

NEWS BRIEFS

EVENTS

NOTABLES

SEARCH

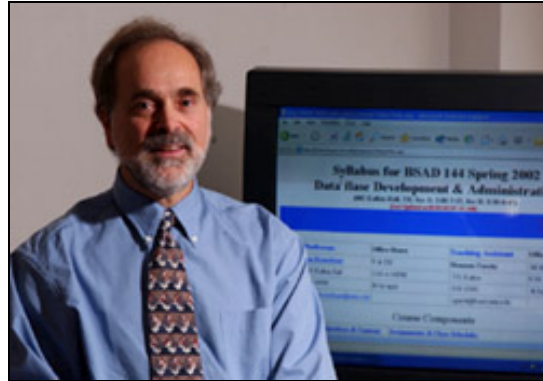
PRINT THIS ISSUE

PRINT PAST ISSUES

FEEDBACK

UVM HOMEPAGE

## Test First, Ask Questions Later



He's wired, and students better be ready: Jim Kraushaar loves quizzes. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

When Jim Kraushaar is doing his job correctly as he defines it the stuff of his students' dreams is not ghostly gossamer, but flickering lines of unspooling HTML code or a maddeningly complex relational database query.

[FULL STORY ►](#)

## PREVIOUS ISSUE

[Teaching Mindfully](#)

[Grammy-nominated Music Lecturer to Premiere UVM Professor's Composition](#)

[Thurman Headlines Tibet Festival Oct. 25-26](#)

[Grand Cree Chief to Discuss Historic Legal Settlement](#)

[UVM to Honor Outstanding Vermont Teachers](#)

[Forum Seeks "Meaning Through Movement"](#)

[In the Long Run](#)

[UVM to Play Key Role in Huge "Stroke Belt" Study](#)

[Two Faculty Win Fulbrights](#)

[Fogel's First 100 Days End with Administrative](#)

## Partners in Clime

The construction going on around the Rubenstein Ecosystem Science Laboratory at the base of College Street is a metaphor for what will be going on inside in years to come. The lab is being surrounded.

## Back to School

His fellow students in Psych 1 – some focused, some sleepy, many tattooed and serially pierced – are familiar because they're his children's generation.

## Bramley Interview

*the view* sat down with the new provost to learn more about his priorities, approach to the job and relationship with UVM President Daniel Mark Fogel.

## THE WEEK IN VIEW

**Oct. 24 12:30 p.m.** Tea ceremony workshop with Mutsumi Corson, Japanese language program. Green tea and sweets served. **B180 Living/Learning Center. Registration required: 656-1117**

**Oct. 25 7 p.m.** Talk: "Tales from a Crip" UVM alumna and staffer Laurel Pitts offers a humorous take on disability and life. **North Lounge, Billings. Information: 656-3368**

**Oct. 26 10 a.m.-6 p.m.** Heirloom appraisal day: A small fee garners expert verbal appraisals of antiques, collectibles, jewelry and more. **Fleming Museum. Information: 656-0750**

**Oct. 29 3:30 p.m.** Sustainable community development lecture: "Unlearning Consumption," with Stephanie Kaza, environmental program. **301 Williams.**

**Oct. 29 6 p.m.** Community Medical School: "The Anatomy of Trick-or-Treating," with Bruce Fonda, anatomy and neurobiology. **Carpenter Auditorium, Given Building. Registration: 847-2886**

**Oct. 30 12:30 p.m.** Area studies lunchtime talk: "Forever Foreign:"

NEWS BRIEFS

NEWS BRIEFS

EVENTS

NOTABLES

SEARCH

PRINT THIS ISSUE

PRINT PAST ISSUES

FEEDBACK

UVM HOMEPAGE



**Sturtevant to Lead Radiology**

Dr. Norman Sturtevant was appointed chair of the radiology department effective Oct. 18. He will also serve as Fletcher Allen's clinical leader of radiology.

Sturtevant, who joined the UVM faculty and the Fletcher Allen staff in 1984, is an associate professor of radiology and was the interim chair and clinical leader of radiology at UVM and Fletcher Allen since November 2000. He is a graduate of the UVM College of Medicine. (Photo: Adam Riesner)

**"Nature" Paper finds Storms Brewing**

Is New England headed for troubled waters? Significant storms and floods may be ready to wreak havoc, according to geologists at the University of Vermont. Their study of storm and flood patterns in the Northeast over the past 13,000 years will appear in the Oct. 24 issue of the journal *Nature*.

Funded by a National Science Foundation Career grant, Paul Bierman, professor of geology, led a team of colleagues and students in a four-year project to collect and study core samples from 21 lakes in Vermont and the Adirondacks. Among their conclusions: periods of intense storminess have peaked in the North Atlantic region roughly every 3,000 years over a 13,000-year period.

"The last big group of storms was – you guessed it – almost 3,000 years ago," says Bierman, who co-authored the paper with Anders Noren, former graduate student of geology at UVM; Andrea Lini, assistant professor of geology; and colleagues in Washington and California. While they cannot predict exactly when the next big storm will hit, the regional patterns they were able to establish are red flags to emergency planners, who rely on early detection to quickly evacuate people to higher ground when waters rise.

