

## Eastern Alumna Chimamanda Adichie Named 2008 MacArthur Fellow



Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie '01 continues her winning ways. On Sept. 23, the Chicago-based John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation named Adichie a MacArthur Fellow for 2008, along with 24 other recipients. Each awardee will receive \$500,000 in “no strings attached” support over the next five years.

Adichie, winner of Eastern’s Distinguished Alumni Award in 2004, illuminates the complexities of human experience in her writing, inspired by events in her native Nigeria. She explores the intersection of the personal and the public by placing the intimate details of the lives of her characters within the larger social and political forces in contemporary Nigeria. Dividing her time over the last decade between the United States and Nigeria, she is widely appreciated for her stark yet balanced depiction of events in the post-colonial era.

“The MacArthur Fellows Program celebrates extraordinarily creative individuals who inspire new heights in human achievement,” said MacArthur Foundation President Jonathan Fanton. “With their boldness, courage and uncommon energy, this new group of Fellows — men and women of all ages in diverse fields — exemplifies the boundless nature of the human mind and spirit.”

In her most recent novel, “Half of a Yellow Sun,” published in 2006, Adichie unflinchingly portrays the horror and destruction of the civil war following the establishment of the Republic of Biafra. In humanizing the Biafran tragedy, Adichie’s novel has enriched conversation about the war within Nigeria while also offering insight into the circumstances that lead to ethnic conflict. A writer of great promise, Adichie’s powerful rendering of the Nigerian experience is enlightening audiences both in her homeland and around the world. Her short stories also have appeared in such publications as the New Yorker, Granta, and the Virginia Quarterly Review.



Adichie was named “Nigeria, West Africa’s Artist of the Year” earlier this year. In November 2007, she won Britain’s Orange Prize for Fiction, that country’s top literary prize, for “Half of a Yellow Sun.” Adichie’s debut novel, “Purple Hibiscus,” published in 2003, immediately gained international attention, with one reviewer calling it “a monumental literary achievement and a prayer for Nigeria.”

Adichie earned a master’s degree from Johns Hopkins University in 2003. This past May she earned a M.A. from Yale University.

## Eastern Hosts “Gandhi Peace Panel”



On Oct. 2, eight scholars specializing in peace studies presented a panel at Eastern in celebration of Mahatma Gandhi’s birthday, recently recognized by the United Nations as the international day of non-violence. Participants discussed Gandhi’s legacy of Ahimsa, or non-violence, non-harm and compassion. The panel is the second in this year’s popular Arts and Lectures Series at Eastern.

Panelists included Uma Mesthrie, a professor of history from South Africa and the great-granddaughter of the late spiritual leader Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi; Usha Thakkar, director of the Institute of Research on Gandhian Thought in Mumbai, (formerly Bombay) India; R. P. Jain, one of the owners and publishers of Motilal Banarsidass Publishers; Bal Ram Singh, director of Indic Studies and director of the Gandhi Lecture Series at the University of Massachusetts—Dartmouth in Dartmouth, MA; Emmett Bradbury, an associate professor of philosophy and past chair of African American Studies at

Chicago State University; and Hope Fitz, professor of philosophy at Eastern. Roger Buckley, founding director of the Asian American Studies Institute at the University of Connecticut, served as moderator.

The Gandhi Peace Panel was sponsored in part by the Peace and Human Rights Committee Lecture Series at Eastern and the Asian American Studies Institute at the University of Connecticut, with support from the Jain Academic Foundation of North America, the Jain Community of Hartford, and private donations.

### **Andrew Revkin Lectures on Global Warming at Eastern**



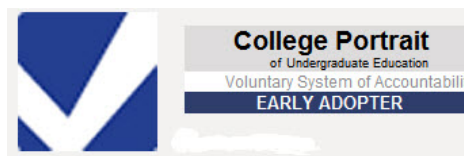
Andrew Revkin, New York Times journalist and author, spoke to a packed audience in the Betty R. Tipton Room on Sept. 23. Much of his reporting is centered on the environment and global warming. He discussed how the world’s human population will swell to approximately nine billion by the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which will put additional pressure on available natural resources and food supplies to support this population. Two billion people around the world already have no energy options.

Revkin told about his past reporting experiences, having gone to Alaska, Greenland and Djibouti, among other places. He has written about the melting ice in the Arctic region and explained that the Arctic has warmed more quickly than the rest of the world. He also discussed the possibility of a trade route opening up in this area because of the thaw. Revkin explained that this trade route would be beneficial to countries in the Eastern Hemisphere for shipping, as it would provide an 8,000-mile shortcut through the Arctic Circle. He informed those present that the ice in Greenland is equivalent to all the water in the Gulf of Mexico, and if it all melted, the oceans would rise 20 feet. More carbon dioxide equals a warmer world, which in turn equals less ice and higher seas. This equation is hard to roll back.

