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Meet the Coaches



Bob Corran (front right) sits with his first four hires since being named athletic director in May: Skiing coach Bill Reichelt (front left); Cross country and track coach Matt Belfield and women's basketball coach Sharon Dawley (middle row); and hockey coach Kevin Sneddon (back). (Photo: [Jordan Silverman](#))

Bob Corran's first official act as athletic director was to sign a contract for the men's basketball team to play UCLA in Los Angeles. Over the next 53 days, his other major moves – filling four coaching vacancies – offered more insight into how he plans to set lofty goals for the department.

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New Professors The University of Vermont's newest group of professors is now on campus, many with the script barely dry on their hard-won doctorates, bringing expertise in everything from robotic vision to the sociology of disaster. *the view* spoke with a few of them to learn more about their professional and personal passions.

Hovercrafting the

Future Mechanical engineering graduate student Graham Spencer's love of motors started as a young boy growing up in Ohio. His unquenchable desire to understand motors led to increasingly complex projects with his crowning pre-teen achievement being the construction of a hovercraft based on plans he found in a comic book.

THE WEEK IN VIEW

Sept. 5 5 p.m.
"Welcome Home Picnic" at the Women's Center. 34 S. Williams St. 656-7892.

Sept. 7 1:30 p.m.
Men's soccer takes on North Carolina. Centennial Field. Information: uvmathletics.com

Sept. 8 8:30 a.m.
Convocation. Lee Bollinger, president of Columbia University, will deliver keynote address. Ira Allen Chapel. Reception follows.

Sept. 9 12:15 p.m.
"Does Israeli-Palestinian Peace Have a Chance?" Lecture by Dr. Reuven Kaminer, former vice president of Hebrew University. John Dewey Lounge, 325 Old Mill.

Sept. 10 7:30 p.m.
Lecture: Regulatory archaeology in Vermont, with John Crock, director of the UVM Consulting Archaeology Program. Memorial Lounge, Waterman Building.

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Lee Bollinger will speak at the UVM Convocation on Sept. 8 at 8:30 a.m. in Ira Allen Chapel. (Photo courtesy of Columbia University.)

Lee Bollinger to Address Convocation

Lee Bollinger, President of Columbia University and a forceful advocate for diversity within higher education, will address the University of Vermont Convocation, a gathering that marks the symbolic beginning of the academic year. The ceremony will take place on Monday, Sept. 8 at 8:30 a.m. in Ira Allen Chapel.

Bollinger, who served as President of the University of Michigan until 2002, was a party to two recent precedent-making Supreme Court decisions holding that, under certain conditions, race can be used as a factor in college admissions. The rulings are widely regarded as major victories for affirmative action.

"Convocation is a gathering and renewal of the academic community," said University of Vermont President Daniel Mark Fogel, who also will speak at the event. "We are honored that President Bollinger will deliver the keynote address at Convocation. His strong scholarship on free speech and First Amendment issues and his principled advocacy for building more diverse university communities resonate deeply with our values and priorities here in Vermont. President Bollinger's participation in Convocation at UVM underlines the aspiration I set forth for the University at Convocation a year ago: this will be an institution where diversity and academic excellence are inextricable."

Lee Bollinger is a graduate of the University of Oregon and Columbia Law School. After serving as law clerk for Judge Wilfred Feinberg on the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and Chief Justice Warren Burger on the United States Supreme Court, he joined the

Green Refurbishment Takes Stock of History, Symbolism

The University of Vermont Green, the campus's verdant heart, was in its earliest days a source of income-producing timber. Later it became a sheep pasture. Still later, as a protective cordon of stately elms grew, its interior was shady and open. In the 1960's, after disease killed the elms, wave after wave of smaller plantings crowded the green's center, creating some intimate woody "rooms," but obscuring its spaciousness and long vistas.

Later this month, landscape crews will begin refurbishing the Green to something more closely approximating its historic character. The work will take place in the center area of the Green directly in front of Waterman Building, with a focus on the area surrounding the fountain. Many trees in this location, particularly small crabapples, are nearing the end of their life spans or are seriously compromised due to disease, ice storm damage, and several years of drought.

