

UCONN SPIE
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Annual Report June 15, 2008

15 Current Members

Andres Aguirre
Yasaman Ardeshirpour
Guiqiu Bao
Nrusingh Biswal
Sonia Contreras Ortiz
Caitlin Danehy
Mehdi Daneshpanah
Cuong Do
John Gamelin
Mukesh Gogna
Gaurav Joshi
Supriya Karmakar
Anastasios Maurudis
Robert Schulein
Yi Yang

Chapter Activities

UCONN SPIE chapter established APRIL 2006 Initial Size: 21 members
Current Size: 15 members

Faculty Advisor: Prof. Quing Zhu, ECE Dept., University of Connecticut

UCONN SPIE chapter website maintained: <http://www.spie.uconn.edu>
Webmaster: Cuong Do,
Asst. Webmaster: Michael Khalil

Held and co-sponsored SPIE fall barbeque day. Coincided with visit from SPIE President, **Brian Culshaw**. Later article was published (“SPIE President Visits UConn Chapter”) in *UConn Frontiers* and in [SPIE Student News \[Oct. 15\]](#) by UCONN SPIE Vice President.

Held and co-sponsored seminar as part of SPIE Guest Lecturer Program, by **Dr. Ralph James**, Associate Laboratory Director, Energy, Environment and National Security Directorate Brookhaven National Laboratory, [“MATERIAL PROPERTIES LIMITING THE PERFORMANCE OF CADMIUM ZINC TELLURIDE GAMMA-RAY DETECTORS” \[Oct 12.\]](#)

Held and co-sponsored conference and luncheon as part of SPIE Guest Lecturer Program, by **Dr. Robert Breault**, Chairman/Founder of Breault Research Organization, Inc., [“THE ARIZONA OPTICS CLUSTER The Arizona Optics Cluster: What is it? How has it helped to grow the Arizona optics industry by a factor of ten in employees and in gross revenue in the past ten years? Can Connecticut enjoy the same success?”](#) [Oct 26]. This event was the inaugural event of the [CT Optics and Photonics Association](#). Additional speakers included **Mr. Michael Roer**, Executive Director, Connecticut Venture Group **Mr. Frank Milone**, Partner, Fiondella, Milone & LaSaracina LLP **Mr. Jack Antonich**, Connecticut Technology Council, Catalyst for Innovation & Growth, **Ms. Angela Caponetto**, CT SBIR, **Mrs. Connie Maffeo**, Director, Connecticut's Business Response Center **Mrs. Judith Donnelly**, Laser Center Director, Three Rivers Community College **Professor Quing Zhu**, Director of Biomedical Optics Lab, University of Connecticut, Winner of the CTC 2007 Woman of Innovation Award, **Mr. Charlie Moret**, Managing Director of Business Development, Connecticut Innovations, **Mr. Vic Capelli**, Manager, ASML-Optics, **Mr. Paul Denney**, Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology Laser Application Lab

Held and co-sponsored conference and luncheon, by **Dr. Mary L. Good**, Dean of Engineering, Univ. of Arkansas, Little Rock Managing Partner, Venture Capital Investors, LLC Chair of the Board, ASTRA, The Alliance for Science & Technology Research in America Former Under Secretary for Technology Department of Commerce, [“Competitiveness of science based R&D in the United States”](#)[Nov 16]. Additional speakers included **Dr. Holger Schlüter**, Vice-President, TRUMPF, Farmington, CT, **Mr. Charlie Moret**, Managing Director of Business Development, Connecticut Innovations, Rocky Hill, CT, **Mr. Charles F. O'Brien**, Intellectual Property Attorney, Cantor Colburn LLP, Bloomfield, CT **Dr. Mansoor Khan**, Director of Technology Licensing, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT **Brigadier General Robert E. Mansfield, Jr., USAF (retired)**, Director, National Center for Aerospace Leadership, Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, East Hartford, CT, **Dr. John Gamelin**, Research Scientist, Biomedical Optics Laboratory, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, **Dr. Karen Birch**, Executive Director, Next Generation Regional Manufacturing Center, Hartford CT, **Mr. Jeff Vose**, Vice-President, Economic Development, MetroHartford Alliance, Hartford, CT.