Revkin both alleviated fears and sparked new concerns when he discussed the position certain animals will have in the new and rapidly changing climate. He said that polar bears are unlikely to become extinct because they have adapted to climate change before, but they will have fewer offspring. Burmese pythons are invading the Everglades in Florida and may pose a threat to some animal populations there. The baiji, or Yangtze River dolphin as it is more commonly called, is recently assumed to be extinct because of over-fishing and rapid industrialization near the Yangtze River in China, the species’ natural habitat.

### **Eastern is Part of Nationwide College Portrait Project**

Eastern announced its participation with 302 other public four-year colleges and universities across the United States in a Voluntary System of Accountability (VSA) designed to help students, parents, and other constituents understand and learn more about institutions of higher education.



The VSA’s “College Portrait” is a web site template that provides high school students, guidance counselors, and other stakeholders with easy access to basic, comparable information about student characteristics, costs, student experiences, and learning outcomes. Eastern’s VSA web site is at [http://www.easternct.edu/depts/pir/documents/CollegePortrait2008FINAL\\_Sep192008.pdf](http://www.easternct.edu/depts/pir/documents/CollegePortrait2008FINAL_Sep192008.pdf). Persons interested in other schools can visit the national web site at [www.collegeportraits.org](http://www.collegeportraits.org).

The VSA is a partnership between the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) with funding from Lumina Foundation for Education.

Eastern and 193 other colleges and universities recently posted a College Portrait on their web sites as “early adopters.” These early adopters enroll some three million undergraduates and nearly 60 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment in four-year public colleges and universities.

“We are serious about our responsibility to fully disclose key information about the University’s costs, student experiences, and learning outcomes,” said Eastern President Elsa M. Núñez. “Students and their parents, as well as guidance counselors and other student mentors deserve quick and easy access to the information they need to make informed decisions about their college of choice. Indicators of our success, including graduation rates, job placement of our graduates, and other accountability measures, are now readily available on our Eastern Connecticut State University web site, using the same Voluntary System of Accountability template being adopted across the country.”

### **Administrators Serve Up Late Night Breakfast**



President Elsa Núñez, Vice President for Finance and Administration Dennis Hannon, Academic Affairs Vice President Rhona Free, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Kenneth DeLisi, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs Ken Bedini, and Dr. Núñez’s husband, Dr. Richard Freeland, doled out delicious pancakes and bacon to several hundred hungry students on Friday night, Sept. 26. The late-night breakfast is a twice-a-year tradition at Eastern.

### **Walkathon Supports Local Elementary School**



More than 150 walkers showed up on Oct. 4 to circle Eastern’s outdoor track in support of Sweeney Elementary School in Willimantic. Supported by 50 Eastern students from the Education Club and MALES, participants raised more than \$3,600 in pledges to support five hours of walking from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The funds will be used by Sweeney School to purchase books, computers, and “smart boards,” and to support academic after-school programs. More than 20 children from the school showed up at the walkathon to express their thanks.

“I would like to thank everyone who attended or who made a donation to the walkathon,” said event organizer Katie Dudzinski ’09, a math and elementary education major. “I know the Sweeney kids appreciate the time and money that has been donated to improve their school.”

### **Southwest Airlines President Emeritus Speaks at Eastern**

On Sept. 24, Colleen C. Barrett, president emerita of Southwest Airlines, discussed “The U.S. Airline Industry and Its Future,” as part of the David T. Chase Free Enterprise Institute’s Distinguished Lecture Series at Eastern. Barrett’s presentation took place in the Paul E. Johnson Sr. Community Room of the J. Eugene Smith Library. She discussed her experiences in corporate leadership including her seven-year term as president of Southwest Airlines. She also addressed her past and present responsibilities in company

management and leadership, including corporate communications, sales, distribution, labor and employee relations, and negotiation and corporate security.

As an active member in community and corporate-based organizations, Barrett serves on the board of directors of JC Penney, and on the board of trustees of the Ken Blanchard College of Business and Becker College. She has also been recognized nationally for her corporate achievements, and has been the recipient of many awards, including World's 100 Most Powerful Women (2004, 2005); Outstanding Women in Aviation (2007); Fortune's 50 Most Powerful Women; and Business Week's Best Managers Recognition.



