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Weaving Statistics Into Life



Sheila Weaver's lively classes mix theory with reality and have earned her the admiration of colleagues and students alike. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

If a statistics class doesn't call to mind telephone surveys, ESP tests and serving lunch to low-income Vermonters, odds are you haven't taken a class with Sheila Weaver.

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After Genomics

Remember the Human Genome Project? As technology moves at warp speed, it's almost ancient history. We're now in the post-genomics era, where biomedical technology is a multibillion-dollar industry in the United States alone.

Cartoon Comments

Amid the neon collage decorating anthropology Assistant Professor Luis Vivanco's door, there is a cartoon that he thinks neatly summarizes one of his discipline's problems.

THE WEEK IN VIEW

Nov. 14 4:30 p.m. Reading: Lorrie Moore, author of *Birds of America* and *Anagrams*. John Dewey Lounge, Old Mill.

Nov. 15 8 p.m. Fall dance performance: Choreographed works by faculty and students. Tickets start at \$4. Dance Studio, Patrick Gym. 656-4183

Nov. 17 7 p.m. Art auction. Sales will support a student "alternative break" service trip to Oaxaca. Contois Auditorium, Burlington City Hall.

Nov. 19 3 p.m. Dedication: Sculpture, *Emerging Ammonite*, by James Sardonis. Fleming Green. Reception follows. Perkins Museum.

Nov. 20 12:30 p.m. Brown Bag Lecture: "The Politics of Mexican Immigration," Caroline Beer, political science. John Dewey Lounge, Old Mill.

Nov. 20 4 p.m. Talk: Julie Chen, artist and bookmaker at the Flying Fish Press in Berkeley. Bailey/Howe Library.

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Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) talks with Dr. Michael Ricci and Dr. Jose Salinas (in background), from Texas A&M, in the ambulance designed in Texas. Leahy helped UVM and Fletcher Allen secure a grant to expand telemedicine services to rural practitioners. (Photo: Adam Riesner/Medical Photography)

Technology to Reduce Rural Risk

There are plenty of pluses to living in a beautiful, rural state like Vermont, but in an emergency, getting to a medical facility – especially during the winter – is definitely a negative. In fact, according to a 1999 report published by several UVM professors in the *Journal of Trauma*, trauma victims in rural areas are nearly twice as likely to die from their injuries as people in more urban areas. Now a new technology that may increase the survival rate of critical patients from rural areas is going to be tested at UVM and Fletcher Allen Health Care.

Funded by a \$250,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, this mobile telemedicine technology, called FAST STAR for Fletcher Allen Specialized Telemedicine for Supporting Transfer and Rescue, includes one-way, full-motion video and two-way audio communication between a command center located at Fletcher Allen and an emergency medical services crew inside an ambulance. The audio/video is transmitted via new cellular phone technology that allows for more data to be sent than ever before, thereby providing full-motion video.

What makes this technology so appealing is its potential to provide the expertise and guidance of a trauma specialist to the crew and patient in the ambulance when time and care is critical – on the way to the medical center.

“Using mobile telemedicine in trauma situations, is

Faculty Senate Endorses Honors College

At its Nov. 11 meeting, the Faculty Senate considered and approved a motion to endorse the Honors College concept "with a target implementation of fall 2003, or as soon as practicable thereafter," according to the language in the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously, with a friendly amendment that the proposal go first to the school and college curriculum committees for comment in time for the Faculty Senate to again formally consider the proposal at its Dec. 9 meeting.

A detailed implementation plan for the Honors College is being developed. For the complete proposal, see: [Honors College Proposal](#)

Bringing Summer Break Back to Campus

The format was a little hokey – think "What I Did During My Summer Vacation" classed up with PowerPoint – but the enthusiasm of the three students and two staff facilitators for their service-learning trip to Georgia and Alabama came through clearly in a Nov. 6 presentation at Living/Learning.

A total of eight students participated in the "Alternative Summer Break," the first time the burgeoning volunteer service program had sponsored a summer excursion. The group visited Birmingham and Atlanta from May 11 to May 18, combining visits to historical monuments with work serving meals at an urban ministry and preparing a needy woman's home for painting.

Trip organizer Andrew Feldman, assistant director of community service, also required that trip participants "bring the trip back to campus." In addition to the evening presentation at Living-Learning, students led an intense two-hour-plus, discussion in a race and culture class.

The three students at the Living-Learning evening talk – Michael Merrigan, Jennifer Marquis and Annie Willis – agreed that the opportunity to briefly immerse themselves in an unfamiliar physical and cultural landscape to explore race relations was valuable, as was the opportunity to see civil rights monuments first-hand.

