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The 2006-2007 Projects

A key feature of the HESA experience is the year-long assessment course and the corresponding research component. This year, four groups spent the year examining a specific issue on campus, and on April 24 presented the findings from their projects to their project sponsors, members of the UConn faculty and staff, and other students.

This year’s assessment projects worked with four unique campus organizations, including the Senior Year Experience, Community Standards, Dining Services, and the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life. Each project featured a unique purpose, including:

- Determining traditionally-aged seniors’ patterns of involvement, their perception of support received from the University, and their learning preferences at the University of Connecticut.

- Assessing the student perceptions of academic integrity at the University of Connecticut, Storrs Campus.

- Examining perceptions of undergraduate students living in on-campus apartment-style residence halls with regard to their general attitudes towards dining services and meal plan options.

- Exploring the perceptions of members of social Greek letter organizations (SGLOs) in regards to their experience with Husky Village.

Many students agreed the process was one of the most challenging and beneficial experiences they’d faced.

Interview Days 2007
Finding our new students

After receiving a record number of applications, the HESA program admissions committee worked hard to select a group of candidates to bring to the 4th Annual UConn HESA Interview Days, held March 1 and 2.

A wet, wintry welcome mat was laid out for the 44 candidates as they arrived at the Storrs campus. The potential students were treated to two days of information, interviews, and good times!

The candidates were able to tour the campus and meet current students before an informational session led by program directors Dr. John Saddlemire and Dr. Sam Miller, as well as program coordinator, Dr. Sue Saunders.
With a big day ahead, the candidates were then given the choice of attending a social, hosted by UCSAA held in the Asian American Cultural Center, or retiring for the night to rest and prepare for their big day of interviews.

While the traditional “interview weekend snowstorm” didn’t materialize, the day was not without its precipitation. Umbrellas and galoshes were the accessories of choice for the prepared participant, and some early interviews took place with at least one soggy participant. Representatives from offices and programs from around the campus chatted with potential students about their experiences, goals, and attitudes, with 16 offices or programs looking for new graduate assistants and eight faculty members hoping to gauge candidates’ perceptions and preparedness.

When the dust settled, over 300 individual interviews had transpired, and the groundwork had been laid for the Higher Education & Student Affairs class of 2009.
Rita Bottoni

*Hometown:* Arlington, MA

*Undergraduate Institution:* Salem State College

*Major:* Psychology

*Assistantship:* Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Services

Hi everybody! My name is Rita Bottoni and I am from Arlington, Massachusetts.

I was originally interested in counseling psychology but my undergraduate involvement in student government and residence life has helped me realize my passion for student affairs.

I am so excited for the start of my journey in Higher Education and someday hope to become the president of a university. I can’t wait to become a Husky and to be a part of the HESA cohort ’09.

Jeff Carter

*Hometown:* Meriden, CT

*Undergraduate Institution:* University of Delaware

*Major:* History

*Assistantship:* Center for Students with Disabilities

Hi I’m Jeff Carter born and raised in Meriden, Connecticut. I did my undergraduate work at the University of Delaware and graduated with a B.A. in history as well as minors in political science and women’s studies.

I first became involved in student affairs through various leadership positions in on-campus organizations. I have also spent two years as a Resident Assistant and worked in the University Advisement Center for undeclared undergraduates.

My passions are diversity and social justice and activism which I hope to use and expand upon in my time at UConn. I also hope to find new experiences in student affairs that will help me decide what role I want to take as a professional in the field. I am very excited about returning to my home state, starting at UConn in the fall, and getting to know everyone in the program.

Kate Daniel

*Hometown:* Sioux Center, IA

*Undergraduate Institution:* Georgia Southern University

*Major:* International Studies

*Assistantship:* Community Standards

Life is like the river. I use this cliché because the river has been my life this past year in working for a whitewater rafting company, and I have learned so much from it. My time on the river has given me a chance to think about my career aspirations and my desire to
emulate the wonderful mentors I had at Georgia Southern.

I am realizing that there are certain things on the river that you cannot change—rocks, rapids, strainers—but there is the path in which you paddle down the river that you have the ability to control. Similarly, in student affairs there are the things we cannot control; however, it is my hope to follow the lead of my mentors to change what I can in order to shape and encourage the next generation of students. Paddle on!