### Eastern Honors American Red Cross Chair



On Sept. 22, in conjunction with the David T. Chase Free Enterprise Institute, Eastern conferred a Chase Medallion on Bonnie McElveen-Hunter, chairman of the American Red Cross and CEO of Pace Communications, the nation's largest custom publishing company. The ceremony took place in the Paul E. Johnson Sr. Conference Room. McElveen-Hunter was honored for her work in the advancement of women in the workforce.



McElveen-Hunter's accomplishments include serving as the first woman chairman in the American Red Cross's 126-year history. From 2001-03, she was ambassador to Finland, has served as a member of the international board of directors of Habitat for Humanity, and is founder of the United Way Billion Dollar Women's Leadership Initiative.



*David T. Chase's daughter Cheryl and grandson, William.*

McElveen-Hunter's unprecedented contributions to the business world include her leadership in forming the Women's Business Leaders Summit, held for the past three years in Finland, Latvia, and most recently, Jordan. These summits have helped to further entrepreneurship and have encouraged businesswomen from the Baltic Region to the Middle East to launch or expand business opportunities in their native countries.

The Chase Medallion is given periodically to a business professional who is distinguished in the social, economic, or political arenas. Winners have demonstrated professional success and contributed to the betterment of their community, state, or nation.

### Safari Photographer and Author Robert B. Haas Speaks at Eastern

On Sept. 22, National Geographic photographer and author Robert Haas presented tales of his African safaris in Room 110 of Webb Hall. A book signing followed his presentation. Haas has recently written a children's book titled "African Critters." It chronicles Haas' intimate, up-close photographs and adventures from his numerous safaris in South Africa, Botswana, Kenya, and Namibia. "African Critters" draws readers into Haas' passion for Africa; for conservation; for finding harmony between the actions of humans; and for the survival of wild animals. Royalties from the book will be donated to the Humane Society of the United States.

Haas' work has been exhibited around the world and featured on CBS News Sunday Morning and CNN and in National Geographic and Time Magazine, Forbes, Life, and many other publications. He is a graduate of

Yale University and Harvard Law School, and has written several other books, including “Ten Days on the Chobe,” “A Vision of Africa,” and “Through the Eyes of the Condor: An Aerial Vision of Latin America.”

### **Classical Guitarist Performs at Eastern**



On Sept. 24, internationally acclaimed classical guitar player Petar Jankovic performed in Shafer Auditorium as part of Eastern’s University Hour Series. Jankovic first built a name for himself in his native Yugoslavia after earning a degree in classical guitar from the renowned Music Academy in Belgrade. He became a two-time gold medal, silver medal, and two-time bronze medal winner at the National Music Competition in Yugoslavia before finding success in the United States.

Jankovic has won numerous awards for his exemplary guitar skills, including first prize at the First Annual Competition in Performance of Hispano-American music and as a bronze-medal winner at the M.M. Ponce international guitar competition. He was also the first guitarist to win the Graduate Top Strings Award at the Indianapolis Matinee Musicale. Jankovic earned a master’s degree from Indiana University-Jacobs School of Music, where he is now a professor.

### **Filmmaker Barbara Martinez Jitner Speaks at Eastern**



On Oct. 2, renowned filmmaker and human rights activist Barbara Martinez Jitner lectured at Eastern Connecticut State University in the Student Center Theater. Jitner is one of the first Latina executive producers of a primetime network television series.

In 2007, Jitner released the acclaimed documentary “La Frontera,” in which she posed as a worker in a factory along the U.S.-Mexican border to expose the corruption and reprehensible conditions there. “La Frontera” was the inspiration for the Jennifer Lopez film, “Bordertown.”

Jitner also served as executive producer, writer, and director of the PBS series “American Family,” and was nominated for a Golden Globe and an Emmy for the series; the show won the Emmy. She has collaborated with Academy Award-nominated director Gregory Nava on such feature films as “Selena” and “Why

Do Fools Fall in Love.” Jitner’s upcoming projects include adapting Victor Villaseñor’s book “Rain of Gold” into an HBO miniseries and writing a script focusing on the 2006 immigration march, “A Day Without an Immigrant.”

Jitner’s presentation is sponsored by the Women’s Center, the Intercultural Center, and the departments of Women’s Studies, English, History and Modern Language.

### **Akus Gallery Paint Recycling Project**



The Julian Akus Gallery at Eastern Connecticut State University and People Helping People (PHP), a student-based community service group at Eastern, have combined resources to engage the campus and the greater Willimantic community in a latex paint recycling project.

Gallery Director Elizabeth Peterson and Gallery Registrar Roxanne Deojay,

PHP students Aiyanna Medeiros and Nate Oldham, and other volunteers are sorting the paint by color, strain and mix, and will repackage and donate the resulting paint to local community organizations.