"Being there made everything seem very real," said Merrigan. His experiences on the trip, he added, helped contribute to a decision to change his major. "I want a field where I can help people directly," he said. "I'm changing at least in part because of the trip."

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in fact, the tip of the iceberg," said Dr. Michael Ricci, who serves as clinical director of telemedicine at Fletcher Allen. Roger Albee Professor of Surgery and vice chair for surgical research at the College of Medicine. "Imagine that we virtually place a high-risk obstetrician in the back of the ambulance with a difficult birth or a neonatologist in the ambulance with a sick, premature infant. Suddenly our ambulance crews will have more support when unexpected and difficult situations arise."

Before using the mobile technology in actual patient care situations, emergency medical services crews and physicians will test it in simulated trauma cases. One Fletcher Allen Coordinated Transport vehicle – a ground ambulance service that transports adult patients to the Medical Center Campus from community hospitals in Vermont and northern New York – will be outfitted with the FAST STAR system. The new system, which was designed by the pioneers of mobile telemedicine technology at Texas A & M University, will be installed and tested beginning in December.

UVM also received a grant for \$385,994 from the Health Resource and Services Administration's Office of the Advancement of Telehealth to expand UVM and Fletcher Allen's tele-trauma program, which allows a specialist to interact and develop a care plan with a patient and local provider via remote video consultation without requiring the patient to physically move to the medical center.

To learn more about the telemedicine program at UVM and Fletcher Allen, see: [Telemedicine](#)

Research to Investigate Response to Acupuncture

Last fall, Dr. Helene Langevin, research assistant professor of neurology, reported in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* that the body's connective tissue appeared to be involved in the needle grasp associated with acupuncture work. Langevin and her research team, supported by funding from the National Institutes of Health, will now pursue that finding with even more depth, looking at cellular response to acupuncture.

"Our next step is to find out how the cells in connective tissue are responding to acupuncture needling," Langevin said. "We want to know what genes are getting activated as a result and what kind of impact their action has on the body."

Langevin's research findings and rigorous methodology have attracted a lot of attention from both alternative medicine supporters, national media and – most importantly – from the government agency that provides her funding. Her recent five-year, \$1.8 million grant from the NIH's Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine is more than triple the original funding she received in 1999. *Newsweek* will include Langevin's research in an alternative medicine article due to appear later this month. Last May, *Massage* magazine ran a six-page article on her study.

Junior Jen Marquis also found the trip enlightening, particularly in conversations with area residents who had lived through the events the students were studying. She is still struck, she said, by a short conversation with a man playing at the park with his son.

"He told us that they were going to solve their race problems in the South before people in the Northeast even realize that we also have a problem," she said.

Encouraging those kind of personal interactions, those moments where history becomes personal and immediate rather than distant and abstract, was a primary goal of the trip's organizers.

"We spent the entire trip dancing with our comfort zones," said Troy Headrick, a residential life staff member who was the trip's co-facilitator. "Sometimes we pushed ourselves in the right direction, and sometimes we didn't. We'll try to do better next year."

The alternative break program is growing, with a winter trip to Oaxaca set for January (see this story for information on a [Art Auction](#) that will help fund that trip) and another Southern visit planned for the summer of 2003.

Faculty Invited to Civic Engagement Workshop

Rick Battistoni, professor of political science at Providence College, will lead a workshop for UVM faculty on "Civic Engagement Across the Curriculum" on Nov. 22 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Battistoni, who also is Campus Compact Engaged Scholar on Civic Engagement, will speak in the Grace Coolidge room, Waterman. The workshop is free, and lunch will be provided.

Topics will include introduction to the theory and practice of civic engagement across the curriculum and integrating civic engagement objectives into course design (including both classroom activities and service-learning approaches appropriate for many courses).

Formerly Director of the Feinstein Institute for Public Service at Providence College, Battistoni also developed and directed service-learning efforts at Rutgers and Baylor Universities. Among his publications are *Experiencing Citizenship: Concepts and Models for Service-Learning in Political Science*, co-edited with William E. Hudson; *Education for Democracy: Citizenship, Community and Service*, co-edited with Benjamin Barber; and *Civic Engagement Across the Curriculum: A Resource Book for Service-Learning Faculty in all Disciplines*.

Registration: David Snyder, 443-2507 or dsnyder@middlebury.edu

Fill the Fireplace Campaign Begins

Each year, the UVM community helps local, non-

To accomplish their latest task, Langevin and colleagues in the departments of neurology, orthopaedics, pathology and biostatistics will be looking at connective tissue in both animals and humans. As they ramp up to begin the next phase of their study, the team will be developing new technologies to assist them in obtaining information, including something similar to the one-of-a-kind device developed for inserting, manipulating and removing the acupuncture needle Langevin used in her first study, in the General Clinical Research Center. Most of the new study's investigations will take place in the operating room at Fletcher Allen's Medical Center Campus. Langevin expects they will begin recruiting study participants sometime in January.

