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[Debating a Debate](#)



Professor Alfred "Tuna" Snider (middle) watches the vice presidential debate on Oct. 5 with members of the Lawrence Debate Union who he coaches. (Photo: Jon Reidel)

Sitting around a boardroom table scattered with notebooks, pizza, soda and chips, members of the university's nationally ranked debate team watched the vice presidential debate and concluded that if it was held in the same format as a college debate, both candidates would have been soundly beaten if not disqualified.

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Postmenopausal women who take the hormone therapy estrogen plus progestin have double the risk for a potentially fatal condition that causes blood clots to develop in the veins, according to an article in the Oct. 6 issue of *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association* authored by Dr. Mary Cushman, an associate professor of medicine, and others.

[Service & Learning](#)

Tom Hudspeth, professor in the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, was incorporating elements of service-learning into his courses long before the recent rush by universities to make the concept a key component of academic programs.

THE WEEK IN VIEW

Oct. 6, 6 p.m.
Lecture: "Women's Activism and Political Change," with Patricia Moynagh, visiting assistant professor of political science, and Gretchen Bailey, constituent advocate, Office of Congressman Bernie Sanders. L300 Lafayette. Information: 656-4282

Oct. 6, 7:30 p.m. Lane Series concert: Rufus Reid Quintet, winner of the Charlie Parker Jazz Composition Award. UVM Recital Hall. Information: [Lane Series](#)

Oct. 7, 5 p.m.
Lecture: "Ethics and the Sanctity of Human Life," with philosopher Peter Singer, Princeton University. Ira Allen Chapel. Information: 656-4464

Oct. 8, 4:30 p.m.
Speaker: "Constitutional Interpretation," with Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. Ira Allen Chapel.

Oct. 9, 10:30 p.m.
Play: "Antigone," presented by UVM Theatre. Royall Tyler Theatre. Information: [UVM Theatre](#)

Oct. 12, 5 p.m.
Wilderness seminar: "Not One Acre More," with Ed Larson, executive director of the Vermont Forest Products Association. 108 Lafayette.

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The winning firm's preliminary vision for Aiken includes a waterfall and pond located where Marsh Life Sciences meets Terrill Building, and from it a walkway up through a natural area to the south entrance.

Architects Chosen for 'Greening Aiken' Building Redesign

William Maclay Architects and Planners of Waitsfield was chosen to redesign and expand the George D. Aiken Center, home to the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources. Donald DeHayes, dean of the school, announced the results of the design competition this week.

Maclay's nine-person team was among 24 architectural firms who vied for the honor. In May, more than 100 students, faculty, staff and others took part in a two-day design competition in which the top four firms presented design concepts for the building redesign project, which the school calls the "Greening of Aiken."

"We selected William Maclay Architects as our partners because they're an experienced, nationally recognized Vermont company whose design ideas, 'green' approach and willingness to work with our faculty, staff and students to create the final plans are consistent with our goals," said Professor Alan McIntosh, who is spearheading the project. "Together we will develop an exciting green design for the building and the systems to operate it. Most importantly, we will create an active learning center that integrates the building into the curriculum."

"In 1980, the Aiken Center was built to accommodate a school of 350 students and 30 faculty and staff," said DeHayes. "Today, the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources has 60 faculty and staff and more than 600 students, and the building's systems are near the end of their lifespan. We have an opportunity, using environmentally friendly, efficient and

Zakaria Discusses Foreign Policy from 'Casablanca' to Iraq

From the situation in Iraq ("chaos") to politics in Vermont ("I'm usually attacked from the right, but I should have known that here I'd get attacked from the left") to the film "Casablanca," foreign policy analyst Fareed Zakaria treated a capacity George D. Aiken Lectures crowd on Sept. 29 to a rollicking but often sobering look at America's changing role in the world.

Anticipating themes in the subsequent "global test" Presidential debate flap (candidate John Kerry said while we can never cede control of our defense, our actions must be clearly justified to the American public and the world to be effective; President Bush said this dangerously abdicates control of our security to foreigners), Zakaria observed, "Something has happened to the way we conduct diplomacy these days."

