

# theindependentvoice

Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges... Educators, Employers, Community Partners

## Societal Benefits vs. State Investment in Higher Education



Judith B. Greiman, President, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges

In 2002, the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance noted that over 400,000 college-qualified lower income high school graduates would not seek four-year degrees due to financial barriers. In 2006, this Committee noted that at least 2.4 million to 4 million bachelor's degrees have been or will be lost in this and the past decade due to such college-qualified students passing up enrollment in college.

Recently, the College Board updated *Education Pays*, its study of the benefits of higher education for individuals and society. It found that "the gap between the median earnings of college graduates and the median earnings of high school graduates has increased significantly over the past thirty years." For men, that gap was evidenced in 1975 when the median earnings of four-year college graduates were 19% higher than those of high school graduates. By 2005, the gap has grown to a whopping 63% difference. For women, the gap is even higher at 70%. *Education Pays* also noted that college degree

holders are healthier and more engaged on a civic level, pay more in taxes and use less in public subsidies.

How do we change this dynamic.... evidence of the increased benefits of higher education contrasted with greater numbers of students shut out from degree attainment?

A key driver of college tuition cost stems from the fact that, at the state and federal levels, we have not kept our commitment to students and their families to access to higher education. Federal funding has remained flat such that for the third consecutive year, the value of the average Pell Grant declined in constant dollars. The same has been true of state need-based grant aid. Neither of the two work horse Connecticut aid programs are even close to being funded at the statutory level, and from FY 90-05, funding for the independent college student grant decreased by 12% in constant dollars. In fact, citing these aid programs as an example of the "illusion" of a state budget surplus, *The New York Times* recently noted in an editorial, "Connecticut's balance sheet looks good in part because the state simply has not owned up to some of its financial obligations and promises."

To make up for this lack of public funding for needy students, colleges and universities have tapped all areas of their budgets and, yes, raised tuition, to allow them to increase substan-

tially the money devoted to financial aid. Last year, independent colleges provided over \$300 million in private and institutional financial aid

*"Connecticut's balance sheet looks good in part because the state simply has not owned up to some of its financial obligations and promises." The New York Times, October 29, 2006*

funds to Connecticut undergraduates. This has allowed the majority of students to pay far less than the "sticker price" and has allowed students to chose the colleges that are right for them in terms of programmatic offerings, location and sense of community rather than to rely solely on finances to drive the decision.

As noted by Robert Archibald and David Feldman in a piece on college cost, "There is a crisis in higher education today, but it's not well-publicized tuition spikes. It's the long-term decline in political and financial support for the idea that all students should have access to higher education, regardless of ability to pay."

Our charge in Connecticut is to reverse this trend, fund our aid programs and let our students fulfill their dreams while strengthening the State's workforce.

## Leo I. Higdon, Jr. is 10<sup>th</sup> President of Connecticut College

Connecticut College embarked upon the 2006-2007 academic year with new president, Leo I. Higdon, Jr., at the helm. Higdon became the tenth president of Connecticut College on July 1.



President Leo I. Higdon, Jr.

Higdon was inaugurated October 14 during a ceremony steeped in tradition, including a procession featuring international students carrying more than 40 flags from their respective countries of citizenship.

A strong advocate of liberal arts education as a preparation for diverse careers, Higdon was a Peace Corps volunteer and an investment banker before becoming a leader in higher education.

Higdon was president of the College of Charleston from 2001 to 2006, and oversaw that institution's transformation from a regional university to a nationally-known liberal arts and

(Higdon cont. on page 3)



## UB's Dental Hygiene Students Practice Art Far Beyond Campus

When Dr. Alfred C. Fones began teaching the art of dental hygiene, he saw the tremendous implications it had in public health. If you teach a person how to care for their teeth, and they do, they can minimize dental troubles through their lifetime.

It's that belief that inspires Fones' disciples in the field of dental hygiene, and particularly dental hygienist Wendy Grove. She's furthering Fones' precepts as a faculty member of the Alfred C. Fones School of Dental Hygiene, one of the oldest in the country, at the University of Bridgeport, and as coordinator of the school's community program.

Fones students, and graduates of the school who make up the majority of dental hygienists practicing in Connecticut, know that the more individuals they reach in teaching the practices of oral health, the more smiles they'll preserve for lifetimes.

The dividends don't stop there. They show up in feelings of self respect, in sweeter breaths, in better digestion and a host of others, not the least of which is saving the costs of replacing lost teeth.

And with 75 percent of Fones students coming from Connecticut cities and towns, they're most likely to go back to their own communities to practice dental hygiene. And that has a direct impact on Connecticut public health.

Grove imparts that philosophy on her students as head of the community rotation program all students at Fones must complete to earn their degree. That's in addition to a regular clinic all students work in at the school on UB's Seaside Park Campus.

"Our students worked in 87 different community sites during all seven of their

rotations," Grove said. "They served a total of 8,978 people in it. That's a major impact, and even more remarkable, the service is provided at no cost to the city, the communities or to the people served." Another 1,500 receive services provided by Fones students at dental clinics in the region.