Held and co-sponsored seminar by **Dr. Michael Retsky**, Vascular Biology Department **Dr. Folkman's** staff at Harvard Medical School Boston, Ma., [“Does Surgery Induce Angiogenesis in Breast Cancer?”](#) [Nov 30]. Other speakers included **Dr. Marc Himel**, PhD, MBA, Manager-Test Group, Tessera, Charlotte, NC, [“Micro-Optics: From Theory to Real World Application”](#).

Held and co-sponsored seminar by **Dr. Irving Bigio**, Director, Biomedical Optics Laboratory Professor, Boston University Departments of Biomedical Engineering Electrical & Computer Engineering, Physics, “Elastic light scattering spectroscopy for the detection of early cancer and pre-cancer” [Dec. 7]

Held and co-sponsored seminar as part of SPIE Guest Lecturer Program, by Dr. Robert Danehy, PhD in Astronomy from SUNY Stony Brook, B.S. degree in Physics from Cooper Union, "[Designing and building the most accurate Optical Gyroscopes in the World](#)". [April 4]

Held and co-sponsored annual [Biophotonics Convention](#) which coincided with SPIE spring barbeque day. Speakers included **Dr. Alexander Oraevsky**, Vice-President, Research & Development Fairway Medical Technologies, Inc., Houston, TX, "LOIS: Laser Opto-acoustic Imaging System", **Dr. Michael Retsky**, Harvard Medical, Boston MA, "Does early detection of breast cancer always lead to an improved outcome? Maybe not", **Dr. Gerald Diebold**, Brown University, Providence, RI, "Ultrasonic vibration potential and ultrasound modulated x-ray phasecontrast imaging", **Dr. Quing Zhu**, UCONN, Storrs, CT, "Biomedical photoacoustic tomography and diffusive optical tomography for early detection of breast cancer", **Dr. Irene Georgakoudi**, Tufts University, Milford, MA, "Optical Monitoring of Cell-Matrix Interactions in Engineered Tissues,".

UCONN Student Chapter co-founded **CT Optics and Photonics Association**. The purpose of the association is to encourage the proliferation of optics based industry throughout CT and the surrounding areas. See Appendix A for summary.

UCONN Student Chapter was published in Hartford Business Journal: "[Focusing On Commerce Like A Laser Beam; UConn-led group spotlights potential of Nutmeg State optics firms](#)" [Nov 26]

UCONN Student Chapter was published in *SPIE Professional*, "Students Are Active Participants in Optics, Photonics Community; UCONN Students Driving Force in Photonics Cluster" [April]

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

UCONN SPIE fall barbeque day with guest speaker TBA, September 5th, 2008.

Annual CTOPA Conference co-sponsored by UCONN SPIE Student Chapter. Guest speakers include Dr. Robert Breault and Anastasios Maurudis, October 17th, 2008.

UCONN SPIE Student Chapter field trip to Boston to visit various research facilities including Tufts Univ and Brown Univ.

UCONN SPUE Student Chapter will host student membership drive early in the fall semester.

Elections to finalize e-board members.

Expanding the UCONN SPIE Chapter Library

Financial Information

Financial Statement For Fiscal Year 2007-2008

Income:

Donations	2,788.00
Events/Programs Co-Sponsorship	600.00
Rental	149.50
Interest	19.90
Total Income:	\$3,557.40

Expenses:

Events/Programs Co-Sponsorship	600.00
Travel	33.25
Rental	125.00
Postage	14.18
Photocopying	41.70
Refreshments for Organization(Meetings/Workshops)	155.21
Refreshments for Events/Programs	2,395.36
Supplies	21.85
Total Expenses:	\$3,386.55
Net Profit (Loss):	\$170.85

06/1/07 Beginning Balance	\$1,585.07
Add Net Profit (Loss) from above	170.85
Current Balance	\$1,755.92

Officers

President: Mr. Anastasios Maurudis (Biomedical Engineering)

Vice-President: Mr. Christopher Falkner (Biomedical Engineering)

Treasurer: Mr. Andres Aguirre (Biomedical Engineering)

Secretary: Ms. Caitlin Danehy (Electrical Engineering)

Our faculty advisor is Prof. Quing Zhu of the Electrical/Computer Engineering Dept.