That changed "something," a shifted balance in the always delicate relationship between idealism and power in American foreign policy, is one factor leading to the spread of popular anti-Americanism around the globe and more difficult relationships with our allies. America, Zakaria said, is now the world's sole superpower – and the country is almost as ambivalent about being in that role as the rest of the world is about having us in it.

Prompted by the series of film discussions at the center of this year's Aiken program (see details below), Zakaria started his talk with a discussion of "Casablanca," which he said offered one of his first vivid insights into this country. The movie, Zakaria said, reflects America's "ambiguous view of the world at large." Rick, the protagonist, espouses his apartness from the conflict brewing around him, but eventually (if reluctantly) steps in and does the right thing. "That's the American story. The country that doesn't want to get involved, but does get involved, and does what needs to do be done unselfishly," he said.

That story, he argued, is only part of the reality. The United States has had hundreds of thousands of troops deployed around the world for decades, and has intervened in foreign affairs regularly. But now, with the fall of the Soviet Union, the country is in the historically unique position. At times, the country has used its power and idealistic mystique well, as in a trivial but telling example Zakaria cited of America answering the call to impartially mediate a territorial dispute between Morocco and Spain over the tiny Parsley Islands.

But at this moment, growing resentment of America's enormous power, and suspicion of the

sustainable materials and technologies, to bring this building into the future. I envision Aiken as a nationally recognized 'green beacon' that calls attention to the importance of the environment at UVM and uses the designing and building process as part of our curriculum."

Maclay is no stranger to environmental and educational design or building requirements for cold climates. Among its projects are the offices of Wind NRG Partners in Hinesburg, a St. Lawrence University wetlands research building in Canton, N.Y., Yestermorrow Design Build School in Warren and the Inn of the Six Mountains in Killington.

"We're excited to work with UVM on this important building. We feel that together we can use the Aiken Center to change how people think about the environment, and to realize that we live in nature whether we're outdoors or inside a building," said William Maclay. "It is particularly exciting that this facility is the home of UVM's Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources."

The design concept competition was the culmination of nearly two years of work by students, staff, faculty and UVM's Architectural and Engineering Services. The Greening of Aiken competition and initial phase was funded by a generous gift from the Lintilhac Foundation. Now the school's faculty, staff and students will work with the Maclay team and UVM Architectural and Engineering Services to develop an initial design and budget. An intensive fundraising campaign has also begun. Undergraduate and graduate students are already investigating green technologies and materials and a related cost-benefits analysis class is being developed for spring 2005.

New System Aims to Give Hall Residents More Authority, Accountability

When UVM's new director and associate director of residential life arrived on campus last year, they found halls where residents sometimes didn't know the names of their neighbors, much less their residential advisors, and would often call the campus police over matters as trivial as a too-loud stereo.

Stacey Miller and Alvin Sturdivant were appalled at their walk-throughs and survey results and decided to bring in a new model for running the halls. Called the community standards process, the recently adopted system gives students more autonomy – and responsibility. Developed at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, it's also been implemented to good reviews at Syracuse, New York University and the University of Virginia.

"We've clearly had some image problems," says Miller, the director of residential life. "We're making significant changes now to try our very best to bring a different level of community to halls."

Along implementing the new philosophical model this semester, Miller and Sturdivant also boosted

country's motives and largely unilateral methods of intervening in Iraq threaten the United States's special position in the world, which has always resulted from combining military strength with principles beyond self-interest.

Iraq, Zakaria said in response to questions from the audience, is an example of American assumptions about equality and stability undermining us. We didn't, he said, "get the central historical problem of order" because of our relatively prosperous and stable past. Continuing, he argued that, "We destroyed the old order [in Iraq] without being willing or able to step in ourselves."

Succeeding in bringing stability and democracy to the country, which Zakaria said he believes is still possible, requires establishing order first. And part of doing that, he argued, is incorporating Sunni insurgents into the new Iraq's political life, probably through some sort of general amnesty, an action that Iraq Prime Minister Iliad Allawi at one time supported but was rejected because of fierce opposition from the U.S.