Kendra Darigan

_Home Town:_ West Chester, PA

_Undergraduate Institution:_ West Chester University of Pennsylvania

_Major:_ Professional Studies

_Assistantship Location:_ Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life

As an undergraduate at West Chester University, my opportunities as Leadership Consultant, Student Government Senator, Residence Assistant, Orientation Leader, Pan-Hellenic Executive Board member and overall active student leader fueled my passion for student involvement and development.

Upon graduation from WCU in 2005 I accepted the position as Chapter Services Director at the International Headquarters of Delta Phi Epsilon Sorority. Working with over 60 women’s groups across the country confirmed my dream to obtain a graduate degree in Higher Education in order to contribute as an active member of a stimulating academic community, serving and assisting undergraduates along their life journeys.

I am thrilled to be setting off to the cooler weather of New England to pursue my master’s degree and my future in Higher Education at UConn! Go Huskies!

Pat Duffy

_Home Town:_ Hillsborough, NJ

_Undergraduate Institution:_ University of Denver

_Major:_ Marketing

_Assistantship Location:_ Career Services

My name is Pat Duffy and I am originally from Hillsborough, NJ, a small little hamlet located almost dead-center in the middle of the state. I graduated in June, 2006 from the University of Denver (DU) with a BSBA in Marketing. And for the past year, I was working at DU as Apartments Coordinator for Housing and Residential Education.

I am really excited to be joining the HESA program this year. The things that attracted me to HESA were the small size of the program but the larger size of the campus population. I also liked the focus that was placed on hands-on learning and experience for all of the students. I started my Assistantship in Career Services on Aug 1st and am still getting my feet wet. Learning a brand new system of how to get things done is a little overwhelming but I am looking forward to it and everything else UConn has to offer over the next two years.
Hi everyone! My name is Liz Green and I am originally from Lowell, Massachusetts. I completed my undergraduate experience at College of the Holy Cross, where I majored in History and minored in being an over-involved student leader.

At Holy Cross, I had the opportunity to be involved in various capacities within the areas of student activities, leadership, orientation, residence life, multicultural education, admissions, counseling center and community service. It was through these experiences that I developed a passion for and interest in college student development and student affairs work. My involvement with HC's campus activities board is what first sparked my interest in student affairs, so I'm very excited to be working closely with SUBOG as part of my graduate assistantship in UConn's Programs Office! Looking to the future, I can see myself working in various capacities within student affairs. My ultimate goal is to serve as Dean of Students or Vice President of Student Affairs.

I am extremely excited about being a Husky, meeting my cohort, and starting my journey into student affairs! See you in the fall!

For application information for the HESA program, visit http://hesa.uconn.edu/ for the latest news and updates about our requirements and admissions process!
Hi everyone! My name is Kenny Importante. I was born in the Philippines and moved to Oxnard California when I was 10 years old. I did my undergrad at the University of California Santa Barbara, where I majored in History and Global Studies.

My experiences include Res Life, Apartment Living, and Student Life. I currently serve as the Assistant Resident Director at UCSB, where I am gaining a lot of knowledge on working with students. My passion in life is to educate people on equal access to higher education, social justice, and developing student leaders.

I never really considered a career in student affairs until around time for my graduation in May of 2006, which was too late to start school in the fall of 06. Instead I tried the whole corporate thing out and decided it was not for me and decided to pursue graduate school.

I am excited to be a part of the whole UConn HESA experience and look forward to learning as much as possible from everyone during our two years together.

Members of the Classes of 2007 and 2008 volunteering for UConn’s famed Midnight
Stephanie Muehlethaler

Hometown: Bern, Switzerland
Undergraduate Institution: Wilfrid Laurier University
Major: English and Psychology
Assistantship Location: Senior Year Experience

Hello everyone, I’m Stephanie Muehlethaler and I’m originally from Bern Switzerland, now living in Goderich, Ontario, right on Lake Huron. I went to Wilfrid Laurier University and studied English and Psychology, with a minor in History.

Since graduating in 2005 I have been working for Wilfrid Laurier as a recruitment officer and admissions assistant, as well as working for a camp in Switzerland for the summers. I also spent a contract working on a cruise ship.

I’m a country girl at heart, and I love peanut butter, Harry Potter, hockey, and Coldplay. I look forward to the good times, random road-trips and everything in between!

Erin McClellan

Hometown: Abington, MA
Undergraduate Institution: Springfield College
Major: Rehabilitation and Disability Studies
Assistantship Location: Office of Orientation Services

“The things you’re scared of are usually the most worthwhile.” A quote that I strongly believe in and is true of my experiences up to this point in my life. I originally hail from Abington, Massachusetts, but for the past four years I have called Springfield College my home.

