

FALL 2014 | Issue 2

# UConn

## Global Affairs Newsletter

When life gives you  
mountains... climb them

*Lake District, Helvellyn, United Kingdom (Photo courtesy of Kayla Laprise, UConn School of Business '15)*





# IN THIS ISSUE

TO ACHIEVE  
EXTRAORDINARY THINGS  
YOU MUST SET  
EXTRAORDINARY GOALS

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**MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PROVOST...Pg. 1**

## **GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS**

**The University of Jordan...Pg. 3**

**Developing Collaborations in Israel...Pg. 5**

**The Technion - Israel Institute of Technology...Pg. 7**

**Knowledge Sharing & Capacity Building in Haiti...Pg. 9**

## **FACULTY RESEARCH**

**Infectious Disease & Vaccine Research in Jordan...Pg. 11**

**Rural Governance & Land Grabbing in China...Pg. 13**

**Building a Socio-Ecological Understanding of Reforestation in the Tropics...Pg. 15**

## **OUTREACH**

**Human Rights in K-12 Education & Business...Pg. 17**

**Study of the U.S. Institute...Pg. 21**

## **STUDENT EXPERIENCES**

**UConn Summer in Hong Kong: East Meets West...Pg. 23**

**Shaping the Future City...Pg. 25**

**Food Safety: From Farm to Table... Pg. 27**





*Prof. Daniel Weiner*  
*Vice Provost for Global Affairs*

We are delighted to publish the second issue of the UConn Global Affairs Newsletter. This fall, the University of Connecticut welcomed 1,016 new and 1,523 returning international students, representing 102 countries. International students now constitute 8.4% of total student enrollment, the largest group of international students in UConn history. Additionally, Study Abroad became Education Abroad on July 1, 2014 as our mission expanded to include international service learning, internship and other experiential learning opportunities.

I am also delighted to welcome our new Assistant Vice Provost for Global Affairs, Dr. Yuhang Rong. Yuhang transitioned into this role July 1, 2014, after serving eight years as Assistant Dean for UConn's Neag School of Education. During his tenure at UConn, he has served on numerous committees, including the Provost's International Executive Council. Yuhang has worked in higher education for over three decades, building expertise in student services, international education, and academic affairs in higher education, as well as in the area of teacher quality enhancement in K-12 education. Since 1998, he has provided professional consultation to universities both nationally and internationally on accreditation review processes, strategic planning, and educator preparation. In 2003, the Governor of the State of Connecticut and the Connecticut General Assembly recognized him for his professional and civic contributions to the state as a first generation immigrant. We are pleased to have someone with Yuhang's expertise, enthusiasm, and vision. His appointment has significantly strengthened Global Affairs' leadership.

In this second issue of the UConn Global Affairs Newsletter, we begin with news on our Middle East partnerships and a developing relationship with the University of Haiti in Limonade. We then provide a sampling of faculty research and collaborations, including land reform in China and global tropical reforestation. Next we review outreach efforts by the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center and the Global Training and Development Institute and wrap up this issue with student experiences.



The spring 2015 issue of the UConn Global Affairs Newsletter will include progress towards achieving the eight strategic objectives identified with the Global Affairs Advisory Board. As indicated in the diagram, we have an exciting and ambitious agenda around the world and here at home.





*Firenze, Italy (Photo courtesy of Erica Chrisis, UConn School of Business '15)*





*Petra, Jordan (Photo courtesy of Prof. Jeremy Pressman, UConn College of Liberal Arts & Sciences)*



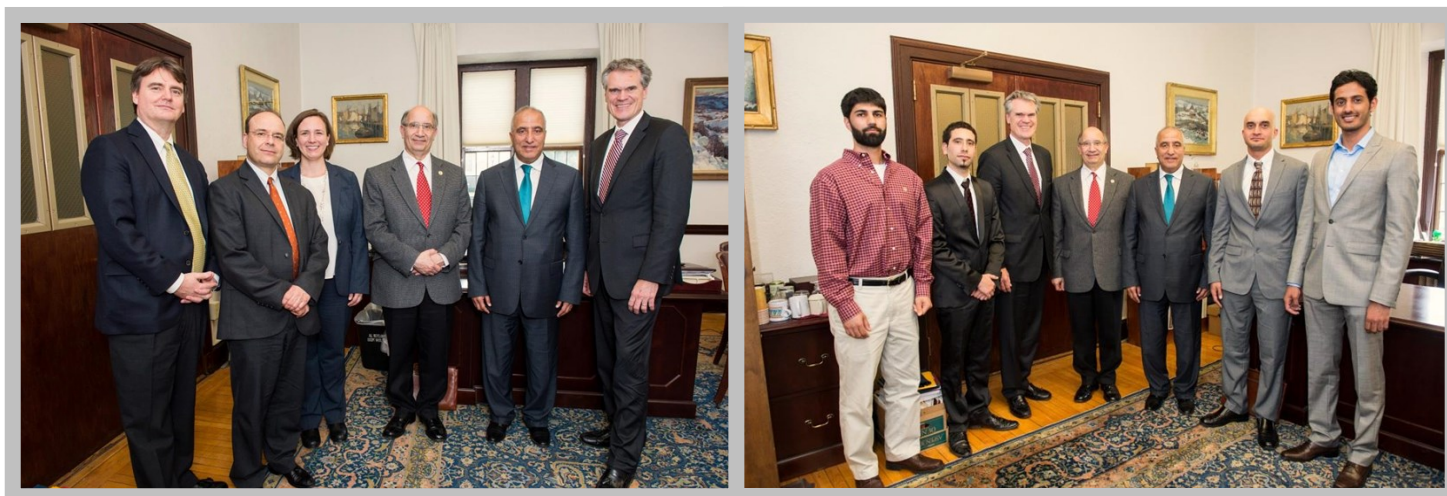


*Prof. Ekhleif Tarawneh (President, University of Jordan) presents Prof. Susan Herbst (President, UConn) with a plaque.*

## The University of Jordan

The University of Connecticut welcomed visitors from the University of Jordan April 29 - May 1, 2014. The delegation consisted of Prof. Ekhleif Tarawneh, President of the University of Jordan; Prof. Ahmad Faleh Tamimi, Director General of the University Hospital; and Prof. Zaid Eyadat, Dean of International Affairs. A Memorandum of Understanding had been signed in September 2013, and this visit served to strengthen already established ties. The delegation met with UConn leadership and representatives from the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources; the College of Engineering; El Instituto; the School of Law; and the UConn Health Center. The article on page 11 provides an inside look at one of the collaborative research projects underway with the University of Jordan and UConn's Center of Excellence for Vaccine Research.

*(Below, left) University of Jordan delegates meet with UConn School of Law's Dean and faculty (L-R): Prof. Peter Lindseth, Prof. Peter Kochenburger, Prof. Molly Land, Prof. Ahmed Al-Tamimi, Prof. Ekhleif Tarawneh, Prof. Timothy Fisher. (Below, right) University of Jordan delegates meet with the Dean and students from UConn School of Law (L-R): Samem Jabarkhail, J.D. '15; Thameur Ellouze, LL.M. '15; Prof. Timothy Fisher; Prof. Ahmed Al-Tamimi; Prof. Ekhleif Tarawneh; Mutaz Mousa, LL.M. '15 (Undergraduate LL.B. from University of Jordan 2004); Saif Alkhamis, LL.M. '14. (Photos courtesy of Spencer Sloan.)*







*Clockwise from top left: Prof. Susan Herbst (President, UConn) meets with Prof. Uriel Reichman (President, Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya), Prof. David Farragi (Rector, University of Haifa), Prof. Menahe Ben-Sasson (President, Hebrew University), and Prof. Elihu Katz (Emeritus Professor of Sociology & Communication, Hebrew University).*

## Developing Collaborations in Israel

The University of Connecticut's global education strategy includes partnering with leading research universities around the world and developing high quality locations for students to study abroad. The 2013 UConn Presidential visit to Israel generated concrete plans for research collaboration with multiple Israeli institutions, broadened opportunities for UConn students to study in Israel, initiated an Israel Alumni Chapter, and rekindled the Israeli love for UConn basketball. UConn is developing a comprehensive strategy for engaging with Israel, a nation with outstanding higher education institutions that are now being courted by the best universities in the United States and around the world. By developing strong partnerships with Israeli institutions, UConn is also opening doors for the State of Connecticut and providing access to some of the most successful technology transfer operations in the world.