**Police Services Wins Award**

A drive to improve relationships with students earned UVM Police Services a finalist designation in the 2002 Community Policing Awards given by the International Association of Chiefs of Police in Minneapolis.

The UVM program was selected from 84 worldwide entries, and was one of eight finalists and five winners intended to reflect "best practices" in grassroots police work.

"I am very proud of the men and women who serve our community," says Gary Margolis, director of police services.

After recognizing rising tensions between officers and the population they served, Police Services began to work on a community-policing initiative in January 2001. The goals included improving communication, reducing complaints and increasing crime reports. Margolis and his staff shuffled duties to create campus liaison officers and crime prevention coordinators.

Since that time, crime reports are down significantly, as are complaints against officers. Margolis believes the changes are the results of their increased community outreach and education efforts.

**Applications for Service-Learning Fellowships Due Dec. 2**

Faculty interested in integrating service learning into their curriculum are invited to apply for the 2003 Faculty Fellows for Service Learning program. Selected faculty will take part in a ten-week seminar facilitated by Courtney Lamontagne, coordinator of the Community Outreach Partnership Center and Chris Koliba, director of the John Dewey Project.

The Faculty Fellows for Service Learning program seeks to provide faculty with the tools and resources needed to successfully integrate service into their curriculum in an educational and meaningful way. During the seminars, participants will identify course goals and objectives, explore the academic benefits of service learning, form a relationship with a community partner, plan logistics and design coursework to complement collaborative service activities.

Faculty Fellows will receive a \$1,000 stipend for participating in the seminar and, following the completion of the spring program, will be eligible

There was no time for warnings, preparations or escape when record rainfall overflowed rivers and partially submerged several Vermont towns in 1927, killing 55 people and destroying \$30 million in property. (The Center for Research in Vermont, incidentally, is sponsoring a commemoration of the flood on Nov. 3. Watch *the view* for details.) But that disaster, says Bierman, was merely a drop in the bucket compared to earlier – and future – hydrologic hassles.

"If this cycle continues, the frequency and severity of intense rainstorms that can cause massive flooding should continue to increase for the next several hundred years," agrees Noren, who is lead author of the Nature article. He joined Bierman's research team as a graduate student and wrote his thesis on the project, building on the thesis of another geology graduate student, Sarah Brown. In a laborious process he calls "a wintry dance," Noren spent long, cold days helping to collect sedimentary archives by hammering 20-foot pieces of 3-inch diameter PVC pipe into the bottom of frozen lakes and extracting core samples that were later sliced, photographed and painstakingly analyzed.

"In each of the cores we looked for sandy layers of sediment that were washed into the lakes during rainstorm-induced floods," he explains. During "nor'easters," cyclones and hurricanes, material stored in upland streams and basin hill slopes is eroded and transported to lake basins. "By getting radiocarbon dates on the organic materials in and around these layers, we were able to determine when floods occurred," Noren notes. The study's main conclusions were culled from an analysis of the flood chronologies of all the lakes.

"There may be much bigger floods than the 1927 disaster lurking out there," Bierman says. "But the most important thing to come out of this research is that, for the first time, we know the history of stormy periods in New England over the past 13,000 years." The storm rhythms observed in the UVM study are consistent with those recorded in the Greenland ice sheet, which carries signals in its chemical and physical properties that reflect an upswing in storminess over the past 600 years. It is suspected that the impact of human activity, especially the emission of atmospheric greenhouse gases, could speed up storm cycles.

to apply for further funding to support their service-learning curriculum.

Application information will be distributed to all university departments at the beginning of November. The application deadline is Dec. 2. Information: Courtney Lamontagne at 656-0095, or Chris Koliba at 656-3772.

theview

University Communications  
86 South Williams Street  
Burlington, Vermont  
05401-3404

pho 802.656.2005  
fax 802.656.3203

theview@uvm.edu

[The View Homepage](#) | [UVM Homepage](#)  
[News Briefs](#) | [Events](#) | [Notables](#)  
[Print This Issue](#) | [Print Past Issues](#) | [Feedback](#)

## EVENTS

NEWS BRIEFS

EVENTS

NOTABLES

SEARCH

PRINT THIS ISSUE

PRINT PAST ISSUES

FEEDBACK

UVM HOMEPAGE

**Two Days in Tibet**

Robert Thurman – scholar, champion of Tibetan culture and the first American to become a Tibetan Buddhist monk – will speak on "The Dalai Lama's Millennial Ethic of Intelligent Nonviolence," Oct. 25 at 8 p.m. in Billings Campus Center Theater. His remarks are part of a Tibet Festival Friday and Saturday. For information about festival events, [click here](#). (Photo: Jim Hagan/Wisdom Tours)

**From Thermal Underwear to Ultracold Atoms**

If you've ever wondered where central heating, the kitchen oven and range, drip coffeepot and thermal underwear originated, you won't want to miss Daniel Kleppner's lecture, "Rumford: New Englander Extraordinaire," Thursday, Oct. 24, in Memorial Lounge, Waterman at 4 p.m.