In December, Langevin will publish a new article on the relationship between acupuncture meridians – the interconnected energy channels of the body mapped out in ancient Chinese texts – and connective tissue planes in the journal *Anatomical Record*. She and her team also will be working on an intramural project in collaboration with the Laboratory of Human Genetics and Integrative Medicine at the National Institute on Aging.

Master Gardener Registration Opens

Registration for 2003 Master Gardener Basic Course is now underway. This UVM Extension training is offered only once each year and, in the past, has filled quickly.

The course involves 14 weeks of training on a variety of horticultural topics such as vegetable and flower gardening, entomology, botany, landscape design and more. Faculty and experts within Vermont's horticultural industry will teach the classes. Training is offered, via Vermont Interactive Television, at locations throughout Vermont Tuesday evenings from February through early May 2003, except for the initial class, which will be held on Monday, Feb. 3. Class time is 7:15 p.m. to 9:45 p.m.

Information, registration: [Master Gardener](#) or master.gardener@uvm.edu or Nancy Hulett, 656-9562. Registration forms are also available at all UVM Extension offices.

profit agencies collect needed supplies for the winter season through the annual "Fill the Fireplace" campaign. Faculty, staff and students are asked to bring items from agencies' wish lists to the Great Hall of Billings Student Center Nov. 18-21.

Items needed include winter hats and gloves; children's books and art supplies; personal care products; gift certificates; and non-perishable foods. For a complete listing of agency needs visit [Hearts](#). Campus groups also may sign up to donate to a specific agency by completing a "Fill the Fireplace" registration form through the office of Student Life.

The program has been a tradition at UVM for 11 years, helping to gather much needed supplies for agencies like Vermont Cares, The King Street Youth Center, The Burlington Community Health Center, The Women's Rape Crisis Center, the Committee on Temporary Shelter, the Chittenden County Emergency Food Shelf and the Ronald McDonald House.

Following the collection of donations, there will be a reception held in the Great Hall of Billings Student Center on Nov. 21, when items will be presented to representatives from local agencies.

Information: Carrie Williams, 656- 2060, cwillia1@zoo.uvm.edu.

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A Star on Guitar

The brilliant Italian guitarist Antonio Calogero and his ensemble will deliver their jazzy take on world music in a Lane Series concert on Nov. 15 at 7:30 p.m. in the UVM Recital Hall. Tickets are \$25.

"Birds of America" Author Moore to Visit

Lorrie Moore, a fiction writer whose work combines darkness with insight and wit, visits campus on Nov. 14. She will answer questions about her work at an open class at 3:30 p.m., in John Dewey Lounge, Old Mill. Her reading begins at 4:30 p.m. in the same location.

Ms. Moore is the author of *Self-Help* (1985); *Anagrams* (1986); *Like Life* (1990); *Who Will Run the Frog Hospital?* (1994) and *Birds of America* (1998). Her work frequently appears in the *Paris Review* and *The New Yorker*. She is an English professor at the University of Wisconsin.

Sponsored by the UVM English Department's Writers' Workshop, with funding from the Buckham Fund, the events are free and open to the public.

Delving into Vermont's Solidly Republican Past

Samuel Hand, emeritus history professor, will trace the Republican Party's 100 years of political hegemony in Vermont in a talk on Nov. 18, at 7:30 p.m., in Memorial Lounge, Waterman.

During this period, Vermonters never failed to elect Republicans to state and national office, and, every four years until 1964, they returned a slate of electors pledged to that party's presidential candidate. During this period, Vermont gloried in being the only state never to desert the party in a presidential election and, during the New Deal, prided itself as "a lonely Republican eminence." Hand will discuss the

Student Service Group to Hold Art Auction

The Alternative Winter Break program will hold an art auction fundraiser on Sunday, Nov. 17, at Contois Auditorium in Burlington City Hall. Viewing will begin at 6 p.m., with the auction beginning at 7 p.m. The sale will include offerings from artists of local and statewide prominence.

Profits will help send 15 UVM students to Oaxaca, Mexico, for a 10-day service-learning trip in January. While there, students will team with Community Links, a non-profit organization dedicated to cross-cultural immersion. Students will volunteer with local communities and learn about traditional cultures, ecological integrity, individual and community relationships, political systems and fair business practices.