Zakaria, who believed confronting Iraq was necessary but disagrees with many of the ways that strategy was implemented, allowed that pulling out might eventually become necessary if the situation deteriorates further. He said that he hoped that wouldn't come to pass, adding that he is deeply concerned about the unpredictable threat of a post-Saddam, post-United States Iraq.

"I think we'd leave a place far more dangerous than we found it," he said.

The 2004 edition of the annual George D. Aiken Lectures, which are organized around the theme "An Empire of Liberty? America's Role in the World," continues with a series of five weekly film screenings and discussions beginning tonight, Oct. 6. All films are shown at 6 p.m. in the Fleming Museum's downstairs screening room and are free and open to the public.

- Oct. 6, "Lawrence of Arabia," a sophisticated treatment of the colonial enterprise and its effects on the colonizer, with discussion leader Gregory Gause, an associate professor of political science at the University of Vermont, and director of the University's Middle East studies program.
- Oct. 13, "Xala," a satire and a lament for the failings of the Senegalese government after the demise of French colonial rule, with discussion leader David Jenemann, an assistant professor of English, film and television studies.
- Oct. 20, "Stagecoach," an epic John Ford Western that reflects American ideals, conflicts, and fears, particularly the theme of miscegenation and its relationship to empire, with discussion leader Tom Garrett, an adjunct professor of cinema studies at Burlington College and executive director of Legal Services Law Line of Vermont.
- Oct. 27, "Black Robe," a historical drama

the programming budget, mandated that residential advisers hold at least one community activity (whether a meeting, forum or social event) per week, and screened and trained new R.A.'s with the process in mind. So far, results look good. Drug and alcohol incidents are down this year as opposed to this time last year and participation at events is up.

"The new process shifts our role in residential life from being authorities to facilitators. We're empowering students," Sturdivant says. "It's also a shift from us creating experiences for students to them creating their own experiences. What is important is that the student is actively engaged."

Community standards are agreements shared by students in residence halls. They define how individuals will treat each other and their environment, celebrate successes and address behavioral problems. What's different here is that the standards come from the students themselves. Within the bounds of preexisting policy, the residential community decides on rules and enforcement through consensus. This brings students closer together – whether they travel as a floor to a field hockey match to celebrate a neighbor's athletic prowess, or lay down the law on a noise-making room – and that improves the environment.

Sturdivant and Miller say it will take a year or two for the program to take off and for the new process and expectations to become engrained in hall culture. At the end of this year, the two will evaluate the program by looking at statistical measures like police incident reports and counseling referrals, while also convening focus groups to gather qualitative impressions from students.

featuring a Jesuit missionary and his quest to reach a distant outpost among the Heron Indians, is pervaded by concepts of idealism and manifest destiny. The discussion leader is Kenneth Mello, an assistant professor of religion.

- Nov. 3, "Blackhawk Down," Ridley Scott's cinematic depiction of a disastrous battle between U.S. troops and local militias in Somalia. The discussion leader is Barry Snyder, chair of cinema studies and film production at Burlington College.

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Innovative classical guitarist Paul Galbraith is playing the Lane Series. (Publicity image)

Prominent Classical Guitarist to Play

The highly regarded classical guitarist Paul Galbraith will perform a solo recital at the UVM Recital Hall as part of the Lane Series 50th Anniversary Season on Oct. 15 at 7:30 pm. Works on the program include: Debussy: Prelude "La fille aux cheveux de lin" and "Children's Corner"; J.S. Bach: "Cello Suite No. 2"; and Ravel: "Mother Goose Suite."

A Scotsman currently living in Brazil, Galbraith is a NPR favorite – he has performed numerous times on "Performance Today" and has also been featured on "All Things Considered." His recording of the *Complete Bach Violin Sonatas and Partitas* was nominated for a Grammy and was chosen as one of the best CDs of 1998 by *Gramophone Magazine*.

Galbraith is known for his unique playing position. His custom-made guitar is supported by a metal endpin, similar to that of a cello, that rests on a wooden resonance box. The instrument has two

Celebrate the Environmental University at the 4th Annual Eco-Fair

The Environmental Council is hosting the Eco-Fair on Oct. 13 from 11-2 p.m. in the Billings Student Center.