Benjamin Thompson, better known as Count Rumford, is credited for the research that led to the above discoveries; he also fled New England for England in order to avoid being tarred and feathered as a Tory and saved Munich from destruction by French and Austrian armies.

"He was one of the greatest applied scientists of all time," says Kleppner, who is Lester Wolfe Professor of Physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and director of the National Science Foundation MIT/Harvard Center for Ultracold Atoms.

Kleppner also is a pioneer in the exploration of atomic physics and low-temperature systems. His research team was the first to achieve Bose-Einstein condensation in atomic hydrogen in 2000. He will discuss "The Discovery of Bose-Einstein Condensation in Atoms" Friday, October 25, in room 004, Kalkin at 4 p.m.

Kleppner's lectures, which are free and open to

**Fleming Event Offers Heirloom Appraisals**

Answering the immortal attic question – "Is this trash, or a treasure?" – is easy at the 17th annual Heirloom Appraisal Day at the Fleming Museum. The event runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Oct. 26.

Having an item evaluated by an expert does not require an appointment, but the museum assesses a fee of \$5 per item for members and \$7 for non-members. This year's appraisers are Lilian Baker Carlisle, Jim Dickerson, Carolyn Fernandez, Vincent Fernandez, Tom Jiamachello, Elisha Morgan, Ruth Morrow, Martha Richardson, Mary Van Buren-Swasey and Diana Vincent.

Information: 656-0750

**Lane Series Presents La Bohème**

The lives, loves and losses of penniless Parisian artists drive Puccini's *La Bohème*, one of the composer's most popular operas. The Lane Series presents the work on Oct. 29, at 7:30 p.m., at the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts in Burlington.

The Stanislavsky Opera Company, a top Russian ensemble, will perform the work in Italian with English supertitles and live orchestra. Tickets start at \$38. For more information, see the [Lane Series Website](#).

**New Visions of Justice**

Susan Herman, executive director of the National Center for Victims of Crime, will speak at 1 p.m. on Oct. 25 at Ira Allen Chapel. The title of her talk is, "Seeking Parallel Justice: New Visions of Justice for Victims of Crime."

Herman has been director of the center, a resource and advocacy organization for crime victims, since 1997. She has defended victims of crimes such as stalking, domestic violence, and fraud against the elderly in testimony before the U.S. Congress and in numerous panels and conferences. Recently, her work has grown to encompass the fight against new crimes that rely on the Internet, such as identity theft and cyber stalking.

Information: 656-2508

the public, are sponsored by the John Dewey Honors Program and the Department of Physics. Information: 656-2644 or 656-4464.

theview

University Communications  
86 South Williams Street  
Burlington, Vermont  
05401-3404

pho 802.656.2005  
fax 802.656.3203

[theview@uvm.edu](mailto:theview@uvm.edu)

[The View Homepage](#) | [UVM Homepage](#)  
[News Briefs](#) | [Events](#) | [Notables](#)  
[Print This Issue](#) | [Print Past Issues](#) | [Feedback](#)



NEWS BRIEFS

EVENTS

NOTABLES

SEARCH

PRINT THIS ISSUE

PRINT PAST ISSUES

FEEDBACK

UVM HOMEPAGE

## NOTABLES

*Oct. 23-Oct. 29**Publications and Presentations*

**Patricia Moynagh**, visiting assistant professor of political science, presented a paper titled "Hannah Arendt and Simone de Beauvoir on Freedom" at the 10th Symposium of the International Association of Women Philosophers, Barcelona, Spain, October 4, 2002

**Lyn Carew**, professor of animal science and nutrition and food sciences, is co-editor of the book *Food and Feed from Mucuna: Current Uses and the Way Forward*. Other co-editors are from Benin, Honduras and the Ivory Coast. The book covers recent studies in Africa, Asia, Latin American and the United States with mucuna, a bean plant commonly called the velvet bean, that is used as a cover crop as well as feed and food for farm animals and humans. The bean, popular in the U.S. at the beginning of the last century, is now being used with subsistence farmers worldwide because it is hardy, requires little economic input, and is environmentally beneficial. Carew has been collaborating with researchers on the nutritional properties of this plant.

*Events*

**Chyi-lyi (Kathleen) Liang**, participated in the U.S. Community Forestry Research Fellowship Program in Epes, Alabama Oct. 10-12. The CFRF provides fellowships to graduate students to support their fieldwork in communities, and also funds undergraduate internships and assistantships. The workshop focused on forestry management, labor issues and community and forestry network studies.

**Chyi-lyi (Kathleen) Liang** was selected to participate in a national competition at the 2003 U.S. Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship conference in January in South Carolina. The intent of the competition is to showcase state-of-the-art teaching exercises, lessons, and strategies used in business courses through use of a competitive presentation format amongst academics.

