A prominent international businessman based in Danbury will share his global insights with graduates at Western Connecticut State University's 110th commencement in May.

Farooq Kathwari, chairman, president and chief executive officer of Ethan Allen Interiors Inc., will address the university's undergraduate degree candidates at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 18, in the Westside Athletic Complex on WestConn's Westside campus.

Kathwari has been president of Ethan Allen Interiors since 1985, and chairman and CEO since 1988. In 1989, he formed a group to purchase Ethan Allen and took the company public in 1993. Under Kathwari's leadership, Ethan Allen has been transformed into a leading manufacturer and retailer of home furnishings in the United States, with its world headquarters located in Danbury.

WestConn President James W. Schmotter said his decision to invite Kathwari to deliver the commencement address was an easy one.

"Farooq Kathwari is one of America's most successful, thoughtful business leaders," Schmotter said. "His compelling observations on the nature of globalization and its impact on businesses, society, and individual lives and careers have received acclaim in the United States and abroad. I know he will share this wisdom with our graduates, and I can't think of a better way to send them out to face the opportunities and challenges that await them in our interconnected 21st-century world."

Kathwari, who will speak about "Entering a Globalized World: Challenges and Opportunities," said he is excited about joining in this inspiring and joyous occasion and addressing the tremendous opportunities for leadership by those graduates in their careers and communities.

The best leadership, in my experience, is leadership by example — giving back in service, public interest work and providing models of good citizenship and civic leadership, or Ed.D. degrees. When asked about his selection as commencement speaker, Kathwari said, "I am excited about joining in this inspiring and joyous occasion and addressing the tremendous opportunities for leadership by those graduates in their careers and communities. The best leadership, in my experience, is leadership by example — giving back in service, public interest work and providing models of good citizenship and civic leadership.

Since the university will confer the degree of Doctor of Education on May 18, the board meets later this month. The money will be used for a variety of improvements, including security upgrades and a new academic success center.

The second annual commencement exercise solely for students obtaining a graduate degree is especially auspicious because it marks the first time the university will confer doctoral degrees. More than a dozen candidates will defend their dissertations to receive doctorates in instructional leadership, or Ed.D. degrees.

Connecticut State Attorney General Richard Blumenthal will address WestConn's 2008 graduate degree candidates at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 16, in the Feldman Arena in the William O'Neill Athletic and Convocation Center on the Westside campus.

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By meeting a challenge to bring cultural experiences to students at Western Connecticut State University’s faculty and staff have come up with a dynamic array of educational programming — from learning about human conditions through the rich and diverse lens of the United Nations and from developing a public television series that will focus on differences to discovering firsthand the diversity in the Danbury community by sampling ethnic foods at local eateries and to mentoring one-on-one with local school children.

WCUO President James W. Schnitter recently approved grants from the President’s Initiatives Fund totaling $110,000 to faculty, students and staff for projects that advance the “learning opportunities that differentiate us from our competitors to create.” These special projects help further one of the university’s core competencies to educate students for global realities.

“It was please with the quality of the proposals that were selected for funding. The collaboration between staff, faculty and students shows how much thought and creativity into their creation,” Schnitter said. “These programs will not only benefit our university, but will also incorporate, and so will benefit, external constituents of WCSU.”

Our students will not only grow academically, but by learning more about communities beyond the campus, be they local or global, they will better understand the complexities and power of human diversity in our world.

The quality of the proposals was strong enough that the President’s Initiatives Fund was supplemented to provide more than $116,000 in funding.

The 10 programs below were selected to receive funding from the President’s Initiatives Fund. They were chosen from 38 proposals submitted by the Jan 1 deadline.

Dr. Linda Rinker and Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences Dr. Linda Vaden-Goad on the President’s Initiatives Committee who screened the proposals. President Schnitter then made the determination of the final recipients. Joining Rinker and Vaden-Goad on the advisory committee were Professor of Theatre Arts Frank Herbert, Professor of Sociology and Social Sciences Dr. Yuan Mei-Raff, Assistant Professor of Nursing Program, Professor of Art Abraham Echevarria, Professor of Education and Educational Psychology Dr. Marcy Delcourt, student representative Inman Quisz, Associate Professor of Accounting and University Planning and Budget Committee representative Dr. James D. Germanelli, Director of Student/Center Life Dr. Paul Simon, Media Services Director Rich Woolman, and President Computing Project Manager Stephen Veillette and Office Assistant Matha Berg.

This is the second round of grants for the President’s Initiatives Fund, supporting projects driven by faculty, staff and students during the 2008 and 2009 academic years.

This funding will allow the development of innovative ways to employ the educational resources of the university and the broader community to create learning experiences grounded in the exposure to human, intellectual or emotional differences.

Selection criteria included how effectively and effectively the proposals advanced the “learning opportunities that differentiate us from our competitors to create.” Specific factors that were rated included numbers of stakeholders affected by the project and the measurable impact the project would have on enhancing education outcomes, increasing WestConn’s profile visibility or generating potential new streams of revenue. Proposals also were reviewed based on their purpose for further development an environment that values and affirms the unique contributions of WestConn’s many constituent populations, recognizes the learning opportunities that differentiate us from our competitors to create.