This program, dubbed the “Loop Limited” project, originated with “People Powered,” three Chicago artists, Kevin Kaempf, Suraiya Hossain, and Lora Lode, who are committed to creating community events to reduce waste and to affect grassroots change. An installation of paint recycling kits, chips, paint and a video of the process was on view at the “One Thing Expo” in Hartford on Oct. 10-12, and will be at Akus Gallery beginning Oct. 23, as part of the eco-art exhibition “It’s Getting Hot in Here,” which comes to Eastern courtesy of Montserrat College of Art in Beverly, MA. Instructions for starting your own community paint recycling program will be available at both events.

This project is made possible in part by a generous donation from O.L. Willard Company, a local lumber, paint, and hardware supplier.

### **Sociologist Michael Kimmel at Eastern**

On Sept. 23, Michael Kimmel, one of the leading researchers and writers on men and masculinity in the world today, lectured at Eastern in the Student Center Café. Kimmel is the author/editor of more than 20 books, including “Changing Men: New Directions in Research of Men and Masculinity,” “The Politics of Manhood,” “The Gender of Desire,” “The History of Men,” and a documentary history, “Against the Tide: Pro-Feminist Men in the United States, 1776-1990,” that chronicles men who have supported women’s equality since the founding of the nation. He also co-edited the “The Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities” (2004) and “The Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities.” Kimmel teaches sociology at SUNY—Stony Brook. His book, “The Gendered Society,” has become one of the nation’s best-selling texts in social science courses in Gender Studies.

Kimmel’s presentation was sponsored by the Women’s Center, along with the departments of Sociology and Psychology and the School of Education and Professional Studies.

### **Mark Your Calendar!**

#### **Eastern to Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month**

**Oct. 20 from 7:30–11 p.m.**

Storytelling and food tasting in the Student Center Café.

**On Oct. 21 from 8–11 p.m.**

Participate in Hispanic Heritage Jeopardy games and watch movies in the Intercultural Center.

**On Oct. 22 from 8-11 p.m.**

Enjoy delicious food and dancing in the Student Center Café.

**On Oct. 23 from 7-10 p.m.**

“Craft Night.” Make your own piñata or sombrero in Room 219 of the Student Center.

### **Eastern Set to Dedicate New Science Building!**



State dignitaries, legislators, government officials and friends of Eastern will be on hand when the University dedicates its new 174,000-square-foot, six-story Science Building on Oct. 22. The new building opened in September. The facility houses all of Eastern’s science and mathematics departments, which had previously been scattered across seven separate buildings. It sports a 132-seat lecture hall; sophisticated audio-visual systems; a state-of-the-art greenhouse; and high tech laboratories. In addition, the building has been built to U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) certification standards.

## Eastern Sports

### 7th ANNUAL HAUNTED HAPPENING ON TAP FOR OCT. 31

#### Eastern's Student Athletes Sponsoring Special Night for Kids

On Oct. 31, Student athletes at Eastern will host the Seventh Annual Haunted Happening from 6-8 p.m. in the Geissler Gymnasium of the Sports Center. Haunted Happening involves playing lots of fun games, making spooky arts and crafts, collecting candy, and even competing in the Costume Parade Contest, all for children 12 years of age and younger. Eastern's Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC), composed of student representatives from each of the Athletic Department's programs, wanted to give back to the Windham County community, so they created Haunted Happening in 2002 to provide a safe environment for children to celebrate Halloween. If you would like to donate candy to Haunted Happening, or need further information, please contact Janice Patry in the Athletic Department at (860) 465-5315. Tell your family, friends, and neighbors!



#### Eastern in the News

- The Oct. 1 edition of the Hartford Inquirer ran a front page story on Eastern alumna Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, '01. On Sept. 23, the Chicago-based John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation named Adichie a MacArthur Fellow for 2008.
- On Sept. 29, Eastern Professor of Philosophy Hope Fitz was a guest on "The Wayne Norman Show" on WILL-AM radio, where she discussed and promoted "The Gandhi Peace Panel," which took place at Eastern on Oct. 2.
- On Sept. 24, Wayne Norman conducted a live studio interview with award-winning classical guitarist Peter Jankovic, who also performed for Norman's audience before coming to perform at Eastern during University Hour.
- The Sept. 10 edition of The (Willimantic) Chronicle ran a very positive editorial on Eastern winning a \$1.4 million federal dollar grant to support the University's Center for Early Childhood Education.
- The Sept. 4 edition of The (Willimantic) Chronicle reported on Federico Subervi's presentation on "The Mass Media and Latino Politics."
- The August 30 edition of The (Willimantic) Chronicle reported on the record number of freshmen attending Eastern this fall.