*Oct. 16-Oct. 23**Publications and Presentations*

**John Gennari**, assistant professor of English and ALANA Studies, was the keynote speaker in a symposium at New York University titled "Eye-Talian Flava: The Italian American Presence in Hip Hop." On Nov. 2, Gennari will deliver a paper titled "Duke Ellington and the Jive Sages" at the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers-Newark. On Nov. 14, at the American Studies Association annual conference in Houston, he will deliver a paper titled "Baraka's Bohemian Blues."

**Huck Gutman**, professor of English, published a column exploring the economic implications of President Bush's policy of preemptive war in the Indian newspaper *The Statesman*: [Gutman Editorial](#)

**Richard G. Vanden Bergh**, assistant professor of business administration, published a paper this summer titled "Policy and Process: A Game-Theoretic Framework for the Design of Non-Market Strategy" in the journal *Institutionalism in Strategic Management: Advances in Strategic Management*.

NEWS BRIEFS

EVENTS

NOTABLES

SEARCH

PRINT THIS ISSUE

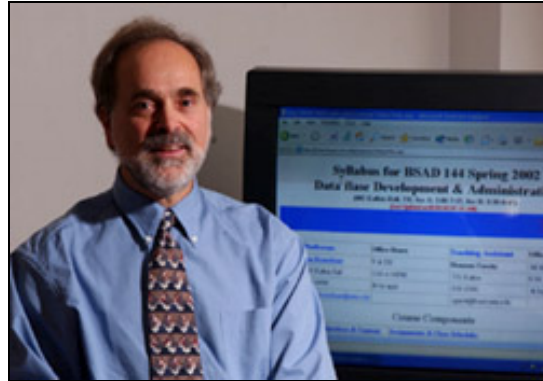
PRINT PAST ISSUES

FEEDBACK

UVM HOMEPAGE

## Test First, Ask Questions Later

By Kevin Foley



He's wired, and students better be ready: Jim Kraushaar loves quizzes. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

When Jim Kraushaar is doing his job correctly as he defines it the stuff of his students' dreams is not ghostly gossamer, but flickering lines of unspooling HTML code or a maddeningly complex relational database query.

The associate professor of business and winner of a 2002 Kroepsch-Maurice Teaching Award puts his mission, which happens to be his job, in blunt terms. He learns so

he can help others learn.

And his definition of learning is tough.

"If they're going to take the class I'm going to challenge each and every one of them to learn as much as they possibly can," he says. "I mean *learn*. Not memorize. Not regurgitate. My goal at the beginning of the semester is to get them immersed in this course so much that they literally dream about. If they dream about it, they're subconsciously thinking about it."

After two decades of university teaching, Kraushaar knows that most of even his brightest charges prefer to ease back into the soft bath of lectures and readings, languidly letting terminology and concepts wash over them. For these students, finals and midterms do little more than exercise short-term memory. When the test ends and the grades go in, their synapses empty and the professor's work slides right down the drain. That's not learning to Kraushaar, and learning is what gets him out of bed and to work.

"It's a real reward when a student tells you or someone else that they learned a lot, and they really did learn a lot. Students often *think* they learn a lot, but whether they really did or not is an entirely different matter," he says.

"Sometimes it takes them a while to find out that they really did learn something, and when they tell you, it's wonderful. You wouldn't be in this business if you didn't enjoy that."

### Flipping the script

Kraushaar teaches technology, and he's as handy with WebCT, a wireless mouse pointer and classrooms where every student has a PC as you'd expect. But one of his preferred tools for teaching is decidedly low-tech. Kraushaar likes to quiz. He quizzes early and often, opening virtually every class with a test.

Students are assigned reading or exercises before class, and when they arrive Kraushaar will spend a few minutes taking questions and then break out a short quiz. The test will lob a pitch or two down the middle, show some tougher stuff inside, then unleash a screamer. Only then, when the students have frank, objective feedback on how well they understood the finer points of the

 [PRINT](#) | [EMAIL THIS PAGE](#)

### Partners in Clime

The construction going on around the Rubenstein Ecosystem Science Laboratory at the base of College Street is a metaphor for what will be going on inside in years to come. The lab is being surrounded.

### Back to School

His fellow students in Psych 1 – some focused, some sleepy, many tattooed and serially pierced – are familiar because they're his children's generation.

### Bramley Interview

*the view* sat down with the new provost to learn more about his priorities, approach to the job and relationship with UVM President Daniel Mark Fogel.

material, do the discussions begin in the earnest.

"The quizzes change the direction of the flow, they're giving stuff to me at the very beginning of class, rather than expecting me to give it to them. That gets dialogue going," Kraushaar says.

Dialogue is the right word. In recent years, Kraushaar hasn't lectured much in class; most of his talks are on the Web, for students to read before they arrive. Classroom time is for discussion, problems, arguments and interaction.

Seriously. An early morning class this summer – not exactly a model environment for getting lively interaction going – begins with the usual: slouching bleary-eyed students, a miasma of coffee and Diet Coke hanging low and stifling. The topic, public-key-encryption, isn't exactly a winner, either; while essential to Internet commerce, it's difficult and abstract to explain.