This program is one of the many alternative-break programs, which include: Alternative Spring Break, Alternative Weekends and Alternative Summer Break. Last year's Alternative Winter Break program went to [Ground Zero](#) in New York to volunteer with a group preparing and delivering meals to rescue workers at the World Trade Center.

Auction information: Ben Zimmerman, 862-2117. For more on alternative break, see www.uvm.edu/~altbreak.

Armstrong Returns to the Lane Series

Nancy Armstrong, a UVM alumna and acclaimed early music singer from Boston, will perform on Sunday, Nov. 17, at 3 p.m., in the Recital Hall.

She has earned rave reviews from dozens of publications, including *The Boston Globe*, which once lauded a performance by saying she "sang out of a heart that was full." Armstrong will appear with keyboardist Peter Sykes, who will play fortepiano and organ.

The duo will present a varied program of instrumental and vocal compositions, titled *Vox Humana*, which will include works by Haydn, Mozart, Anton Heiller, and Ned Rorem.

Tickets are \$20. Information: see

Renowned Indian Vocalist to Perform at UVM

Tripti Mukherjee, an award-winning singer based in New York, will headline a night of north Indian

forces and individuals that gave rise to the party and its dominance as well as the socioeconomic forces and internal rivalries that eventually led to its diminished authority.

Hand's most recent book, published earlier this year, is *The Star That Set, The Vermont Republican Party, 1854–1974*. His presentation is sponsored by the Center for Research on Vermont and the History Department.

classical vocal music on Saturday, Nov. 16, at 7 p.m. in the UVM Recital Hall.

The award-winning vocalist, who has also sung in Carnegie Hall, will perform with Samir Chatterjee on the tabla and Suresh Bengal on the harmonium. The show is presented by the Friends of Indian Music and Dance www.uvm.edu/~fimd. Tickets are \$10 general admission, \$5 for students.

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Awards and Honors

The National Association of University Centers on Disabilities presented its 2002 Leadership in Advocacy Award to **Susan Yuan**, research assistant professor in the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion. The award, presented at the AUCD's Annual Meeting and Conference in Bethesda, Md., recognizes an outstanding individual who has exhibited exceptional leadership and advocacy skills in the area of developmental disabilities. Yuan serves as the Consumer Affairs Coordinator at the Center on Disability and Community Inclusion, working closely with consumers and families throughout Vermont on disability issues.

The Vermont Medical Society presented Dr. **James McKay, Jr.** with its Distinguished Service Award, at the its annual meeting Oct. 26, in Manchester, Vt. The Distinguished Service Award is the highest award that the Medical Society can bestow on one of its members. It is awarded on the basis of meritorious service in the science and art of medicine and for outstanding contributions to the medical profession, its organizations, and the welfare of the public. McKay founded the department of pediatrics and served as its chair from 1954 to 1982. He is past president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the New England Pediatric Society, the Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairmen and the medical staff of the Medical Center Hospital of Vermont. He was also editor of the *Nelson Textbook of Pediatrics*, as well as the journals *Pediatrics in Review* and *Pediatrics*.

Ron Savitt, John L. Beckley Professor of American Business, has been made a Life Member of Clare Hall, the University of Cambridge, where as a visitor at the Scott Polar Research Institute he will continue his research on polar explorers as managers.

Papers and Presentations

Ronald Savitt, John L. Beckley Professor of American Business, delivered a paper titled "Polar Exploration and the Search for Tacit Knowledge" to the History of Polar Research Group at the University of Munich, Nov. 7. He also will participate in a Seminar on the "Centenary of the Scottish National Antarctic Expedition and William Spiers Bruce" at the Scott Polar Research Institute at the University of Cambridge, Nov. 17.

Within the Department of Animal Science at UVM is a growing collective of internationally-recognized researchers (the LAMGB, or Lactation and Mammary Gland Biology group) focused on understanding the mammary gland and its function. Their work spans a range of application from dairy animal production to human breast cancer. **Russ Hovey**, assistant professor, recently presented work at the Era of Hope meeting sponsored by the U.S. Department of Defense Breast Cancer Program and spoke in Mexico City to the 11th meeting of the International Society for Research on Human Milk and Lactation. **David Kerr**, assistant professor, recently addressed the 53rd Annual Meeting of the European Association for Animal Production in Cairo, Egypt where he spoke on the "Potential of Transgenic Animals for Agriculture."

Connell Gallagher, director of research collections, recently published *Objects/Encounters: Bookworks at Flying Fish Press, 1987-2001*. The book provides a checklist and an analysis of the artists books produced by California artist Julie Chen, who will speak at the Bailey/How Library Nov. 20, at 4 p.m.