Committee

Program Committee

Mr. Christopher Falkner, Chairman

Yasaman Ardeshirpour

Mehdi DaneshPanah

Michael Khalil

Nahum Kryzman

Behnoosh Tavakoli

Membership Committee

Nrusingh Biswal, Chairman

Yasasman Ardeshirpour

Zhe Chen

Sonia Contreras

Nahum Kryzman

Lu Lu

Nathan White

Publicity Committee

Cuong Do, Chairman

Andres Aguirre

Michael Khalil

Undergraduate Committee

Nathan White, Chairman

Christopher Falkner

Michael Khalil

Nahum Kryzman

Caitlin Danehy

Prepared by

Anastasios Maurudis

2007-8 President

Christopher Falkner

2007-8 Vice President

CTOPA: Helping CT See the Light

Christopher M. Falkner

Edited By: Anastasios Maurudis

And Nathan White

All three authors are students at the University of Connecticut and UConn SPIE board members. In August of 2007, they successfully beat the odds to create the Connecticut Optics and Photonics Association, the first successful optics trade association in CT.

“Leave it on the chair,” squeaked a metallic female voice through a speaker phone suspended on a wall of thick Plexiglas. Sitting on the other side of the industrial strength barricade sat a small and uninterested woman with repetitiously lifeless eyes and a green corduroy jacket sporting a blue and white crest on the left breast pocket that read: Fox 61 News. As she surreptitiously starred us down, we made a move towards the vault-like door that separated us from the main office that she so vehemently guarded like a templar knight at the home of the Holy Grail. Before we could even grip the handle of the large door that would lead us to the people we had traveled so far to see, there was another loud squeak and a monotone hiss that mimicked the first, “Leave your information on the chair.” Without further hesitation, we left our information on the chair as instructed and made our way back through the first two security entrances we had squeezed our way through not minutes before. We could only hope now that the nameless woman in the green corduroy jacket would pass on our press release announcing the inaugural summit meeting of what would soon become one of the most influential economic moves in the history of Connecticut based technology commercialization, the birth of the Connecticut Optics and Photonics Association.

Before heading back to my tired Jeep Grand Cherokee that quietly sat below a parking meter that minutes earlier guzzled three dollars and twenty five cents worth of parking time in anticipation of a long meeting with a news representative at the Fox 61 News headquarters on the second floor of One Corporate Center in downtown Hartford CT, we approached a young receptionist in the main lobby who’s soft features and gentle smile sharply juxtaposed those of the woman encased in the fish tank

structure on the second floor. With nothing to lose, we inquired as to whether or not there were any other news stations in the general area who might be interested in promoting our initiative. A quick scan on the internet and she informed us that just up the road in one direction was the Hartford Current, up the road in the other direction was the Hartford Business Journal, and no more than three blocks away was the local headquarters of the Public Broadcast News Station...Score one for capitalism.

And score one for the Connecticut Optics and Photonics Association. Well...almost anyway. Despite their more cheerful dispositions as compared to Fox 61 News, none of the Hartford based news stations expressed an immediate interest in our event or our organization. What was it, though, that made these news stations so hesitant to accept our blatantly well intended and passionate desire to use the growing power of optics technology to stimulate the state economy? Was it our polite and youthful faces that suggested we were just a group of naïve college students? Well that couldn’t be it: Anastasios Maurudis, one of the founding members, is a Ph.D. student at the University of Connecticut and formerly an electrical engineer in California’s Silicone Valley with years of technology based industrial experience. Was it, then, that no one had ever heard of the CT Optics and Photonics Association? Well with the support of state representatives from business, education and industry, including Congressman Joe Courtney, Dr. Holger Schlutter from Trumpf Lasers, and Dr. Michael Retsky from the Harvard Medical Center, having never heard of us certainly wouldn’t be a plausible explanation either. Whatever it was working against us that day that made every news station in the Metro Hartford area so strongly opposed to our initiative, however, would soon begin a theme that has followed us around the state: epidemic support on a large scale from government



officials and industry CEOs, but very little support on a smaller scale from students, educational representatives and local media outlets. What, then, can we do to fully capture the state's attention?