The event is a forum for celebrating everything environmental within the university, and features academic projects, campus departments, student organizations, and community partnerships. The fair will also include alternate fuel vehicles and ecological technologies here on campus.

Exhibits will include "green" buildings, ecological economics, recycling, sustainable agriculture, energy conservation, renewable energy, local purchasing, and fair trade coffee. In previous years, an average of more than 500 students, faculty, and staff have visited the fair to celebrate and talk with one another.

The fair offers free coffee, food, music and prizes. Information: Gioia Thompson, Environmental.Council@uvm.edu or 656-3803.

Investigating the Green Mountain Irish

Vincent Feeney, a historian and adjunct faculty member, will discuss "Pre-Famine Irish in Vermont," on Oct. 15 at 7:30 p.m. in Memorial Lounge, Waterman Building. Feeney's talk is part of the Center for Research on Vermont's research-in-progress seminar series.

Feeney has investigated the surprisingly large numbers of people from Ireland who emigrated to Vermont in the years prior to 1840. In this seminar he will report on what he has discovered about early Irish proprietors like Crean Brush, Matthew Lyon, and John Kelly, and on the interesting figure of Bethel's Michael Flynn.

extra strings, one high and one low. Both the guitar's design and Galbrait's playing style are considered a groundbreaking development in the history of the instrument, increasing its range and expressivity.

Tickets, information: 86-FLYNN or www.uvm.edu/laneseries

One-Man Play Illuminates James Baldwin's Life

Calvin Levels will perform "James Baldwin: Down From the Mountaintop" on Oct. 14 at 7 p.m. in North Lounge, Billings.

The one-man play traces the life of the American novelist, playwright, essayist and civil rights activist: growing up in Harlem as a prodigious reader and fiery young minister, his first sexual experiences, leaving America and moving to Paris, and publishing his works, including *Go Tell It On The Mountain* and *Giovanni's Room*. The play also dramatizes Baldwin's friendships and rivalries with the actors, writers, and civil rights leaders Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X.

Levels, who also wrote the play, appeared in "Open Admissions" on Broadway, for which he received the Theatre World Award for outstanding new talent. He has also been nominated for a Tony Award, New York Drama Desk Award and New York Outer Critics Circle Award. "James Baldwin: Down From the Mountaintop" will be presented free of charge and is sponsored by GLBTA Services, the Provost's Office and ALANA Studies program.

Information: 656-8637

Flynn's story raises interesting questions about assimilation and ethnic identity in eighteenth-century America. Feeney will also relate his findings concerning Vermont's oldest Irish community, Fairfield.

Feeney is a retired Burlington businessman and a longtime adjunct professor of Irish history at the University of Vermont. In the late 1990s he was president of the Chittenden County Historical Society. He has written widely on Vermont and Ireland: His books include *Vermont: An Illustrated History*, with John Duffy; and *The Great Falls on Onion River: A History of Winooski, Vermont*. His articles have appeared in *Eire-Ireland*, the journal of Irish historical studies in the U.S., in *The Encyclopedia of the Irish in America*, and in *The Vermont Encyclopedia*.

Individuals requiring accommodations should contact Sally Knight at 802-656-3166 by Oct. 7.

Conservation Lecture Features National Park Executive

Donald Murphy, deputy director of the National Park Service, will discuss protecting wildlife and habitat in the 84 million acres of the nation's 387 national parks on Oct. 12 at 7:30 p.m. in Memorial Lounge, Waterman Building. Murphy's talk is part of the [Conservation Lecture Series](#).

The next talk in the series is set for Nov. 4, when Gustavo da Fonesca will speak about international conservation research taking place in Brazil. He is executive vice president of Conservation International and also professor of zoology at the federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil.

The talks are sponsored by the the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources and the Conservation Study Institute and are intended to address conservation issues at the landscape level.