### The Weizmann Institute of Science

The Weizmann Institute of Science is a leading multidisciplinary research institution. A number of medical and technological advancements have developed from the fundamental research of Weizmann Institute scientists including amniocentesis, affinity chromatography, and living polymerization.

The Yeda Research and Development Company, Ltd. was founded in 1959 as the commercial division of the Weizmann Institute. The company disseminates research findings and innovative technologies developed by Weizmann Institute



scientists to the global marketplace. Yeda's CEO, Amir Naiberg, is a UConn Alumnus. UConn connected him to the State of Connecticut delegation that visited Israel in December 2013, led by Commissioner of Community and Economic Development Catherine Smith. Mr. Naiberg also visited Connecticut in March 2014 and met with the Department of Community and Economic Development as well as a consortium of parties interested in attracting Israeli companies to the UConn Tech Park.

## The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem is a leading research university and has a dedicated school for international students. The University's Rothberg International School is the international study center of the University, offering programs for overseas students. The Yissum Research Development Company is the commercial branch of the Hebrew University, which markets research and technology generated by the University's researchers and students.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed on October 28, 2013, during President Herbst's visit. Subsequently, an Addendum for specific cooperation between UConn's Department of Anthropology and Hebrew University's Institute of Archaeology was signed on May 19, 2014. The addendum called for the development of faculty research, exchange programs, and a field school in Archaeology. The faculty have pre-existing external grant funded projects and continue to work collaboratively. We will build on these faculty interactions to develop new relations in other fields including philosophy, law, human rights, cognitive and brain science, mathematics, and political science.

## The Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya

The Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya, is an emerging private institution that was established in 1994. It does not receive government subsidies and therefore has academic and administrative autonomy. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed on October 29, 2013, during President Herbst's visit. A study abroad exchange program for undergraduate students is being developed and will be offered starting fall 2015.

## The University of Haifa

The University of Haifa considers itself to be one of the most diverse institutions of higher education in Israel. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed on October 31, 2013, during the delegation's visit to Israel. Since the signing, UConn and the University of Haifa have been building their relationship and programs in multiple disciplines including Judaic Studies and Law. During the first week of September 2014, UConn's Center for Judaic Studies hosted Prof. Ephraim Lev and Dr. Moshe Lavee, co-directors of the Interdisciplinary Center for the Broader Application of Genizah Research at the University of Haifa. Prof. Lev and Dr. Lavee spent a week at UConn and presented new and exciting research based on recent findings from the Cairo Genizah. During their visit, Prof. Lev and Dr. Lavee met with UConn faculty working in the fields of Medieval Studies, Art and Archeology, and Judaic Studies in order to foster collaborative relationships and begin conversations about future research partnerships that will benefit not only faculty, but also students at the graduate and undergraduate level. UConn is pursuing an undergraduate student exchange program with the University of Haifa, to commence in fall 2015, which will provide students with an outstanding multi-cultural experience.

In addition to hosting these Genizah scholars, UConn's Center for Judaic Studies is hosting Dr. Emma Maayan Fanar for the entire 2014-15 academic year. Dr. Fanar is an art historian completing a monograph on the forgotten Jewish-Christian tombs of early Christian Galilee. UConn will be providing Dr. Fanar access to important resources required to complete the project. While at UConn, she will be offering a graduate course on the history of photographic accounts in pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

UConn is strengthening its existing collaborations with the University of Haifa's Faculty of Law and also exploring possible linkages in Marine Sciences and Middle East Studies, particularly Middle Eastern languages, including Farsi, Turkish, Arabic, and Hebrew.



# The Technion - Israel Institute of Technology

*Contributions from Prof. Gerald Dunne (University of Connecticut, College of Arts & Sciences), Prof. Marc Lalande (University of Connecticut, School of Medicine), and Prof. Prabhakar Singh (University of Connecticut, School of Engineering)*

## THE PHYSICS AND MATHEMATICS OF FRACTALS

UConn and Technion's collaboration began in 1999 with Professor Gerald Dunne and Professor Eric Akkermans, two physics professors from UConn and Technion respectively, while Prof. Dunne was on sabbatical in Israel. Later, Professors Dunne and Akkermans joined with Professor Alexander Teplyaev, from the Department of Mathematics at UConn, to collaborate on a research project dealing with the mathematical physics of fractals. Fractals are special geometric shapes with repeated patterns and structures and are common in nature. They have many distinctive features in physical applications, such as thermodynamics and quantum transport. Professors Dunne, Akkermans, and Teplyaev have had regular reciprocal visits between UConn and Technion, collaborated on three published papers, and organized a conference at Technion in 2011 on "Waves and Quantum Fields on Fractals." They have also presented their collaborative work at other international conferences, including conferences of the American Math Society and the American Physical Society.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Technion in July 2012.

*Romanesco broccoli provides an example of fractals occurring in nature (Photo courtesy of Jon Sullivan/Public Domain)*



