

theindependentvoice

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

Want Accountability? Check out U-CAN



Judith B. Greiman, President CCIC

The University & College Accountability Network (U-CAN) was launched in September to great acclaim. U-CAN represents the first nationally coordinated effort by colleges and universities to collect and report data and qualitative information directly to consumers. The number of participating institutions continues to grow and is at 686 as of early November. With almost 64,000 visits and over 400,000 page views, the site appears to have taken off as a place to visit for those seeking information about colleges and universities.

What is U-CAN and why was it created?

U-CAN was created by the independent college sector to help students and their families learn about key elements of colleges in which they are interested through web-based access to a common format with

the information on each campus all in one place. A key goal was to be able to provide greater institutional transparency and accountability. Participating schools fill out online profiles that include data on forty-seven different elements including admissions, enrollment, graduation rates, popular degrees, price of attendance, financial aid, net tuition, average loan debt, internships, diversity, campus safety and other factors. Additionally, there are links to key areas of campus websites.

The development of U-CAN was aided by focus groups with students and parents as well as by conversations with public opinion leaders to ensure that the final product included those data points in which both groups are interested. Other guiding principles were that the site needed to be available to all users at no cost and needed to be concise, visually attractive and give users the ability to compare like data across different institutions. It was not designed to be a ranking or rating site; merely one that would allow consumers the ability

to access data easily to allow them to draw their own conclusions about colleges and universities based on their own priorities.

What institutions are participating?

A wide range of the country's independent, non-profit colleges and universities can be found on the U-CAN site. They include small



<http://www.ucan-network.org/>

liberal arts colleges, Ivy League universities, faith-based and historically minority institutions, and regional and local schools. Almost all of the CCIC member institutions are represented on the site.

What are people saying about U-CAN?

"As a longtime proponent of transparency in higher education, I consider U-CAN a breakthrough. This online resource gives consumers access to meaningful, comparable information that will empower their educational decision-making. Modeled after many of the consumer tools I and other

members of Congress proposed in 2004, U-CAN provides a starting point for transparency that can and should be embraced by the higher education community as a whole."

— Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon (R-CA), Ranking Member, Committee on Education and Labor, U.S. House of Representatives

"The college search should be about finding the "right fit" for each student and U-CAN is an ideal tool to help make this happen. Students and parents can decide how to use the valuable data to evaluate colleges based on their values, not someone else's ranking system. U-CAN is the answer to the consumer plea for help in finding information about colleges in an easy, one-stop site. I'm happy to be able to recommend it as a resource."

— Martha O'Connell, Executive Director, Colleges That Change Lives

Visit the new CCIC website at www.theccic.org for data, news, and campus information.

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Connecticut College opens LGBTQ Resource Center on Campus

The Connecticut College community recently celebrated the opening of a new campus resource center for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, queer and questioning students, faculty, staff and their allies and friends.

The center serves the unique needs of LGBTQ students by providing a supportive space, resource library, social events and educational programming on issues related to sexuality and gender identity.

"The LGBTQ Resource Center is a positive step forward in our campus effort to provide a more systemic support system for students who may feel disenfranchised. Unity House has long been a consistent and welcoming place focused on issues of multiculturalism. Now this new center is available for education, advocacy and community building for the LGBTQ community," said Armando Bengochea, Dean of the College Community.

The LGBTQ Resource Center is located in a corner of Burdick House, a residence hall directly across from the library. Bright yellow curtains, funky green and blue walls and vivid red couches bring a sense of energy and excitement to this room which will serve as a safe space and resource center for the campus.

The center is part of Connecticut College's commitment to understanding how homophobia and heterosexism interlink with sexism, racism, and classism to perpetuate oppression. The center also serves as a resource for the entire College Community to learn about issues related to sexuality and gender identity.

Two established campus groups are each meeting weekly in the Center. CQ2, Connecticut



"Connecticut College students, faculty and staff celebrate the opening of the College's LGBTQ Resource Center."