By taking risks and joining organizations, I fell into the field of Higher Education. My experiences with New Student Organization, Student Government Association, and Vice President of my class, along with many others, gave me the insight into a career path that I never even knew existed.

Outside of my campus life I love to travel, spend time with my best friends, and line dance. Over the years I have had the opportunity to go to some amazing places and meet many amazing people along the way. Each of these people has helped to touch my life in a very different way making me the person I am today. I hope that I can help students achieve the leader within them just like my friends, family, and others have done for me.
John Pepin

Hometown: Rochester, MA
Undergraduate Institution: Stonehill College
Major: Spanish
Assistantship Location: Residential Life

My name is John Pepin, but most people just call me "Pep." I'm from Rochester, Massachusetts, which is a small town about a half hour west of Cape Cod, and I have a huge family in southern Mass, so even going to Connecticut is somewhat of a stretch for me. I was first bit with the student affairs bug when I went on an alternative spring break trip in March 2005 to work with students from the Bronx who were learning Math, English and computer skills to pass the GED test and look for better jobs. Ever since that week, I've known that working with students in higher education is something that I am quite passionate about. I went back to the Bronx this spring break to do the same thing, but with high school students from foreign countries.

I graduated with a Bachelor's in Spanish from Stonehill College in Easton, MA, where I've been an RA for the past 3 years. I love music, and I play the guitar and piano (I try to always have some sort of instrument handy). That's pretty much my life in a nutshell, and I'm wicked excited to move in to my apartment in July to begin my graduate assistantship with Residential Life as a Graduate Hall Director.

Christine Noonan

Hometown: Long Island, NY
Undergraduate Institution: SUNY Oneonta
Major: Psychology
Assistantship Location: Academic Center for Exploratory Students

Well hello! My name is Christine Noonan, and I am from Long Island, NY. I recently graduated from the State University of New York (SUNY) College at Oneonta in May of 2007 with a B.S. in Psychology. During my time at Oneonta I got my feet wet in a plethora of activities ranging from becoming a resident advisor, tour guide, President of our National Residence Hall Honorary, serving on the Northeast Affiliate of College and University Residence Hall's (NEACURH) Regional Board of Directors, and orientation leader just to name a few.

My involvement with these activities, and the people who influenced me along the way such as my advisors and supervisors helped me find my passion in Student Affairs. These people have made a monumental impact in my life, and I am thrilled to be attending UCONN to receive my master's and aspire to make a similar impact on the lives of future students.

While I am very sad that I will no longer be an Oneonta Red Dragon, I am excited to begin my stint as a Husky working for the Academic Center for Exploratory Students!
Ravi Prasad

*Hometown: North Haven, CT*

*Undergraduate Institution: Brown University*

*Major: English*

*Assistantship Location: Off Campus Student Services*

Ravi Prasad is delighted to join the HESA program. In the past few years, Ravi has worked in many student life positions. Most recently, he volunteered in the Office of Community Service at Lesley University where he advised two student groups, forged community partnerships, organized alternative spring break trips, and managed publicity as part of a year with AmeriCorp and Massachusetts Campus Compact.

Previously, Ravi worked as a Leadership Fellow, backpacking instructor, and residence counselor at Brown University -- also his undergraduate institution.

Through HESA Ravi continues to work towards his goal: to someday implement a college program involving leadership development, community service, and outdoor skills. Until then, Ravi can be found at his favorite past-times: interacting with students, running programs, and relaxing in trees.

Chelsea Rayome

*Hometown: Livermore, CA*

*Undergraduate Institution: UC-Davis*

*Major: Managerial Economics*

*Assistantship Location: Peer Education*

Hello! My name is Chelsea Rayome and I'm originally from Livermore California. I studied at the University of California Davis and graduated in 2003. While there I was involved with summer advising, campus tours and was a student manager for an event facility on campus named Freeborn Hall where I helped with concerts, banquets, fairs and many student programs.