## STEM CELL RESEARCH:

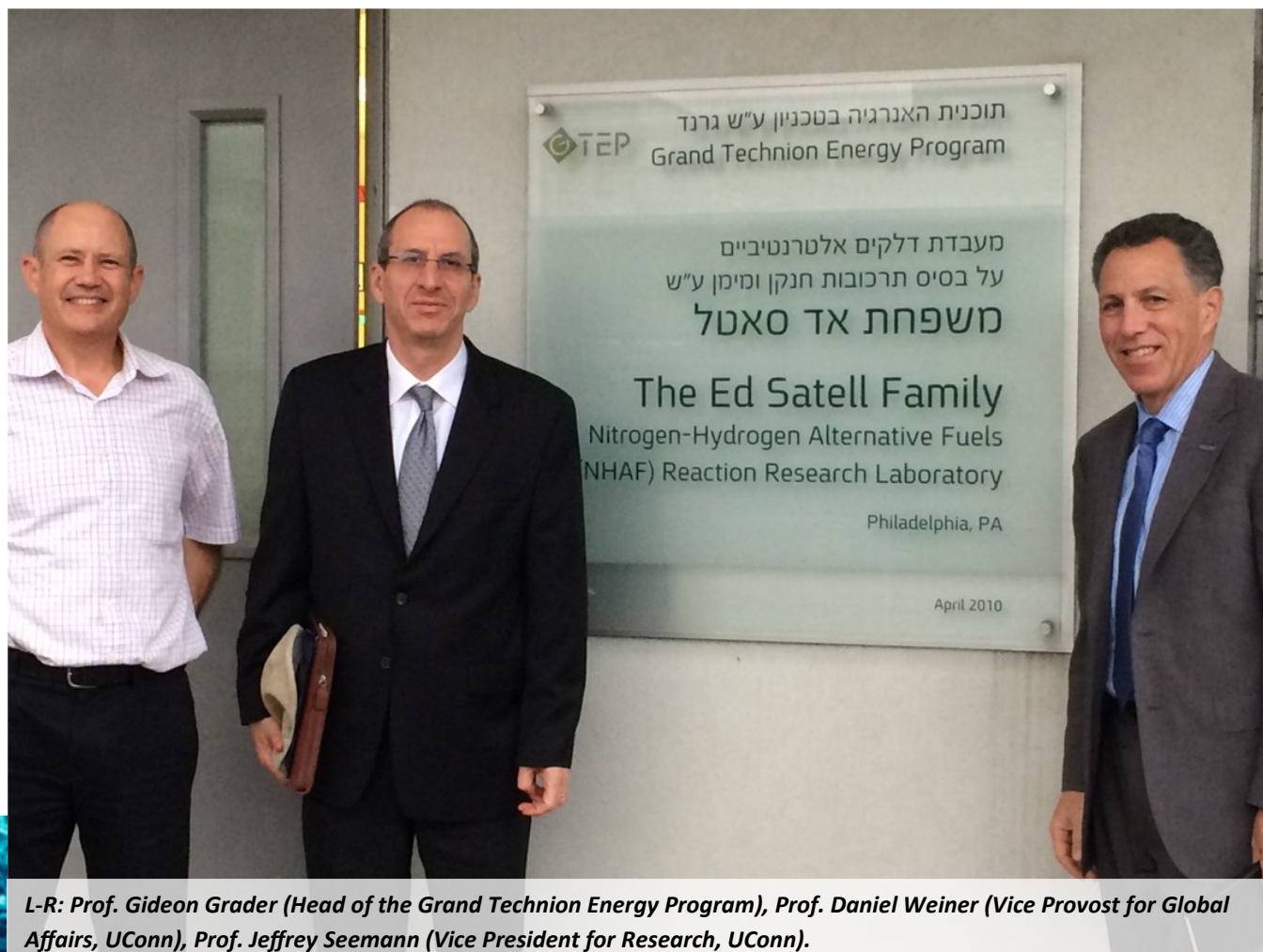
### ENGINEERING MUTATIONS IN HUMAN PLURIPOTENT STEM CELLS

The UConn Stem Cell Institute has produced over 150 lines of patient-specific stem cells derived from skin and blood samples for numerous human genetic disorders ranging from Down syndrome and autism to cognitive disorders and epilepsy. UConn has shared these "diseases in a dish" with investigators across the U.S. as well as with scientists at Technion, Cambridge University, and the University of Paris VII. These UConn cell models are being used in drug screens to target abnormal genes including an autism candidate that is the focus of research for one UConn team.

Researchers at the Institute, led by Professor Marc Lalande, Director of the Stem Cell Institute and Executive Director of UConn's Genomics and Personalized Medicine Programs, have also developed and perfected cutting-edge techniques of genetic engineering. In May 2014 Dr. Sara Selig and Dr. Irit Huber, researchers from two different Technion research groups, spent a week at the UConn Stem Cell Institute facility in the Cell and Genome Sciences building in Farmington, Connecticut, in order to acquire the genome editing techniques from the UConn team.

With Dr. Sara Selig, the UConn team generated a human pluripotent cell line with a point mutation for a gene called DNMT3B. Dr. Selig's lab will study the effect of the mutation on the length and function of chromosome tips (called telomeres), abnormalities of which are associated with loss of cell function in aging and cancer. The UConn team worked with Dr. Huber, a stem cell expert from Professor Lior Gepstein's group, to correct the genetic mutation that causes Pompe disease.





**L-R: Prof. Gideon Grader (Head of the Grand Technion Energy Program), Prof. Daniel Weiner (Vice Provost for Global Affairs, UConn), Prof. Jeffrey Seemann (Vice President for Research, UConn).**

## SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

UConn and the Technion are recognized leaders in the field of energy engineering and education, and both are deeply committed to advancing global adoption of clean and efficient energy technologies. The partnership between UConn and Technion will significantly accelerate research, paving the way to a sustainable world. To this end, Progressive Business Publications (PBP), founded by Ed Satell, has agreed to provide \$150,000 in seed funding over three years to support a *Satell UConn-Technion Leadership Program for Global Energy Sustainability*. The program will feature graduate student and faculty exchanges and collaborations that advance joint research.

Professor Gideon Grader, Head of the Grand Technion Energy Program, recently visited UConn and met with Professor Prabhakar Singh, Director of UConn's Center for Clean Energy & Engineering. Professors Grader and Singh will pursue multiple projects, such as a "Molten Salt Initiative," and have also discussed how they can combine expertise in the field of Solid Oxide Fuel Cells (SOFC) to advance some of the critical challenges in this area. Both institutions have a great deal of knowledge of defect chemistry of oxide ceramics and related transport properties. While there are many working SOFC stacks, at least in lab scale, reducing their costs and improving their durability remain challenges. UConn and Technion's combined capabilities (materials synthesis and cell fabrication, electrochemical testing, in-situ characterization, materials modeling) will be fairly unique and will allow both basic and applied work to be tackled. The main goal would be understanding thermochemical and electrochemical processes influencing chemical stability, elemental segregation, and defect structure modification in different relevant environmental conditions. Another goal might be developing methods for real time state-of-health monitoring of SOFCs.





*Dr. Bette Gebrian and Prof. Emeritus Judy Lewis with UEHL students and UEHL President Prof. Jean Marie Theodat, Haiti.  
(Photo courtesy of Prof. Emer. Judy Lewis, UConn School of Medicine)*

## Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building in Haiti

*Prof. Emeritus Judy Lewis (University of Connecticut, School of Medicine)*

In 2013, Global Affairs formed a Haiti Working Group, which included representatives from the School of Medicine, School of Nursing, School of Business, School of Pharmacy, Neag School of Education, College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Office of Community Outreach, and Center for Public Health and Health Policy. It provides a strong interdisciplinary group for education, health, and development. Most of the group's members have worked on several projects in different parts of Haiti.

The State University of Haiti (Université d'Etat d'Haïti) Limonade Campus (UEHL), also known as the Campus Roi Henri Christophe, and the University of Connecticut have signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the intention of building collaboration through capacity-building projects in the areas of service learning, student services administration, faculty training, and curriculum development. Under the broader collaborative projects being developed, it is expected that each partner will support the exchange of faculty and students with a focus on capacity development in these areas. The exchanges will provide opportunities for faculty and students at both universities to learn from each other and the communities each serves. The concept of the collaboration is based on discussions with Dr. Bette Gebrian, Associate Clinical Professor at UConn School of Nursing and former Public Health Director for the Haitian Health Foundation; Dr. Timothy Dowding, Professor-in-Residence of Operations and Information Management, UConn School of Business; Professor Jean Marie Theodat, President of UEHL; and Professor Jusnerd Nelson, Vice President of UEHL. Additionally, results from interviews conducted in August 2014 with students, local NGOs, health facilities, local governments, and community members proved crucial in the discussions.

EUHL was built by the government of the Dominican Republic for the Haitian government and the University of Haiti. It was completed in 2012 and is currently in its 3<sup>rd</sup> year of operation, with 2000 enrolled students and capacity for 10,000.





**Professor Emeritus Judy Lewis** is a public health sociologist with almost 30 years of experience working in Haiti. She is the Chair of the University of Connecticut Haiti Working Group. Prof. Lewis is committed to improving U.S. and global community health with a focus on women and children. She developed one of the first school based health clinic programs in the U.S. in Hartford, CT and it is still in operation. As a Professor of Community Medicine and Pediatrics at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, she developed the Community Based Education program to help students learn from local communities about their views of health and illness and their local resources. Prof. Lewis has developed partnerships with many community programs, both in the Greater Hartford, CT area and internationally, including the Universities of Peradeniya (Sri Lanka), Antwerp (Belgium), Puerto Rico, and Costa Rica, as well as NGOs such as the Haitian Health Foundation, IHCAI (International Health Central American Institute, Costa Rica), and BOCED (Buguruka Orphan and Community Economic Development Tanzania). She has conducted program evaluations, research and trainings in over 50 countries. Prof. Lewis is Co-Chair of the International Health Committee of the Maternal and Child Health Section of the American Public Health Association, Board Chair of the CORE Group and the West Hartford Bloomfield Health District, and a member of the Women's Health Task Force Management Committee (GHETS/Network).

The major curriculum areas are Medicine, Nursing, Law, Humanities, Social Sciences, Engineering, Fine Arts, Agronomy, Education, Environment, Science and Technology, and Business Administration and Innovation. There are approximately 300 faculty members, of which 40% are female, while the student body is primarily male (80%), in part due to the lack of university housing. UConn is working with EUHL to identify mechanisms for building student housing.

