Chen Guangcheng, a Chinese self-taught civil rights lawyer and human rights activist, announced a new partnership Oct. 2 with three organizations — including The Catholic University of America — to pursue his academic interests and human rights advocacy for the next three years.

During an event at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., Chen revealed to a room full of domestic and international press that he will serve as distinguished visiting professor at Catholic University’s School of Architecture and Planning, and a distinguished fellow in human rights at the Policy Research & Catholic Studies, senior fellow of Catholic University’s Institute for Faith, Culture, and Public Life. The three organizations are the Catholic University’s School of Architecture and Planning, the Edmund A. and Lillian W. Gaines Institute for the Study of Religion and Public Life, and the Center for Global Education at the Edmund A. and Lillian W. Gaines Institute for the Study of Religion and Public Life.

“Today I’m at a new starting point and I’m very thankful for the support of these three organizations,” Chen said through an interpreter. “They jointly set up a human rights platform from which I’m able to speak up about the facts and realities of the Chinese communist authorities’ violation of human rights, their indescribable brutality, and the threat they pose to humanity. From today forward, no matter what difficulties we encounter, we will stick together and work closely for all mankind; we will make concerted efforts to defend the freedom of the Chinese people and move forward courageously to defend human dignity and other universal values.”

Blind since a young age, Chen grew up in a small Chinese village. He taught himself law and became known as a “barefoot lawyer.” His work exposing human rights abuses in China, including forced abortions and a government policy that prohibits families from having more than one child, led to four years in prison, followed by house arrest. Chen escaped house arrest in April 2012, drawing international media attention. He made his way to the U.S. embassy in Beijing, and subsequently to the United States in May 2012 when he was offered a visiting fellowship at the law school at New York University.

More than 50 reporters attended the press conference, and news about the partnership was picked up by more than 300 national and international outlets, including the Washington Post, New York Times, Associated Press, and Reuters.

“Instead of going from the top down, with the administration implementing sustainable policies, our students are becoming facilitators and are able to educate administrators about greener alternatives. They have become the catalysts driving sustainable policy changes from the bottom up,” says Patricia Andrasik, assistant professor in the Master of Science in Sustainable Design program and head of sustainability outreach for the school, who created the course in 2012.

The goal of the program is to certify additional facilities on campus.
Members of the Class of 2017 — some 929 strong, including first-year and transfer students — were welcomed to the 2013–2014 academic year in August by “Doors Opening,” a four-day orientation program for students and their families.

Seventy-six CUA student volunteers served as orientation advisers. Dressed in red T-shirts with “Welcome to CUA” imprinted on the front, those volunteers fanned out across campus to assist new students and their families by answering questions, providing directions to different buildings on campus, and helping students move into residence halls.

The CUA community marked the traditional official start of the academic year at the Mass of the Holy Spirit on Aug. 29 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Cardinal Donald Wuerl, archbishop of Washington and chancellor of the University, served as principal celebrant and homilist. For the fourth consecutive year, the Mass was televised live by EWTN.

Class of 2017 Begins 2013–2014 Academic Year

Marion Ficke came to The Catholic University of America as a freshman biology major from Long Island, N.Y., in 1967. She worked for the department in the 1970s as a graduate student and was offered a staff position in 1979.

As a high school student, I had a book that listed Catholic colleges. The first school listed was The Catholic University of America. We didn't plan college visits in those days like students do now. But I saw the campus on a senior class trip to the Shrine [of the Immaculate Conception]. As a prospective student, I received several letters from Mary Elinor Smith, associate dean of students. The way she communicated with students before they arrived and her personal touch were very striking.

I have the best job in the world! Working in this department is just heaven. It's full of intellectually stimulating, bright, nice people. Working with students is something I really enjoy. They keep me young and informed.

My husband, son, and I are devoted basketball fans. The year (2001) the men's basketball team won the championship was exciting. I had seen the entire season and was at the championship game. It was nice to see the campus so alive with such a level of excitement.

The graduation ceremony on the Shrine steps is very impressive. I think it's better than at most universities.