"The crabapples were a good selection when they were planted, but since then much more disease-resistant varieties have been developed," says Mark Starrett, an associate professor of plant and soil science who teaches plant identification on the Green and who participated in meetings regarding the project. "One has died because of foliar diseases, and all of them have been affected."

The work is in preparation to host the university's 200th Commencement on the Green on May 23, 2004, a return to a long-standing University of Vermont tradition. The university has worked with a landscape architect on a plan for the area, which will involve removing some groupings of shrubs and 17 crabapples. Workers will also prune the lower branches of six larger trees.

"Many of the shrubs in question have been deemed invasive species by the state of Vermont," Starrett says. "The Green is the university's front door, and it's not a good thing to have a cluster of invasive shrubs right at the welcome mat."

The plantings, many from the 1960's, are "park-like," Starrett says, but they are not very "green-like," in that the plants and spacing do not resemble those in historic New England greens.

Thomas Visser, associate professor of historic preservation, participated in many of the meetings involved in developing the landscaping plans, and is confident that they honor the Green's symbolic and historic character.

faculty of the University of Michigan Law School in 1973. In 1987 he was named Dean of the University of Michigan Law School, a position he held for seven years. He became Provost of Dartmouth College and Professor of Government in July 1994 and was named the twelfth President of the University of Michigan in November 1996. In 2002 he was named President of Columbia University.

His primary teaching and scholarly interests are focused on free speech and First Amendment issues, and he has published numerous books, articles, and essays in scholarly journals on these and other subjects. His most recent book is *Eternally Vigilant: Free Speech in the Modern Era*, published by the University of Chicago Press in 2001. Bollinger is the recipient of several awards for his strong defense of affirmative action in higher education, including the National Humanitarian Award from the National Conference on Community and Justice.

A ceremonial procession of faculty into the chapel is set to begin at 8:15 a.m. The University of Vermont Brass Quintet and the University Memorial Carillon, which is directed by Professor David Neiweem, will provide music. The event is free and open to the public.

A reception will follow at 9:30 a.m. in the Billings Student Center.

For more information regarding convocation, contact Leslie Logan at 656-1266 or leslie.logan@uvm.edu.

UVM, Banknorth Strike Sponsorship Deal

Banknorth Vermont and the University of Vermont have entered into a three-year sponsorship agreement. The deal, which will run through the end of the 2005-06 academic year, is worth \$234,000 over its term. Under the agreement, Banknorth will become the official bank sponsor of Vermont athletics.

The company will become the title sponsor of the annual women's basketball tournament, a top early season event, and will share the title sponsorship of the men's ice hockey tournament.

"Banknorth has a longstanding tradition of supporting UVM, and this agreement takes that support to a new level to reach our entire campus," says Chris McCabe, assistant vice president for marketing and business development, who helped negotiate the agreement.

Other components of the deal include:

- Student gift bags in all dorm rooms
- Signage at Gutterson Fieldhouse, including center-ice logos, dasher-board ads, Zamboni signage and a backlit sign and home bench "wrap"
- Signage in Patrick Gym (two permanently mounted vinyl banners located beneath each scoreboard)
- Signage at Centennial Field, and sole

"Until now, we haven't taken a broad view from a landscape design perspective and looked at what is going to make sure the Green is a delightful place five, ten and fifty years from now," Visser says.

The preservationist calls the plan an opportunity to begin to "refurbish" the green. "I'm very excited," he says. "This will reopen some once sunny spaces in the midst of the trees and also offer new vistas of the beautiful historic buildings across the green."

Starrett thinks the changes will make the area a more comfortable and natural place for games, conversation, relaxation and teaching.

"We'll still have the rooms, but we'll also have a bit more open space," he says.

The professor hopes that the work won't stop there. "My goal is to see some elms put back on the green," he says. "There are now disease-resistant elms, so why not bring some of them back? Not as a monoculture, but as a reminder of the past."

For more information: Kit Anderson, a lecturer in the environmental program, [traced the Green's history](#) for *Vermont Quarterly*. Thomas Gustafson, vice president of student and campus life, sent an e-mail to campus addresses with more details about the landscaping.

Fetes to Mark Staff Feats

Mark your calendars and update your Outlook: Staff Recognition Week is coming around again.

The week's signature event, the staff social on the green, will take place on Sept. 15 and will be hosted by UVM President Daniel Mark Fogel and Rachel Kahn-Fogel. Lunch will be served from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Fleming Museum entrance. This year's event will not require an entry coupon.