Declan Connolly, associate professor of physical education, **Christie Lauzon**, graduate student in the human performance lab, and lab intern **Michael**

Dunne presented research at the New England American College of Sports Medicine Nov. 7-8 in Providence, R.I. They presented, respectively: and invited lecture, "Pre-Season Testing of Competitive Athletes: Performance Prediction or Injury Prevention"; "Anthropometrical, Physiological and Musculoskeletal Characteristics of National Hockey Players"; and "The Use of High-Volt Pulse Current in the Treatment of Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness." Approximately 800 educators and professionals attended the conference.

Helga Schreckenberger, professor of German, has published an article on "The Collective Nature of Subjective Crisis: Peter Henisch's *Der Mai ist vorbe*," in *Balancing Acts: Textual Strategies of Peter Henisch*, edited by Craig Decker, Ariadne Press. The article explains that Henisch's modern novel depicts how the individual and the collective history of people are bound together.

Wolfgang Mieder chairperson of the Department of German and Russian, has edited volume 19 of *Proverbium: Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship*, published at UVM. Among the articles and book reviews by scholars from around the world are several by Juan Maura and Timothy Murad associate professors of romance languages; Kevin McKenna, professor of Russian; and Richard Sweterlitsch, associate professor of English. In addition to his annual bibliographies, Mieder has contributed an article on "Narrative History as Proverbial Narrative: David McCullough's Best-selling John Adams Biography."

Lyn Carew, professor of animal science and nutrition and food sciences, presented an invited talk, "Heating Raw Velvet Beans (*Mucuna pruriens*) Reverses Some Anti-Nutritional Effects of Feeding Them on Blood Chemistry, Organ Growth and Histology in Growing Chickens," at the International Workshop, "Increasing Mucuna's Potential as a Food and Feed Crop" held in Mombasa, Kenya. The workshop covered research being done in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the United States. It was sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, The Center for Cover Crops Information and Seed Exchange in Africa, and The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, Benin. During his trip he visited remote Maasai villages in the Maasai Mara/Serengeti region to observe food patterns. The Chief's son of these nomadic cattle herders showed Lyn how they draw blood from cattle and mix it with milk to make a widely used "yogurt." Consumption of this food by Maasai is believed by some to explain their very low blood cholesterol and almost complete lack of heart disease.

Alan Wertheimer, professor of political science, gave a talk, "Coercion and Manipulation in Clinical Research," to the Joint Bioethics Seminar at the National Institutes of Health on Nov. 12. The seminar included faculty and fellows from Georgetown University, Johns Hopkins University and the National Institutes of Health.

Nov. 6 - Nov. 12, 2002

Awards and Honors

Dr. **Paula Duncan**, professor of pediatrics and health services researcher in the Vermont Child Health Improvement Program, received the Dr. J. Ward Stackpole Recognition Award from the Vermont State School Nurses' Association on Oct. 25. Dr. Stackpole is clinical professor of pediatrics. The annual award recognizes health care providers whose work significantly supports the efforts of school nurses in Vermont.

Publications and Presentations

Kathleen Liang, assistant professor of community development and applied economics, and Paul Dunn, from the University of Louisiana at Monroe, conducted a workshop for the youths in the Southeastern Vermont Career Education Center's horticultural program on Nov. 1 to plan their agricultural business project for the winter. They helped the participants analyze a new business opportunity to establish a greenhouse, develop their products and markets, develop operation and management responsibilities, assess financial feasibilities, define the long term goals and establish evaluation procedures for the business.

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Weaving Statistics Into Life

By Lynda Majarian



Sheila Weaver's lively classes mix theory with reality and have earned her the admiration of colleagues and students alike. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

If studying statistics doesn't call to mind telephone surveys, ESP tests and serving lunch to low-income Vermonters, odds are you haven't taken a class with Sheila Weaver. For 17 years the lecturer of statistics has upped the probability of her students' success with a combination of theory, activities, practical application and service learning. Her accomplishments were recently honored with UVM's Kroepsch-Maurice

Award for Teaching Excellence.

"I tend to present information in a lot of different ways to reach students with different ways of learning," Weaver says. She began a class last week, for instance, with song lyrics she composed, set to the tune of the Beatles' *Revolution*. "You say you've got a distribution/A bell, you know/We all want to know its name."

The song helps them to remember concepts, she says, noting that she brings in her clarinet on occasion to illustrate mathematical permutations.

She follows the song by passing out Zener cards, which are used by parapsychologists to test psychic ability. The deck comprises five kinds of card: a star, three vertical wavy lines, a plus sign, a circle and a square.

"Does anybody here think they have ESP?" Weaver asks, passing out the decks to teams of two students each.