Before answering that question and speculating the future of the Connecticut Optics and Photonics Association, also referred to as CTOPA, let us take a moment to discuss the short but exciting history of how three University of Connecticut students and their SPIE student chapter battled the odds to develop Connecticut as one of the leading staples of national economic stability and international optics technology commercialization.

On October 4th, 2007, Anastasios Maurudis, President and founder of the UConn SPIE student chapter, was fortunate enough to attend the 50th anniversary of the Sputnik 1 launch hosted in Washington D.C. by ASTRA where he met many individuals who would soon play a significant role in the creation of the CTOPA. Amongst those individuals was the host of the event, Dr. Mary Lowe Good, who would later visit the University of Connecticut on November 16th, 2007 to give a seminar on economic and technology competitiveness in the United States. Also among the audience, a long time inspiration for Mr. Maurudis, was the DARPA director in the mid 1960s, Dr. Charles Herzfeld.

Later during his visit to the nation's capital Mr. Maurudis found himself wandering through the sacred WWII memorial and was once again inspired, but this time in a different sense. Hours earlier he mingled with some of the most powerful figures in the American technology industry and he now walked amongst national heroes whose contributions to the nation are immeasurable. Being stung with emotion, Anastasios got a surge of inspiration. Something must be done, he thought to himself, to encourage the propagation of technology based R&D in the United States if we, as a collective nation, have any intentions of remaining competitive in the global market. Although an old saying argues: "Who cares about innovation when you're fat and happy," it must be recognized that it is, in fact, *innovation* that ultimately lines the pockets of the American economy and if it is ignored, it will be logistically impossible for us to remain happy in a long term market. As Dr. Mary Lowe Good pointed out to students and Connecticut

technology professionals during her visit to the University of Connecticut, we are not only lacking in innovation R&D, but are beginning to find that other countries are "fattening-up" their contribution to global technology. The number of graduate degrees in technology related fields such as optics, for example, has greatly begun to plateau in the United States only to be rapidly surpassed by China, Japan, and other countries that are reaping the benefits of a declining American economy. Moreover, as the value of the US dollar, too, declines well below that of international standards, the tables are steadily turning and the fruits of America's long and fertile history in the progress of technology are becoming harder to grasp.

As he sat in the airport, waiting for his return flight back to Hartford, CT, Mr. Maurudis racked his brain trying to think of how he and his colleagues at the University of Connecticut could take advantage of their resources to promote technology based R&D in the United States. Perhaps beginning locally would be advantageous, he thought. He remembered that long time friend and mentor, Dr. Robert Breault, had once suggested the possibility of forming a statewide optics trade association to promote optics based technology and research. After all, Connecticut is home to some of the nation's most successful optics based companies including Trumpf Lasers, ASML optics and OFS Fiber Optics all of which are optimally located in proximity to Hartford, New York City, Boston and Providence. On top of that, Dr. Breault, a CT native, is founder of some of the most successful optics clusters in the world, including the most successful, the Arizona Optics Industry Association. Despite his desire to make a difference, however, Anastasios wondered how he could possibly get the attention of an entire state with only the help of a few hard working undergraduate engineering students. Just then, at that very moment, out of the corner of his eye, he noticed a familiar face sitting alone in the corner



waiting for his plane to begin boarding. Sitting only three rows away was Congressman Joe Courtney, a political superpower for the state of Connecticut and a representative of. Anastasios was immediately inspired to approach Congressman Courtney and felt a surge of energy as he began to explain his dilemma about how to promote optics based technology. Much to his amazement, Courtney too felt a surge of energy and excitement and assured Anastasios that he would provide whatever support he could. Then, only minutes later, who would he bump into but Congressman Christopher Murphy. Coincidence?...I don't think so. Anastasios knew right then that those impromptu meetings were the jumping off point in the formation of the CT Optics and Photonics Association. He was right.

