



## CATCH UP CORNER

UConn Early College Experience reached a milestone this past Fall, now serving more than 10,000 students at 165 high schools statewide. Students are offered more than fifty UConn courses in twenty disciplines.

In response to the continued growth in enrollment, the UConn ECE office will be working with the Registrar's office to improve processes and streamline registration in the years to come. It is our hope to have an easy-to-use online registration form available to students and parents in 2014. In the meantime, we thank you all for your patience while we work through our growing pains!

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A NEWSLETTER FOR THE  
UConn ECE COMMUNITY

HIGHLIGHTS  
WINTER 2013

## ECE Teacher Travels to South Africa

By Karen Cordero, UCONN ECE ENVIRO instructor, Bolton High School

A few years ago my principal at Bolton High School came to me and asked, "Karen, how would you like to teach a UConn ECE Environmental course?" After 22 years of teaching the same ole same ole, I said "Absolutely"!

The UConn ECE workshop and preparations for the course challenged me to find more meaningful, real-life experiences to include in the curriculum. Dr. Morty Ortega, the faculty coordinator of the ECE Natural Resources and the Environment program, hosted several professional development sessions and has observed me several times in the classroom. I admire his passion for the environment and desire to allow his students to experience the many different biomes that he has traveled to. When he mentioned that he was looking for a high school teacher to accompany his group of UConn students in his African Ecology course to South Africa, I never thought twice. I said "Yes, without a doubt"! Even when I had a chance to think about leaving Bolton, my family and my summer vacation time, I did not hesitate! I attended Morty's Wednesday evening African Ecology classes from January to March, and met the eighteen UConn students who were traveling to the Entabeni Reserve in August. Morty and I dis-

cussed the possibility of bringing high school students to the reserve if the program deemed fit for juniors and seniors. My plan was to participate in all of the Entabeni Guide Training programs just as the students did, then decide whether the program was adequate for high school students.

The trip was amazing! We camped in the middle of the Savannah, truly roughing it. We went on over forty game drives in twenty-one days. We learned how to track wildlife, identify habitats, hold snakes (even cobras), and locate and identify scorpions. We got certified in CPR, first aid and Bushveld first aid and went spelunking through three amazing caves. We studied bats, birds and Bushveld vegetation. And after twenty-one absolutely awe inspiring days we decided that this is definitely an experience that is worthy of high school juniors and seniors. I presented my trip to my students and the Bolton Community with the hopes that I can recruit up to eighteen students for a fourteen day trip of my own to South Africa in the summer of 2014.

*The UConn ECE office is thrilled to have this opportunity to work with the Entabeni Reserve and hopes the partnership can become a permanent part of the program.*



**Above, Karen Cordero, a UCONN ECE instructor from Bolton High School at the Entabeni Reserve in South Africa**

## It's about the students, really.

**By Brian A. Boecherer, Associate Director of UConn ECE**

"Why does UConn run this program?" It is not uncommon for me to hear this question when I visit a new high school looking to partner with UConn ECE. The first time I heard it, eight years ago, I was taken aback. Isn't it obvious? We want your students to have a leg-up and succeed in college no matter where they attend." Sometimes that answer falls flat. After I tell principals, guidance counselors, and instructors about the credits and advantages in the college admissions process, I start to talk about the student and faculty access to the library and academic conferences. Yes, conferences for students and faculty. This is when the conversation starts to be convincingly genuine.

In the central office, we know that rigorous coursework is the keystone to UConn ECE. But a bridge is not just a keystone; you need extensions. Last October, like every Fall since the 1990's, UConn ECE and the French Department hosted the French Immersion Day and Quiz Bowl Competi-

tion. To me, this student event never gets old. Ninety to a hundred UConn ECE students, on campus, speaking French, walking around campus (occasionally getting lost), and competing in a Jeopardy-style French Quiz Bowl for huge shiny trophies. Finally, academic competition for the fun of it! We run student conferences because it inspires lust for higher learning. Incidentally, it is fun for more than just the students. People who love learning, want others to love learning. Karim Mabrouk, third-year doctoral student in French has been offering immersion classes for us for over two years. "As an instructor, the [UConn ECE] students' excitement from the day's activities is absolutely refreshing", he observes.

This Spring we will be running the 6th annual Globalization Conference on the Stamford Campus. (Yes, it has huge trophies that tower over high school football trophies. The bigger the better. I love visiting a high school and the front office is cluttered with trophies, especially when they are educational.) In the years to come, we are discussing a STEM conference. Although

these things take time, resources, and planning, they serve a vital purpose: academic socialization, self-motivated learning, you name it. Besides student conferences, we are very proud of our faculty development. Not only are we expanding our annual discipline workshops, but also we are in our third year of offering a three-day Biology Summer Institute. And for several years now Tom Recchio, the ECE English faculty coordinator, has been offering an annual writing conference for his instructors. It used to be nicknamed, the "English mini-conference". That is a euphemism now as fifty-plus ECE instructors regularly attend. Now that the large NACEP conference is out of our system (remember Mystic 2011!), we are back to offering a regional conference on concurrent enrollment. Reminder: hold May 29th on your calendar for our regional conference.

So, why do we do it? Well, as part of the UConn ECE community, why do you do it? It's about the academic community, the faculty, the departments, and the outreach. But it's about the students, really.