Summer Study in Madrid, submitted by Assistant Professor of World Languages and Literatures Dr. Galia Barkhamova and Assistant Professor of Art David Sklar, is a study program from May 29 to June 29, 2009, that will expose students to Spanish arts and architecture. A total of four classes will be created so students can choose and earn credit for semester-long classes or five-week courses.

“Crossing Cultures: ethnic restaurants, bakeries and stores. This will be a Musical Bridges of Peace program, submitted by Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts Frank Herbert and Director of Student/Center Life Dr. Paul Simon, Media Services Director Rich Woolman, and President Computing Project Manager Stephen Veillette and Office Assistant Matha Berg.

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WCSU honored for innovative energy conservation program

WestConn recently received the prestigious Energy Project Award from the New England chapter of the Association of Energy Engineers (AEE) for its innovative program to monitor energy use and identify opportunities for improved energy efficiency at 14 buildings on campus.

The Energy Project Award, announced at the AEE chapter’s “Utilities Night” meeting in Waltham, Mass., on Feb. 6, cited the monitoring-based energy efficiency collaboration between WestConn’s Department of Environmental and Facilities Services (EFS) and EnerNOC, Inc., a Boston-based company specializing in development and implementation of integrated systems for energy demand management.

The award recognized WestConn and Director of Environmental and Facilities Services Luigi Marcone's excellence in the pursuit of energy conservation and efficiency measures.

Since the start of 2007, WestConn’s existing system for management of building energy utilization has been integrated with the EnerNOC PowerTrak Analytics system to provide monthly reports summarizing the energy use profiles for 14 classrooms, residential and administrative buildings.

During the first year of the program, EnerNOC has identified a total of 42 proposed measures that would yield a projected annual savings of nearly $250,000.

Marcone said the PowerTrak system has provided a powerful new tool to help operational anomalies, "but it doesn’t replace the daily efforts of our staff to maintain our buildings.

"Over the past 18 months, my team has spent significant time and effort to fine-tune the operation of our buildings to achieve savings," he observed. "Efforts such as reducing set points, adjusting heating and cooling temperatures, and readjusting setpoints are just some of these activities. We also have spent a substantial amount of time making repairs, adding insulation and upgrading antiquated equipment."

Rick Paradis, senior energy analyst at EnerNOC, noted in the December "Score Card" report that WestConn measures implemented during 2007 resulted in an estimated annual energy cost savings of nearly $120,000, surpassing the program’s goal for the year by an impressive 50 percent.

Paradis observed that WestConn achieved a net reduction in energy consumption from 2006 usage despite heightened winter heating and summer cooling demand from year-earlier levels.

"In his nomination of the

WCSU program and Marcone for the Energy Project Award, Tia-Lausonique of EnerNOC noted the integration of meter readings from individual buildings with the operational data available from the university’s building management system has made it possible to pinpoint specific usage issues and identify appropriate measures to address them.

"WSCU and EnerNOC turned PowerTrak into a unique and centralized platform, identifying energy efficiency opportunities by monitoring, computing and analyzing set point operations, operating schedules and other operational components," Lausonique wrote.

In comparison with previous efforts, EnerNOC has developed detailed reports that document baseline consumption and benchmarks, usage profiles, and energy and monetary savings from implemented efficiency measures.

The December "Score Card" report for WestConn housing revealed the largest reductions in energy usage from levels a year-earlier were observed at Higgins Hall, Berkshire Hall and the Ruth Haas Library on the Midtown campus, and at the One Westside and EastVille on the Westside campus.

Other buildings monitored as part of the WestConn/EnerNOC program include Centennial Hall, Ella Grasso Hall, the White Street parking garage, Pinney Hall, the Science Building, the Midtown campus Student Center, University Hall, Warner Hall, the Westsidest College Building and White Hall.

Marcone emphasized the collaboration with EnerNOC to reduce energy usage represents only one facet of the component initiative by WestConn to support environmentally sound operational policies and achieve sustainability in resource management.

"We are making significant strides to become more sustainable at WestConn, and energy conservation is just one of these efforts," he said.

"Recycling, water conservation and solid waste minimization are other areas that we currently are focusing on."
Isaacs receives WestConn’s first Teaching Excellence Award

by Patra Birkner

At some point in the academic career of every student who studies with Professor of Music Dr. Kevin Jay Isaacs, the student will hear Isaacs say, “You’re not so great, even though the world has been giving you medals and telling you that everything you do is wonderful. It’s just not always true.”

But do not despair, Isaacs will continue: “The point is not to continually seek greatness for yourself, but to ‘understand how to recognize the true greatness around you, then you can surround yourself and others with excellence more often.’”

His commonsense inspiration of students is one reason Isaacs was honored as the first recipient of the WCSU Teaching Excellence Award presented by Provost Dr. Linda Rinker.

“I am a naturally inquisitive person who enjoys facts, figures and the like,” Isaacs said. “Everyone with whom I come in contact says that I am quick and insistently curious as I am. This creates an endless stream of opportunities to share ideas and information. I live in a state of perpetual learning for myself. My family teases me that I can remember obscure facts, but can’t remember directions around town. I have the greatest job in the world. Every day I am around energetic and talented young adults performing, discussing and studying music. It is a blessing!”