Within minutes of landing in CT, Anastasios called his esteemed colleagues at the University of Connecticut and notified them that "...we're going to have a busy semester." That was the understatement of the year.

Although the first UConn SPIE seminar of the year, featuring future SPIE president Dr. Ralph James, was not officially a CTOPA meeting, it was a necessary step in preparing for the first official seminar held only weeks later. It was imperative, Dr. Breault insisted, that the optics trade association appeal to all optics venues throughout the state in order to optimize local support. As a prominent figure in both technology and national politics, Dr. James would undoubtedly play an invaluable role to CTOPA as he took Mr. Maurudis under his wing and taught him how to appeal to political and business advocates at the federal level, a skill that would be a necessity to maximize local support.

With only three weeks until Dr. Breault was scheduled to visit the UConn campus for an SPIE seminar on how to efficiently sustain an optics trade association, Anastasios and his team had to work fast to get as much accomplished towards forming a cluster before he arrived. Immediately, they began to research every company in the state of Connecticut that might be even remotely linked to the use of optics and encouraging them to attend Dr. Breault's seminar, which quickly became the inaugural summit meeting of the Connecticut Optics and Photonics Association.

This is the point in the story where we made our first attempt to get media coverage of Dr. Breault's seminar and, moreover, our first glimpse at the challenges that laid ahead. Although they each responded with a different tone, every news station we visited wanted nothing to do with our event. The first and most successful visit was to the Hartford Business Journal. The receptionist in their cozy and welcoming main office expressed a polite concern for our initiative and assured us that our information would go to the right people. Their tone: *mild interest*. At the Public Broadcast Network we spoke to a very confused receptionist who seemed not to know what to do with us. We told her we had big news and wanted to speak to someone about covering our event. She looked at us like we had told her we were a travel circus that wanted to spend the night in the studio (although, they probably would have gotten more attention than we did). "Where do these people get their news from?", I thought. Certainly we were not the very first people to walk into a news station with big news. Apparently we were. Their tone: *extreme confusion*. At channel 3 news we spoke to a very pleasant security guard who seemed surprisingly interested in our event, but, alas, we were unable to speak to anyone. Perhaps we should have given the security guard a camera and told her to cover the story. Their tone: *polite disinterest*. Next on the list was the Hartford Courant. As we walked into their overly expansive marble-laid lobby we headed directly for the main desk which was an awkward 30 yards across the empty vault like room. As we approached the desk, the security guard whispered something into his sleeve and then held his finger to his earpiece. He stared us down like an emaciated lion would eye at a piece of warm flesh. I wasn't quite sure if I was more afraid of them or if they were more afraid of me. Needless to say, we left the Hartford Courant as soon as possible. Their tone: *complete fear*. Then we visited my favorite: Fox 61 news. As alluded to before, the Fox news station had three security entrances and more security cameras than employees. As we squeezed past the first two security entrances, we were stopped by a female security guard that didn't even bat an eye at our arrival. Their tone: *severe apathy*.

Now, the reason I have so painstakingly explained our first major obstacle in the initialization of the CTOPA is for two reasons. The first is that it acted as a motivator. Dr.

Breault, one of the most successful self-made men in the United States, has always told us “no one has failed more times than me...” and, in fact, Anastasios and his team were more inspired to succeed as a result of this first obstacle. The second and most notable reason that our failure at grabbing the local news station’s attention is important is that the ultimate sign that we had succeeded would come later in the process and would be a complete turning of the tables.