"I might," volunteers one student. "I knew you were going to ask us that," jokes another.

As one student tries to guess the order of the cards, his or her partner records the results, then posts them along a numbered line on the chalkboard.

Consulting a book titled, *Why People Believe Weird Things*, Weaver tells the students that, according to the Association for Research and Enlightenment, more than seven correct guesses reflect that a person has ESP.

But should it? Since there are 25 cards in the deck and five kinds of card, there is a one in five chance, or 20 percent likelihood, of making the right guess. Five correct guesses, Weaver explains, are average. More than seven correct easily could happen by chance, according to a random sampling distribution. By the end of class, the wannabe-clairvoyants have learned new theoretical concepts in a way they won't forget.

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[After Genomics](#)

Remember the Human Genome Project? As technology moves at warp speed, it's almost ancient history. We're now in the post-genomics era, where biomedical technology is a multibillion-dollar industry in the United States alone.

[Cartoon Comments](#)

Amid the neon collage decorating anthropology Assistant Professor Luis Vivanco's door, there is a cartoon that he thinks neatly summarizes one of his discipline's problems.

"Statistics is a subject that can be applied to many different kinds of research," Weaver says. "When students see statistics in practice, they learn to be more critical consumers of information."

Service learning projects provide concrete experience of statistics as a tool to obtain practical information with practical applications. A member of UVM's Athletic Council, Weaver engaged one class last year in a telephone survey to gauge UVM community members' interest and opinions of campus athletic events. She sent a report of the interpreted data to Edwin Colodny, then UVM's interim president.

"He came to class and spent the whole hour talking with the students about the survey results and about the issues," Weaver recalls.

Other projects serve the community more directly. In conducting a survey for the Committee on Temporary Shelter in Burlington, Weaver had students help prepare lunch at the facility, in addition to handing out surveys "to get a feel for the organization." This semester, one class helped gather telephone survey information on a variety of topics from 435 randomly-selected citizens for a poll by the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks and Recreation.

"Each class works on three mini-projects per semester," Weaver explains. "One is service learning and two are data-gathering and research projects they can choose themselves."

Since her students, most of them in their first or second year at UVM, run the gamut from liberal arts majors to engineering and business majors, their projects reflect a wide range of interests: from determining whether men or women are more likely to help a female student manage a large box to how long it takes each gender to honk their horn at a car stopped at a red light.

"Students really enjoy the research projects," Weaver says. "They have to plan how to conduct the research in order to gather a good sample. And they are often surprised by their results."

Surprise also adds to Weaver's obvious enjoyment of teaching. "The students are so open to new ideas," she says. And consistent with every teacher's dream, she loves it when former students look her up to tell her, "You know what? I use statistics all the time."

As do the media. Last week, a *Vermont Press Bureau* reporter called on Weaver to help explain why a recent poll predicted Doug Racine would win the Nov. 5 gubernatorial election with a 10 percent lead.

"The poll wasn't necessarily flawed," Weaver says. "It may not have represented a random demographic, some voters may have changed their opinions, and there's always a margin for error." Which the reporter might have known if he had studied statistics.

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UVM HOMEPAGE

Vermont Enters Post-Genomics Era

By Lynda Majarian and Jennifer Nachbur



The stuff of life: Vast amounts of genetic data fit on a single computer chip. (Photo: Adam Riesner/Medical Photography)

Remember the Human Genome Project? As technology moves at warp speed, it's almost ancient history. We're now in the post-genomics era, where biomedical technology is a multibillion-dollar industry in the United States alone.

Vermont is in this huge game, and UVM has the critical tools to be a player. Made possible by a three-year, \$6 million award through a

National Institutes of Health initiative called Biomedical Research Infrastructure Network, UVM and four partner colleges have established the Vermont Genetics Network. Key components of the VGN are a new microarray facility, a bioinformatics network and a mentoring program that will facilitate competitive biomedical research for scientists, faculty and students throughout Vermont. UVM is the lead institution in the VGN, which also includes Middlebury, St. Michael's, Norwich and Johnson State.

The VGN's primary goal is to provide Vermont researchers with the necessary tools to "compete with the big guys," says Christopher Allen, VGN principal investigator and co-director and professor of chemistry. "The microarray facility is an absolute necessity for maintaining competitiveness in generating NIH funds and for preparing students for biomedical careers," he adds.