Limonade is located approximately 8 miles from Cap Haitien, which has the major health and commercial facilities for the Nord Department (northern shore region). It has a growing population of 55,000 people dispersed between the town and three rural sections. Limonade has limited health care, sanitation, and recreation facilities. Additionally, the lack of student housing has put a great burden on the residential housing market.

The greatest immediate needs of EUHL are housing, student services (health, counseling, advising), and community engagement/service learning projects. While housing is beyond the scope of the initial project concept, student services will be needed for any housing that is developed on university property. At present there is no administrative unit for student services beyond two nurses who provide first aid. The development of a student services program structure will reduce the burden on the President and Vice President who are currently the main recourse for student problems and concerns. UConn has a well-developed student services program and can provide consultation and support for the development of this type of program at EUHL.

Service learning/community service is another important element of EUHL philosophy and academic programming. Currently this consists of students assisting the Limonade community in garbage collection once a month. While this is a much needed service for the municipality, EUHL would benefit from the development of an academic and administrative unit to support service learning goals and ideas generated by students and the community. UConn has a 30-year history of developing community service programs and can provide consultation in the establishment of such a unit as well as assist with capacity building and development of student projects.

UConn has demonstrated its effectiveness in working collaboratively in sustainable development projects, and the EUHL-UConn partnership has all the makings of a successful collaboration with great potential for increasing academic capacity and student skills.



# Infectious Disease and Vaccine Research in Jordan

*Prof. Steven Geary (University of Connecticut, College of Agriculture, Health & Natural Resources)*

*Prof. Najwa Khuri-Bulos (University of Jordan, Division of Infectious Disease)*

The University of Jordan and the University of Connecticut are undertaking a joint venture to create a global collaboratory, the Center for Infectious Disease and Vaccine Research (CIDVR) at the University of Jordan. Ultimately we envision this Center as a hub for the Middle East region. The Center will promote human security in Jordan and the region by allowing researchers to surveil pathogens, develop new vaccines, and educate students and field practitioners. CIDVR's research will also have positive impacts in the United States and North America.

Through CIDVR, the University of Jordan and UConn's Center of Excellence for Vaccine Research (CEVR) will develop a mutually beneficial relationship, in which faculty, post-doctoral fellows, and graduate students will be afforded the opportunity to collaborate with peers from across the globe and exchange perspectives on research and its application. An added benefit of this innovative and international collaboratory will be providing researchers with access to regionally differentiated field isolates and opportunities to apply their diagnostic tools and vaccines in a real world setting. Presently, infectious diseases continue to be the major cause of morbidity and mortality in Jordan, especially among children. The World Health Organization reports that pneumonia continues to be the major cause of death in children less than five years of age. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the first outbreak of the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) occurred in one of Jordan's government hospitals and led to the death of health care workers. The etiology of this outbreak, however, was identified only in retrospect several months later.

Jordan is bounded by countries that have suffered from instability, political upheaval, and conflict for over sixty years. Consequently, Jordan has received notable waves of refugees. In 1948 and 1967 refugees came from neighboring Palestine, and from Iraq in 1991 and 2003. Currently they are absorbing a massive influx of refugees from Syria, which now presents a serious public health emergency. These refugees bring devastating pathogens with them, such as multiple drug resistant *Mycobacteria tuberculosis*. Additionally, pathogens transported by incoming refugees have led to the reemergence of well controlled diseases such as measles and pose the threat of a re-emergence of polio, which has been controlled for more than twenty years. Jordan is committed to providing primary health care services including immunization to all of its inhabitants regardless of national origin. The health expenditure in Jordan exceeds 8% of GDP, and is one of the highest in the region.

The Center for Infectious Disease and Vaccine Research will aim to:

- ▶ Develop and implement state-of-the-art diagnostic platforms for real-time detection of infectious agents.



- ▶ Develop improved vaccines for the prevention of human, animal, and zoonotic infectious diseases that present current and future threats to health and well-being in Jordan and the region.
- ▶ Conduct translational research, incorporating knowledge of the mechanisms of pathogenesis of current and emerging pathogens in Jordan and the region.
- ▶ Train the next generation of scientists, graduate students, and post-doctoral fellows in state-of-the-art research methodologies, grantsmanship, and ethics as it relates to scientific conduct.
- ▶ Serve as a focal point to foster collaborative research with other institutions of higher learning and research in Jordan, the region, and internationally.

Recent events in the Middle East, including outbreaks of infectious diseases and heightened political instability, are significantly impacting Jordan. Research and medical programs in Jordan will benefit greatly from collaborative research efforts with the University of Connecticut.

*“The University of Jordan is an important strategic partner for the University Connecticut, and we are eager to cultivate collaborative projects in a variety of fields. We are particularly excited about the proposal for a joint Center for Infectious Disease and Vaccine Research, brought forth by Professors Geary and Khuri-Bulos. This Center will promote human security in the region by furthering public health initiatives currently underway in Jordan and providing critical research required to proactively target pathogens that have the potential to cause epidemics.”*

*- Prof. Daniel Weiner, Vice Provost for Global Affairs*



**Professor Steven Geary** joined the faculty of the Department of Pathobiology & Veterinary Science at the University of Connecticut in 1989, where he is currently Professor and Department Head. Additionally, he serves as the Director of UConn’s Center of Excellence for Vaccine Research (CEVR).

Prof. Geary’s research focuses on investigating the mechanisms of pathogenesis of *Mycoplasma* species affecting animals and man and is internationally recognized as a leader in the field of *Mycoplasma gallisepticum* virulence and comparative and functional genomics. He conducts investigations into cytoadherence molecules and host cell receptors, as well as analysis of variable expressed surface lipoproteins and their roles in immune evasion. Prof. Geary is also engaged in vaccine development and immunologic and genetic means of detection (DIVA tests) of these pathogens. He is currently funded by the NIH, USDA, and DTRA.

Prof. Geary received his Ph.D. in Bacteriology from the University of Connecticut. He was a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Microbiology at the University of Missouri School of Medicine from 1980 to 1981.



**Professor Najwa Khuri-Bulos** is Dean of Research and Professor of Pediatrics and Infectious Disease at The University of Jordan. She also serves as Head of the Division of Infectious Disease at the University Hospital. Prof. Khuri-Bulos is also Adjunct Professor of Pediatric Infectious Disease at Vanderbilt University.

Prof. Khuri-Bulos received her B.Sc. (honors) and M.D. (honors) from the American University of Beirut, Lebanon. Her aim is to upgrade the professional and academic practice of medicine and pediatrics in Jordan and the region. Her objective is to attain equity in child care and achieve the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the Middle East through improved delivery of care at the therapeutic and preventive levels.



# Rural Governance & Land Grabbing in China

Dr. Meina Cai (University of Connecticut, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences)

As China develops—with an economy likely to surpass the U.S. to become the world's largest this year, sooner than widely anticipated—challenges of land scarcity, food security, and social stability loom large. With each of these land-related challenges becoming more threatening, economic development in China is hardly sustainable. How well can the Chinese state address these challenges so as to maintain its economic prowess? With land remaining publicly owned after three decades of economic reforms, local governments are increasingly tempted to use land as a source of revenue and an instrument with which to intervene in the economy. What impact does the unusual land property rights regime have on the political economy of development in China? What motivates the Chinese state to carry out the incredible mission of moving 250 million rural residents into urban areas over the next dozen years? How are rural households compensated and to what extent are their interests protected when their land is taken?

These are the questions that fascinate me and drive my research. For years, land has been almost completely neglected in studies on the Chinese political economy because, in the absence of land markets, land was allocated administratively by the state free of charge. Recognizing this deficit, I bring land into the analysis and investigate how the emergence of land markets has impacted China's political economy of development. In my dissertation, *Land-Locked Development: The Local Political Economy of Institutional Change in China*, I argue that the land property rights arrangement by design allows local governments to generate windfall revenue through converting rural land to non-agricultural use. Such conversion is constrained, however, by the land quota system, imposed by the central government to preserve the shrinking supply of arable land. This, in turn, induces local politicians to develop new forms of land-centered development strategies. These new development strategies disproportionately benefit the state vis-à-vis ordinary citizens with land use rights, motivating the former to resist reforms that promote private land ownership. Consequently, the local

governments' dependence on land to generate revenue and intervene in the economy persists, creating land-locked development.