Other events in the week include invitation-only events for staff with 10 years of service (Sept. 17 at noon in Memorial Lounge) and 15 or more years of service (a dinner at 6 p.m. on Sept. 19 at the Radisson Hotel in Burlington).

sponsorship of the "Best Seat In the House" promotion, where the first 500 UVM students will receive a fold-out chair to watch Vermont vs. North Carolina in men's soccer on Sept. 7

- Ads in basketball and men's hockey media guides and game programs produced by the Vermont Office of Athletic Communications
- Hospitality and promotional events, including receptions and fan giveaways
- Licensed use of the newly redesigned V-cat logo
- Automatic Teller Machines on campus, making Banknorth the exclusive supplier of ATMs at the University of Vermont

"We are very excited to continue and strengthen our partnership with the university," says Philip R. Daniels, president of Banknorth Vermont. "With Banknorth's focus on education and youth, our support of the University of Vermont has always been a natural fit."

theview

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Unearthing Vermont's Past

John Crock, research assistant professor of anthropology and director of the UVM Consulting Archaeology Program, will give a talk titled "The Contributions of Regulatory Archaeology to the Understanding and Management of Vermont's Nonrenewable Past" on Sept. 10 at 7:30 p.m. in Memorial Lounge, Waterman Building.

Crock says that the overwhelming majority of archaeology conducted in Vermont and across the country today falls within the realm of "regulatory" archaeology, or archaeology that is required by state or federal laws designed to protect and preserve cultural resources.

This talk will focus on the results of large-scale archaeological excavations conducted at precontact Native American sites by the UVM program in advance of local highway and development projects. Crock will emphasize the importance of cultural resource management laws to the advancement of Vermont archaeology, the long-term value of data recovered from endangered sites, and the ongoing need for site preservation.

The talk, which is sponsored by the Center for Research on Vermont, is free and open to the public. For more information, see the [CRV Website](#). For more on Crock and consulting archaeology, see this story from *the view*: [The Past, Done Fast](#).

Doing Good, Doing Well

Green entrepreneur Jeffrey Hollender, president and CEO of Seventh Generation and author of *How To Make The World A Better Place: A Guide To Doing Good*, will give an open forum to MBA students on Sept. 10 at 5:00 p.m. in 225 Kalkin.

The talk is titled, "Growing Green in Tough Times."

Seventh Generation is the leading brand of natural household products in the United States. Hollender has an extensive history of writing, consulting and leadership in environmental groups and socially conscious business organizations.

Information: 656-0655

Exhibition Celebrates 100 Years of Pringle's Plants

The Fleming Museum and the Pringle Herbarium will celebrate the 100th anniversary of Cyrus Pringle's world-renowned plant collection with an exhibit running Sept. 13 through Dec. 14.

The exhibit highlights Pringle's relations with botanists from Washington's Smithsonian Institution to England's Kew Gardens and features the work of Pringle and his Vermont colleagues.

Pringle's extensive travels and his exchanges with international botanists led to the diverse plant collection now housed in Torrey Hall. The third largest herbarium in New England, the Pringle Herbarium has more than 310,000 plants representing every continent but Antarctica.

For more information and a complete schedule of exhibition events, visit [Fleming Museum](#).

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*Sept. 3, 2003***Publications and Presentations**

Gale Burford, professor of Social Work, gave invited lectures at the Center for Social Work in Copenhagen, Denmark and the University of Southampton in England during June. Burford consulted with local area social work teams while in Denmark and England and gave a one-day lecture/workshop at the Children's Bureau in London titled, "Planning for Safety: Families Using Family Group Conferences to Halt Family Violence."

Sanjeeva Murthy, associate professor of physics, published a paper with R.G. Bray titled, "Structure and Properties of Polyamide 6 and 4--Aminomethylcyclohexane Carboxylic Copolymers with an Unusually Short Helical Pitch for Nylons" in the August Issue of the journal *Polymer*.