Isaacs joined the faculty at WestConn in 1999, teaching courses in theory, composition and choral studies. For the 1999-2000 school year, he was a Mellon Foundation Faculty Fellow at the School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music of Yale University. He received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in theory and composition from Texas Christian University and a doctorate in composition and choral conducting from the University of Arizona under the tutelage of the celebrated composer Robert Starzyk and choral mentor Maurice Skones. Under Isaacs’ leadership, the WCSU choral program has grown and flourished. The Concert Choir has performed in concerts and symphonies, headlined five times with the New Haven Symphony, twice with the Ridgefield Symphony, and combined with the Texas Christian University choirs for concerts at Carnegie Hall with Nitch Henderson and the New York Pops Orchestra. They have been selected for performance at the Connecticut Music Educators Association All-State and In-Service Conference.

Former student Hilary Aon Brown said she benefited from Isaacs’ experience. “I wasn’t at the university long before realizing that Dr. Isaacs was regarded by all as possessing a vast wealth of information,” Brown said. Dr. Isaacs would dig so deep into the Brandenburger Concertos that it was akin to being inside Bach’s mind, then he would just as capably point out the structural nuances in the Beatles’ ‘Eleanor Rigby.’”

Isaacs’ musical sphere includes writing commissioned compositions, adjudicating, and conducting All-State, regional and other honor choirs. Additional conducting opportunities have included the Charles Breslauer Festival Choirs, Festival Choruses, the Camerata Chamber Orchestra, and four years as Music Director of the Christ Church, Derby area adult ecumenical choral ensemble.

Dr. Russell Hirshfield, associate professor of music and music education, nominated Isaacs for the teaching award and praised Isaacs’ innovative and thorough approach to education. “Isaacs trains directors and composition students and the institutions require instruction in the gestural and interpretive aspects of conducting.”

Hirshfield pointed out. “The challenge for the instructor is to bring to the students’ repertoire problem solving, artistic forethought and communication skills that are inherently part of the discipline.” Dr. Isaacs demands that the students’ physical gestures are informed by mental, spiritual and artistic impulses. He wants young conductors to serve both the musical score and the growth of the students in their charge. This is achieved through score study, cueing drills, physical exercises and philosophical inquiry.

Isaacs’ compositions are commissioned and performed by amateur and professional performers and ensembles across the nation. Collegiate ensembles are especially fond of his arrangements and performances by California Lutheran University, Eskele College and Marquette University. The Ojai Camerata, a professional ensemble in southern California, recently performed and released three commissioned choral works titled “life rounded with sleep” The Musical Film Festival "Unnecessary Roughness," was premiered by Professor of Music David Smith and the WCSU Percussion Ensemble in March 2007 at the MENC National Conference. Regional Conference: Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, presented a new commissioned choral work at the North Central convention of the American Choral Directors Association in March 2008. In 2001, CBI Records released on CD “4 Seasons” a commissioned work for saxophones and piano, commissioned by Dr. Dan Goble, chairperson of the WCSU music department.

Isaacs’ works have been published by Mark Foster Music and an “Art of Animation” exhibition in the Student Center displaying student art works and other presentations by student animators.

“Every year it’s been better and better,” Joel said. “Last year the student competitions had to take place up to four times as many submissions as the previous year. You may see anything during the festival showings to enjoy these animation shorts.”

Admission to all AniFest ‘08 programs will be free and the public is invited. Pre-registrations are required for the workshops, information is available online at http://cs.wcsu.edu/cgr/festival ‘08 or by e-mail request to Joel at joelw@wcsu.edu. AniFest ‘08 represents one element of CGR’s expanding scope in the development of sophisticated and innovative computer graphics and animation. Now in its fourth year as an independent event, CGR seeks “to provide students and faculty with opportunities to explore, to compete, to appreciate” the steadily advancing sophistication and applications of these technologies, from the

Center for Graphics Research shares competitions, art of computer animation

by Robert Mardian

Since 2002 WestConn has shared the pioneering innovations of computer animation in a public festival that each spring attracts participants from around the nation to learn about the latest graphics applications and celebrate the exuberant artistic creativity of animated film shorts. This year the Center for Graphics Research (CGR) will take its seventh annual festival from April 18 to 25. AniFest ‘08, to the next stage, expanding an existing five-day program that extends its teaching outreach to schools in the Greater Danbury area.

CGR Director and Professor of Computer Science Dr. William Joel said the 2008 festival will create all the features that have contributed to its success as a forum for exchange of ideas and information on graphics applications, and as a showplace for original animation created and produced by students at WestConn and other colleges nationwide.

The festival schedule will be extended to five days, from three days previously, to accommodate the addition of AniFest workshops designed to provide middle and high school teachers with a broad range of information about how graphics and animation tools can be applied in the classroom and inspire artistic creativity. “These daylong workshops will cover all aspects of animation — acting for animation, the mathematics of animation, story development, graphic techniques and other areas,” Joel said.

From April 21 to 23, AniFest ‘08 will feature continuous showings in the Student Center Theater of shorts from the festival computer animation competition, which has grown in popularity and participation by student animators at colleges across the United States. Other festival events will include an evening talk on local symposium art and techniques by a representative of BlueSky Studio and an “Art of Animation” exhibition in the Student Center displaying student art works and other presentations by student animators. Every year it’s been better and better,” Joel said. “Last year the student competitions had to take place up to four times as many submissions as the previous year. You may see anything during the festival showings to enjoy these animation shorts.”