My current research examines why substantial subnational variation exists in land-grab compensation, even after controlling for geographical location, the level of economic growth, and government fiscal capacity. While local governments are motivated to grab rural land to collect revenue, they are situated in the middle of the sandwich structure, with pressure coming from the higher-level government authority and from ordinary villagers. As a result, local governments have to provide land-grab compensation in a way that allows them to generate as much revenue as possible while minimizing the chance of triggering other players to take action against them. In response, local governments have developed a range of options of land-grab compensation, which in general can be categorized into three forms: one-time cash, social welfare benefits, and regular cash. Local governments mostly prefer providing the minimum compensation prescribed by higher-level authorities, who determine the career prospects of local politicians. However, when minimum compensation can no longer satisfy affected villages, local governments prefer regular to one-time payments; the ability of local government to generate regular payments is a function of the power of the state versus society that has been shaped by previous development strategies.

To further develop the discourse on these significant, complex, and yet under-researched land issues, I organized two conferences in 2014. These two timely conferences created a platform for speakers representing a variety of disciplinary perspectives to address the political economy of land rights and land reallocation in both urban and peri-urban settings. The conferences featured presentations by eminent as well as junior scholars, followed by a roundtable discussion, which stimulated intellectual conversations among workshop participants. An important outcome was the discussion pertaining to the agenda for future research projects in this area.

*Photo illustrating how peasants are pushed to give up their housing plots and live in high-rise buildings to make more land available for real estate development, China. (Photo courtesy of Dr. Meina Cai, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences)*



# URBANIZATION

## Why We Care about Land Grabbing in China

On March 8, 2014, Dr. Cai organized a one-day conference “Why We Care about Land Grabbing in China” at Harvard’s Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies. The conference brought together eminent and junior scholars to discuss land grabbing and its implications for economic development in China. Speakers included Professor Jean Oi (Political Science, Stanford University), Professor George Lin (Geography, University of Hong Kong), Dr. Susan Whiting (Political Science, University of Washington), Dr. Yu-Hung Hong (Urban Planning, MIT), Dr. Meg Rithmire (Harvard Business School), and Dr. Meina Cai (Political Science, UConn). The conference was chaired by Dr. Gregory Ingram, the then president of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

*Additional conference details at:* <http://fairbank.fas.harvard.edu/event/why-we-care-about-land-grabbing-china-workshop-meina-cai>

## Land and Urbanization in China

On May 16, 2014, Dr. Cai and William Pyle, Professor of Economics at Middlebury College, co-organized another conference “Land and Urbanization in China” at the Center for Interuniversity Research and Analysis of Organizations (CIRANO) in Montreal, Canada. The conference brought together an inter-disciplinary group of experts to discuss recent research relating to land and urbanization in China. Speakers included Professor James Kung (Social Science, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology), Professor Loren Brandt (Economics, University of Toronto), Professor William Pyle (Economics, Middlebury College), Professor Weiping Wu (Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning, Tufts University), Dr. Pierre Landry (Political Science, University of Pittsburgh), and Dr. Meina Cai (Political Science, UConn). During the roundtable session, three additional scholars joined the discussion: Professor Ting-Sheng Lin (Political Science, University of Quebec), Dr. Brian Robinson (Geography, McGill University), and Dr. Jessica Teets (Political Science, Middlebury College).

*Additional conference details at:* <http://www.cirano.qc.ca/conferences/conf20140516>



**Dr. Meina Cai** joined the University of Connecticut in fall 2013 as an Assistant Professor of Political Science. Dr. Cai received her Ph.D. in political science and M.Sc. in Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Prior to joining UConn, she was a post-doctoral fellow at Harvard University's Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies.

Her research interests lie in the political economy of transition and emerging economies. Her current research focuses on land property rights and their impact on rural governance and development in China. The originality and the critical insights about how de facto rights arose in a context where they were in conflict with the national laws won Dr. Cai the 2014 Ronald Coase Best Dissertation Award from the International Society for New Institutional Economics.



# Building a Socio-Ecological Understanding of Reforestation in the Tropics

*Prof. Robin Chazdon (University of Connecticut, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences)*

Tropical regions are home to two-thirds of the terrestrial species on our planet and provide critically important environmental services for local, regional, and global populations. However, rampant deforestation has led to high rates of species loss and land degradation. Reforestation is an urgent issue worldwide. The global-scale [Bonn Challenge](#), launched in 2011, targeted 150 million hectares of land for reforestation. Targets 14 and 15 of the [Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020](#) adopted by the Parties to the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) focus on restoring environmental services, rural livelihoods, and the well-being of local communities, as well as enhancing ecosystem resilience, conserving biodiversity, and mitigating climate change through reforestation of degraded ecosystems. How can these targets be achieved?

Balancing forest conservation and reforestation with the need for social and economic development in a global economy poses a seemingly insurmountable challenge for developing tropical nations. This challenge motivated the formation of [PARTNERS](#) (People and Reforestation in the Tropics: a Network for Education, Research, and Synthesis). UConn Professor of Ecology Robin Chazdon, an authority on tropical forest regeneration, led the effort to obtain funding for a Research Coordination Network from the National Science Foundation. The five-year grant began in September 2013 with co-investigators Professor Michael Willig (Director of the Center for Environmental Sciences and Engineering at UConn) and Professor Thomas Rudel (Human Ecology and Sociology, Rutgers University). Over 240 scientists from 39 countries have joined the network to date.

Reforestation can be achieved passively, through spontaneous forest regrowth, or actively, through establishment of tree plantations or agroforestry. Each of these modes has distinct social and ecological costs and benefits. The major goals of the PARTNERS project are to:

(1) Provide interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed scholarly syntheses and document case studies of reforestation,

which will form the basis of policy briefs and educational modules.

(2) Create a platform for communication among researchers, reforestation practitioners, and international organizations. The web-based information portal will be a major communication platform for network members and the general public. PARTNERS will also organize an international Distributed Graduate Seminar and host two webinars to communicate major synthetic results to the public and to policy makers.

(3) Produce innovative proposals for integrated socio-ecological research focused on key tropical reforestation processes within and across different regions.

PARTNERS activities involve graduate students, postdoctoral associates, researchers in fields of social and natural sciences at different career stages, stakeholder groups, and representatives of collaborating organizations, working together to synthesize information across disciplines and sectors. To ensure actionable science, PARTNERS is collaborating with organizations with broad policy interests and a history of engagement in reforestation, conservation, climate change mitigation, and sustainable development in the tropics. The [Union of Concerned Scientists](#), the [Environmental Leadership and Training Initiative](#), the [Network of Conservation Educators and Practitioners](#), [WeForest](#), the [World Resources Institute](#), the [Global Partnership for Forest Landscape Restoration](#), [Landscapes for People, Food, and Nature](#), International Union for the Conservation of Nature, [Ecologic](#), and the International Analog Forestry Network, provide important conduits for the network's synthetic products, policy documents, and training materials. These organizations also provide insights into information and policy gaps that PARTNERS can help to address.

At the inaugural workshop recently held in Storrs, Connecticut in May 2014, an interdisciplinary group of 53 social scientists, ecologists, and NGO representatives assembled from 34 universities, spanning 14 countries and 8 fields of natural and social science. Working groups



met for the first time to focus on five major themes for development into synthesis papers, educational modules, and policy briefs:

- (1) The nature and ecological consequences of forest transitions in the tropics
- (2) Linking social and ecological resilience with different modes of reforestation
- (3) The role of reforestation in climate change mitigation and adaptation
- (4) Social and ecological tradeoffs among different modes of reforestation
- (5) Defining concepts and terminology in the arena of tropical reforestation policies

Workshop participants expressed strong agreement that the urgent need for reforestation and restoration creates new research demands that require integration of social and ecological knowledge with broad policy and inter-agency frameworks. Reforestation must be acknowledged as an essential part of sustainable development. Through appropriate reforestation approaches, multi-use forested landscapes in the tropics will provide resilient systems that preserve critical ecosystem services and maintain social options critical for adaptation by local peoples. Although some forms of reforestation can be costly, the decision to not undertake reforestation may prove to be far more costly to society and to nature.