Mark Nelson, chair and professor of pharmacology, and **Adrian Bonev**, research assistant professor of pharmacology, are co-authors of a paper in the Sept. 1 *Journal of Clinical Investigation* titled, "Modulation of the molecular composition of large conductance Ca²⁺ activated K⁺ channels in vascular smooth muscle during hypertension." The research, conducted by Nelson, Bonev and their co-authors from the department of physiology and biophysics at the University of Washington, was funded in part by the National Institutes of Health, as well as a Totman Medical Research Trust award.

*August 27, 2003***Awards and Honors**

Francine Bazluke, vice president and general counsel, was named president of the National Association of College and University Attorneys at the association's annual conference in June. Founded in 1960, NACUA seeks to advance the effective practice of higher education law for the benefit of the colleges and universities. The organization comprises more than 3,000 attorneys who represent nearly 660 institutions. Bazluke has served as UVM general counsel since 1992.

Heather Bouchey, assistant professor of psychology, was selected for a 2003 Illinois State University Alumni Award in honor of her professional achievements. Bouchey was invited to visit Normal, Ill., in October to accept the award and deliver a colloquium.

Stephen Cutler, professor of sociology and Joyce professor of gerontology, has been awarded a Fulbright Scholar grant to lecture and conduct research at the University of Bucharest, Romania during the spring semester of the 2003-2004 academic year. He will study the long-term consequences of the precipitous changes in Romanian population policy that occurred in the mid-1960s.

Glenn Rogers, extension regional farm business management specialist, was elected President of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents at the group's annual meeting held in Green Bay, Wisc., during July. Rogers served as Northeast Vice Director and Director from 1987 to 1991 as well as National Vice President for NACAA in 2002. In 1997 he helped organize and chaired the facilities committee at the NACAA Annual Meeting in Burlington, which attracted more than 2000 attendees.

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Meet the Coaches

By Jon Reidel



Bob Corran (front right) sits with his first four hires since being named athletic director in May: Skiing coach Bill Reichelt (front left); Cross country and track coach Matt Belfield and women's basketball coach Sharon Dawley (middle row); and hockey coach Kevin Sneddon (back). (Photo: [Jordan Silverman](#))

Bob Corran's first official act as athletic director was to sign a contract for the men's basketball team to play UCLA in Los Angeles. Over the next 53 days, his other major moves – filling coaching vacancies in men's hockey, women's basketball, skiing, and track and field and cross country – offered more insight into how he plans to set lofty goals for the department.

If there's a common theme among Corran recent hires, it's that they're all relatively young, have lots of energy and are used to winning either as a

player or coach. The average age of men's hockey coach Kevin Sneddon, women's basketball coach Sharon Dawley, and ski coach Bill Reichelt is 35. In most cases, they were hired over older, more experienced coaches.

"Any hiring is subjective," Corran says. "No matter how hard you try to be objective it gets down to a feeling, who you feel most strongly about. Certainly the general public will be more black and white about it measuring it more by wins and losses, and that's a priority for us too, but we're focusing more on the process of preparing teams to win as opposed to focusing on winning specific games. If all these things are working, wins will be one of the outcomes."

The hire: hockey

Kevin Sneddon, the new hockey coach, would like to do for UVM as a coach what he did for Harvard as a player – win a national championship.

But before the 33-year-old Burlington, Ontario native starts talking about taking the Catamounts back to the Frozen Four for the first time since 1996, he'd like to work on making Vermont an ECAC contender again. To make that happen, Vermont's fourth coach in 40 years plans to add as many blue chip recruits as possible and help his current players get even better.

"UVM is one of the best programs in the country, so in respect to recruiting, we should be involved with best players in the country," Sneddon says. "Players of that caliber want to win national championships, so before we can recruit them, we've got to prove to prospects that we can win."

Sneddon faces the pressure of maintaining the aura that surrounds UVM hockey, an image that doesn't always jive with the numbers. He'll be expected to eventually take the Catamounts to the NCAA tourney, for example, something that has occurred just three times since UVM joined Division I 28 years ago.

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[New Professors](#)

The University of Vermont's newest group of professors is now on campus, many with the script barely dry on their hard-won doctorates, bringing expertise in everything from robotic vision to the sociology of disaster. *the view* spoke with a few of them to learn more about their professional and personal passions.

[Hovercrafting the Future](#)

Mechanical engineering graduate student Graham Spencer's love of motors started as a young boy growing up in Ohio. His unquenchable desire to understand motors led to increasingly complex projects with his crowning pre-teen achievement being the construction of a hovercraft based on plans he found in a comic book.