NOTABLES

October 6, 2004

Awards and Honors

Chester Liebs, professor emeritus of history and founding director of UVM's Historic Preservation Program, received the James Marston Fitch Preservation Education Lifetime Achievement Award given by the National Council on Preservation Education. The award recognizing Liebs' work on national and international cultural heritage conservation was presented Oct. 1 at the National Trust for Historic Preservation meeting in Louisville, Ky.

Dr. **Benjamin Littenberg**, professor of medicine, has received a grant from the National Institutes of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases titled, "Barriers to Optimum Diabetes Care." The award provides support for five years of research as well mentoring of trainees and junior investigators. Littenberg has also been appointed to the National Quality Forum's Breast Cancer Technical Panel and will work on the project, Quality of Cancer Care Performance Measures, which develops standards for measuring and reporting the quality of medical care across the nation.

Vermont Medicine, the University of Vermont College of Medicine's magazine, has won an award of distinction in the 2004 Association of American Medical Colleges/Group on Institutional Advancement Awards for Excellence competition. The AAMC/GIA awards acknowledge the most creative and effective approaches used to promote academic medicine in the United States through alumni, development, public relations and marketing programs and products.

Publications and Presentations

Richard Vanden Bergh, assistant professor of business administration, published an article in the October issue of the journal *Law, Economics and Organization*. The article, "Influencing Agencies through Pivotal Political Institutions," examines how interest groups allocate influence activities, such as monetary donations and lobbying, across multiple government institutions when seeking more favorable agency policy decisions. The article was co-written with Guy Holburn, assistant professor at the University of Western Ontario.

Dr. **Jan Carney**, research professor of medicine, will discuss two abstracts on the role of UVM medical students in promoting public health projects at the American Public Health Association's annual meeting in Washington, D.C., this November. Carney will cite findings from UVM reports on "Community-academic Partnerships: Teaching Medical Students Public Health" and "Promoting Healthy and Active Communities: Medical Students and the Built Environment," co-authored by College of Medicine faculty Yvette Pigeon and Dana Walrath.

Dennis Clougherty, professor of physics, published an article titled, "Looking for Design in Materials Design," in the October issue of the journal *Nature Materials*. The article critiqued the state of computational materials science in designing new materials by computer.

Matthew Wilson, research assistant professor of business administration, co-authored a manuscript on "Rethinking the Scope Test as a Criterion for Validity in Contingent Valuation," which will be published by *The Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*. The article will appear in the journal's online publication in January and in the print edition in July or August of 2005.

Teaching Activities

Key Compton, a UVM alumnus and School of Business Administration Board of Advisors member, spoke on "Entrepreneurship and the Role of Technology," as a guest speaker for business administration classes on Sept. 27-28. Compton, a serial entrepreneur and co-founder of the on-line music business SoundSpectrum, Inc., discussed connecting IS with a career in business. He was invited to speak by **Matthew Bovee**, assistant professor of business administration.

Dr. **Charles Mercier**, associate professor of pediatrics, is leading an effort called "Great Beginnings," a national, Web-based educational series to help clinical teams across the country improve the quality of hospital care for newborn infants and their mothers through a series of seven live conferences led by a team of faculty from across the nation. The program, which begins this fall, was created by the National Initiative for Children's Healthcare Quality and the Vermont Oxford Network, two leading quality improvement organizations in children's health care.

September 29, 2004

Awards and Honors

Gayle Belin, clinical assistant professor in the Department of Communication Science, was recently elected to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association's Legislative Council. She will represent the Vermont as a legislative counselor from 2005-2007.

Publications and Presentations

Alice Fothergill, assistant professor of sociology, recently published *Heads Above Water: Gender, Class, and Family in the Grand Forks Flood* with the State University of New York Press.

Graduate student **Bryenne Lazarus** and her Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources professors and fellow researchers **Paul Schaberg**, **Don DeHayes** and **Gary Hawley** published "Severe Red Spruce Winter Injury in 2003 Creates Unusual Ecological Event in Northeastern United States." *The Canadian Journal of Forest Research* put this study on its "fast track," publishing it just four months after it was submitted, an indicator of the topic's importance. Schaberg and Hawley also gave two oral presentations and a poster session at the August Ecological Society of America meeting in Portland, Ore.

