellow and a member of the Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The President's Distinguished Lecture Series, established by President Daniel Mark Fogel in October 2002, brings top researchers to enhance the academic experience; showcase faculty, students and programs; and bring the campus community together.

Information: Rodriguez lecture, 656-1368;
LaFeber lecture, 656-8512.

Some of the faculty and staff of two College of Education departments moved into Mann Hall during the last semester break. They are: Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration, Graduate Counseling and Race and Culture programs and School Research Office and Early Childhood Research projects – 24 people so far. Their experience, perhaps, is a template for the immediate future, as other education offices will move to Mann over the summer, and geology will soon pack up for a move to nearby Delehanty Hall.

Classrooms in the renovated Mann meld past and current facilities – a built-in, glass-front oak cabinet shares space with ceiling-mounted projectors and accompanying cart of technology-driven teaching tools. The building has an auditorium, conference space and a gymnasium. Trinity Cafe is open in nearby Delehanty Hall.

"The primary reason for these moves was because many of these units were in University Heights, so this was phase one of the effort to make way for the new University Heights construction," according to Rosalind Andreas, former assistant dean of education, who spearheaded the project.

The college is no stranger to relocation. About five years ago some departments moved from Waterman to University Heights, others to the Living Learning Center and still others to downtown Burlington. In May the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion and the Foster and Adoptive Training Project will make the move. Ultimately the whole college will be reunited on the Trinity campus from its disparate locations.

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[News Briefs](#) | [Events](#) | [Notables](#)
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EVENTS



This rare painting by Pieter Brueghel the Younger is the center of a March 26-27 symposium. (Photo courtesy of the Fleming Museum)

A Proverbial Picture Worth Thousands of Academic Words

How far does the apple really fall from the tree? What does it mean to "take the cow by the tail?" Find out at the International Proverb Symposium on March 26 and 27, to be held in conjunction with the UVM Fleming Museum's rare exhibit of Pieter Brueghel the Younger's satirical painting, "The Netherlandish Proverbs."

Coordinated by Wolfgang Mieder, chair of the Department of German and Russian and a prominent proverbial scholar and folklorist, the symposium will feature an international panel of scholars. Presentations by professors from the University of California at Berkeley, Meiji University in Japan and the University of Sheffield, England, among many other institutions, will explore the significance of the painting and its illustration of more than 100 proverbs and proverbial expressions.

"The Netherlandish Proverbs" was created by the Flemish painter Pieter Brueghel the Younger in 1610. It is an almost identical replica of a painting created in 1559 by his father, Pieter Bruegel the Elder. The painting of a bustling village scene is filled with humorous references to 16th-century visual culture while also warning against foolish behavior and addressing the relationship of the individual to society. Many of the proverbial expressions are familiar to us today, such as "swimming against the tide" and "big fish eat little fish." Others are no longer in use, such as to "have one's roof covered in tarts," which meant "to have an abundance of everything." The painting, which was loaned from the private collection of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert J. Klapper of New York, is one of only 20 copies in existence,

Harvard Prof Asks, 'Is Profiling Always Wrong?'

Frederick Schauer, Frank Stanton Professor of the First Amendment at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, will be giving a Florence Davis Dean Lecture on March 25 at 4:00 p.m. in John Dewey Lounge, Old Mill. The title of his talk is "Is Profiling Always Wrong?" The lecture is free and open to the public.

The talk will be based on his recent book, *Profiles, Probabilities and Stereotypes* (Harvard University Press), which was featured on NPR among other places. Read more about the book online at [Schauer Virtual Book Tour](#).

Before coming to Harvard, Schnauer was a Professor of Law at the University of Michigan. He has also been the Cutler Professor of Law at the College of William and Mary, Visiting Professor of Law at the University of Chicago, William Morton Distinguished Visiting Professor of the Humanities and Visiting Professor of Government at Dartmouth College, Ewald Distinguished Visiting Professor of Law at the University of Virginia, Distinguished Visiting Professor of Law at the University of Toronto, Professor in Residence at the New York University School of Law, and Visiting Professor of Law at the Harvard Law School.

Schauer is the author of *The Law of Obscenity*, *Free Speech: A Philosophical Enquiry*, and *Playing By the Rules: A Philosophical Examination of Rule-Based Decision-Making in Law and in Life* and co-author of *The Philosophy of Law: Classic and Contemporary Readings With Commentary* and *The First Amendment: A Reader*.