For more information, please visit the [PARTNERS website](#) or contact [Prof. Robin Chazdon](#). PARTNERS is supported by the U.S. [National Science Foundation Program on Coupled Natural and Human Systems](#). UConn Global Affairs contributed additional funding for the May 2014 workshop.

# THE PARTNERS

**Professor Robin Chazdon** is a professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Connecticut. Her research focuses on regeneration and restoration of tropical forests, tropical forest successional dynamics, and biodiversity in human-modified tropical landscapes. She leads a multi-investigator project on long-term secondary forest dynamics in Costa Rica, Mexico, and Brazil. Prof. Chazdon has served as Editor-in-Chief of the international journal *Biotropica*, on the governing board of the Ecological Society of America, and on the Science Advisory Boards of the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center and the National Center for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis. She is Director of the PARTNERS Research Coordination Network and Executive Director of the Association for Tropical Biology and Conservation. Prof. Chazdon is an author of over 120 peer-reviewed scientific articles and book chapters and co-editor of two books. Her sole-authored book *Second Growth: The Promise of Tropical Forest Regeneration in an Age of Deforestation* was recently published by the University of Chicago Press.



*Thirty-year natural regrowth, Osa, Costa Rica. (Photo courtesy of Prof. Robin Chazdon, UConn College of Liberal Arts & Sciences)*





*Students studying at the Pudar School for Street Children, India.  
(Photo courtesy of U. Roberto Romano/UConn Libraries Digital Mosaic, Romano Human Rights Photograph Collection)*



# Human Rights in K-12 Education & Business

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*Dr. Glenn Mitoma (University of Connecticut, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center)*

Building on its strength as a center of human rights outreach and engagement, the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center is moving from ideas to impact in the areas of K-12 Education and Business.

Working with educators from across the state, the Dodd Center is dedicated to making Connecticut a national model for human rights education in primary and secondary schools. Inspired and based on international standards, including the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011), the Dodd Center aims not only at integrating human rights content into classroom curricula, but also at promoting a culture of human rights in our schools, our communities, and around the world.

The business and human rights initiative is guided by the recent global interest in finding new ways to ensure businesses can better fulfill their responsibility to respect human rights throughout all aspects of their operations. Through the Dodd Center's historical engagement with economic issues through its Greenwich Capital Economic Seminar Series and its potential to facilitate collaborations among UConn's School of Business, regional business leaders, and various stakeholders, it is well positioned to have significant impact in this area.

## True Human Security: The Right to Food, Shelter, and Education

On March 14, 2014, the Dodd Center, in partnership with the human rights youth outreach organization PeaceJam, coordinated a visit and lecture by Nobel Laureate and former President of Costa Rica, Óscar Arias Sánchez. During his time on campus, President Arias met with a select group of human rights undergraduate students, lunched with faculty and staff, and delivered a keynote address to a packed auditorium. Over the course of the following weekend, Pres. Arias remained on campus and participated in the PeaceJam New England annual conference, meeting and working with high school and college students from around the region during a two-day series of intensive workshops. This event, co-sponsored by the Office of Community Outreach, marked the return of Pres. Arias to the Dodd Center, nineteen years after his first visit in 1995. It brought together a diverse constituency from the campus community and beyond.

## K-12 Teacher Workshop:

### Speak Truth To Power Human Rights Curriculum

On March 7-8, 2014, the Dodd Center partnered with the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights (RFK) to train Connecticut teachers in the Speak Truth To Power (STTP) human rights curriculum. This two-day workshop provided participants with training in STTP lessons, resources, and projects, along with guidance in integrating the curriculum into district and school-level standards. Developed and presented by Karen Robinson, RFK Senior Manager for Education and Training, and Christopher Buckley, Darien High School teacher and STTP Lead Teacher, the workshop was interactive and engaging, allowing teachers to explore new resources and strategies for including human rights in their curriculum. As a highlight of the Dodd Center's new program in Human Rights Education, this workshop demonstrated both the enthusiasm of teachers for the initiative as well as the opportunity to have a real impact in the classroom.



## K-12 Teacher Workshop: Using Video to Protect & Understand Human Rights

On May 3, 2014, the Dodd Center partnered with the leading video advocacy organization WITNESS for a one-day teacher-training workshop. Presented by Kelly Matheson, WITNESS Program Director, and Jackie Zammuto, WITNESS Engagement Coordinator, the workshop provided participants with tools to facilitate the effective utilization of films and videos to illustrate human rights concepts, violations, and advocacy. Moreover, it provided participants with the means to foster student involvement in the production of videos as a form of inquiry-based human rights learning. By engaging teachers in the arts and technical education fields, this workshop helped to bring human rights education beyond the social studies classrooms and into the wider school curriculum.

## K-12 Teacher Workshop: Teaching the Holocaust & Genocide from a Global Perspective

On May 16, 2014, the Dodd Center partnered with the UNESCO Chair & Institute of Comparative Human Rights to present K-12 teachers with lesson resources and materials for teaching the holocaust and genocide from a global perspective. Guided by international UNESCO Chair-holders and other experts in the field, several dozen teachers considered topics such as the relationship between holocaust and genocide education and human rights education, differences and similarities in approaches to genocide education in various countries, and the use of multi-media and other resources in the classroom. Speakers included Dr. Mariana Blengio Valdés (UNESCO Chair in Human Rights, University of the Republic Uruguay), Dr. Amii-Omara-Otunnu (UNESCO Chair of Human Rights, UConn), Dr. Sarah Cushman (Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Clark University), Nela Navarro (Center for Genocide & Human Rights, Rutgers University), Prof. Avi Patt (Judaic Studies, University of Hartford), and Dr. Alan Marcus (Curriculum & Instruction, UConn). Dr. Stephen D. Smith (UNESCO Chair of Genocide Education and Executive Director, USC Shoah Foundation) delivered a public keynote address as the capstone for the day.



*Auschwitz concentration camp, Poland. (Photo courtesy of Katherine Lainas, UConn College of Agriculture, Health & Natural Resources '15)*





## Implementing Dodd-Frank 1502 & 1504: Advancing Human Rights through Financial Reporting

The passage of the *Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act* of 2010 marked the most significant revision of U.S. financial regulations since the Great Depression. Among the most innovative—and controversial—features of the law were the provisions requiring the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to receive reports from corporations disclosing whether “conflict minerals” originating in or around the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are used in the manufacture of their products. This provision, contained in Section 1502 of the Act, was designed to address ongoing concerns about the way in which the extraction of certain resources in eastern DRC was contributing to the endemic violence and massive violation of human rights in the region. After many months of consultations, the SEC issued the reporting requirement rule in August 2012, which established disclosure process for compliance with the Section 1502 provisions. Section 1504 requires companies to disclose payments made to the U.S. or foreign governments related to extraction of oil, natural gas or minerals. Having withstood legal challenges, these rules are now in effect and will soon require companies to submit their first disclosure reports.

On April 8-9, 2014, the Dodd Center brought together scholars, policymakers, and business representatives to consider the legislative background behind 1502 and 1504 provisions, explore the potential legal, political and economic impacts of the Dodd-Frank Act, and discuss how businesses are approaching compliance with these new rules. The symposium began with a spirited and productive panel of experts, including legal scholars, policy experts, and NGO representatives from both sides of the table, and highlighted the broad challenges and potential impacts of implementation. The session was followed by a keynote panel, which featured remarks by Senator Christopher Dodd, and a roundtable discussion in which he was joined by two key legislative staffers: Toby Whitney, former Legislative Director for Representative Jim McDermott (WA) and primary author of the Section 1502, and Neil Brown, former Senior Staff, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and primary author of Section 1504. The conversation was deeply informative as to the broader context of the financial crisis and the need for Wall Street reform, as well as the more specific legislative history behind these particular sections.