After resounding failure at gaining media coverage of the Dr. Breault seminar, Mr. Maurudis decided it was time to “up-the ante” and take on the state legislative office. The plan: to walk around the halls of the legislative building at unspeakable hours of the morning and catch state representatives before they could settle into their offices, catch them off guard, if you will. Was it a success? Well not exactly. In fact, we found ourselves aimlessly wandering dark empty hallways in the hopes of finding some key representatives. Although I try to avoid admitting when I’m lost (it’s a “guy” thing), sometimes it’s undeniable: We were lost in the legislative building. Just when we thought that we would never find our way through the maze of underground hallways and expansive marble lobbies, we came across Toni Boucher’s office, representative to one of the districts in Fairfield County, CT. To no avail, however, she was not in her office and we were left speaking to her assistant, who, interestingly enough, seemed to be wildly interested in our organization. Despite the small boost of moral from Boucher’s assistant, we finally found our way back to the car and drove away with an overall sense of disappointment. No amount of frustration, however, would be enough to get our spirits down. We had fate on our side.

When October 26th finally rolled around, Anastasios and his colleagues were ready. By 9AM that morning, UConn’s professional catering services had set up an elaborate breakfast display and an ornate registration table was laid out to greet visitors outside the largest and most technologically advanced lecture hall in the state, the ITEB C80 lecture hall at the University of Connecticut. Using the university as a meeting point, aside from being the most convenient location for Mr. Maurudis and his team, was ideal because of its economic neutrality. Both Anastasios and good friend Dr. Robert Breault felt strongly that if an optics trade association was to be successful it must not

reside under the umbrella of any one company or venue. The University of Connecticut acts as a neutral location because it is the representative university of the state and, as such, promotes the overall success of the state rather than that of any specific companies or political parties. The big question, however, was: would anyone show up? After all the hard work and passionate planning of the event, Anastasios and his team had done everything in their powers to get the attention of the entire state. But would it pay off? Then, much to the team’s wonderment, at exactly 9:37AM the first guest arrived: Jack Antonich, a professional consultant from the Connecticut Technology Council (CTC). Ecstatic that even just one guest had arrived, Anastasios and his team got an immediate rush of energy and motivation. Then, only minutes later, what started as a slow trickle of guests and students burst into a full fledged wave of professionals and educators flowing into the lecture hall. Among them was Congressman Joe Courtney’s field representative Gene Tewksbury, Paul Denney, a senior research engineer at the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology (CCAT), Charlie Moret from CT Innovations, Adel Joobeur from ASML Lithography, Professor Judith Donnelly from Three Rivers Community College, Dr. Michael Retsky from Harvard Medical Center and many more. Having successfully congregated a plethora of optics representatives throughout the state, the hard part was over and the event went off without a hitch. Dr. Breault’s charismatic seminar on maintaining a successful optics trade association was enlightening and sparked a sense of economic duty in every individual in attendance. As a two session seminar, there was a catered lunch sponsored by NSF Next Generation Manufacturing Center that was provided for the guests, all of whom were encouraged to deliberate on the possibility and potential of an official optics trade association in Connecticut. Walking around the room, one could feel the energy and excitement radiating from each table where powerful optics representatives from very different venues united with one passionate desire: to ignite the CT economy using optics and the formation of an optics cluster as the fuel that would feed the fire of success.

Despite the exhaustion all team members felt at the end of the day, Anastasios was now more inspired than ever. The very next day, he and his teamed linked up with the powerful forces of SPIE and the UConn SPIE chapter to encourage



and build-up the momentum that had already begun to barrel its way to success.

Only weeks before Dr. Breault's seminar, Anastasios and CTOPA team member and UConn SPIE vice president, Christopher Falkner, had the great privilege of attending SPIE's annual Optics and Photonics Convention in San Diego where they met some of SPIE's most notable representatives. Among those individuals was the affable SPIE President, Brian Culshaw who would later visit the University of Connecticut as the keynote guest at the annual UConn SPIE barbeque in September, a fantastic inspiration in the formation of the CTOPA. Also in attendance at the seminar were student service coordinators Dirk Fabian and Jason Hamman, both of whom have played integral roles in supporting Anastasios and his team as they worked towards a brighter CT economy.