Information: 656-4325

Women's Center 'Healing Fire' Aims to Raise Awareness of Sexual Violence

A healing fire will be ignited at noon on April 1 at the UVM Women's Center, 34 South Williams Street, to raise awareness of Sexual Violence Awareness Month and to give sexual violence survivors, advocates and supporters a forum to build community.

In many cultures, fire is used as a purifier, with the smoke symbolizing cleansing on physical, emotional and spiritual levels. Burlington's fire will be lit from embers transported from Montpelier's healing fire, and will continue burning until sunset on April 4. The opening ceremony will include remarks by Burlington Mayor Peter Clavelle; Celia Cuddy, director of the Women's Rape Crisis

valued at \$5 million and previously exhibited only once before in the United States.

"The Netherlandish Proverbs" are also under discussion in a proverb seminar Mieder is teaching this semester. He will give each student in the class a framed copy of the painting. Creating the rare chance for the public to view this painting is the fulfillment of a lifetime dream for Mieder, whose personal library contains more than 4,500 collections of proverbs; 8,000 books, dissertations and articles; and a 10,000-slide archive. He learned of the existence in the United States of a copy of "The Netherlandish Proverbs," and subsequently put into motion the concept of an exhibit at UVM, while dining with an international art dealer who is the father of one of his former students.

The symposium is free and open to the public. Events begin at 4 p.m. on March 26 with a keynote address followed by a reception in the Fleming's Marble Court. Mieder will close the event on March 27 at 4:20 p.m. with the appropriately titled lecture, "One Picture that's Worth More than a Thousand Words." For a full schedule of symposium events and related programming, go to [Netherlandish Proverbs](#), call 656-3430 or e-mail German-Russian@uvm.edu.

Epidemiologist and Author Speaks on Pollution and Public Health

Epidemiologist and environmental author Devra Lee Davis has long argued that daily exposure to low levels of pollution contributes to a broad spectrum of diseases and that industry and government have hidden information from the public. Davis will make a case for changing public health policies on March 25 at 12:30 p.m. in Carpenter Auditorium, Given Building.

In her National Book Award finalist book, *When Smoke Ran Like Water: Tales of Environmental Deception and the Battle Against Pollution*, Davis argued that cancer and health problems are linked to exposures to avoidable environmental contaminants. She also reported on promising environmentally sound technologies and business practices.

Davis's narrative includes stories of the 1952 London Smog, when deaths were falsely attributed to influenza; behind-the-scenes machinations by oil companies and auto manufacturers to keep lead in gasoline; and the 1948 smog emergency in Donora, Pennsylvania, with pollution that killed 20 people and caused chronic health problems in many others.

Davis is visiting professor at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz School, honorary professor at London's School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and advisor to the World Health Organization. Her research, which has appeared widely in professional journals, has also caught the attention of the national media. She has discussed environmental health in interviews on PBS's "Now with Bill Moyers," C-Span, the BBC, NPR and others.

Center; Kara DeLeonardis, executive director of SafeSpace; and Anne Smith of the UVM Campus Advocacy Program. Survivors will be invited to speak and to make offerings to the fire, such as messages written on paper or wood, photographs and dried sage.

"I specifically chose to work on the Healing Fire committee because I have realized the importance of offering survivors a space and time where they can be supported in their experiences," says Melody Wollgren, a graduate student of social work and intern at WRCC. Since its inception in 2002, Vermont's Healing Fire initiative has grown to include eight such events throughout the state and in New Hampshire.

Stephanie Mead, another social work major and a member of the women's varsity soccer team, says she "jumped at the chance to get involved." The fire, she says, "is a chance to raise awareness about sexual violence and its harmful effects." An active member of the planning committee who will also volunteer at the fire, Mead helped to enlist the soccer team as an event sponsor.

The opening reception for the WRCC annual Survivors Art Show will be held directly after the Healing Fire ceremony in the Women's Center, where the show is displayed this year. Those interested are welcome to view the exhibit during normal working hours. People may also visit the fire, which will always be attended by trained staff and volunteers, through April 4.

Talk Discusses Going 'Back to the Land' in Vermont

Dona Brown, associate professor of history and director of the Center for Research on Vermont, investigates the roots of new agrarianism in Vermont in a talk, "Back to the Land in the 1930s," scheduled for March 25 at 7:30 p.m. in Memorial Lounge, Waterman Building.