College Queer & Questioning, aims to build a supportive community for LGBTQ students, and its members meet to build social and community ties as well as to support each other in dealing with the obstacles that arise while coming out and being out. Spectrum: Gender & Sexuality Alliance aims to improve the quality of life for LGBTQ students on campus and works toward ending homophobia through education and advocacy.

In addition to these regular meetings, the LGBTQ Resource Center has, since its opening in the spring, been used for art exhibits, discussions, workshops and more.

Most recently leaders at the Center have reached out to faculty and staff on campus inviting them to self-identify as allies to the College's LGBTQ community.

"It is especially helpful for first year students or those just coming out to readily identify faculty and staff on campus who are knowledgeable about LGBTQ issues and support LGBTQ equality," said Jennifer Manion, visiting professor of history and director of the LGBTQ Resource Center.

Each semester, the LGBTQ Resource Center will hold a 90-minute workshop for faculty and staff allies to update them on the latest issues facing the LGBTQ community, answer questions, and help everyone involved learn how to be effective allies for Connecticut College students.

The center is open Monday through Friday, from 1 p.m. to midnight, and Sunday, from 4 p.m. to midnight.

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Online Review Courses in Anatomy & Physiology and Microbiology Offered at St. Vincent's College

St. Vincent's College is now offering online review courses in Anatomy & Physiology and Microbiology through a grant from the Connecticut Department of Higher Education, Health and Education Initiatives. The courses are open to all students in colleges throughout the country in an effort to retain students in nursing, radiography and allied health programs.

The review courses are designed for students who have already completed their anatomy & physiology and

St. Vincent's

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microbiology courses, but need to brush up on the material before beginning clinical studies or taking licensing examinations. Nursing and Radiography students in particular can benefit from these courses.

The Anatomy & Physiology course will review all of the material from an eight-credit curriculum and contain information on the content categories and subcategories tested on nursing and radiography exams. The course will also contain units in genetics, radiochemistry, and immunology.

The Microbiology unit will review the content of a four-credit microbiology course and will contain content in lifecycles of microorganisms, infectious disease processes, nosocomial infections, disease prevention, handling hazardous and infectious materials, epidemiology, organisms implicated in bioterrorism, laboratory tests and all material tested on the NCLEX-RN exam.

Susan McReynolds Capasso, Ed.D., CGC, Professor of Science and Chair of the General Studies Program at St. Vincent's College, said that a limited number of slots in nursing programs and long waiting lists across the state have led to many students taking their science courses up to five years before they enter their clinical studies.

"During this time students often forget important scientific concepts and

St. Vincent's (cont. on p. 3)





St. Vincent's

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content, and as a result find it difficult to succeed in clinical courses and licensing exams," Capasso said. "We believe the course reviews are critical to their success and will have a positive impact on the nursing shortage."

Capasso said the "time lapse" between taking science courses and clinical studies is a result of the shortage of qualified nursing faculty at a time when an increased number of students wish to pursue health care careers.

She said the review courses are expected to raise both retention and licensure exam success rates, particularly for many of the students who are "non-traditional adult learners" pursuing health care careers while working and supporting their families.

Nursing schools around the U.S. were unable to accept more than 41,000 qualified applicants in 2005 because they did not have the faculty to teach them.

"It is therefore critical to retain those students currently enrolled as well as those preparing to enter nursing programs, Capasso said. We're grateful for the state grant and we believe it will help ensure the success of these students".

St. Vincent's first introduced online education in 2006. Dr. Capasso, who is teaching the courses, currently teaches an online human biology course at St. Vincent's. She has also developed an online introductory biology course in addition to teaching anatomy & physiology and microbiology in

the traditional classroom setting. Dr. Capasso is a certified genetics counselor, teacher, researcher and textbook author.

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Rensselaer at Hartford's Summer Computer Challenge "Goes Green"



The Peabody Museum of Natural History.

Rensselaer at Hartford's 27th annual Summer Computer Challenge was held July 9 through August 3, serving children in the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades from three Hartford area elementary schools: Barnard-Brown, Burr, and SAND. Thirty-five students were involved in the free program designed to increase computer literacy and research skills. The children interact creatively through hands-on computer learning. The computer software used during the program focuses on the integration of language arts, reading, writing, and mathematics skills.