Kraushaar pushes ahead gamely, but doesn't gather much traction. Then comes the quiz. The atmosphere quickens; the talk picks up. Score one for simplicity.

### **The art of the essential**

Kraushaar's material, the technology of the business, changes every year, every semester, maybe every class. Staying on top of it consumes vast amounts of time and energy; he recently spent a sabbatical taking eight weeklong technology courses back-to-back. His criteria for including material in his courses are stark. It must be critically important, he says, and it must be fundamental.

"It's got to be fundamentally important to everyone to work at the undergraduate level," he says. "Then the challenge is to find a way to explain it and find a way to have students work with it in a way that will make them really learn and understand it."

That puts pressure on Kraushaar to keep up with a fast-evolving field. Sometimes, despite his efforts, he is only a week or two ahead of his best students as he writes quizzes and lectures and devises interaction exercises. Occasionally, particularly in obscure areas, he is behind some of them.

Kraushaar is comfortable with that. His students aren't the only ones who are in the classroom to learn.

"They pay me money to do something that an awful lot of people would love to do: learn," he says. "Can you ask for a better job than that?"

theview

University Communications  
86 South Williams Street  
Burlington, Vermont  
05401-3404

pho 802.656.2005  
fax 802.656.3203

theview@uvm.edu

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



NEWS BRIEFS

EVENTS

NOTABLES

SEARCH

PRINT THIS ISSUE

PRINT PAST ISSUES

FEEDBACK

UVM HOMEPAGE

## Partners in Clime

### New lakefront museum will let visitors see Rubenstein research first-hand

By Cheryl Dorschner



Research on display: Phelan Fretz (left) and Mary Watzin hope a new museum will, among other things, vividly showcase university research. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

The construction going on around the Rubenstein Ecosystem Science Laboratory at the base of College Street is a metaphor for what will be going on inside in years to come.

The Rubenstein is being surrounded.

Surrounded by a world-class, \$14.5 million science museum unlike anything in the United States.

The new ECHO at the Leahy Center For Lake Champlain museum will literally and figuratively have science at its core. For the first time, an active scientific research team will be part of and contributing to the museum's exhibits.

"It's not common and has not been done elsewhere, so we hope we can be a model for how museums and research can work together," says Mary Watzin, associate professor of natural resources and Rubenstein director. "It's going to be a wow when it's finished."

"While any one piece of what we'll be doing is not unique, the linkage of an active research lab, a museum and a community is new," agrees Phelan Fretz, the museum's director. "The concept of an eco-museum is, of course, about the ecology of a particular area." The whole idea behind the concept is to "reinforce the relationship between university-level research and public education," he adds.

#### Is there an ECHO?

The new facility intends to reinforce other relationships, as well. The ECHO in its name stands for the ecology, culture, history and opportunity of Vermont and the Lake Champlain Basin.

"We felt our mission is so strong we wanted it to be in our name," says Fretz.

The goal is to teach these concepts and demonstrate opportunities to become stewards for the environment and the community by using interactive exhibits.

So far, putting that idea into operation has gone smoothly. "We're on track, on time and on budget," says Fretz. Last week windows were being glazed. Fretz says the building will be done in December; 10 staff members and some 2,200 creatures, ranging from a five-foot sturgeon to 1,000 emerald shiners, will take up residence in January. In April, Fretz plans to bring in several "test audiences" to make sure things run smoothly before the actual grand opening the week of May 30.

 [PRINT](#) | [EMAIL THIS PAGE](#)

#### [Jim Kraushaar](#)

When Jim Kraushaar is doing his job correctly as he defines it the stuff of his students' dreams is not ghostly gossamer, but flickering lines of unspooling HTML code or a maddeningly complex relational database query.

#### [Back to School](#)

His fellow students in Psych 1 – some focused, some sleepy, many tattooed and serially pierced – are familiar because they're his children's generation.

#### [Bramley Interview](#)

*the view* sat down with the new provost to learn more about his priorities, approach to the job and relationship with UVM President Daniel Mark Fogel.

The projection is that about 700,000 people will visit the Center for Lake Champlain each year. The site includes a café and is designed to host special events, dinners and receptions in a setting that at once interprets the science of Lake Champlain – and offers sweeping views of its azure waters.

Through windows, visitors will view university labs where research continues on lamprey, zebra mussels, algae blooms, water quality and more. Sixteen scientists and their assistants work in the building, including two in partnership with St. Michael's College. Visitors will have opportunities for "appropriate" access to some areas where work is being done, says Watzin. (Some areas, particularly those that are unsafe or that may jeopardize experiments, will be closed.)

The new building has eight labs and a mooring for UVM's research boat, the Melosira, "so we can get our samples and come right back," says Watzin. Researchers leverage the facility's proximity to their subject of study in other ways, as well; for some experiments lake water is pumped directly into the lab. This direct access is a welcome change for the group, which was peripatetic before the Rubenstein opened three years ago, moving from the Aiken Center to Hills to a trailer near the water at various points.

In the same way that the Rubenstein building has extended the range and ease of scholarly work, Watzin hopes that the new museum (which replaces the Lake Champlain Basin Science Center) will make new experiences possible for visitors to the lake, bringing them into the spirit of the research enterprise.