Brown will argue that back-to-the-land movements have come and gone in waves throughout the past century. Each of these movements had demographic and economic consequences, but, perhaps more than anything else, they were a literary phenomenon. Brown will look at three Depression-era accounts of back-to-the-land experiments in Vermont that laid the groundwork for the gradual transformation of Vermont as a state –and as a state of mind.

Brown's talk is part of the Center for Research on Vermont's research-in-progress seminar series. Information: 656-4389

Newsweek wrote "One of the things that makes *When Smoke Ran Like Water* so powerful is that Davis hasn't merely studied the data, she's lived them." Davis grew up in Donora, the former steel mill town infamous for its pollution.

Davis's lecture, free and open to the public, is sponsored by the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, College of Medicine, College of Nursing and Allied Health and the Environmental Program. Information: 656-4380

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[The View Homepage](#) | [UVM Homepage](#)
[News Briefs](#) | [Events](#) | [Notables](#)
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NOTABLES

March 24, 2004

Awards and Honors

The Animal Welfare Judging Team in the Department of Animal Science placed third in a national judging contest held this month at Michigan State. This is the first time UVM has fielded such a team. Student members who competed were **Mary Kate Bennett, Gena Fagerberg, Stephanie Fischer** and **Deborah Press. Russell Hovey**, assistant professor of animal science, was the academic advisor.

Warren Bickel, professor and interim chair of psychiatry, has been elected President of College on Problems of Drug Dependence. Bickel's term will begin this June. The College is the oldest (est. 1929) and among the most prestigious scientific organizations addressing the study of drug dependence. Bickel's research concerns drug dependence, the treatment of opioid dependence and the use of behavioral economics to understand drug-taking behavior.

Dr. **Virginia Hood**, professor of medicine, has received a \$25,000 grant from the American Medical Group Association and Pfizer, Inc., Models of Excellence Collaborative. UVM is one of only four institutions nationwide to receive this grant, which will fund Hood's one-year program, titled "Getting to Goal: Patient-Directed Blood Pressure Control." The project's primary aim is to increase the achievement of a blood pressure goal of less than 130/80 in people at high risk for adverse cardiovascular or renal outcomes.

Physics student **Zuzana Srostlik** recently learned that she has been admitted to a summer research program at University of Hawaii. She is one of the seven students admitted for the summer program among 210 applicants nationwide. She will join research groups on astronomy projects.

March 10, 2004

Awards and Honors

Rick Vanden Bergh, assistant professor of business administration, has been named to the editorial board of the journal *Business and Politics* beginning this calendar year. *Business and Politics* solicits articles within the broad area of the interaction between firms and political actors. It is particularly interested in the use of non-market corporate strategy and efforts by policy makers to influence firm behavior through regulatory, legal, financial, and other government instruments.

Publications and Presentations

Sarah Abrams, assistant professor of nursing, recently had an abstract accepted for presentation at the 15th International Nursing Research Congress on July 22-24 in Dublin. The abstract is titled, "Caring for Persons with Dementia: Service Use and Policy Implications."

J. Tobey Clark, director of the Instrumentation and Technical Services Program, presented "Medical Device Safety and Performance Testing in the U. S." to the National Institute of Metrology in Shanghai on March 8.

In Memoriam

Francis Haggarty, UVM farm superintendent from 1968-1988, died March 2.

News

Events

NOTABLES

Search

Print This Issue

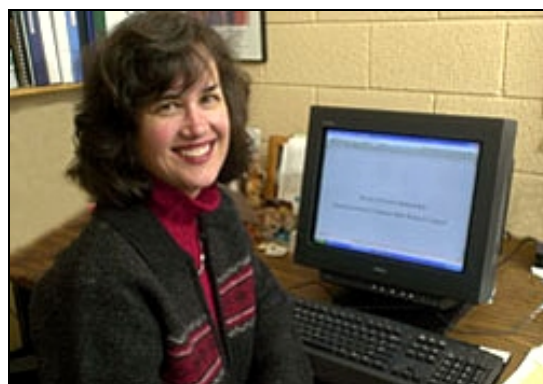
Feedback

UVM Homepage

Challenging Care Disparities

Nursing professor's award-winning research probes why different groups make different choices

By Kevin Foley



Mary Canales, associate professor of nursing, recently won a Howard University award for her research. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

Mary Canales loves the qualitative side of her research into disparities in health care. She finds sitting down with her subjects and interviewing them in depth about their lives and about why they do or do not seek diagnosis both enjoyable and intellectually stimulating.