This event was one of the first public accounts of the negotiation that ensued with the drafting of the regulations. The following morning, the Dodd Center convened a panel of business representatives at the UConn Stamford Campus to discuss how their companies were working toward compliance with these and other disclosure mandates. Speakers included Jonathan Drimmer, (Barrick Gold), Selig Merber (General Electric), and David Strauss (Praxair). The speakers candidly described the challenges their businesses and industries are facing with the implementation of this law. Despite these challenges, however, it was evident that these companies had devoted considerable resources to compliance, and, most importantly, there was an overwhelming commitment to improving the human rights conditions in their communities of impact.

*The symposium was co-organized by Prof. Stephen Park of UConn’s School of Business.*

*Above photo of Luwowo Coltan mine near Rubaya, North Kivu, DRC on 3/18/14. Luwowo is one of several validated mining sites that respect CIRGL-RDC norms and guaranties conflict free minerals. Photo by MONUSCO/Sylvain Liechti. Published under Creative Commons 2.0 license.*





*Above: Study of the U.S. Institute group photo. Photo courtesy of Hadil Al-Senwi, Yemen.*

*Below: Volunteering at WAIM Community Garden. Photo courtesy of Magatte Camara, Senegal.*





# “IT WAS THE TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME.”

## Study of the U.S. Institute

This 2014 the Study of the U.S. Institute (SUSI) for Student Leaders on Social Entrepreneurship was hosted by the University of Connecticut and was developed and delivered by UConn's Global Training and Development Institute (GTDI) in partnership with Ashoka. Ashoka's work in advancing social entrepreneurship is world renowned. GTDI fosters global sustainable development, citizenship, and cross-cultural understanding by providing individuals from around the world with transformational learning experiences. Since 1961, over 10,000 government officials, business and non-profit leaders, and university students from 130 countries have participated in the GTDI's education and training programs.

SUSI is designed and funded by the Study of the U.S. branch in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA). The five-week SUSI Program provides university student leaders from North and Sub-Saharan Africa and Yemen with a transformative learning experience that deepens their knowledge and understanding of the United States while equipping them with social entrepreneurial skills to create sustainable solutions to problems in their communities and country.

These programs are designed for participants to:

- ▶ Learn how to use business techniques and entrepreneurial skills to address global challenges.
- ▶ Develop their leadership and collective problem-solving skills and learn how to creatively apply these skills.
- ▶ Deepen their understanding of the United States by exploring the principles of democracy and fundamental American values such as individual rights, freedom of expression, pluralism and tolerance, and volunteerism.



*It was going to be the first time away from home for me. I was very motivated to explore the U.S. and curious to witness the life I used to see in movies. I applied for the SUSI program, Study of the U.S Institute, for the chance to fill my curiosity. Yet once I got to the U.S., everything changed, and I realized that my expectations were so narrow. SUSI aimed not just to introduce participants to American culture, but rather it aimed to expose us to 11 different cultures. This diversity granted us with the opportunity to widen our gazes and think outside the box. The five weeks of SUSI included a mix of workshops, group experience, home-stays, field visits and cultural activities providing us with problem-solving skills to attract investors, carry out projects, and collaborate across the boundaries between public and private institutions. All in all, I loved being a part of SUSI program. It was the transformative experience of a lifetime. It gave us a chance to know the world better and be change makers.*

*- Hadil Al-Senwi, Yemen*



# UConn Summer in Hong Kong

*By Cailin McHugh-Roohr (University of Connecticut, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences '17)*

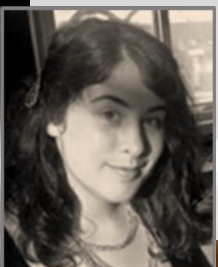
As a member of the Global House Learning Community, I spent my freshman year living in a dormitory and participating in group activities in which half of the members were international, many of them hailing from China. Thus, you could say that Global House's UConn Summer in Hong Kong: East Meets West program was something of a role reversal for me. Now, for three weeks, I was the international student.

Of the ten of us who went on the trip, two were fluent in Mandarin and three had some knowledge of it, either from home or from courses at UConn. These skills came in handy, even though the language spoken in many of the places we visited in Southern China was Cantonese, rather than Mandarin. I on the other hand had no background in any Chinese language, and embarked on the trip with a mixture of anxiety and guilt about this fact. Fortunately, most people in Hong Kong speak excellent English, and ultimately I got by with learning a few key phrases. One phrase was especially useful: "m'goi," the Cantonese catch-all for "excuse me," "pardon," and "thank you for the service." On a few occasions I needed to communicate with someone without linguistic common ground, and these instances proved to be a fun challenge rather than an awkward situation.

In Hong Kong, I also happened to hear a great deal of Tagalog, the national language of the Philippines. I was aware Hong Kong was home to many migrant domestic workers from nearby countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia. While this part of Hong Kong society wasn't exactly hidden, it also was not something I expected to experience on this trip. However, not only did we visit the weekly meeting place where thousands of Filipina workers go on their only day off, but we also sat down with the director of the Mission for Migrant Workers, a Hong Kong-based NGO. The other students and I had a chance to converse with domestic workers about their experiences and their views. I appreciated that as we learned about the growth and development of the Pearl River Delta, the perspectives of low-wage migrant workers were treated with just as much consideration as the stories of other residents.

This was my first time really trying to immerse myself in another culture. Unlike the time my high school French class spent a week in Paris, and I was utterly conscious of being one of millions of tourists, my time in China this summer felt uniquely my own and entirely genuine. Yes, while we did enjoy some major tourist attractions, such as the giant Buddha statue on Lantau Island and several renowned museums, I didn't get the sense that any of us embarked on this trip imagining the exact backdrop to our future Facebook profile pictures. In fact, some of the most memorable and interesting moments of the trip were ones I hardly thought to take pictures of, such as when we attended a tea appreciation class hosted by expert tea master Ip Wing-Chi, or when we spoke at length with Dr. Helena Wong, a member of the Legislative Council, the unicameral legislature of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

I am incredibly grateful for everything I learned, saw, and experienced during the trip. My understanding of the political and social culture around the Pearl River Delta and how it is connected to our lives here in the U.S., and at UConn in particular, has greatly expanded. I sincerely hope to use this understanding to enrich the experiences of others in Global House next year.



*Cailin McHugh-Roohr is a sophomore at the University of Connecticut. She is a Political Science major hoping to minor in International Studies. Cailin is an active member of the Global House Learning Community and the 2014 director of the Disarmament and International Security Committee at UConn's Model United Nations conference.*



# EAST MEETS WEST

*Shortly before departing for Hong Kong to lead the Global House Study abroad trip to the Pearl River Delta, I received a phone call from the mayor's office in Hartford. They had come across the trip on the UConn website and wanted to know whether the students would pass close to Dongguan. This city lies between Shenzhen and Guangzhou on the eastern banks of the Pearl River. Dongguan and Hartford are twinned cities and so, although no activities had been programmed for Dongguan, it made sense for the UConn group to visit as unofficial emissaries of the city of Hartford. Once this was communicated to officials in Dongguan, they developed a program that would allow the students to get to know their city. We were given a fascinating and personalized tour of the Opium War Museum in Humen Town and then a second tour of the city museum at the Dongguan Exhibition Center. There, the significance of Dongguan to the Chinese economy as a major manufacturing center became apparent. We then proceeded to an elegant luncheon in the heart of the city, where we were welcomed by Nancy Chen from the Dongguan Foreign Affairs Bureau. The excellence and international diversity of the buffet style meal was greatly appreciated by the students. Ms. Chen was a most gracious host and enjoyed learning about Connecticut and Hartford from the students. We were pleased to deliver some token gifts on behalf of the City of Hartford, including a book about the city signed by the mayor. In general the visit was an excellent and practical introduction to the art of international relations.*



— Prof. Hedley Freake  
Faculty Director, Global House  
Professor, Department of Nutritional Sciences





## Shaping the Future City

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*Emily Kaufman (University of Connecticut, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences '16)*

The Universitas 21 Summer School, “Shaping the Future City,” was hosted by the University of New South Wales in Sydney Australia between July 2<sup>nd</sup> – July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The vibrancy of the city compelled jet-lagged students to venture from their comfortable dorm rooms to explore the glamorous tall buildings and the hip city limits full of art and history. At first, excitement overruled critical analysis of Sydney’s architecture and urban planning, as we flocked toward the Sydney Opera House—camera hungry for our shot of the abstract building. We clamored over the Harbour Bridge for a first look at the stunning skyline. After our initial foray into the city we met with some of Sydney’s finest architects and planners to gain critical knowledge and insight into why the city looked the way it did and in what ways it could be improved both aesthetically and for the people living there.