After graduating, I decided I wasn't ready for the real world and ran away to Australia. While working and living in Oz for 6 months, I learned not only how to eat vegemite without gagging but also that I really missed the world of student affairs. After returning to the US I found myself back at UCD and working at Freeborn again. After working there for 3 years, I've come to the realization that I love working with and encouraging students! I can't wait to get going at UConn in the fall and am excited to see where the world of student affairs takes me.
Marisa Sullivan

Hometown: Long Island, NY

Undergraduate Institution: Western New England College

Major: Psychology

Assistantship Location: Leadership Development

Hi! My name is Marisa Sullivan and I am originally from Long Island. I graduated from Western New England College, New England’s “hidden gem,” in Springfield, Massachusetts. Coming from an undergraduate population of about 2,300 students, UCONN will be quite the adjustment as I won’t know the first, middle and last name of almost every person I walk by on campus.

I have explored several career options since entering my undergraduate institution including becoming a zoologist, an environmental lawyer, forensic psychologist and a physiological psychologist. As I struggled to find my career path, I spent most of my time working with first year students, various leadership development programs, first year athletes and I was the captain and goalkeeper of the Women’s Soccer team. Eventually I came to the realization just prior to my senior year as I worked as an Orientation Group Leader, that I had already found my career niche in Higher Education. I want to be able to guide students to find their true potential and help them to exceed their own expectations, just as I was able to. My assistantship is in Leadership Development and

I’m really excited for the challenges it will present and the experience I will gain!

I hope to use my experience at UCONN to pursue a doctorate in the future and become a Dean of First Year Students or Dean of Students. But I’m open to new experiences and perhaps a new focus within Higher Education because that is what led me here! On a side note I am thoroughly obsessed with Will Ferrell and I use the word phenomenal whenever possible!

Faces & Places

HESA’s Visits and Visitors for 2006-2007

For the 2006-2007 school year, the students in the HESA program were fortunate to travel to local colleges and universities and to play host to several student affairs professionals from various fields and institutions.

HESA students had an early opportunity to hear from an influential member of the student affairs community as UConn’s First Year Programs office brought George Kuh, Ph.D., to the campus in July for the UConn FYE/ECE Conference. Dr. Kuh addressed student engagement and preparation.

Visitors dotted the campus again in September for the Inaugural Pivotal Publications Colloquium. With keynote speaker Dr. Elizabeth Whitt discussing the strategies and tactics demonstrated at our nation’s most exceptional universities, the stage was set for numerous questions and answers from several leaders in the field of student affairs, including Dr. Whitt, Dr. Linda Clement, Vice President for Student Affairs at the University of Maryland, Dr. Dennis Roberts, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs at Miami University, and our own Dean of Students Dr. Lee Burdette Williams.
The UConn Student Affairs Association arranged a major trip for the HESA program for the last week of the Fall semester. On December 13, the HESA program was fortunate to visit with a conglomeration of student affairs professionals on two distinctly different campuses.

Beginning the day on the suburban grounds of Brandeis University, HESA students were able to tour the unique institution and hear from a panel of the school’s student affairs staff. The panel members shared some of the unique challenges and opportunities present at the Waltham, MA campus. With HESA students from diverse educational backgrounds, the exposure to a small, private institution was beneficial to our students who matriculated at large, public universities. The panel discussion featured members of the staff at every level of experience and knowledge, so students received information from multiple angles and inclinations.

The trip's second stop introduced the HESA students to faculty and staff from Boston University and Northeastern University, with a luncheon hosted in the heart of Northeastern University's Alumni Center. The students also had the opportunity to meet and mingle with their peers from the College Student Development and Counseling program at Northeastern University.

After the luncheon, students were treated to a walking tour of some of the key areas of Northeastern University's downtown campus. Contrasting with the pastoral UConn campus, students were intrigued by the nature of student affairs work in one of the Nation's largest cities.

Special attention was also paid to Northeastern University’s top-ranked Co-op program, with students and faculty addressing the unique needs and concerns that are associated with the program, which allows students to spend a semester working with industry leaders. Residence life concerns, engagement issues, and transition assistance all appear to play major roles in assisting the Co-op program's effectiveness.

On February 26, the class of 2008 was able to visit with the student affairs staff at Springfield College, in Springfield, Mass. Springfield’s Vice President for Student Affairs David Braverman played host to the 16 students, scheduling break-out sessions in departments and offices across the campus. HESA students were able to meet with representatives from offices including Campus Ministry, Student Volunteer Programs, Student Activities, the Career Center, the Counseling Center, the Student Health Center, and Residence Life. For some HESA students, this was their first experience with a school of this size, and most students were in agreement that Springfield College, and its staff, managed to both impress and captivate the HESA class of 2008.

