From left, U.S. Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, University at Albany President Kermit L. Hall, and Kevin O’Connor, CEO of Tech Valley Communications, at Innovations and Opportunities in Telecommunications: A Showcase of New York State’s Telecommunications Industry, a conference on trends in the telecommunications sector, at the UAlbany campus on Friday, March 10. Clinton moderated the conference. Sponsors for the event included New Jobs for New York, Inc., and the Center for Economic Growth.

Great Danes Put UAlbany on the Map

The UAlbany men’s basketball team had a great run this season, attracting national attention by playing in the first Division I tournament in school history. The Great Danes played a hard-fought game against second-ranked Connecticut in the first round of the NCAA tournament on March 17 before 19,990 fans at the Wachovia Center.

Marcus Williams shot 16 of his 21 points in the second half as UConn rallied for a 72 to 59 win over UAlbany. UAlbany (21-11) trailed 33-30 early in the second half before reeling off 13 unanswered points. Lucious Jordan, who had 12 points, hit a driving layup to put his team ahead. Jason Siggers beat the shot clock with a three-pointer from the left corner to give his team a 43-33 lead with 14:26 remaining.

The Great Danes, who earned their first NCAA appearance by winning both the America East regular-season and tournament crowns, pushed out to a 50-38 advantage when Jamar Wilson hit a pull-up jumper in the lane with 11:34 left. Wilson, the America East player of the year, finished with 19 points and six assists.

Connecticut (28-3) then showed why they are one of four number one seeds in this tournament, by ripping off 19 of the game’s next 19 points. Denham Brown, who had 17 points, hit two free throws to tie the contest at 52 apiece. Williams, who made 7-of-11 shots from the field and added eight assists, then drilled one of his five three-pointers to give his team the lead for good. Williams and Brown would each make a three-pointer that increased the margin to 66-55 with 2:40 to play.

“Down the stretch UConn was patient and raised their level of play,” said UAlbany coach Will Brown, whose team forced 17 Huskie turnovers, including 11 steals.

UConn’s Josh Boone had nine of his 13 points in the opening period. The Huskies, who have won two national championships in their history, shot 58.7 percent from the floor on 27-of-46 attempts. Kirsten Zooliner, a 7’1” senior, was the third UAlbany player in double figures with 12.

“We made it a point to really enjoy this experience,” said Brown. “I could not have been prouder as a coach for these kids. It’s amazing where they were and where they are now. The seniors have left their mark on this program.”

The University at Albany men’s basketball team gave an amazing effort in its first NCAA appearance. Above, Kirsten Zoellner (No. 12), and, at right, Jamar Wilson (No. 31).
President Kermit L. Hall congratulated recipients of the President’s Leadership Awards at a ceremony in the Campus Center Ballroom on Sunday, March 12. The awards recognize and reward students who have made significant contributions to enhance the quality of life at the University at Albany. Recipients have demonstrated a variety of accomplishments including extraordinary leadership, service, academic achievement, and involvement within the University community.

■ CNSE Center Generates $1.1 Billion Economic Impact

The Center for Advanced Technology in Nanomaterials and Nanoelectronics (CATN2) at the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering (CNSE) of the University at Albany has used $7 million in state investments to generate an economic impact of $1.1 billion, according to the New York State Office of Science, Technology, and Academic Research (NYSTAR). The most recent figures available from NYSTAR show that the CNSE CATN2 created 1,104 high-tech jobs and retained another 384 from 1997 through 2004. During that time, New York state invested $7 million in the center, which generated an overall economic impact of $1,116,734,848.

■ University at Albany Awarded Prestigious Ford Foundation Grant

Provost Susan Herbst has announced that the Ford Foundation selected the University at Albany from among 675 applicants in a national competition to promote pluralism and academic freedom on campus, and create a campus environment where “sensitive subjects can be discussed in a spirit of open scholarly inquiry, intellectual rigor and with respect for different viewpoints.”

The Difficult Dialogues Initiative seeks to nurture classroom environments that are vibrant and dynamic spaces where undergraduate students learn from difficult, but civil, dialogue. The project builds on the premise that dialogical engagement enables students to become thinkers who make informed judgments, responsible citizens who appreciate perspectives, and conscientious members of a global and pluralistic community who celebrate diversity in all its forms.

■ SUNY Day

President Kermit L. Hall, faculty, staff, and students met with New York State government leadership and the Capital Region legislative delegation on SUNY Day, March 7, to support the SUNY Chancellor’s Budget Request and highlight University needs. Topics discussed included: restoring proposed reductions to student financial aid to ensure access to higher education; providing additional operating support to fund campus academic improvements and improve services; funding additional faculty lines to improve graduate and undergraduate education and enhance research; supporting University capital needs to improve student recruitment, health and safety, and quality of life; and maintaining support for items already included for the SUNY system and the University at Albany in the 2006-07 Executive Budget. Two teams from UAlbany participated, and the president also participated in meetings with SUNY Chancellor Ryan’s team. All involved did an excellent job advocating for the University and SUNY as a whole, and legislative staff and members commended presenters, especially the students, on the clarity and effectiveness of their presentations.

■ Prestigious Research Initiative

Prestigious Ford Foundation Grant

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Lynne Tillman, professor and writer in residence in the Department of English, has received notification that she is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship. Guggenheim fellowships are awarded to “professionals who have demonstrated exceptional ability by publishing a significant body of work in the fields of natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and the creative arts, excluding the performing arts.” Tillman, a novelist, short story writer, and essayist, plans to start a new novel with the award funding. Her five novels include American Genius, a Comedy, soon to be released, No Lease on Life (1997), which was a New York Times Notable Book of 1998 and a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, Cast in Doubt (1992), Motion Sickness (1991), and Haunted Houses (1987).

The American Diabetes Association has awarded Assistant Professor of Biochemistry, Alex Shekhtman, $800,000 to study proteins in Type II diabetes. A team of researchers led by Shekhtman has developed a technique to observe protein interactions in living cells using nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy. Shekhtman heads the NMR Laboratory for Structural Biology at the new Life Sciences Research Building. His research is part of the Life Sciences Research Initiative, a comprehensive program to build excellence in education and research that will speed the pace of discoveries into the cause and cure of disease.