Candice Zarella helps a child measure himself at community education clinic students at the University of Bridgeport's Fones School of Dental Hygiene conducted.

The value of Fones' clinical outreach services is estimated at \$1.7 million, with some \$500,000 of that donated by the university in its costs and faculty and student services.

The sites are everywhere, from the Bridgeport's Curiale Elementary School to Warren Harding High School, from the Parish Court Housing in Fairfield to Changing Images in Stratford, from the Greater Bridgeport Mental Health Center to the Connecticut Valley Hospital, from St. Joseph's Manor in Trumbull to the Hospital of St. Raphael's Smiles to Go program in New Haven, from St. Mark's Day Care in Bridgeport to the Baldwin Senior Center in Stratford.

"We teach the fundamentals in school," Grove said. "Then we take the students out to the community, where they adapt what they've learned in class to make it work in these different community settings.

"That's why we have such a variety in our community settings," she said.

The concept of service, where a professional gives back to the community some of their skills, is also stressed.

"But we want Fones hygienists to contribute on broader levels where public policy may be involved as well," Grove said.

"The clinical experience," she said, "teaches these students how to identify populations in need, assess the extent of those needs, provide support through screening and oral hygiene instruction, and refer people, where necessary, for restorative work or treatment of oral diseases.

There are seven different community rotations for the Fones students, Grove said. Each student participates for four weeks at three days a week. Other off-campus rotations include clinical experience at the Norwalk Hospital Dental Clinic, the Waltersville Elementary School dental clinic in Bridgeport and the Yale New Haven Hospital dental clinic.

Besides the outreach services, there are another 1,500 people served a year in the campus clinic, which has outgrown its space and facilities.

Dr. Meg Zayan, director of the Fones School, said the clinic experience is more intense and that patients return regularly for care.

Zayan said 52 percent of those treated in the clinic are Bridgeport residents. Children (17 percent) and the elderly make up 50 percent of the patients treated in the campus clinic.

University leaders, spurred by Zayan, have developed plans to address the inadequacies of the

current clinic, located in Eleanor N. Dana Hall.

"Our students are working with equipment and examining chairs that haven't been updated in years, and it's difficult to prepare students to be on the frontiers of care when they're being taught in a setting that resembles the past," Zayan said. "We intend to fix that."

Zayan said the improvements will ultimately call for a move to the adjacent Warner Health Center, where the dental hygiene service will share a central reception, registration and filing office with the chiropractic, naturopathic medicine and acupuncture clinics and have its own floor, all served by the health center's central elevators.

"We don't have elevators in Eleanor N. Dana Hall and that's a problem around accessibility for some of our patients, and some of our students," Zayan said. "A move will solve that."

The university has put a priority on the clinic improvements, and is seeking grants and raising funds with alumni and corporations to make it happen, Zayan said.

### Did you know?

Federal loans now constitute 51% of total student financial aid.\*

The average CICS grant for FY 06 was \$3,431.

\*Trends in Student Aid 2006



## Rensselaer at Hartford Celebrates Fifty Years



Congressman Larson presents a Congressional Certificate to Dr. Jackson.

The Hartford Campus of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute recently celebrated fifty years of educating working professionals in Connecticut. Rensselaer at Hartford, formerly known as The Hartford Graduate Center, was created specifically to address a critical shortage of engineers and other professionals in the Greater Hartford area in 1955, a time when the aircraft and defense industries were faced with rapidly changing technologies.

H. Mansfield Horner, then chairman of the United Aircraft Corporation (now United Technologies Corporation), approached Livingston Houston, then president of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, with a proposal to provide local, graduate instruction to these working professionals. Rensselaer accepted Horner's invitation and introduced to the Connecticut River Valley the same academic standards that had secured its own nationally acknowledged stature and reputation. The Hartford Graduate Center merged with Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute at Troy in January 1997 and became a branch campus known as Rensselaer at Hartford.

To mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Rensselaer's Hartford Campus, Her Excellency M. Jodi Rell, Governor, State of Connecticut, officially proclaimed June 2,

2006, as Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Day in the State of Connecticut. The Honorable Eddie A. Perez, Mayor, City of Hartford, proclaimed June 2, 2006,

as Rensselaer Day in the City of Hartford. In addition, at a gala reception held that evening, Congressman John B. Larson, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, presented a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition to Rensselaer at Hartford "in recognition of outstanding and



Worth Loomis and Dr. Warren Stoker after being presented with 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary medals. [Note: Dr. John Cassidy was unable to attend the reception.]

invaluable service to the community."

At the gala, Dr. Shirley Ann Jackson, President, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, presented 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative medals to "three leaders who stand as the human embodiment of our greatest ambitions and values. These three men all contributed outstanding vision, dedication, and leadership to the creation and growth of Rensselaer at Hartford, and they continue to sustain us with their unending loyalty and support." The medals were presented to:

- John F. Cassidy, Ph.D., (Class of 1965) former member of the Rensselaer at Hartford Board of Trustees and the Retired Senior

Vice President for Science and Technology for United Technologies Corporation. He was a staunch supporter of lifelong learning.