"What is going to be great here is interpreting the science," says Watzin. "I like to think of [the research/museum visitor experience] as being an eco-detective. The idea is that scientists develop a question or a problem and collect data, which are the clues. Put it together and figure out how it all fits."

And hope that visitors get a "wow."

---

## Related Links

Rubenstein Lab: [snr.uvm.edu/rubenstn/](http://snr.uvm.edu/rubenstn/)

ECHO at the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain:  
[www.lakechamplaincenter.org/home.html](http://www.lakechamplaincenter.org/home.html)

theview

University Communications  
86 South Williams Street  
Burlington, Vermont  
05401-3404

pho 802.656.2005  
fax 802.656.3203

[theview@uvm.edu](mailto:theview@uvm.edu)

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

NEWS BRIEFS

EVENTS

NOTABLES

SEARCH

PRINT THIS ISSUE

PRINT PAST ISSUES

FEEDBACK

UVM HOMEPAGE

## General Counsel Returns to General Ed

By Tom Weaver



Sophomore Bob Opel, age 48, dropped a big job at Blue Cross to start nursing studies.  
(Photo: Bill DiLillo)

His fellow students in Psych 1 – some focused, some sleepy, many tattooed and serially pierced – are familiar because they're his children's generation. The undergraduate routine of texts and tests inspires *deja vu* because he's lived it before, never mind that it was about 25 years ago. Remove those touchstones and not much else looks the same these days in the 9 to 5 life of Bob Opel, sophomore nursing

student. At age 48, Opel is back in school, one of a growing number of non-traditional students pursuing healthcare-related bachelor's degrees at UVM.

For Opel and his fellow "non-trads," the decision to return to college is a leap into both future and past. It's not an easy move, but the desire to find more fulfilling work and helping others is often the impetus to leave behind a successful career and secure finances for a new direction.

Drinking coffee in the Living/Learning Marche one morning last week, Opel isn't in danger of being mistaken for a "traditional" undergraduate. But in a baseball cap and flannel shirt, he's just as unlikely to be identified as the general counsel and chief administrative officer at Blue Cross/Blue Shield, a post the Vermont Law School-educated attorney held for more than ten years before returning to college this fall.

Opel's first experience with nursing education at UVM came through his work on the school's advisory board, where he brought the perspective of one well-versed in the business side of healthcare. Learning more about the nursing field and UVM's undergraduate curriculum as a board member tipped the scales in a direction they'd been increasingly leaning since the day Opel began part-time work as a firefighter and emergency medical technician in Montpelier eight years ago.

"The EMT and firefighting work was really satisfying in a way that the work I was doing for Blue Cross wasn't. It was very concrete, very immediate, very much person-to-person," Opel says. "I felt like I'd gotten something done every time I was on a call. Someone was having a very bad day and we were able to make it better."

But, viewing EMT work as "a young person's game," he sought an option that would allow him to continue in healthcare for the next twenty years or longer. Opel says he didn't rush his decision, knowing that the income drop from corporate attorney to undergraduate student would require the guts of a cliff diver. Still, his family (his wife teaches English as a second language and they have five children between the ages of 22 and 12) was behind it. Opel says, "We knew there would be a sacrifice, but I haven't second guessed it for a minute."

 [PRINT](#) | [EMAIL THIS PAGE](#)

### [Jim Kraushaar](#)

When Jim Kraushaar is doing his job correctly as he defines it the stuff of his students' dreams is not ghostly gossamer, but flickering lines of unspooling HTML code or a maddeningly complex relational database query.

### [Partners in Clime](#)

The construction going on around the Rubenstein Ecosystem Science Laboratory at the base of College Street is a metaphor for what will be going on inside in years to come. The lab is being surrounded.

### [Bramley Interview](#)

*the view* sat down with the new provost to learn more about his priorities, approach to the job and relationship with UVM President Daniel Mark Fogel.

**Past lives, present choices**

Midway through the semester, Opel feels like he's finding his rhythm with the textbooks. But he marvels at his fellow undergrads, the nursing majors in particular, for their ability to assimilate new information quickly. "I'm doing fine, but the brain's not as plastic as it once was," he says with a smile. "A lot of what I did as an undergrad the first time through (Harvard, economics) just required being pretty smart. I was able to miss classes and still fake myself around a lot of stuff. You can't do that in this program, and that's a good thing."