But recently, the associate professor of nursing has become convinced that analyzing carefully directed

conversations isn't enough.

"I've gotten to a point in my thinking where I see that to really make a difference I need to move past qualitative studies. I can't have the impact I want to have when I talk with 20 women," she says. "I can write and present and speak at conferences with that individual data, but I can't challenge societal problems."

Canales is currently pursuing a four-year project investigating mammography decision making among American Indian women in Vermont funded through the National Cancer Institute and the NIH Cure program. The study, one of very few to focus on off-reservation women in the Northeast, looks at a population with a relatively high incidence of death from breast cancer, but with mammography screening rates below the national average.

The resonance of that project, as well as other work Canales has done around mammography, breast cancer and breast health among Latina women, contributed to her designation as an "emerging nursing star" in health disparities research, an honor she accepted on March 11 at a Howard University event.

Culture and disparity

Canales is in the midst of the second, quantitative phase, of her mammography work. After reviewing literature and conducting interviews to grasp the contours of the issue – the different ways that members of a non-homogenous group frame their decisions to receive (or not receive) mammograms – she's now nearing completion of a survey that will offer some harder data on the subject and offer insight into the accuracy of the decision-making theory she developed using her qualitative data.

The survey applies a widely used model, called "Stages of Change," which looks at how individuals make decisions about health issues like quitting smoking (slowly, and in stages), to mammography. The model hasn't been applied to minority women before, and Canales's aim is to relate her subjects' thinking about mammography, their "slot" in the "Stages of Change" model, to their complex sense of their ethnic identities, a measure Canales calls "traditionality."

Sweet Knowledge

Tom Baribault and his Proctor Maple Research Center colleagues' progress towards unlocking the genetics of a strain of extra-productive maple trees may someday help make sugar makers' days and nights shorter – and sweeter. That prospect is a priority for Baribault, but he's also fascinated by the ways that human beings write their wishes in the DNA of their trees.

Trustees Review University Finances

UVM continues to close the tuition gap between itself and other universities in the region by implementing a relatively modest cost increase, though the price tag for out-of-state students will break the \$30,000 mark for the first time.

[News](#)

[Events](#)

[Notables](#)

[Search](#)

[Print This Issue](#)

[Print Past Issues](#)

[Feedback](#)

[UVM Homepage](#)

"Women think about their native identity in different ways. ... Some women check the box on a form, but they don't really think of themselves as American Indians. Other women didn't think of it growing up, but as they get older, they develop an interest in their identity. Others grow up with it, and move out of touch as they age," Canales says. "How do these factors affect decision making? We make lots of assumptions about what people are based on crude categories, but the reality is much more complex."

When the survey instrument is completed, Canales will use the Vermont Breast Cancer Surveillance System, a statewide registry led by colleague and co-author Berta Geller, research associate professor of family practice, to distribute the completed survey. Eventually, and with some modification, the survey may go out nationwide to see if trends that emerge in the data have wide application. Urban American Indian women in Colorado, for example, have some things in common with the predominantly rural native population in Vermont.

The eventual goal is to provide a foundation to test initiatives to promote breast health in American Indian women.

"What has been done in the past with this kind of survey work is to develop and begin to evaluate targeted medical interventions," Canales says. "Obviously, the message and approach need to be different for someone who has never had a mammogram versus someone who had one a few years ago and is considering another one."

The depths of disparity

Even in a country that spends a higher percentage of its national wealth on health care than any other, inequalities in treatment exact a terrible toll, Canales says. The too-low rate of mammography among American Indian women, and the complex reasons behind it, is only one facet of a larger problem.

Canales frames disparity within the context of a country where 43 million people have lacked health insurance for an entire year, and 70 million went without it for some portion of the year, and the nation's largest employer offers neither insurance nor a wage high enough to pay for it on the open market.

Such structural problems with the nation's health care system, from lack of access to a focus on technology and acute care over prevention, as well as racism, make the problems hard to attack, but Canales believes that academic work can push change forward.