Located within the Vermont Cancer Center's DNA analysis facility in the Health Science Research Facility, the microarray is the project's nucleus. Touted as revolutionizing molecular biology, the microarray process involves a series of steps and stations that put raw genetic data on a single chip so that researchers can have a better picture of the interactions of as many as 15,000 genes simultaneously. Often called a "lab on a chip," the end product of the microarray process allows scientists to zero in, for example, on the specific genes involved in the process of a disease. Compared with previous technology, microarray makes much more data available in a very short amount of time. In nonscientific terms, it's the equivalent of the difference between cooking in a regular oven and a microwave.

The VGN began with a team of researchers and faculty at UVM, the four partner colleges, national consultants and focus groups who helped to "build the network from the bottom up," says Judith Van Houten, VGN co-director, professor and chair of biology. During the preparation of the BRIN grant, Van Houten explains that careful thought and planning went into determining exactly how Vermont and Vermonters could make the best use of a biomedical network. Through jobs and facilities created to staff and support it, Allen estimates the VGN has had an economic impact of \$930,000 on the state since the grant was awarded in October 2001.

The volume of information the microarray puts at researchers' fingertips can be almost overwhelming, says Ahmad Chaudhry, director of the microarray facility and research assistant professor of microbiology and molecular genetics. "The

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[Cartoon Comments](#)

Amid the neon collage decorating anthropology Assistant Professor Luis Vivanco's door, there is a cartoon that he thinks neatly summarizes one of his discipline's problems.

questions concern how to use all the information most efficiently," he explains.

Stepping up to answer researchers' questions in this regard is Jeffrey Bond, research assistant professor of microbiology and molecular genetics, who is director of the VGN's bioinformatics core. According to Bond, a central goal of this core is to help turn the data obtained in the microarrays – multiple measurements for thousands of genes – into significant conclusions about how cells function. To accomplish this, he says, it is often necessary to analyze the measurements for each gene by comparing the information on the microarray chip to existing data about the same gene under different conditions, measurements from other genes and information about gene function. All of the existing data is housed in the bioinformatics network database, which will evolve constantly.

"Drug companies are pouring millions of dollars into this technology," Chaudhry says, in the quest to identify disease-related genes and to target new drugs that have a role in disease treatment. But the myriad applications for genetic information available through the microarrays are broad and diverse, ranging from tumor classification and toxicology to the effects of environmental exposure on organisms. Examples of microarray projects currently underway at UVM are breast cancer-related experiments by Russell Hovey, assistant professor of animal sciences; examination of the effect of environmental stress on plants by Mary Tierney, associate professor of botany; and analysis of specialized muscle proteins by Jim Vigoreaux, associate professor of biology.

Mini-grants funded through the BRIN grant are currently available to researchers to underwrite projects in genetics and a wide range of the sciences conducted by faculty and graduate students at UVM and the partner colleges. "We've tried to be as inclusive as possible," Van Houten says.

In some cases, the VGN will facilitate research that otherwise could not be done in Vermont. One UVM researcher recently was turned down for a grant because he had no access to a microarray. That problem, the VGN team notes, is a thing of the past.

"The VGN is a partnership, with a great level of cooperation and shared vision," Allen says. That partnership involves departments in the colleges of Medicine, Arts and Sciences, and Agriculture and Life Sciences, as well as the four partner institutions, and community advisors.

A milestone for Vermont, the VGN is launching the state into a competitive market. In addition to its research and academic uses, the technology has enormous potential to attract biomedical businesses to the state.

To learn more about the Vermont Genetics Network, including grant eligibility, see: [Genetics Network](#)

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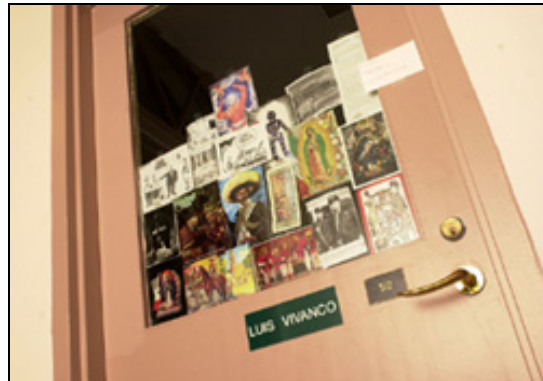
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UVM HOMEPAGE

Cartoon Commentary

Faculty doors offer wisdom, wit

By Kevin Foley



Luis Vivanco decorates his office door with art and clippings intended to both please and provoke. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

Amid the neon collage of hooded Mexican wrestlers, Zapatas and the Virgin of Guadeloupe decorating anthropology Assistant Professor Luis Vivanco's door, there is a cartoon that he thinks neatly summarizes one of his discipline's problems.

"It's a *Far Side* and you just see these long-legged giants from the knees down, and there are these little tiny anthropologists in the

foreground, and they say, 'Maybe they will worship us as gods.' That's my little jab at the arrogance of anthropology," he says.