Allan Strong, a Rubenstein assistant professor, presented work on "Land Use Patterns as an Ecological Trap for Bobolinks in the Champlain Valley" recently at a joint meeting of the Society of Canadian Ornithologists and American Ornithologists' Union. Strong and colleagues also published work on Bicknell's thrush in the spring issue of the quarterly journal *The Auk*.

Academic Activities

The **Latin American Studies Program** recently hosted 12 Latin American political dignitaries who visited Vermont to learn about civil society and its relationship with government. The group also wanted to learn more about UVM's program and to discuss Vermont politics and U.S. culture. The visit was somewhat of a surprise. "The Vermont Council on World Affairs, which was helping the U.S. State Department organize the trip, contacted us last minute and asked if we could host the delegation," says Luis Vivanco, the program's director and an assistant professor of anthropology. Delegation members are high-ranking political leaders and representatives of nongovernmental political organizations in El Salvador, Peru, Costa Rica, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Honduras and Panama. "We had an extremely productive discussion that ended with promises of possible collaborations between some of these institutions and UVM," Vivanco reports.

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Debating a Debate

By Jon Reidel

Article published Oct 06, 2004

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Professor Alfred "Tuna" Snider (middle) watches the vice presidential debate on Oct. 5 with members of the Lawrence Debate Union who he coaches. (Photo: Jon Reidel)

If the Oct. 5 vice presidential debate were held in the same format as a college debate, both candidates would have been soundly beaten if not disqualified, say members of the Lawrence Debate Union, UVM's nationally ranked debate team, who gathered to watch the event amid the pennants and trophies of their Main Street headquarters.

"The difference between our debates and this one is that we have to actually answer the

questions," says Zoe Anderson, an LDU member. "We lose if we don't answer the question. [This is] a different kind of debating. They're going more for mass appeal. We have to present facts to a judge who checks them during the debate."

Sitting around a boardroom table scattered with notebooks, pizza, soda and chips, members of the university's nationally ranked debate team listened to the candidates with well-trained ears and an appreciation for argument. Some took notes, while others let out an occasional "ouch" or "nice jab" in response to a candidate's answer. The students repeatedly emphasized that the debate format used at college competitions is vastly different from the kind of political debates seen on television. "They have to win over the American people. We only have a judge to win over. But the judge is very knowledgeable of the subject," says debater Nathan Gagnon.

Students described college debates as being much faster, almost rushed, with students reeling off as many facts and figures as possible to show their knowledge. Like a presidential-style debate, things like demeanor, delivery and clarity count, but not as much as one's actual knowledge of a subject.

"In college, if you're wrong, you lose the debate," says Brady Fletcher. "A political debate is the exact opposite because winning isn't based on facts. It's kind of academic bizzaro world debate."

Undebateable success

Intercollegiate debate at UVM has been around since 1899, when Edwin Lawrence, a 1901 UVM graduate, started a [debate](#) team. The team rose to national prominence in the 1950s and 60s, including national titles at all levels. After a brief period of decline, the program was rejuvenated with the help of Alfred "Tuna" Snider, Lawrence Professor of forensics.

Snider, who has hosted the World Debate Institute, a series of educational programs, for the past 20 years, also teaches a UVM course on presidential campaign rhetoric. His students, many of whom are on the debate team, learn about theories of rhetoric, style, construction, and the criticism and evaluation of rhetoric as applied to the presidential campaign.

"These students use more of a critical eye. They're hungry for discussion of issues. My students are more content-oriented when it comes to debating," says Snider.

In his analysis of the vice presidential debate, Snider thought Cheney underperformed and came across as angry, often looking downward when he spoke. Edwards appeared more dynamic and gave more substantive answers, despite losing steam at the end. "I thought Edwards scored some potent body blows with his arguments. I was surprised, though, at how much Edwards moved towards the middle on a number of issues."

And the winner is...

Most of the students had Edwards winning the debate by a slim margin. "Because Cheney was under fire, I thought he tried hard to keep a poker face," said one student. "Edwards let more emotion come through, which I thought was good. Overall, it was better than the presidential debate."