She's currently working with a group of colleagues on an article about disparities in cancer diagnosis and treatment for the *Annual Review of Nursing Research*. "That article is going to Senator Bill Frist's (R-Tenn.) office. He is a point person on these issues in the Senate," she says. "We hope it may help shape policy."

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[The View Homepage](#) | [UVM Homepage](#)
[News Briefs](#) | [Events](#) | [Notables](#) | [About Us](#) | [Feedback](#)

Sweet Understanding

By Cheryl Dorschner



Higher-sugar sap means better yields for sugar makers. (File photo: Bill DiLillo)

Grade A amber.

Baribault and his colleagues' progress towards unlocking the genetics of a strain of extra-productive maple trees may someday help make those days and nights shorter – and sweeter. That prospect is a priority for Baribault, but he's also fascinated in the way that human beings write their wishes in the DNA of their trees.

"Sugar maples and humans interact within a co-evolutionary framework which parallels that of honeybees and apiculturists, ancestral grains and their early domesticators, or the salmon-Pacific tribal dyad," Baribault wrote on this theme in a USDA Hatch Grant application. "Any social and environmental changes that shift human purposes result in new management plans and can alter the array of genotypes."

In other words, human-plant interaction with the aim of improved production alters genetics. And when it comes to sugar maples there are two choices: "optimizing growth conditions or selecting and propagating elite genotypes," he says.

A syrupy story

Some 50 years ago, about a dozen forestry researchers identified a batch of "super sweet" maple trees, plants with more sugar in their sap, at various locations in New England, New York and Ohio. In the 1960s they planted seeds from them at Proctor Maple Research Center, on private land in Jericho, and at Williams College, Ohio State University and a Cornell University station in Lake Placid. They then tracked these "mother" trees and their progeny.

Baribault and fellow UVM botanists Timothy Perkins and William Currier picked up this work and continued tracking the maples' sugar levels. Through additional funding from North American Maple Research Council and, later, the USDA National Research Initiative, Baribault pressed forward with the work, and from leaf and bud samples he is now looking for DNA "fingerprints" that might distinguish extra-sweet trees from the rest. These identifying genetic markers will aid breeding programs and shed light on the signaling mechanisms that regulate a maple's sugar-production process.

"This is just the beginning of finding out how trees make more sugar. There's not going to be any one gene that makes a tree sweeter than another. There

In his 2001 award-winning book *The Botany of Desire*, author Michael Pollan popularized the idea that plants prosper by enticing human desires. Thomas Baribault, research associate in botany, knows well the ways humans and plants conspire together toward change. In his role at UVM's Proctor Maple Research Center, he watches sugar makers spend days and sleepless nights in pursuit of

Challenging Care Disparities

Mary Canales loves the qualitative side of her research into disparities in health care. She finds sitting down with her subjects and interviewing them in about why they do or do not seek treatment or diagnosis both enjoyable and intellectually stimulating. But recently, she has become convinced that it isn't enough.

Trustees Review University Finances

UVM continues to close the tuition gap between itself and other universities in the region by implementing a relatively modest cost increase, though the price tag for out-of-state students will break the \$30,000 mark for the first time.

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may be a half a dozen and not every sweet tree is going to have them all," Baribault says.

The rationale of the work is obvious: The sweeter the sap, the less fuel needed to make syrup. Better still, the sweeter trees actually produce more sap than their counterparts, so they represent a potential economic boon to producers. The sweetness advantage of the super-sweet trees is significant. Regular sap averages about two percent sugar. The progeny of the super-sweet trees average six-to-seven percent with some higher than 10 percent sweetness, Baribault says.

While he's been tracking the trees since 1997, Baribault feels that after this season he'll finally have enough data to publish his conclusions. "It's all kind of coming together this year," he says.

But progress, he allows, will be slow, even with sugar makers working to identify sweet trees, and Cornell providing inexpensive cuttings from sweet trees. The maple's long lifespan and the pace of research means that it will be a long time before super-sweet maples fully enter the nursery trade, and longer still before old sugarbushes are renovated with production-ready super-sweets.

"This is just the beginning of many future decades of applying molecular biological methods to sugar maple breeding. I'm 50 and this project was started 50 years ago," Baribault shrugs. "I'm never going to retire. This is what forestry research is all about. What we're really doing is giving people an opportunity to keep the forest going. By making it possible to produce a comparable amount of syrup in less time and with less resources, the sweet tree research will [keep the forest healthy] and the fingerprint project will help us track and continue the diversity of maple."