With Dr. Breault's seminar, the CTOPA seminar series had officially begun. Throughout the semester the University of Connecticut and UConn SPIE hosted a total of 6 seminars

featuring accomplished members of the optics community including, Dr. Ralph James, Dr. Mary L. Good, Dr. Irving Bigio, and Dr. Marc Himmel all of whom are longtime SPIE members as well as Dr. Michael Retsky who has researched angiogenesis for many years at the Harvard Medical Center under the supervision of the world renowned Dr. Judah Folkman.

Despite its immediate success in getting the support of major industry and business representatives, it was not, however, until early December that CTOPA began to grab the attention of local media and students. Shortly after the inaugural CTOPA seminar in October, Anastasios got a call from the Hartford Business Journal informing him that they had contacted

some of the key players involved in the formation of the CTOPA including Dr. Breault and Anthony DeMaria owner of Coherent and a University of CT professor, and were now interested in running an article to promote the formation of a CT optics trade association. Moreover, they were interested in publishing the article on the front page. It was an overwhelming success for Anastasios and his team. Only weeks before, they had struggled to get even a meeting with a media representative and now they were being published on the front page of the Hartford Business Journal.

The true sign of success came when Anastasios and his team were invited to exhibit his business plan for the CTOPA at the Innovation Pipeline Accelerator awards ceremony sponsored by Connecticut Technology Council at the Yale Lawn Club in New Haven, CT. Amongst the many state representatives at the ceremony was the influential business advocate for the state, Rob Simmons. Immediately after the award presentations, the entire audience swarmed towards Mr. Simmons to talk to him about their business plans to get him to provide his support. Being the "cut-throat" lobbyist he is, Anastasios worked his way towards Mr. Simmons and within minutes of pitching the CTOPA had his full and undivided support. Within the next few days Mr. Simmons had secured a ribbon cutting event at the Old Judiciary room at the state capital on March 13th of 2008. In attendance at this meeting would be many of the major industry and business representatives that have supported the optics trade association as well as many state representatives that would soon see invaluable economic impact of the CTOPA. For Anastasios, however, most notably in attendance would be an entire slew of media representatives wanting to cover the success of all of their hard work. Furthermore, state representatives like Toni Bucher and Congressman Joe Courtney were now contacting Anastasios to inquire about scheduling meetings with him to discuss the future of the CTOPA.

As a final sign of accomplishment, the CTOPA board members were cordially invited to attend the 2008 international Photonics West Global Optics Industry Cluster Leadership Workshop hosted by SPIE's Peter Hallett where they met with other clusters from around the world and shared their remarkable success story.

In the end, it was a complete 180 degree turn for Anastasios and his team. At the beginning, they had struggled to get the attention of every major media outlet in the state and were turned down and laughed at by almost all. Now, only three months later, media outlets were scratching at the chance to cover the story of the CTOPA and how three UConn students employed every resource available to them and rapidly gained the support of political, educational, business and industrial representatives throughout the state. Moreover, representatives that were practically untouchable only weeks earlier were now going out of their way to contact and schedule meetings with Anastasios and his team.

In the end, however, the formation of the CTOPA is a result of not only three UConn SPIE member's hard work and passionate vision, but the many supporters that stood by them against the odds. In addition to the unparalleled support that SPIE has provided, vital financial and moral support has been provided by Dr. Karen Birch from the NSF Next Generation Regional Manufacturing Center and from the UConn Office of Technology Commercialization. On behalf of the state of CT we thank you for all of your influential support, without which, the Connecticut Optics and Photonics Association would not exist.





Dr. Robert Breault during his October 26th seminar at the University of Connecticut



From Left: Nrusingh Biswal, Anastasios Maurudis, SPIE President Brian Culshaw, Dr. Eric Donkor, Dr. Chandra Roychoudhuri, Christopher Falkner



From Left: Anastasios Maurudis, Dr. Holger Schluter, Dr. Robert Breault, SPIE CEO Eugene Arthurs, Rich Rogoff



From Left: Christopher Falkner, Dr. Mary Good, Anastasios Maurudis, Maryjane Petro Rado, Paul Denney