- Worth Loomis, President Emeritus, The Hartford Graduate Center (HGC), member of the HGC Board of Trustees from 1975 until his appointment as President in 1989. An inspirational and dynamic community leader, he led the Dexter Corporation for many years.
- Warren Stoker, Ph.D., (Class of 1938) founder and architect of Rensselaer's Hartford Campus, President Emeritus of The Hartford Graduate Center, visionary leader, and pioneer in education for working professionals.

The Rensselaer at Hartford community looks forward to the challenges and accomplishments in the next fifty years.

(Higdon, cont. from page 1)

sciences institution. At Charleston, he oversaw rapid growth, extensive construction projects, expanded academic and co-curricular programs, and he increased financial support for the university. The College of Charleston awarded him an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters.

Higdon has said he was attracted to Connecticut College because of its well-earned reputation for innovation, academic excellence and strong faculty-student relationships, as well as the potential he sees to further distinguish the College among its peer group of highly selective residential liberal arts colleges.

"I am deeply committed to liberal education as the best foundation for nurturing the kind of leaders our complex society needs," he said during Convocation in August.

Higdon, 59, an avid runner, sports enthusiast and Revolutionary War buff, earned a bachelor's degree in history from Georgetown University in 1968. Following graduation, he and his wife Ann spent two years in the Peace Corps, teaching in Malawi, Africa, where the first of their four children was born. He earned an M.B.A. in finance in 1972 from the University of Chicago.

In 1973, Higdon joined Salomon Brothers. He became vice chairman and member of the executive committee and managed the firm's global investment banking division. He initiated and executed four transactions recognized by Institutional Investor as "Deals of the Year."

After 21 years with Salomon Brothers, Higdon was named dean of the Darden Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of Virginia. He left Darden to serve as president of Babson College in Wellesley, Mass. At both Babson and Darden, Higdon led top-ranked schools, increased diversity and doubled endowments through record-breaking fundraising.

Currently, Higdon is a member of the boards of directors of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, Eaton Vance Corp. and HealthSouth Corp. His past board affiliations include Georgetown University, Mt. Holyoke College, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, and several major corporations. He has written and published widely on higher education and business.

Higdon replaces Norman Fainstein, who is spending this academic year as a visiting scholar in the Wiener Center for Social Policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, will return to Connecticut College as a professor of sociology and urban studies in the fall of 2007.

## NEW PHARMACY TECH PROGRAM OFFERED AT ST. VINCENT'S COLLEGE

Students at St. Vincent's College have yet another career option this academic year. A new 60-hour certificate program is being offered in cooperation with the Connecticut Pharmacists Association.

"This flexible short-term program allows more individuals the opportunity to enter the health care careers," said Dr. Anita K. McCain, Dean of Academic Services of St. Vincent's College.

Dr. McCain said a key factor in the decision to offer the Pharmacy Tech program was the employment opportunities available to graduates.

"Employment for these technicians is expected to grow at a much faster rate than all occupations through 2014. As the population ages the demand for pharmaceuticals will increase dramatically. This increased demand will spur an increased demand for technicians in all practice settings," she said.

At the conclusion of the 10-week evening program, students are eligible to take

the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board exam to receive national certification. The first class began September 12 and students will complete their studies before the Thanksgiving Holiday!

Virginia Stoeffel, Director of the College's Continuing Education division, said that pharmacy technicians help licensed pharmacists provide medication and other health care products to patients.

"Pharmacy technicians who work in retail or mail-order pharmacies have varying responsibilities, depending on State rules and regulations. In hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted-living facilities, technicians have added responsibilities, including reading patients' charts and preparing and delivering the medicine to patients," Stoeffel said.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, pharmacy technicians held about 258,000 jobs in 2004. About 7 out of 10 jobs were in retail pharmacies, either independently owned or part of a drugstore chain, grocery store, department store, or mass retailer. About 2 out of 10 jobs were in hospitals and a small

proportion was in mail-order and Internet pharmacies.

With advances in science, more medications are becoming available to treat a greater number of conditions. Prospects for pharmacy technicians are good and growing, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Development of new treatments for illness also will drive employment for those interested in pharmacy tech careers.

In addition, cost-conscious insurers, pharmacies, and health systems will continue to expand the role of technicians. As a result, pharmacy technicians will assume responsibility for some of the medicine into containers; technicians must oversee the machines, stock the bins, and label the containers.

"While automation is increasingly incorporated into the job, it will not necessarily reduce the need for these technicians," said Stoeffel, noting that students will have the unique opportunity to observe a retail, hospital and nuclear pharmacy environment.

**HAPPY  
THANKSGIVING!**



The Independent Voice is a publication of the Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges, a public policy association representing Connecticut's nonprofit independent higher education institutions.

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