## UConn ECE Wins 2012 NACEP Research Grant

The UConn ECE and Office of Early College Programs is proud to announce funding for a new project that will advance interest in improving the transferability of concurrent enrollment credits. As winners of the 2012 NACEP Small Grant Competition, Magdalena Narozniak and Brian A. Boecherer, will investigate the credit transfer frequency of UConn ECE credits to higher education institutions all over Northern America. The successful transfer of credits is a common concern

among students, parents, program administrators, and policymakers. Data will be collected on the type of credit earned and rejected, transfer policy, student experience during the transfer process, demographics of participating higher education institutions, and the perception of concurrent enrollment among higher education administrators. The researchers hope that an evidence based understanding of concurrent enrollment credit transfer could inform policymakers and program

administrators toward data-driven action. If you have any questions about this project, please contact the ECE office by emailing [ece@uconn.edu](mailto:ece@uconn.edu).



## ECE Office Grows and Welcomes New Staff Members



Wendi Richardson



Magdalena Narozniak



Jessica Parker

The UConn ECE office would like to introduce, and welcome our newest staff members: Mrs. Wendi Richardson, Ms. Magdalena Narozniak, and Ms. Jessica Parker.

We are very excited to welcome Wendi, Magda, and Jessica into brand new positions with the Office of Early College Programs. While expanding the program to reach more high school students, we are also expanding our office staff with these extremely talented individuals.

**Wendi Richardson** joins the ECE office as the Director of Enrollment Operations and as Assistant Director for the Office of Early College Programs. Wendi is responsible for managing student registration and other administrative activities such as fund raising and event coordination. Wendi has many years business manage-

ment experience and has earned her Bachelor's degree as a returning adult through the University of Connecticut's Bachelor of General Studies program.

**Magdalena Narozniak** is the Program Assistant for Research and Development and assists in the planning, development, and evaluation of program objectives and activities. Besides conducting studies and preparing analytical reports, Magda serves as a resource for staff and others regarding program information and research on concurrent enrollment partnerships. She is also a primary contact person for developing programs at the high school level. Magda earned her Bachelor's Degree from Fordham University in Political Science and International/Intercultural Studies and her Master's Degree from

Jacobs University (Bremen, Germany) in International Relations, with a focus on qualitative and quantitative statistical analysis.

**Jessica Parker** is the Program Assistant for the Office of Early College Programs and the Registration Specialist for UConn ECE. Jessica is responsible for managing the student registration process, and providing program and administrative support to ECE students and affiliates. Jessica attended the University of Connecticut where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and Human Development and Family Studies.

*It is with great excitement that we welcome our newest three staff members to the UConn ECE family!*

## Regional Concurrent Enrollment Conference to be held at UConn

UConn ECE and NACEP will co-sponsor a regional conference on May 29, 2013 in the Student Union Ballroom on the Storrs Campus. This conference will showcase successful partnerships and state initiatives that provide pathways for students to

navigate the transition from high school to college. Highlights of the conference include a welcome from UConn past president, Philip Austin, keynote speaker, Nicholas Donohue, President & CEO, Nellie Mae Education Foundation, and a panel

discussion featuring members of the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE). All members of UConn community are welcome to attend. For more information about the conference, please contact Wendi Richardson at (860)486-0702.

## UConn ECE Undergoes NACEP Reaccreditation in 2013

UConn ECE program will be undergoing reaccreditation with NACEP (National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships) during 2013. All of our materials will be submitted by July 31, 2013, but the earliest that reaccreditation would be awarded is April 2014.

NACEP reaccreditation is a self study based on NACEP standards (see [www.nacep.org](http://www.nacep.org)), which UConn ECE instructors and partner high schools are familiar with to a great extent.

Our application will follow a well-defined protocol of evidence for each standard, and will undergo a peer review by a NACEP-appointed review team. Our ECE faculty coordinators will assist in providing essential evidence for many of the standards, but our administrative team also keeps documentation annually in compliance with the standards. It is possible that some of our instructors in the high schools will be asked to provide specific evidence in support of our application, but this will be done on a timely

basis. Director Gillian Thorne and Associate Director Brian A. Boecher have both served on peer review accreditation teams for other programs, which is helpful now that we are going through the process ourselves.

We are proud of our affiliation with NACEP. The reaccreditation process is quite valuable in developing, shaping, and refining credible and accountable academically rigorous concurrent enrollment programs.



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## UConn ECE Calendar of Events & Deadlines

In an effort to keep the UConn ECE community informed of upcoming events, we have provided a list of scheduled professional development opportunities and important deadlines. All events will take place on the UConn Storrs campus unless otherwise noted.

Formal invitations and agendas will be sent to instructors approximately two months before the event date. The UConn ECE program office staff looks forward to welcoming you to campus!

**February 12, 2013**

Advisory Board Meeting  
*Nathan Hale Coventry Room*

**February 26, 2013**

Site Representative Conference  
*Student Union Ballroom*

**March 7, 2013**

Italian Workshop

**March 8, 2013**

Spanish Workshop

**March 8, 2013**

Horticulture Workshop  
*Northeast Floral Expo*

<http://www.northeastfloralexpo.com/handouts.htm>

**March 22, 2013**

Physics Workshop

**March 29, 2013**

Medieval Workshop  
*North Reading Room, Wilbur Cross*

**March 31, 2013**

**Instructor Certification Application Deadline**

**April 3, 2013**

Biotech Workshop  
*New Haven at StemConn Conference*  
<http://www.stemconn.org/>

**April 4, 2013**

Biology Workshop

**April 25, 2013**

French Workshop

**May 13, 2013**

Statistics Workshop

**May 16, 2013**

Chemistry Workshop

**May 29, 2013**

NACEP Regional Conference  
*Student Union Ballroom*

**June 5, 2013**

New Instructor Orientation

**June 15, 2013**

**Student Registration Deadline**

Please contact the Early College Experience Office for more information on upcoming events.