Still, Opel looks forward to putting the classroom behind him and digging into the parts of the nursing curriculum that provide a strong grounding in fieldwork. That's when his EMT skills, comfort with the clinical setting, and the life experience of a 48-year-old father of five figure to come in handy. With nearly 25 percent of the current UVM nursing undergraduates non-traditional age cohorts, Opel doesn't lack for moral support in the ranks. "We all have past lives that we're carrying around with us," he says. "We've all made a choice, struck a balance, had something to lose. We're doing this for a reason."

theview

University Communications  
86 South Williams Street  
Burlington, Vermont  
05401-3404

pho 802.656.2005  
fax 802.656.3203

theview@uvm.edu

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

NEWS BRIEFS

EVENTS

NOTABLES

SEARCH

PRINT THIS ISSUE

PRINT PAST ISSUES

FEEDBACK

UVM HOMEPAGE

## INTERview: Senior Vice President and Provost John Bramley

By Kevin Foley



John Bramley, senior vice president and provost, in the UVM barn. (File photo: Rose McNulty)

*John Bramley spent more than 16 months as interim provost before being appointed to the permanent job on Oct. 10. The view sat down with him to learn more about his priorities, approach to the job and relationship with UVM President Daniel Mark Fogel.*

**Let's talk about the contours of your role as both senior vice president and provost. What's your vision of**

**the job?**

It comes down to a relationship with the president. The president has elected that his primary role is, certainly overseeing the university in the broadest sense, but very much being an external president, really seeing his importance in helping this institution generate the relationships and financial stability that are critical to its future. To free him to do that, he really needs to be confident that the university has a connected sort of management going on a day-to-day basis. That means having a chief operating officer, a fairly common practice in a university. ...

[The appointment] also sends a very clear message that I think is important: the day-to-day operational leadership is clearly rooted in the academic side of the house, which is what we're all about.

**What are you happiest about accomplishing in the job so far?**

What I'm happiest about started with Ed Colodny's leadership: I think we have built some momentum. I think people are feeling that momentum. That doesn't mean that everyone agrees with everything that's happening – in universities, it never will mean that – but I think people are seeing some decisions made and directions being put forward and progress being made toward them. I think there's some energy and some real progress in terms of morale. What am I most proud of? I'm pretty proud of the steps we took around bringing in a great first-year class, and moving ahead in terms of quality. I'm excited about some of the steps that seem like little things but start to tip the balance in terms of our research organization and how that's going to support the scholarship of the faculty of the university. I'm excited about the honors proposal that's on the table and the things we're doing there. There are a number of highlights. I take no personal credit for it, but I think the whole 4-20 stuff and Springfest was a great message for the university, of the students coming together to take some responsibility and do something different.

**I imagine that a lot of work you do is done in increments. Does that frustrate you?**

 [PRINT](#) | [EMAIL THIS PAGE](#)

### [Jim Kraushaar](#)

When Jim Kraushaar is doing his job correctly as he defines it the stuff of his students' dreams is not ghostly gossamer, but flickering lines of unspooling HTML code or a maddeningly complex relational database query.

### [Partners in Clime](#)

The construction going on around the Rubenstein Ecosystem Science Laboratory at the base of College Street is a metaphor for what will be going on inside in years to come. The lab is being surrounded.

### [Back to School](#)

His fellow students in Psych 1 – some focused, some sleepy, many tattooed and serially pierced – are familiar because they're his children's generation.



I'm starting to understand that better. When I was department chair, you could see the impact of the things you did quite quickly. And then as you're a dean, it takes a bit longer, and as provost it takes a little longer still. So you make some of these apparently small changes which sometimes take an interminable amount of effort to achieve. And it may be two or three years down the road that you start to see something happen. The progress we've made in attracting good students here and increasing retention, I didn't do that. Those are the achievements of lots and lots of people, and the groundwork was probably laid five years ago. It always takes a bit longer than you think it's going to take, but at the same time, if you get too comfortable with that you run the risk of achieving nothing. You have to be a little impatient. And Dan is very impatient, in the best possible way.

**How do you work with Dan Fogel... the two of you have extremely different backgrounds, geographically and intellectually...**

We're from different parts of the world, very different areas of scholarship and study, different career paths in many respects, I didn't spend the first 20 years in a university academic setting, but in other settings.

But there's a lot in common. We're both intellectually very curious; we like to learn stuff, we like to be challenged. I think we're both fairly easily bored if we don't have that sort of challenge around. We both have fairly well developed senses of humor. Dan helps me enormously in that he brings a very substantial academic and administrative background. And so it's very helpful to bounce ideas off him.

It was not my original intent to continue in the role of the provost. When I took it as an interim, my intent was to only do it as an interim, I was going to return as dean to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences doing work that I loved. Frankly, Dan has been a powerful persuader that I should continue to do this. If it hadn't been for my enthusiasm for Dan and what I see as a great leader here, I wouldn't have done it.

It was a very difficult decision for me. On the one side, I have tremendous love and enthusiasm for the university and a wish to go somewhere with it... But also, there are sacrifices in being a provost. It is more remote from some of the things you love. My research, that's pretty well gone. It is not something that I can pick up and put down, I have to have a team, I have to have funding. So that's gone. I love my interaction with students, but now it tends to be an interaction with my advisees or around the Student Government Association. But, in fact, I'm looking forward to getting back into classroom again in a few weeks time. I'm not teaching a whole course, but I'm teaching parts of it. And I'm looking forward to it.