With candidates saddled by dozens of pages of rules hashed out by both camps prior to the debate, including not being allowed to address each other, some LDU members questioned whether the event even fell under the heading of a debate.

"It's almost an illusion of a confrontation," says debater Jake Meany. "It's the intellectual fallacy of the red herring. In academic debate you directly clash with your opponent. In these debates they build up their own argument, which allows for more information, instead of trying to take down the argument of their opponent. It's a game they play."

Other students said the visual presentation and style of delivery of political debates often trumps content. "If Cheney showed up in a pair of jeans it would undermine everything he said," said one student. "Unfortunately, there's a lack of caring about substantive issues."

But of course, even content-oriented academic debaters enjoy shouting frivolous comments at the television. This point was brought home by quips thrown out throughout the evening, including, "he's going to smack him on that one," "quit sucking up" and "this is relevant to what?"

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Professor's JAMA Article Links Hormone Therapy, Increased Venous Thrombosis Risk

By Jennifer Nachbur
Article published Oct 06, 2004

Postmenopausal women who take the hormone therapy estrogen plus progestin have double the risk for a potentially fatal condition that causes blood clots to develop in the veins, according to an article in the Oct. 6 issue of *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association* authored by Dr. Mary Cushman, an associate professor of medicine, and others.

Venous thrombosis is a disorder in which the formation of a blood clot blocks circulation in the deep veins of the leg. These veins are responsible for returning de-oxygenated blood from the legs to the heart and lungs. The greatest risk occurs when pieces of the clot break off, travel to and lodge in the arteries that go to the lungs, which is called a pulmonary embolus.

Lead author Cushman and colleagues examined the effects of postmenopausal hormone therapy on venous thrombosis in the presence of age and obesity – two major risk factors for thrombosis. The researchers analyzed final data from the Women's Health Initiative Estrogen Plus Progestin clinical trial, a double-blind randomized controlled trial of 16,608 postmenopausal women between the ages of 50 and 79 years, who were enrolled in 1993 through 1998 at 40 U.S. clinical centers, with 5.6 years of follow up.

As part of the study, hereditary thrombosis risk was measured in the first 147 women who developed thrombosis and in 513 women who did not develop thrombosis. Participants were randomly assigned to receive either a dose of conjugated equine estrogen plus medroxyprogesterone acetate, or a placebo.

Venous thrombosis occurred in 167 women taking estrogen plus progestin and in 76 taking placebo (twice the risk for venous thrombosis for women taking hormone therapy). Compared with women between the ages of 50 and 59 years who were taking placebo, the risk associated with hormone therapy was higher with age.

Women aged 60 to 69 years experienced 4.3 times the risk and women aged 70 to 79 years experienced 7.5 times the risk. Compared with women who were of normal weight and taking placebo, the risk associated with taking estrogen plus progestin was increased among overweight (3.8 times the risk) and obese women (5.6 times the risk). Participants with the hereditary blood coagulation disorder Factor V Leiden had a 6.7 times increased risk of thrombosis compared with women in the placebo group without the genetic mutation.

"The risk for venous thrombosis with oral contraceptive use has been well quantified but we have not had this information with respect to the use of hormone therapy," said Dr. Barbara Alving, director of the Women's Health Initiative and acting director of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. "This study now clearly defines the risk of venous thrombosis in women who are taking hormone therapy for a prolonged period of time according to age, obesity, and inherited conditions that can lead to thrombosis."

"Based on projections for 10 years for 1,000 women taking estrogen plus progestin, the estimated excess number of events is 18 for venous thrombosis, six for coronary heart disease, eight for invasive breast cancer, and eight for stroke," said Cushman, a hematologist who specializes in venous thrombosis and cardiovascular risk factors found in the blood. "Now that we have confirmation of these risks, women have more information on which to base their decision about whether or not to take hormone therapy. Women and their

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physicians can use this information to think about the risk of treatment.”