While the 2006-2007 school year featured several exceptional visits and visitors, the students and staff of the HESA program are working hard to make sure the 2007-2008 school year is filled with even more beneficial events!

**Team Changes**

*A look at recent transitions in the HESA staff*

The staff of the HESA program has undergone several changes this year with valued staff members taking new positions outside the program and moving on to new destinations.

This summer, Program Co-Director Sam Miller accepted the position of Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, NC. While his lead-
ership is missed in the program, HESA is proud of his service at WCU. This summer also saw Sandy Bell, longtime professor and collaborator return to lead the Adult Learning program in the UConn Neag School of Education.

The HESA program was fortunate to add several staff members to enhance the learning opportunities for our students. Donna Korbel, director of the Center for Students with Disabilities, started the trend by joining the program in the spring as a professor for the course *Leading Toward a Multicultural Educational Environment*, an important class taken by our first-year students.

The class is designed to help students explore racial, ethnic, gender, ability, religion, sexual orientation, and cultural differences, and Donna is a natural fit for the class material as she works daily to assure University compliance with all relevant state and federal legislation regarding students with disabilities. To this end, Donna develops program services and oversees the development of University policies and procedures and participates in institutional committees to ensure inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all programs and services.

Fourth-generation educator Dr. George Allen joined the staff this fall as the professor of the year-long *Assessment in Higher Education* course. Students benefit from his four decades of research and service in the fields of education and psychology.

Todd C. Sullivan, director of the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life, and Cathy Cocks, director of Community Standards, joined the staff as assistant group coordinators for the program’s Senior Year Experience component. The duo work with our students as they prepare each week to lead groups of undergraduates through the Senior Year Experience. Todd and Cathy bring significant experience to their group discussions, and our students have surely seen their in-class facilitation experience immediately benefited by this exposure. In turn, this has benefited the seniors that our students are teaching.

Another great addition to our program is Dr. Christine Wilson, Associate Dean of Students and Director of Student Activities. Dr. Wilson is teaching our *Structured Group Interventions in Student Affairs* course, and brings a great sense of thoroughness and exposure to the class, as well as a wide catalog of workshops, team-builders, and ice-breakers built up from her years as Director of Student Activities at both UConn and the University of Baltimore, as well as from her tenure as the Memorial Union Assistant Director for Student Leadership at the University of Rhode Island.

The addition of Dr. Marie Saddlemire ensures our students are treated to an interesting and informative *Law, Ethics, and Decision-Making in Higher Education* course. Dr. Saddlemire’s experiences through research and study combined with her time as the Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs at Eastern Connecticut State University ensures that students have the opportunity to examine a unique presentation of the law and ethics that impact our profession.

Surely our students are prepared to gain a wealth of experience, information, and opportunity from these new staff members, but it may be our new search that proves to be the most beneficial for future students. Beginning in the fall, the HESA program will be exploring the options for bringing in a new full-time faculty member.

If you would like to learn more about the position or the search, please contact Sue Saunders at HESA@uconn.edu
Congratulations to our Class of 2007

Julie Betz  
**Hometown:** Belvidere, NJ  
**Undergraduate Institution:** Montclair State University  
**Current Employment:** Residence Life  
*William Patterson University*

Joshua Brandfon  
**Hometown:** Weston, FL  
**Undergraduate Institution:** Brandeis University  
**Current Employment:** Student Activities Business Office  
*University of Connecticut*

Kelly Duncan  
**Hometown:** Wilbraham, MA  
**Undergraduate Institution:** Western New England College  
**Current Employment:** Assistant Director of Student Programs - Orientation & New Student Programs  
*Millersville University*

Jennifer Johnson  
**Hometown:** East Rockaway, NY  
**Undergraduate Institution:** Quinnipiac University  
**Current Employment:** Coordinator of Student Activities and Orientation  
*Midwestern State University*

Amelia Lerner  
**Hometown:** Wilmette, IL  
**Undergraduate Institution:** Indiana University  
**Current Employment:** Division of Student Affairs  
*Mercer University*

Saben Littlefield  
**Hometown:** West Farmington, ME  
**Undergraduate Institution:** University of Maine at Farmington  
**Current Employment:** Residential Life  
*University of Maryland, Baltimore County*
If you are a graduate of the HESA program and have news to share with us, please visit http://hesa.uconn.edu/alumni.html where you’ll find a useful tool for submitting your information to the program! You can also find the latest news about other alumni, including new positions, achievements, and developments both personal and professional!