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Trustees Discuss University Finances

By Jon Reidel

The overall financial position of the university continues to improve as proposed increases in tuition and fees remain below that of regional counterparts still reeling from state budget cuts.

A relatively modest proposed increase in tuition and fees of 5.2 percent for out-of-state students, however, may push the overall cost of attending UVM over the \$30,000 threshold for the first time.

"The budget reflects the university working from a strong position," said J. Michael Gower, vice president for finance and administration. "When it looks tight we must remember that our colleagues are struggling more than we are. We're in a stronger position than most."

Some members of the board of trustees Budget and Finance Committee expressed concern at a March 22 meeting that sticker shock may become an issue, despite the relatively competitive increase. The proposed increase would push total out-of-state tuition and fees from \$29,368 to \$30,882 for 2005.

Provost John Bramley said that as tuition rises, financial aid is increasing at an even greater pace. The proposed fiscal year 2005 budget has undergraduate financial aid increasing by 10.9 percent, lowering the impact of the cost increase. The same budget calls for an overall cost increase of 5.7 percent (tuition, room and board and fees) for in-state students, or \$925. Tuition for both Vermont and out-of-state students is slated for a 4.5 percent rise pending outcome of a vote by trustees at their May 21-22 meeting.

Last year, the University of Connecticut proposed an out-of-state increase of 13.3 percent increase and an in-state increase of 10.7 percent. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst anticipated a 6.5 percent out-of-state increase and 15.4 percent increase for Massachusetts residents. Tuition increases among private institutions in the Northeast ranged from 4.8 to 6.5 percent.

The university's proposed budget for FY 05 has been brought into balance since the committee met in February, based on figures provided by Gower. Since the preliminary plan presented in February, expense reductions of \$5.3 million have been identified. These reductions stem from changes to medical benefits, a commitment across administrative units to reduce spending, and changes to the way past voluntary separation costs were accounted for. The university expects to spend \$200.7 million for fiscal 2005.

On the revenue side of the ledger, \$600,000 was identified after a review of all sources together with new contributions to the general fund from major income/expense activities. The budget anticipates a 2 percent increase in the state appropriation based on the recommendation of the governor. The university requested 3 percent.

Facing rising health care costs

The most serious financial issue facing the university is the rising cost of health care. Gower said that unless changes are made to existing medical benefits it will be impossible for the university to absorb the anticipated cost increase of 24 percent over the next 18 months. Total health care expenses would approximately equal the dollar amount of the entire state appropriation.

Under a plan proposed by the administration, which applies to the BCBS/Vermont Health Partnership, employees would absorb co-payments of \$250 for in-patient visits and \$100 outpatient surgery, both of which are

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Sweet Knowledge

Tom Baribault and his Proctor Maple Research Center colleagues' progress towards unlocking the genetics of a strain of extra-productive maple trees may someday help make sugar makers' days and nights shorter – and sweeter. That prospect is a priority for Baribault, but he's also fascinated by the ways that human beings write their wishes in the DNA of their trees.

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currently free. Co-payments for emergency room visits and the use of ambulance services, also free under the current plan, would increase to \$50 each. The co-payment for a visit to a primary care physician would increase from \$5 to \$10, while a visit to a specialist would increase from \$15 to \$20.

With prescription drug prices increasing dramatically, the new plan calls for a three-tier co-payment system with generic drugs costing \$5, preferred drugs \$15 and designer or name brand drugs costing \$40.

Gower said the changes would apply to the roughly 3,100 people on the Vermont Health Partnership plan with the structure of the other plans still being considered. Anticipated changes in medical benefits plans would become effective at the start of the new fiscal year on July 1.

Gower has presented a series of open forums to discuss the driving forces behind the proposed changes for UVM's medical plans, which will affect decisions employees make during the next open enrollment period set for May. The next forum is scheduled for March 31 at 1:45 p.m. at Carpenter Auditorium, Given Building.

There are also proposed changes to flexible spending accounts for employees. Under the new plan, workers can either adjust the amounts allocated for pre-tax deductions for 2004 flexible spending accounts or open an account for the current calendar year during the extra open enrollment period, which begins with the benefits fair on April 29-30 and extends through the end of May. Adjustments cannot be made for less than the amounts already reimbursed by the university. Open enrollment will be held again in November for flex accounts for the 2005 calendar year.

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