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Kathwari (cont’d)

deeply honored and humbled by this recognition and the opportunity to share my thoughts and experiences with the students who will become the leaders of the future. I’m proud of the long-standing support and interaction between Ethan Allen and WestConn, and know that we all benefit from what we learn and share with each other.”

Kathwari received a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and Political Science from Kashmir University and a Masters in Administration in International Marketing from New York University.

He holds leadership and membership positions in several nonprofit organizations, including: Refugees International, the Kashmir Study Group, the Council on Foreign Relations, the World Conference of Religions for Peace, Freedom House, Henry L. Stimson Center, the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University, Dialogues Islamic World-U.S.-The West at New York University, the Mahatma Gandhi Center for Global Nonviolence Advisory Board, the American Rescue Committee, Foreign Relations’ Board of Distinguished Advisors, the National Retail Federation and the American Home Furnishings Alliance.

Kathwari has received several recognitions, including the Outstanding American by Choice Award by the U.S. Government; Spirit of Asian American Award from the Asian American Federation of New York; and the David J. Kathwari Family Business and Community Service Award from Tufts University; Eleanor Roosevelt Valent-Kill Medal, Honoree from the International Center in New York; National Human Relations Award by the American Jewish Committee; American Muslim Recognition Awards by several organizations; Worth Magazine Recognition of one of Dr. Best CEOs in USA; the National Retail Federation Gold Medal; the International Leadership Award from the Council for America’s First Freedom; Ernst & Young’s Entrepreneur of the Year Award; and the Anti-Defamation League’s Humanitarian Award. ■

WXCI celebrates 35 years at reunion

WestConn celebrates 35 years at reunion

by Kim Zagorski

At the 35th anniversary reunion of WXCI, the campus radio station, Danbury Mayor James Dyer reminisce.

(l-r): Radio consultant Tom Zarecki, Channel 3’s Kevin Hogan, Greg Wencek and former WXCI station manager, Dr. Kevin Jay Isaacs.

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Lewis celebrates 30 years of teaching by giving back to others

It was in 1978 that an accomplished violinist from New York City was invited to a garden party at the Danbury home of famed opera singer Marian Anderson to help found the Charles Ives Center on Manhattan's Westside campus. Eric Lewis, first violinist in the internationally known Manhattan String Quartet, said the idea sounded wonderful. But it was when Anderson — the world's greatest contralto — asked Lewis to consider her world's greatest contralto — Manhattan String Quartet, said the Charles Ives Center on Marian Anderson to help found home of famed opera singer York City was invited to a accomplished violinist from New.

Lewis is still teaching, conducting and performing at WestConn. To celebrate three decades at the university, Lewis has scheduled a benefit violin and piano recital on April 15. The proceeds received from the suggested donation of $25 will be divided between the WestConn Music Department Scholarship Fund for String Students, and Healing the Children, an organization dedicated to sending doctors worldwide to care for children. A reception after the concert will feature a photographic exhibit by Bruce Byers, who has documented the work of Healing the Children doctors across the globe.

With pianist William Braun, Lewis plans to play sonatas duos by Mozart, Franck and Brahms. The works, dramatic music was selected throughout one of his idols, Russian violinist David Oistrakh, who had a "tremendous impact on violinists of my generation," Lewis said. "They display a great musical spectrum. They're masterpieces from these composers. I love them for the color it brings out of the violin — and I love the interplay of the piano with the violin."

Lewis also plays the viola and piano and is the conductor of the WCSU Chamber Orchestra. While his love of the violin was innate, he was steered toward another instrument when he was a young boy. Instead of giving him the violin he really wanted, his mother taught him piano when he was 5.

The Bronx, N.Y., native grew up listening to symphonies, opera and violin concertos and, after hearing Beethoven's violin concerto at Carnegie Hall, he said, "That's it — I have to have a violin." He was 5 years old.

"We need to take care of the home front," Lewis said. "This is the absolute core of what we're about." Lewis, who received his early training at the Manhattan School of Music where he received bachelor's and master's performance degrees, chose the string scholarship for similar reasons. Noting a continuing lack of stringed instrumentalists in his orchestra, he hopes to attract more students to WestConn's music program who want to play the violin and viola.

Over the span of 30 years, Lewis has seen a lot of change at WestConn — from the expansion of the Westside campus, to the improvements on the Midtown campus and the inception of WestConn's fourth school, the School of Visual and Performing Arts. He eagerly anticipates the completion of the building that will house that school in several years.

"We have to build that building and fill it with orchestras, symphonic, chamber, opera and musical theater," Lewis said. "It will be a cultural magnet for the area."

Lewis said WestConn's music program offers great opportunities for students to perform with their colleagues for the community. And, he said, it's been a great place for him to grow as an educator and a performing musician. "I was brought up to believe that teaching was the highest profession you could aspire to.

Voves named Macricostas Family Foundation Entrepreneur of the Year

Lucie Voves, president of Church Hill Classics, is the first Macricostas Family Foundation Entrepreneur of the Year, to be presented later this year at WestConn.

"I am thrilled to be chosen as the first recipient of the Macricostas Family Foundation Entrepreneur of the Year," said Voves. "I look forward to sharing my experiences and enthusiasm for entrepreneurship with the students at the Ancolli School of Business."