Welcome to the world of UVM's faculty doors, where political slogans coexist with paper abstracts, and *Calvin and Hobbes* and the *Far Side* keep right on going, even if their creators didn't. Aimed at waiting students, passing colleagues or no one in particular, the clips and cartoons bedecking their doorways both celebrate and satirize academic life, serving as the ivory tower's sardonic wallpaper.

Take Margo Thompson, professor of art history. Her door, thanks to some enterprising students, comments on her work with a pair of *Calvin and Hobbes* strips. In one of them, Calvin proposes to sign and then sell Hobbes a snowy landscape as a work of conceptual art. The tiger declines, citing a conflict with his furniture. Calvin rejoins, "The problem with being avant garde is knowing who is putting on who."

Thompson, though a fan of the strip, usually decorates her door with exhibition postcards. But she has enjoyed making an exception. "I believe my first-year honor students may feel that I take art history a little, well, seriously, so I told them I would put up the cartoons and I did," she says.

Gregory Gause, associate professor of political science, also displays a sketch that lampoons one of his fields of interest. In a photocopied frame labeled "Pitfalls of Near Eastern Studies, Part I" he presents a clipping from *The New Yorker*.

"A schlumpy guy and a rather fetching woman are standing in front of an apartment door," Gause explains, "and the woman tells him, 'I would say you should come up, but I need time to digest what you've told me about the Ottoman Empire.'"

Other faculty don't go in for satire, preferring strips that embrace what they do. Malcolm Sanders, lecturer of physics, decorates his door with an old clipping from *For Better or For Worse*, a family strip. A child is asking his mother for help with a complex word problem that involves a package heaved over the bridge. She refuses to tackle it, and instead wonders aloud why the person

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[After Genomics](#)

Remember the Human Genome Project? As technology moves at warp speed, it's almost ancient history. We're now in the post-genomics era, where biomedical technology is a multibillion-dollar industry in the United States alone.

would throw a box of the bridge in the first place. Perhaps frustrated by a challenge left unsolved, Sanders drew a neat speech balloon with a trio of equations answering the problem.

Some doors, like the one leading to the office of Nancy Welch, an associate professor of English, favor political commentary over work-related gags. Currently on display are faculty compensation statistics, anti-war material, a couple of cartoons and, charmingly, an illustrated story written by an eight-year-old at the King Street Youth Center about a Nickelodeon cartoon character, Sponge Bob, stepping on a jellyfish.

"I put things on my door that I want to do more with than just file away," Welch says. "The child's story tickled me, and it's a reminder of how easily kids jump from words and pictures. In the case of the two political cartoons up right now, I was feeling a lot of frustration about the preemptive Bush doctrine and I chose two cartoons that spoke back to official rhetoric."

Vivanco typically avoids events-based commentary on his door, but he, like Welch, hopes that the postings do more than while away time for students waiting to see him. "I want to decenter people with some of these clippings," he says. "That's what we as anthropologists do, we upset the fancy table at the party."

Scientific silliness

A quick tour of major UVM academic buildings finds physical scientists far in the lead in terms of on-door cartoons (with philosophers and, surprisingly, business faculty not so far behind). Christopher Allen, professor of chemistry, thinks the decorations leaven Cook's grim concrete and drab labs. After all, a *Far Side* strip is all the funnier when it is located next door to a portal marked, "Lasers firing. Please knock before entering."

"This place needs all the individuality and life it can get," he says.

Allen diligently tacks up posters from scientific proceedings and his paper abstracts, but also takes time to present a few cartoons. "It adds life to this building," he says. "You see the science side, you see the smart alec side."

Mike Wilson, professor of mathematics, also gets a kick out of displaying his askew take on life and humor on both his door and his [Web site](#). "I like to give people something to read while they wait. It's a habit I got into in grad school," he says. His office door is covered with cartoons and articles, including the inevitable *New Yorker* cartoon: A businessman angrily says into his phone, "A billion is a thousand million? Why wasn't I informed of this!" There are also some hard-to-find excerpts from the "wonderful" *Porcine History of Philosophy and Religion*.

"Now regrettably and amazingly out of print," Wilson says.

Philosophy, appropriately enough, is also fodder for cartoons at the Philosophy Department, where Professor David Christensen has adorned his door with a phalanx of yellowed clippings from *Dilbert*, the *Far Side* and *Calvin and Hobbes*. His strategically located display is, for many visitors, the first thing they see when they visit the department offices.

"The world," Calvin tells Hobbes in one of the clipped strips, "is a complicated place."

The tiger agrees, and advises taking a nap.