But Sneddon is confident he can give the Catamount faithful what they want. "If you don't feel any pressure, then maybe you shouldn't be in those shoes," Sneddon says. "I enjoy the pressures that come with coaching. It's the next best thing to playing."

The hire: women's basketball

Sharon Dawley is shadowed by a dream deferred. Vermont's new women's basketball coach toiled for 10 years as an assistant coach at Dartmouth with the goal of getting the Ivy League squad past the first round of the NCAA tournament. On three occasions, the Big Green made it to the Big Dance, but were eliminated in the first round.

Dawley, who was hired on June 23, can name who Dartmouth lost to in the tourney and by how many points: "Virginia by 3, Rutgers by 12 and Purdue by 4," she says from her new office in Patrick Gymnasium.

But the desire to attain the elusive goal still remains. The only difference is the name of the team she intends to take to the land of 32.

"It's a goal that still haunts me," Dawley says. "We made it there three times and didn't make it past the first round. So my NCAA experience has been that we were so close but didn't quite make it. The goal is the same here. We'll focus on winning the America East (which receives an automatic bid to the NCAA tournament). No one on staff here wants less than a (league) title."

The hire: skiing

Following in the tracks of a legend is never easy, but Bill Reichelt has a pretty good idea how he plans to succeed Chip LaCasse who stepped down after 33 years as director of skiing.

"Skiing has had tremendous success here," says Reichelt. "I'd like to not only maintain it, but take it to the next level."

Reichelt, a Stowe native who has served as men's alpine coach for the past two seasons, says LaCasse built the program into a national power by staying on top of trends and training methods. He plans to do the same by experimenting with newer types of training and equipment. "I've got a lot of new ideas that won't always work, but I want to be innovative in our approach," he says.

Reichelt has his work cut out for him with three members of UVM's NCAA runner-up team having moved on. The most damaging loss was that of sophomore Jimmy Cochran, an All-American in 2003, who was recently named to the United States Ski Team.

But Reichelt has already landed one of the top male and female prep skiers in the nation, and has his eyes set on others. He says his decision to keep the coaching staff intact has helped with that effort – and the team's overall morale.

The hire: cross country and track

Matt Belfield fits the Corran profile. He's young (35); successful as an athlete (six-time all-conference high jumper) and coach (conference coach of the year five times); and has plenty of energy.

Belfield, whose wife Bonnie was an assistant track coach at UVM in the mid 1990s under longtime former coach Ed Kusiak, says he'd like to kick off his tenure in Vermont by working with the talent that already exists at UVM, then start "getting in the pipeline" with local high school kids. But extending the success that the women's cross-country team has already enjoyed, which includes three New England Championships, to the track program will require attracting some top out-of-staters as well.

Only five homegrown Vermonters in state history have ever qualified for the Foot Locker Cross Country Championships – the nation's only true high school national championship – and all of them chose schools other than UVM.

"You have to demonstrate to high profile recruits that they can get better here. But UVM has a lot to offer student-athletes," Belfield says. "I've never wanted to be at a place that didn't put academics first and UVM definitely does that."

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A Pack of New Professors

By Kevin Foley

The University of Vermont's newest group of professors is now on campus, many with the script barely dry on their hard-won doctorates, bringing expertise in everything from robotic vision to the sociology of disaster.

They are a large and accomplished group – nearly 100 new faculty attended a three-day orientation led by the Center for Teaching and Learning, though some started in January – and *the view*, alas, could only speak with a few of them. So what follows is an anecdotal look at the thoughts and work at a few individuals able to return our calls amidst the flurry of paperwork and preparation that comes with the beginning (or, in some cases, the continuation) of an academic career.

Name: Sean Field

Department: history

Training: Ph.D., Northwestern University

Recent experience: visiting assistant professor at Marquette University

Research interests: Field studies medieval European history, specifically 13th century religious history. "When I was thinking seriously about becoming a historian, I wanted to do modern European history, and I ended up working backward from there," he says. He loves the license for inference that working with medieval documents gives. "You do a lot with a small number of sources, the evidence is limited," he says. "It's not like the modern period, where the evidence is essentially unlimited. You have to dig." His dissertation focused on Isabelle of France, a sister of King Louis IX. An abbess acquainted with her named Agnes of Harcourt wrote a biography of Isabelle that Field translated for his first book *The Writings of Agnes of Harcourt*, which will be published soon by the Notre Dame Press. Field calls her prose a "fascinating little window" into medieval France. He's working on his second book, a more analytic study of Isabelle of France.