Voves started her home-based business in 1991, and it has since grown to 65 employees and more than $6 million in annual revenues. In 2007, the company was named by Inc. Magazine as the 95th fastest-growing consumer products company in the United States. Voves was honored in 2007 by the National Association of Women Business Owners as one of three "Trailblazing Women" entrepreneurs from across the country and also was chosen by Entrepreneur magazine as a 2007 "Entrepreneur of the Year." She is on the Board of Directors for the Danbury Chamber of Commerce and the Connecticut Better Business Bureau.

"We have to build that building and fill it with orchestras, symphonic, chamber, opera and musical theater," Lewis said. “It was like being a professor at WestConn. ‘I’ll be there tomorrow.’” That was 30 years ago, and Lewis is still teaching, conducting and performing at WestConn. To celebrate three decades at the university, Lewis has scheduled a benefit violin and piano recital on April 15. The proceeds received from the suggested donation of $25 will be divided between the WestConn Music Department Scholarship Fund for String Students, and Healing the Children, an organization dedicated to sending doctors worldwide to care for children.

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WestConn Society Club honors Wibling with Community Service Award

When this year’s Community Service Award was presented at a March 19 luncheon by the WCSU Foundation Board at its annual luncheon, the face of the awardee was both familiar and friendly.

Harold (Hal) Wibling has served as the president and chief executive officer of the Savings Bank of Danbury since 1993 — and yet he still finds time to serve on numerous boards and committees where he can have a direct impact on making Danbury and the WestConn community even better.

The majority of Wibling’s 35-year banking career has been in the Danbury area. Before heading the Savings Bank of Danbury, he was the president and chief executive officer of the Candlewood Bank and Trust Company.

“Hal Wibling has made significant contributions to the Greater Danbury community and specifically to WCSU,” said Dr. G. Koryoe Anim-Wright, vice president for Institutional Advancement. “As chairman of the Board of Directors of the WCSU Foundation, he has led the foundation in the development and implementation of policies, procedures and fundraising initiatives that have positively impacted the Foundation’s contribution to the growth and development of the university through increased scholarship support and donations to academic programs.”

Wibling, who lives in Danbury with his wife, Barbara, serves as chairman of the WCSU Foundation Board, first vice chairman of the Connecticut Bankers Association and trustee of the Regional YMCA of Western Connecticut. He is also a member of the United Way of Western Connecticut’s Northern Fairfield County Community Council and the Musicians’ Benevolent Foundation. He sits on the Executive Board of Jericho Partnership, Inc.

Lucie Voves, president of Church Hill Classics, is the first Macricostas Family Foundation Entrepreneur of the Year.

At last month’s WestConn Society Luncheon, Lucie Voves, president of Church Hill Classics, a company that creates custom frames for institutions, awards, professional licenses and other professional documents for hundreds of institutions, was the guest speaker.

Voves, who lives in Ridgefield with her family, is the first Macricostas Family Foundation Entrepreneur of the Year, to be presented later this year at WestConn.

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For more information, call the Office of Institutional Advancement at (203) 837-8298.
Global Warming Teach-In

WestConn joined colleges nationwide in a “Focus the Nation” teach-in on Jan. 31 to raise awareness about global warming and explore solutions to this environmental challenge. WCSU students participated in a debate (bottom, left) via Webcast with students from the University of Tartu in Estonia. The debate was moderated by Assistant Professor of History and Non-Western Cultures Dr. Wynn Gadkar-Wilcox and Associate Professor of Political Science Dr. Chris Kukk, who received a Fulbright grant for teaching and research at the University of Tartu for 2007-08.

Another presentation during the daylong event featured student musicians (bottom, center) in “Climate and Harmony: French Horn Quartet and Slides,” a program by Assistant Professor of Music Dr. Marjorie Callaghan that offered live music accompaniment to a slide show on chaos theory as visualized by Professor of English Dr. John Briggs.

Women’s History Month

WestConn marked the beginning of Women’s History Month, founded in 1911 as a national celebration, with an opening reception (top, left) held March 3 for an exhibition at the Ruth Haas Library profiling milestones in American women’s contributions to the nation and the world. On March 5, the WCSU theatre arts department staged a presentation (second from top, left) of the Student Center Theater’s “The Seventh Abuela,” a lyrical collage of true stories from Moldavian women who returned to their homeland after being forced into sex slavery in Bosnia-Herzegovina. (Top, center) Dr. Marita Repole portrayed Dr. Sophia Penfield, a local pioneer in medicine as Danbury’s first female physician a century ago, during the March 11 performance of “Great Women of Danbury,” a narrative and musical program paying tribute to 12 outstanding women in the city’s history.

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Spring Semester Highlights

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President’s Lecture Series

Amy Chua, John M. Duff Jr. Professor of Law at Yale Law School and author of “Day of Empire: How Hyperpowers Rise to Global Dominance — and Why They Fail”, accepts a gift from President James W. Schmotter (bottom, right) commemorating her appearance on March 25 as the featured 2008 speaker in the WCSU President’s Lecture Series. Chau placed the present U.S. role as a “hyperpower” — which she defined as a government that has amassed sufficient military, intellectual and cultural strength to exert dominance globally — within the historical context of past hyperpowers from the Persian Empire and ancient Rome to the Mongol kingdom of Ghengis Khan. Chua also discussed the significant impact of U.S. society’s capacity to incorporate and tolerate ethnic and racial diversity in sustaining its global influence.