The theme for this year's program was "Go Green!" and the children created projects exploring the environment, energy, and conservation, including an examination of

Rensselaer continued...

the "paper vs. plastic" issue. The students learned and applied their knowledge in their Internet research, writing assignments, and report projects. Bruce Piper of Russell's Creative Global Cuisine, presented a workshop for the students about "going green" in relation to health, nutrition, and food preparation.

Students used *UltraKey* to develop and improve typing skills. Practicing exercises with this software allowed the children to track their typing accuracy and the number of



The New England Air Museum

words per minute typed. Other software programs included *Kid Pix Studio*, *Graphers*, and *The Oregon Trail*. The *Kid Pix* program integrates pictures with text, while *Graphers* teaches students how to gather data and create graphs to illustrate the data, and *The Oregon Trail* program helps students to understand the challenges and consequences that the westward settlers faced through game-style interaction with ongoing decision-making. In addition, *Microsoft Word* and *Microsoft PowerPoint* were utilized by the children for lessons on writing and creating presentations.



The USS Nautilus

Field trips to fun and educational destinations rounded out the program. Classroom learning was integrated with the field trips by students conducting research on the Web and using materials and the knowledge gained during the field trips to prepare papers and presentations. This year, the children had the opportunity to experience the Peabody Museum of Natural History in New Haven; the U.S. Navy Submarine Force Museum, home of USS Nautilus, in Groton; the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London; and the New England Air Museum in Windsor Locks.

Rensselaer is grateful to numerous individuals and organizations for their support and commitment to the program. This year's Summer Computer Challenge was made possible by generous contributors including: the Aetna Foundation; the Bank of America Charitable Foundation; the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving; and the Knox Foundation. In addition, the program would like to acknowledge catering by Russell's Creative Global Cuisine.

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Capital Projects Thrive at UB

This year, the University of Bridgeport celebrates its 80th Anniversary, and capital projects are the enterprise de jour. With assistance from increased giving and government grants, UB is undergoing numerous transformation projects throughout this celebratory year.

The Fones School of Dental Hygiene is moving to a new clinic. This project was supported by private contributions as well as two State of Connecticut grants totaling \$1 million. "I am very excited about the new Fones School Clinic. The school is continually being recognized as a leader in the world of dental hygiene," said Marcia H.

Lorentzen, RDH, MEd, Director of Clinical Affairs. The 30 chair educational facility serves over 1500 patients per year throughout the region.

The UB men's and women's soccer teams have a brand new home, from which to kick-off the 07' season, Knights Field. There will be plenty of seating for fans, a press box, as well as light towers for night games. The field is world-cup size, the first of its kind in the East

Coast Conference. It uses the latest innovation in synthetic playing surfaces, FieldTurf. Freshman Defender Nick Campbell was amazed by what he saw. "The field is nice and when the stands and lights are installed, it will all come together. I play on the ball, and the surface allows you to be more technical."



The Connecticut Health and Educational Facilities Authority (CHEFA) approved a \$21.2 million tax-exempt bond issuance to UB. Several projects earmarked are the renovation of Mandeville Hall, home to UB's School of Business, the extension of the IT Information Center network and the renovation of the library's main floor with a "Learning Commons."

Through a generous donation by Mrs. Henry B. duPont III, the duPont Tower

Room, one of the grandest views along the Connecticut shoreline, has been renovated in both interior design and audio visual technology. In similar stride, UB plans to renovate the Arnold Bernhard Arts and Humanities Center with a restored theater, sunken garden and modern facilities for community arts.

"This is an exciting time. The University's enrollment has grown 18% this year. It is our hope that the greater Bridgeport area can incorporate their activities with these new facilities," said University President Neil Albert Salonen. While sounds of heavy machinery and

construction tools fill the air, students and faculty welcome the transformation.

CCIC wishes you Happy Holidays!



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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The Independent Voice follows a regular rotation schedule featuring four of the seventeen member institutions in each quarterly issue.

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