In addition to the University of Vermont, centers involved in this report included the University of Pittsburgh; the University of Washington, Seattle; Stanford University; Kaiser Permanente in Oakland, Calif.; and Leiden University Medical Center, the Netherlands. The Women’s Health Initiative was funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. Wyeth-Ayerst Research provided the study medications (active and placebo). Additional funding was provided by a grant from the Netherlands Heart Foundation.

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UVM HOMEPAGE

Students Teach Peers at the Intervale

By Jon Reidel

Article published Oct 05, 2004



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Senior Nate Trachimowicz (right) and other upper-division students are consulting with the Intervale and sharing what they've learned with other students. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

Tom Hudspeth, professor in the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, was incorporating elements of service-learning into his courses long before the recent rush by universities to make the concept a key component of academic programs.

His most recent attempt to include service-learning – a method of engaging students in activities that address human and community needs through activities designed to promote

student learning and development – comes in the form of a partnership with the Intervale Foundation. Seniors in Hudspeth's "Environmental Interpretation" course recently gave guided tours of the Intervale to 250 students in the "Introduction to Environmental Studies" taught by Saleem Ali, assistant professor in the Rubenstein School.

In addition to honing their teaching skills, Hudspeth's students developed an interpretive master plan for the Intervale Foundation that includes self-guided trails, brochures, signs, exhibits and Web pages. Some of the student recommendations will be implemented with guidance from Lindsey Ketchel, program director at the Intervale Foundation, a non-profit that develops land and farm-based enterprise to generate economic and social opportunities while protecting natural resources.

Ketchel says students gain hands-on experience by working for a local non-profit, which in turn gets their expertise and free labor.

"The beauty is that these students can actually experience consulting in a real environment, with real clients and real deliverables," Ketchel says. "When I was in college it all seemed so hypothetical. Tom's class has helped us come up with innovative ways to expand our visitor experience. They've given us recommendations that will eventually be implemented. It's a win-win situation. I hope we continue to expand on these opportunities."

Students teaching students

Nathaly Filion, a senior in the environmental interpretation course, says leading parts of the 90-minute guided tour of the Intervale was beneficial to her as a future teacher.

Then introductory students filled out evaluation sheets for the upper-division students, many of whom are majoring in recreation management and plan to work as environmental interpreters in national parks, nature centers, and other recreation and tourism venues, to let them know how they performed.

Filion, who plans to teach junior high in New York City next year, took matters

Debating a Debate

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JAMA Article

Postmenopausal women who take the hormone therapy estrogen plus progestin have double the risk for a potentially fatal condition that causes blood clots to develop in the veins, according to an article in the Oct. 6 issue of *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association* authored by Dr. Mary Cushman, an associate professor of medicine, and others.

a step farther, creating her own evaluation sheet so she could learn more about certain aspects of her teaching style. "Sometimes teachers think they're teaching something, but it gets interpreted differently by their students," she says. "The feedback is very helpful. The course is incredibly beneficial for both the students teaching the course and those who are taking it."

Ali says putting students in live teaching situations is the best preparation possible for future instructors. "It's very valuable because it puts them under pressure to perform, so they end up trying to do a better job. If you want respect as a teacher, you have to know what you're talking about. The main value I see is that undergraduate teachers feel empowered by it."

Putting a face on sustainability

Many of the concepts Hudspeth wants his students to convey to first-year students are related to the idea of sustainability. He defines this as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Because it crosses intellectual boundaries, encompassing economics and philosophy as well as environmental ideas, Hudspeth says that "sustainability is fundamentally and inevitably a vague concept." Grasping it is easier when students see examples of it at working landscapes like the Intervale.

For their 90-minute guided walks, Hudspeth's students developed themes related to sustainability and showed Ali's students some examples of sustainability initiatives at the Intervale. The most obvious were the 12 working farms that provide 500,000 pounds of fresh produce to the community (more than six percent of Burlington's total produce consumption) and 50,000 pounds of food to local social service agencies. But the tour also included a project working with at-risk youth, a demonstration project transforming animal manure into fuel and food using a methane digester, and a community garden among others.

"All of a sudden sustainability isn't an amorphous concept. You can see it and smell it. It becomes very real, very concrete. It comes alive," Hudspeth says.

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