Legislative Breakfast

State Rep. and Deputy Speaker Bob Godfrey (top, right) studies the materials he received at the annual Legislative Breakfast, held on campus on Feb. 21.

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Dr. Mitta’s Visit

Dr. Sridhar Mitta, a pioneering industrialist and representative of The Reva Group of educational institutes in Bangalore, India, discusses business and education topics with Dr. Gregory Jin, professor of management information systems, during a visit to WestConn (left, center). WCSU is developing agreements with three universities in India to provide faculty and student exchanges.

Women’s History Month

WestConn marked the beginning of Women’s History Month, founded in 1911 as a national celebration, with an opening reception (top, left) held March 3 for an exhibition at the Ruth Haas Library profiling milestones in American women’s contributions to the nation and the world. On March 5, the WCSU theatre arts department staged a presentation (second from top, left) of the Student Center Theater’s “The Seventh Abuela,” a lyrical collage of true stories from Moldavian women who returned to their homeland after being forced into sex slavery in Bosnia-Herzegovina. (Top, center) Dr. Marita Repole portrayed Dr. Sophia Penfield, a local pioneer in medicine as Danbury’s first female physician a century ago, during the March 11 performance of “Great Women of Danbury,” a narrative and musical program paying tribute to 12 outstanding women in the city’s history.

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Martin Luther King Day Celebration

Fifty years after she passed with eight other African-American students through the entrance of Central High School in Little Rock, Ark., Carlotta Walls Lanier recounted the story of the “Little Rock Nine” who brought school desegregation to the South. Lanier was keynote speaker at the Dr. Martin Luther King Community Celebration on Monday, Jan. 21. Lanier chatted with WestConn President James W. Schmotter (top, right) before giving her talk. The program commemorating King’s civil rights legacy also featured performances by choral singers (top left), praise dancers and members of the community including the Rev. Ivan Pitts of New Hope Baptist Church (top, center).

Black History Month

Author and bioethicist Harriet Washington (left, center) speaks with Dr. Jack Fong, Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at Danbury Hospital, before discussing her award-winning book “Medical Apartheid: The Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present.” One of several events in celebration of Black History Month, Washington’s lecture was on Feb. 20, and included a book signing and reception. The first and only comprehensive history of “racial pseudoscience,” Washington’s book profiles the medical atrocities perpetrated upon black citizens from the slavery era to the more recent U.S. Public Health Service’s syphilis experiments in Tuskegee, Ala. “Medica Apartheid” is the nonfiction winner of the 2007 PEN Oakland Award, the 2007 American Library Association Black Caucus Award, and a finalist for the 2007 National Book Critics Circle Award.

CSUS Education Town Meeting

On March 24, WestConn hosted the first in a series of four traditional, New England-style open town meetings (right) designed to set in motion a statewide conversation on the subject “Education Now. Prosperity Tomorrow. Growing Connecticut’s Future.” The goal was to engage policy makers and regular citizens to help set a course that will enhance the state’s future. The town meeting series began with the question, “Why is education important to Connecticut’s future?” A lively discussion took place at the meeting, led by panelists (l-r): Dr. James Comer, Maurice Falk Professor of Child Psychiatry, Yale Child Student Center; Bethel School Superintendent Dr. Gary Chesley; Moderator Ann Baldwin; Christopher Bruhl, president and CEO of The Business Council of Fairfield County; and Noel Hord, CEO of The Hord Foundation and BCGS Shoes.

Nursing Career Fair

The WCSU Student Nurses Association hosted a Job Fair on March 5 (bottom, center). Potential employers, such as St. Vincent’s Hospital, were on hand to discuss opportunities with WestConn’s nursing students.

Music Recital

A recital (left) on Feb. 13 featured (l-r): Music Professor Dr. Russell Hirshfield and Richard Rood. A Grammy-winning violinist, Rood is a member of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, a first violinist of the New York City Opera and the associate concertmaster of the Santa Fe Opera’s summer season. Hirshfield, recognized by Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers, has collaborated with numerous vocalists and musicians, including members of the Detroit Symphony, St. Louis Philharmonic, Orpheus Chamber Ensemble, Chicago Lyric Opera, New York City Opera and Cleveland Orchestra.

The Who’s “Tommy”

Revolutionary when it was released in 1969, “Tommy,” the story of a young boy rendered senseless due to emotional trauma, still rings true. In February and March, a vibrant cast of talented theatre arts student actors, vocalists, and dancers revived the rock ‘n’ roll masterpiece. It has been suggested that Pete Townshend wrote the piece to express his feelings of enlightenment after being taught by a spiritual master in the late 1960s. WestConn Professor of Theatre Arts Sal Trapani, the production’s director and producer, describes “Tommy” as a story about self-discovery and the perils of fame. (Bottom, right) Holly LoRusso, as Mrs. Walker, and Tyler Cohen, as Captain Walker, sing to Christopher Walsh, as Tommy. WestConn alumni and friends (bottom, left) enjoyed dinner before their theatre experience on Friday, Feb. 29.
WestConn student offers politically incorrect 'guide' to the U.S. Constitution

Professor of History and Non-Western Cultures
Dr. Kevin Gutman

"In effect, they have sought to assert that the Constitution created a 'national' government — not a 'federal' one.