Quirky personal fact: Fittingly for a historian, he plays classical guitar.

Why he chose UVM: Field likes the middling size of the department, large enough to have a broad range of activity, small enough so that no one is "buried."

Name: Alice Fothergill

Department: sociology

Training: Ph.D., University of Colorado

Recent experience: assistant professor, University of Akron

Research interests: Fothergill explores issues of family and of gender inequality in the context of natural disaster. She works in an ethnographic mode, spending time with her subjects and gathering qualitative data. Her dissertation, a version of which will be published next year by SUNY Press as *Heads Above Water*, is the product of her visits to Grand Forks, North Dakota, before and after a 1997 flood. She explored how women reacted to the loss of home, how the flood contributed to downward mobility, how the stress influenced domestic violence. She also saw how accepting aid was deeply stigmatizing to some of the flood's victims. Disasters like the flood, she says, are highly revealing, showing social and gender fissures. "Disasters aren't egalitarian," she says. "Those who are more vulnerable to begin with feel them most." Fothergill also deals with work-family issues, and is involved in a research project looking at women within academia.

Quirky personal fact: Fothergill is a UVM alumna and credits sociology Professor Beth Mintz for getting her into the profession. "Some of the core people I worked with as an undergraduate are still here," Fothergill says. "It's surreal to be moving my boxes into Benedict House."

Outside interests: "When I'm not working, I want to be with my husband and kids," she says. "With small children, anything is fun – a trip to a library, watching ants in the back yard. I also occasionally like to make pottery, a hobby I began at Living/Learning with Joan Watson."

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Mechanical engineering graduate student Graham Spencer's love of motors started as a young boy growing up in Ohio. His unquenchable desire to understand motors led to increasingly complex projects with his crowning pre-teen achievement being the construction of a hovercraft based on plans he found in a comic book.

Why she chose UVM: “The department has a great reputation, it’s recognized as one of the best undergraduate departments in the country. There’s a great balance between teaching and research – both are valued here, which isn’t true everywhere. You are rewarded for doing both well here, which is surprisingly rare. My family is passionate about the outdoors, so that was another lure.”

Name: Paul Martin

Department: English

Training: Ph.D., University of Alberta

Recent jobs: Teaching at Alberta, working in publishing with the Spotted Cow Press, and running an Internet site called [Northwest Passages](#), an online bookstore and resource for Canadian literature. The site has been online since 1996, and has helped stock Canadian literature collections in Syria and the Czech Republic, among other places.

Research interests: Martin’s dissertation examined the canon of Canadian literature and sought to analyze how people chose what to teach. As part of his research, Martin traveled across the country and interviewed 100 different professors at 29 different institutions. Martin favors a comparative literature approach, working in both French and English. He’s also interested in post-colonial literature, and will teach a course using writings of native people from Canada, Australia and elsewhere.

Outside interests: “When I’m not teaching or writing, I’m likely to be working on one of my other jobs,” he says. “But we’re looking forward to exploring Vermont. I also might like to start playing keyboards in bands again.”

Quirky personal fact: Shares a name with the prominent Canadian finance minister, who is likely to become the country’s next leader. “Well, I always said that if he ever became prime minister, I’d have to leave the country,” Martin says.

Why he chose UVM: “I loved my life in Edmonton, but this was really exciting. There’s a 30 year history of teaching Canadian literature in Vermont, and there’s the obvious proximity to Quebec – you can even get Canadian television here, a lifeline of sorts, I guess.” Martin also loves the youth and energy of the department, and as a scholar who looks critically at the canon, he looks forward to the additional freedom that being of the few Canadianists on a United States campus will bring.

Unexpected obstacles to getting here: On a house-hunting trip to Vermont, he was turned back at the border. Getting in required the intercession of Robyn Warhol, chair of English, UVM’s Office of International Education and the staff of Senator Patrick Leahy. He’s also found that some canonical figures in Canadian literature, people like Timothy Findley and Margaret Lawrence, are out-of-print in the United States. So he’s had to import books in order to teach his classes.