**What are the pleasures of being provost for you?**

The big change as you move into a role like this is that you literally are responsible for a huge amount of activity and a bunch of very dedicated and bright people in all sorts of different areas. The most exciting part for me has been to learn more about that. I just came back from a meeting with the folks in computer science, they had a research day and I talked with them, learning more about what they do. Looking at the greensheets for a faculty member in the art department, something very different from my own background, and learning more about how you evaluate and understand the scholarship they are doing. That's intellectually the rewarding part of this, and the bit that I really enjoy and love.

**How would you assess the relationship between the faculty as a whole and the administration?**

First and foremost, I always emphasize the fact that I'm a faculty member of this university and I am proud to be a faculty member of this university. And that's very much the role I expect to return to at some point. There will inevitably be some degree of tension that will always exist between an administration and a faculty, and what I hope the reality is, is that the faculty and the administration always work together to recognize that we have the same thing in common. We want a great university that provides a wonderful range of experiences – of academic experiences, of research experiences, service opportunities, economic development, all of those things that

universities do – and that we want to have as strong and supportive and caring a relationship as we can achieve. We all want that. We don't always agree on steps that are necessary to get there, but I hope that the faculty regard me as somebody who is open, who is honest, who is fair, and who listens and changes my mind when I hear that I have a bad idea.

**Do you feel that your ability to admit that you're wrong and back up makes you a stronger administrator?**

I think you're a damn fool if you've got an idea that you know is not a good one and you continue to persist with it despite what everybody tells you...

**How specifically will your work over the next few years improve the experience of members of the faculty?**

I've been here a little over 12 years now, and I think for the first time, certainly within that time period, this university has a president and provost who will speak out strongly and will attempt to create a climate that really will support the research and scholarship of the faculty. Not underestimating the importance of our top-quality undergraduate program one iota, but recognizing this is a research university and we need to strengthen our research and graduate education. That's an important step, and that needs to be done by ensuring that we provide a climate and an environment that's supportive of the faculty's research and scholarship which allows us to expand graduate programs, particularly at the doctoral level, and attract good students into them. That in many ways is the lifeblood of a research university, and it's certainly a critical part of the environment of a faculty member.

We will fight very hard to acquire the resources throughout the comprehensive campaign or through our relationships with the state or federal government to build the types of facilities that our faculty and our students deserve to have here. The first example of that was the Perkins Building, where we worked very hard to achieve the resources to renovate that building... We will also look for new ways to use endowment monies to build more distinguished professorships and endowed positions to strengthen and reward our faculty.

**Is the environment here set up to encourage working across academic boundaries?**

We still have some significant barriers to doing interdisciplinary work as well as we should be able to. But it's clearly something we have to get better at. For many of us, in our areas of study and teaching, it's actually the interface between the disciplines that is a bit more exciting. That's where the vortices are, where the movement is going on, but within the discipline is a much more steady state. It's more exciting to be in the white water. The Gund Institute for Ecological Economics is an example of that kind of environment. There you have got a group of faculty working together in a center, who stretch from mathematicians to economists to ecologists to physiologists.

On the student side, it's ridiculous that we create barriers that make it difficult for a student to conduct two majors across colleges. We've got to change that – we're not serving our students well by doing that, frankly we're not even serving our faculty well by doing that...

**A lot of searches are going on right now, with more to come. How competitive is UVM in terms of hiring top, young faculty?**

It depends a lot on where you look. I would say that in general, and in the searches I've been involved in very directly, I think in the vast majority of those we got our first-choice candidate. I don't accept that we aren't very competitive. In some areas we have struggled. Business would be one that I'd identify that has been an area that sometimes we have struggled to get a strong pool. There is such a competition for positions. Sometimes, it's money. Sometimes, it's facilities or resources, and we have to do our best to address all of those challenges. Because in the end, unless we are able to recruit and retain faculty, then none of our other goals will be achievable.

**Moving from faculty, there are also some searches for senior administrators pending. What kind of qualities are you and President**

### **Fogel looking for in those appointments?**

There's a series of national-level searches we're engaged in. They range from the vice provost for research and graduate education to the athletic director. So the individual sets of skills and qualities of those folks depend a lot on the position, but there are some things we look for overall. Energy. Integrity. Those are pretty high on my list. I need people who will always speak their mind, will work hard, and can be good team players. The dynamic of how these folks interact is going to be very important in our success. I think we'll do well in those searches. We're going to aggressively try to attract candidates from historically underrepresented groups; that's another high priority. These three or four senior-level searches provide some opportunities to move that university goal ahead.

### **Shifting to a personal note, your job is consuming, but not all-consuming, I hope. What do you like to do when you're not here?**

There are a number of things... but I am not here, not often enough, if you know what I mean. I have a little camp out at Colchester. Janet and I love being at that, and that's a project, as camps usually are. I play golf periodically. I spend a lot of time with kids and family and friends. Janet and I love to walk and hike, so we do a fair amount of that in the summer months. I also have, going back historically, an interest in vintage sports car and vintage motor racing, so we occasionally indulge in that.

theview

University Communications  
86 South Williams Street  
Burlington, Vermont  
05401-3404

pho 802.656.2005  
fax 802.656.3203

theview@uvm.edu

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