To underscore the critical distinction, Gutzman traced U.S. constitutional history back to its roots during the buildup to the Revolutionary War, and the subsequent founding of a weak government under the Articles of Confederation. This experience set the stage for the showdown between proponents of a strong 'national' and limited 'federal' government at the Constitutional Convention that convened in 1787.

"The term 'federal' had a different meaning in the 18th century," he observed. "A 'national' government, like that in France, is one in which all authority is concentrated at the center. The American experience was the opposite: Instead of starting with the center, what came first were the constituent states, which then decided how much authority they wanted to give the center."

"What's the difference? It's the difference between Congress being able to do whatever it wants, and a 'Constitution government' that has only a limited set of defined powers," he said.

The present state of U.S. constitutional law, Gutzman argued, bears little resemblance to the Jeffersonian vision of the framers of the Constitution who viewed the individual states as independent and self-governing entities, bound together by loose association and prepared only to cede limited powers such as national defense and foreign policy to the federal government. Proponents of expanded federal powers at the expense of the states repudiated the framers' intentions and asserted themselves as Federalist and Federalist-leaning governments to resist the "perversion of the Constitution" the framers had originally established.

"I've been working on this project for the past three years, just to see what the framers of the Constitution really wanted," Gutzman said.

The landmark 1810 Supreme Court decision in Marbury v. Madison, by Justice John Marshall, is generally credited with establishing the doctrine of judicial review and the concept of an independent judiciary. But Gutman argued that the Constitution had not been written as an instrument for judicial review but as an alternative to an independent judiciary that had become so deeply engrained in American law to this day, "American law to this day," he added. "The framers never intended to grant the Supreme Court such powers.

"And what do you know — they didn't," Gutman said. "The Constitution's framers never intended to grant the Supreme Court such powers."

The academic achievements have earned Kupchik numerous scholarships, including the Capital Scholarship, WCSU Foundation Award, Sigma Foundation Scholarship, Isabelle Farrington Scholarship, and the Ellen and Jason Dorfman Memorial Scholarship. In addition, she has served as vice president of the Sigma Delta Pi National Spanish Honor Society and has tutored students in Spanish at WCSU.

Kupchik's achievements have earned her a bachelor's degree in music performance with a concentration in classical voice and musicology. Kupchik's vocal skills have earned her notable recognition as a soloist and in group performance. She has been featured in numerous concerts and recitals, including the WCSU Performing Arts Center and the Sigma Delta Pi National Spanish Honor Society.

Kupchik's love of music is not limited to her academic pursuits. She is an active member of the WCSU Concert Choir and has performed in numerous musical productions. Her dedication to music is evident in her skilled performance and passion for the art form.
Dr. Albert Owino, WCSU's Director of Meteorological Studies and Weather Center, has found snowstorms to be a part of the Northeast. According to Owino, the university has a foundation of courses in mathematics, computer science, physics, astronomy, and earth science, combined with meteorology, to prepare students for television and radio weather forecasting, operational and meteorological forecasting and teaching or research in the atmospheric sciences. The Weather Center was the first university weather center in the Northeast and was founded by WTNF's Dr. Mel Goldstein, who taught at WCSU for 27 years. The Weather Center is fully outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment to help students gather data for forecasts broadcast daily in WestConn's student TV weather forecasting show. After working in Kenya as a meteorologist and then England, Owino qualified for a PhD program at the University of Pune, India. Then it was on to West Africa and finally Jamaica where he researched climate variability and developed a Caribbean climate diagnostic set for the Climate Studies Group at the University of the West Indies at Mona. WCSU senior Michael Lombardi is equally impressed with both the Weather Center and Owino's leadership. "He brings a scientific rigor to what goes on here," Lombardi said. "He's the calm at the center of the storm. He loves what he does. That combines with his personality a good leadership and governance for the Weather Center. The Weather Center is a real commercial venture, not just a theoretical thing where you're learning in a text book. You're learning skills and how to work in the real world." One thing Owino hopes to do at the Weather Center is to predict the characteristics of an entire season by determining the reasons for storm variability. "It is one of the factors which will tell if precipitation will be enough for the coming season," he said. Owino said it's not that difficult to predict this by using analyses of past seasons and separating summer from winter. "There are many levels of forecasting, including the use of radar, which targets locations and limited areas, synoptic, which predicts weather on a larger scale using the jet stream and the organization of a system; and numerical weather predictions, data, which are "an attempt to be precise," Owino said, but are based on statistics. Owino uses charts, maps and graphics so students can visualize what's going on to create storms and extreme weather.

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At the Weather Center, the students employ synoptic forecasting using computers and close to a dozen monitors. "On those monitors, we can see charts from other regions and model predictions," Owino said. "I'm convinced the models interpret. It's a calculated guess."

"The Weather Center posts its predictions on the university's Web site and distributes it to local newspapers. The Weather Center operates daily with 10 to 15 students a semester working under the guidance of Assistant Professor of Meteorology Robert Eissen. In his role as the center's director, Owino is in charge of bringing in new products and improving systems, and is working with IBM to implement a 3-D computer program that can create a small storm with numerical equations.