Name: Yuichi Motai

Department: electrical and computer engineering

Training: Ph.D., Purdue University

Research interests: Motai is working to launch the Intelligent Media Laboratory, a Votey-based facility that will comprise research drives in computer vision, ubiquitous computing, human-computer interaction and sensory based robotics. Motai says that faster microprocessors and better algorithms will let people take computers – and their capabilities – with them everywhere they go.

Outside interests: Motai is an accomplished musician (favoring string jazz) and skier, with ski patrol experience in his native Japan.

Why he chose UVM: “In April, when I was interviewing and met the department, I got a very positive impression of the place and the opportunities. I felt wanted by the department chair.” And, he admits, the mountains and snow didn’t hurt. “In Indiana, there are no mountains at all,” he says. “No skiing. Vermont reminds me of my home town.”

Name: Jane Okech

Department: integrated professional studies

Training: Ph.D., Idaho State University

Research interests: Okech will teach a variety of courses within the counseling program, particularly those relating to group therapy, a passion of hers. Most of her research and writing to date has focused on the leadership dynamics of groups led by more than one person. “The dynamics between co-leaders really infiltrate the group,” she says. Tensions or unresolved conflicts between group leaders percolate into conversations between participants, and “members of the group start forming alignments.” Okech is also interested in addressing diversity and multicultural issues within counseling, as well as professional ethics.

Outside interests: Okech is fond of hiking and mountain climbing. The latter hobby, she says, will be on hold here: “But I look forward to exploring Vermont’s rolling hills,” she says. She’s also an avid cook, with a fondness for

Asian cuisines.

Quirky personal fact: In the last three years, she has visited 20 states, some professionally, but many on road trips with friends.

Why she chose UVM: “The counseling program is expanding and strong. It has a lot of potential, and is receiving some new resources from the university. There’s a great future, and it will give me an opportunity to grow with the program and start implementing some of my research findings. There are also a group of people here who are passionate about things that I care deeply about, particularly multicultural issues in counseling.”

Name: Sean Xiaoyang Wang

Department: computer science

Title: Dorothean Professor

Training: Ph.D., University of Southern California

Recent experience: Associate Professor, George Mason University

Research interests: Wang is an expert in database systems, specifically, data mining, the practice of finding useful patterns and information within massive amounts of information. “It’s knowledge discovery,” he says. “If you are studying, say, satellite imagery, you have massive amounts of data and you have to find what you want to find – without necessarily knowing what you want.” Wang also works and publishes in privacy and data security.

“Traditionally, data security is encryption, hiding information,” he says. “The new era is protecting data stores, not just transmitted data.”

Outside interests: Wang enjoys occasional card games, spending time with his family (he has two children, one in middle school, the other in elementary) and jogging.

Quirky personal fact: For English speakers, his given name can sometimes be problematic. “My first name ‘Xiaoyang’ consists of two Chinese characters: ‘Xiao’ for early morning, and ‘Yang’ for the sun,” he writes. “Unfortunately, native American-speakers are notorious in pronouncing ‘X’ followed by three vowels, and many would thus ‘murder’ all the senses of Morning Sun from the name when they say it!” Sean, he says, has a similar sound to his Chinese name and is much easier to say in English.

Why he chose UVM: After 10 years at George Mason, Wang was ready for a change – and he liked the youthful energy of the UVM department. “In Virginia, most of the department were full professors,” he says. “Here it’s assistants. There’s less experience, but a lot of energy.” He also likes the department’s existing links with the medical school and in the life sciences, because he believes his data mining work has applications in a bioinformatics context. “There are a lot of funding opportunities,” he says. The department’s new Ph.D. program, debuting this fall, was also a draw for him.

theview

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Hovercrafting the Future

By Jon Reidel



Need for speed: Graduate student Graham Spencer likes racing, but he loves engineering.

Mechanical engineering graduate student Graham Spencer's love of motors started as a young boy growing up in Ohio. He would take engines apart, study them, and then put them back together. His unquenchable desire to understand motors led to increasingly complex projects with his crowning pre-teen achievement being the construction of a hovercraft based on plans he found in a comic book.