During our second visit to the opera house, we took a more informed approach to studying its beauty. We now wondered whether it was shells, which the aboriginal people used for fishing hooks, or clouds that served as the inspiration to its architect Jørn Utzon. We questioned whether or not the public space around the city’s most famous landmark was inclusive or precluded people from engagement with its natural surroundings. Endowed with visions of green space and thoughtfully designed buildings, our workshop teams took to the city to see and feel what could be improved and what was working.

We heard the frustration of planners and architects whose sustainable projects were bought out by shinier projects which had the veneer of change and aesthetic appeal, but really created spaces that benefitted neither the environment nor the current inhabitants of the city. We were encouraged by the successes of projects taking place at the grassroots level and the integration of sustainability and inclusivity in large scale projects. Creativity and ingenuity characterize how the future city will be shaped and our student groups were challenged to look into solutions for the current issues faced by Sydney and cities around the world. My group consisted of students representing six universities, spanning six countries and five





*Sydney Opera House during Vivid Sydney Festival. (Photo courtesy of Olivia Rossetti, UConn School of Business '16)*

continents. We set off to investigate the area of Sydney that represented the first ever successful city land-rights claim for the aboriginal people. After a little exploration, we soon discovered a grassroots effort to educate children of all cultural and language backgrounds in a small inclusive space. We found this to be an essential element in creating an inclusive future city. We argued that small sustainable grassroots efforts to promote education and equality are effective and oftentimes easier to implement than large scale projects that often suffer from the inefficiency of bureaucracy.

The diversity of the students in our groups and at the summer school was one of the most compelling aspects of the experience. We were all from different places, and for many of us interacting in a new place with all of these unique perspectives opened up avenues of learning that would not have been considered otherwise. Whether it was making enlightening cross-cultural comparisons or sharing a laugh over the pronunciation of a word in one of the innumerable languages students spoke, I am continually impressed by the quality of learning that takes place in a diverse environment. I would posit that not only is the quality of learning better in such an environment, but moreover, an environment with a diverse set of individuals poses new opportunities for learning that would not otherwise be present. The future of cities, and the future of the greater world, reflects the atmosphere at this summer school—engaged students acutely aware of the need to be global citizens and hoping to tackle some of the world’s greatest challenges. I sincerely believe that collaboration across cultures and circumstances changes the scope of ingenuity from narrow to infinite.

Two and a half weeks does not seem like a very long time, but by the end of our time in Sydney I think many of us were surprised at how sad we were to leave: sad to leave a place that we had explored together—a place full of complexities we were just beginning to grasp—and to leave people we now considered excellent friends who had discovered and learned alongside us in this adventure. It is a rare privilege to have the experience to travel and to engage and to listen and learn with other passionate students and professionals who are willing to bring everything to the table to enhance our experience. It is our responsibility now to take what we learned from lectures, interactions, and experiences into our own communities and to strive to create similar experiences for others. It is critical that we share the lessons we learned in Sydney and continue to work together to examine and critically consider the complexities of our world and how to best attend to these challenges.



# Food Safety: From Farm to Table

*Leanne Jankelunas (University of Connecticut, College of Agriculture, Health & Natural Resources '15)*

*Jack Zachary (University of Connecticut, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences '14)*

The Universitas 21 Undergraduate Research Conference, “Food Safety: From Farm to Table,” at Shanghai Jiao Tong University, held July 7<sup>th</sup> – July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014, was by any measure an engaging and enlightening experience. Approximately 60 brilliant students with diverse academic backgrounds, from around the world, gathered to present novel research projects. Many of these projects may serve as the impetus for much needed changes to the how we think about food safety.

As the topic of food safety encompasses many areas, it was no surprise that students presented on a breadth of critical topics, including the recent proliferation of lab grown meat, the role of international law in promoting and inhibiting food safety, the part paraquat exposure plays in early onset Alzheimer’s, and methods to reduce foodborne contamination in food processing and packaging. Our projects included “Controlling *Listeria Monocytogenes* Biofilm Using Bacteria,” a project designed to reduce *Listeria* outbreaks in the world food supply and “Chiquita Brand International and the ‘Farm’ in ‘From Farm to Table,’” a study that critically analyzed current corporate social responsibility initiatives, with a focus on promoting greater human rights fulfillment in the “Banana Republics” of Latin America. The multitude of problems the students addressed were daunting, to be sure, but many of the proposed solutions seemed highly plausible.

There will never be enough words to sufficiently describe how enjoyable it was to attend the conference; it truly was a life-changing experience. Quite possibly the most memorable part of the trip was after the daily conference sessions when the conference participants were able to explore the city of Shanghai. The city is covered with culturally significant tourist attractions, authentic Chinese cuisine, and an efficient but intimidating metro for those of us not up to speed on our Mandarin. We took advantage of any free time we had to immerse ourselves in the culture. For instance, on the first day we met some fellow participants at our hotel and together visited the marvelous Jing’an Buddhist Temple. Here we had a chance to participate in the local customs and watch a traditional ceremony where the monks burned joss paper or “ghost money” as an offering to the ancestors. Afterward, we had the opportunity to try some Chinese icebreakers such as “Where the Wind Blows” and “Catch My Finger” before experiencing a delicious Chinese meal. Other highlights from the week included the Chinese acrobatics show at the Shanghai Circus World and the visit to the city of Hangzhou.

Lastly, cultivating relationships with the other students who all had a unique perspective on the world was invaluable. There was no shortage of topics to discuss on the many long bus rides we took together or during the meals we shared. It’s safe to say that we all learned a great deal through our experiences over the course of the conference week.

*The Bund, Shanghai, China (Photo by Leanne Jankelunas,  
UConn College of Agriculture, Health & Natural Resources '15)*







**Leanne Jankelunas** is a junior pursuing a double major in Animal Science and Pathobiology in UConn's College of Agriculture, Health & Natural Resources and is part of the UConn Honors program. Her career aspiration is to become a veterinarian for the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Leanne hopes to be able to aid in the efforts to prevent and stop the spread of zoonotic diseases worldwide. To further this goal, Leanne is currently involved in research in a food microbiology laboratory at UConn that focuses on foodborne diseases such as *Listeria*, *Salmonella*, and *E. coli*.

Upon completion of her undergraduate studies, Leanne plans to pursue a Ph.D. in either Microbiology or Infectious Diseases. Leanne also works as a technician at the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory and participates in Intervarsity and the Pre-Veterinary Club.

**Jack Zachary** is a recent graduate from UConn, where he was a double major in Political Science and Human Rights. As an undergraduate, Jack was deeply involved in numerous independent and team-oriented research projects, served on the Executive Board of Pi Sigma Alpha and UConn Model United Nations, and wrote extensively on topics including international relations, public policy, law, human rights, and politics. He is in the process of applying to law school, where he will pursue a career in Public Interest Law.



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*Cheetah brothers, South Africa.*

*(Photo courtesy of Kelly O'Connor, University of Connecticut, College of Agriculture, Health & Natural Resources '13)*