"The students will have hands-on experience," Owino said. "The program will not replace, but rather will enhance, synoptic forecasting. Now it's a calculated guess. It will now be in our diagnoses."

Owino said it's exciting to work and teach at a weather center that has so many opportunities and resources. As far as what he and his students will be able to do: "The sky's the limit."

WCSU Weather Center director is calm at the center of storm

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Students perform well in national weather forecasting challenge

Nine students seeking professional training in mathematical analysis — and the applied mathematics necessary to that pursuit — were challenged to submit forecasts in the fall semester, as part of the WestConn’s experience in the National Joint Mathematics Meeting of the American Mathematical Society and the Mathematics Association of America in San Diego. The students, whose trip was partially funded by the WCSU Honors Program and the WestConn Government Association, worked under the guidance of Associate Professor of Mathematics Dr. Xiaodi Wang.

Graduate student Jim Jacobs, and undergraduate students Elizabeth Quarters, Billy Brad Felker, Tegan Goldson and Kyle Markward discussed “Combined Multi-Resolution Wavelet Analysis and Traditional Statistical Process Control for Surface Acoustic Wave Device Fabrication.” They developed a method using “wavelets” to analyze process control charts that detect where errors occur in a process. Wavelets are an application of mathematical function that allow observers to better account for sharp peaks or valleys in a process, thus allowing for more accurate predictions of when errors will occur.

“This analysis process will reduce the amount of defects and make it easier to find the source of error,” said Matt Bucuta, president of the Math Club. “Now companies will not have to go through six or seven tests to track down errors, and can save time and money in production.”

Bucuta, a junior, with senior Luke Kang and junior Yuhbin Wang also used wavelets in their research. “Wavelet-based, Non-Parametric Regression Model for Stock Price.”

In this study, the students applied wavelets to stock markets to create a new, more accurate method for forecasting stock prices. Their work intrigued mathematicians at the conference, who said they may collaborate with the students in the future. In particular, one mathematician in the field of neural networks was interested in what these students have done. The trio is working on its final research paper, which should be e-mailed to WCUSCBeyondtheMargins@gmail.com as a file attachment under the guidelines at www.wcsubeyondthermargins.com.


WestConn student math publications honored

Congratulations to everyone involved with the Fall 17 issue of the AlumniNews, most notably Graphic Designer Freddy Paine, on the announcement by the Admissions Marketing Report that the Fall 17 issue won a silver medal in its design contest. If you have an announcement about a recent appointment to a board, award or other professional accomplishment you'd like to share, please e-mail pressofficeedu@wcsu.edu.

Music students to spend summer in Rome at prestigious music festival

WestConn’s School of Visual and Performing Arts will be represented by four instrumentalists and one vocalist this summer at the prestigious Rome Festival, an international educational event for professional opera singers.

Berisso will perform in several full operas and have the opportunity to learn from other professional opera singers.

With the prestige comes a price, however, and tuition to attend the five-week Rome Festival is not pocket change. In addition to program fees, students are responsible for their own lodging and local transportation.

“Entirely funded by local companies, there are some scholarships available, but it’s not much. We are going to need about $4,500 each for housing in Italy, food and transportation around the city,” Glaviano said with a smile.

The WCSU students are looking to the university and local organizations to help offset the trip’s cost. The Rome Festival Orchestra Ltd. is an educational charity that has offered to help raise funds, but awards only a few merit-based scholarships, without regard to financial need.

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With the Philharmonic’s principal saxophonist Albert Regni and fellow guest performer Lawrence Feldman, Goble knew from the opening notes of U.S. composer George Gershwin’s “An American in Paris” — “an extraordinary piece” — that the audience understood they could in this setting. “It was very evocative. It was a saxophone in this piece was not as strong as any other instrument in the piece,” he observed, given the strong influence of the music director Lorin Maazel’s “music in a very different style,” he said.

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Western Connecticut State University
JAZZ FESTIVAL

The 13th Annual WestConn Jazz Fest will include three headliner concerts:

- USAF Airmen of Note, 4/25
- WCSU Jazz Orchestra w/Jimmy Heath, 4/25
- Cedar Walton Quartet, 4/26

7 p.m., Ives Concert Hall in White Hall, Midtown campus. Cost.

www.wcsu.edu/tickets

Dates and times are subject to change. Check our online events calendar to ensure the event you are interested in is still scheduled. All events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted. For more information about these and other events, please call the Office of University Relations at (203) 837-8486 or visit www.wcsu.edu.

WCSU to honor Caraluzzis at University Ball

WestConn will recognize Tony and Roberta Caraluzzi for their family’s contributions to the university and Greater Danbury communities as the honorees at the 22nd annual University Ball on May 3. This year’s Ball theme, “Escape to Tuscany,” will highlight an evening program of fine dining, dancing and a silent auction to raise academic enrichment and scholarship funds for the WCSU Foundation. Tony Caraluzzi Jr. serves as a member of the WCSU Foundation Board.

“Over the years, the generosity and initiative of the Caraluzzi family have made it possible for dozens of students to attend WestConn,” WCSU President James W. Schmotter observed. “In so doing, they have shared the benefits of their business success with the Bethel and Greater Danbury communities.”

www.wcsu.edu/ball

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