With his only impediment being a shortage of funds, Spencer proved resourceful by using all available household items to build his own version of a type of vehicle known for its low-level flight over land and water.

"It was powered by a vacuum cleaner I disassembled much to the chagrin of my mother," Spencer says. "I was always tinkering with motors. I found it fascinating."

The construction of that initial hovercraft was the beginning of a life-long love affair with hovercrafts and mechanical engineering that would lead to Spencer winning the 2000 World Hovercraft Championships in Shropshire, England and a soon-to-be-awarded masters degree from UVM.

Hovercraft fever

Within a short time of completing his first amphibious cruiser, Spencer started attending hovercraft rallies with a friend of his father's, Scott Brownlee, who was an engineer and had been attending rallies since the 1960s.

Under Brownlee's tutelage, Spencer designed and built a more advanced hovercraft in high school out of wood and fiberglass that reached speeds of 40 mph. The advancements continued in college at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute, Ind. – known as a hovercraft hotbed – where Spencer's hovercraft took first place at a science fair.

As Spencer grew older, his desire to continue to build a more efficient machine never waned. During his senior year in college he built a racing craft that was not only lighter, but also had more thrust, thanks in part to the modification of a snowmobile engine. It was around this time that Spencer got more serious about racing and started entering major hovercraft races.

In 1994, at age 30, Spencer won a national championship in the Formula S Class at the United States National Hovercraft Rally. He also placed second at the same event in 1994 and 1996 in the Formula 2 Class. These led to his world title in 2000.

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Meet the Coaches

Bob Corran's first official act as athletic director was to sign a contract for the men's basketball team to play UCLA in Los Angeles. Over the next 53 days, his other major moves – filling four coaching vacancies – offered more insight into how he plans to set lofty goals for the department.

New Professors

The University of Vermont's newest group of professors is now on campus, many with the script barely dry on their hard-won doctorates, bringing expertise in everything from robotic vision to the sociology of disaster. *the view* spoke with a few of them to learn more about their professional and personal passions.

The evolving engineer

But as much as Spencer enjoyed the competitive aspect of hovercraft racing, it was the science behind making the hovercraft faster and more efficient that truly fueled his desire. He received awards for his hovercraft design and use of composites in 1991 from GM Formula SAE and the U.S. Hovercraft Rally in 1991 and 2000.

"I love to race, but I tend not to be that competitive," Spencer says. "I'm just happy if the machine is running well. I get just as much of a thrill out of someone else winning in one of my machines. I'm a tinkerer at heart."

Spencer's tinkering got him a job as a product engineer at a hovercraft company out of college, followed by jobs as an advanced product engineer at Delphia Interior Systems and as lead product design engineer in the robotic accessories division of Process Equipment Company.

Spencer's current thesis project at UVM, "Dynamic Torsional Response of a Tubular Composite Drive Shaft," is designed to test and analyze vehicular composite drive shafts for weight reduction, improved fuel economy and increased performance. This could have important applications to the auto industry given the limited supply of fossil fuels and the increasing need for efficient green technologies.

Spencer says that with the exception of some high end-end military, aerospace and racing vehicles the implementation of composites into automotive power transmission has been slow to develop. Part of the problem has been the high cost of composite tubes, something that is starting to change as the tubing industry finds cheaper manufacturing methods.

"What we hope to do is provide the basic understanding for composites to be used in a drive shaft application in a light truck," Spencer says.

Spencer is testing torsional strain by using a machine he built at a UVM lab that spins up to 3600 RPM's. The machine is hooked up to a computer that sends data directly into the computer system. The experiment is in collaboration with General Dynamics. Spencer is also seeking grant funding and has submitted a proposal through Vermont ESPSCOR.

After his research is over, Spencer isn't sure what he'll do. Its clear from listening to him, however, that his love of hovercrafts and the desire to find new ways to make them more efficient and hopefully apply the technology to the auto industry will be part of his future.

"I've been doing this since I was 12," Spencer says. "I've always enjoyed the challenge of improving performance and efficiency. You can't just run down to the hovercraft supply store when there's a problem. You have to figure it out on your own. It's always been a hobby, but a lot of these applications can be used in the auto industry. This research could significantly reduce automotive fuel consumption in the future."

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