Beyond the physical changes (there were many buildings here when I was a student that aren't here anymore), the changes that technology has given our students are so amazing. Technology has changed every moment of their lives, not just academics.

When I was a student, we had two phones in our residence hall — a campus phone and a phone booth. No one had a personal computer, and computer labs didn't exist. Most students came to college with a typewriter. The ability for students to conduct library research today is amazing. As a senior, I made "field trips" to the National Library of Medicine. Today, students can sit at any computer anywhere and research scientific literature.

But at the same time, students' lives are more complicated now. It seems like they're busier with jobs, activities, involvement. They give so much of their time.

—M.M.H.
Clemency Project Launched at Columbus School of Law

In August 2013, CUA’s Columbus School of Law, in partnership with former Maryland Gov. Robert Ehrlich Jr., launched a program for the study of executive clemency, with the ultimate goal of making the process fairer, more common, and more transparent. Not only does the CUA Clemency Project offer advocacy to inmates, it also provides executive training for governors and their chiefs of staff, and a clinical experience for law students.

Daniel Attridge, dean of the law school, noted that this initiative broadens the scope of the law school’s existing Innocence Project Clinic, which provides assistance to inmates convicted of violent crimes and sentenced to long jail sentences or to death. The Clemency Project takes on cases on behalf of individuals seeking executive clemency in the form of a pardon or commutation of sentence. As present, applications for assistance are accepted only from individuals convicted in federal district courts.

Ehrlich said during the announcement of the partnership in February 2013 that he is helping to raise funds to underwrite the costs of the collaborative project and will be present at key events. He noted that while he was governor from 2003 to 2007, he made it a policy to personally review requests for clemency. He granted it to more than 200 convicted individuals while he was in office.

Ehrlich has said he considers clemency among the most important powers a governor possesses. He considered free Washington, D.C., area law schools as potential collaborators before choosing the Columbus School of Law. The Innocence Project Clinic and Clemency Project is a year-long, graded course offered for a total of six credits, three in the fall semester and three in the spring semester. Eight students are enrolled for the 2013-2014 academic year, says Professor Sandy Ogilvy, who directs the clinic.

For more information, visit www.law.edu.

New Academic Programs Offered

Four new degree programs are being offered this academic year.

The Department of Modern Languages and Literatures has established a Bachelor of Arts in Italian Studies. This interdisciplinary program ranges from introductory surveys of Italian literature and film through period and genre offerings to seminars exploring individual authors and cultural topics. The program's interdisciplinary focus reflects the department’s interest in the study of language, literature, film, and culture from a comprehensive perspective.

The School of Business and Economics has two new master's programs — and a new partnership with the Columbus School of Law.

- The Master of Arts in Integral Economic Development Policy program — the first in the kind nationally and internationally — offers students the opportunity to learn an integral economic approach for policy design and impact evaluation. Students may follow a two-year, full-time course of study or they may choose a part-time option.
- A Master of Science in Accounting provides students who have completed an undergraduate degree in accounting or an equivalent bachelor's degree the opportunity to complete the 150 credit hours needed to be eligible for the CPA exam and license. The M.S.A. is designed to be completed in one year (two semesters) of full-time study by students. The M.S.A. degree may also be completed on a part-time basis.
- In the joint Juris Doctor and Master of Science in Business Analysis program, students will take their first year of law and then continue with the M.S.B.A. — a one-year master's in business degree for non-business majors. Students will then complete their degree with three semesters of law.

Senior Caregiver

Janet Selway, Nursing

Janet Selway is an assistant professor in the School of Nursing and director of the Adult-Gerontology Nurse Practitioner Program. A geriatric trauma expert, she is the lead author of “Alcohol use and testing among older trauma victims in Maryland” in the Journal of Trauma: Injury, Infection and Critical Care. She is also project director of an $800,000 grant for the new Technology-Enhanced Interprofessional Geriatric Advanced Nursing Education Program and a past president of the Nurse Practitioner Association of Maryland Inc. and the American College of Nurse Practitioners.

Q: Your early research looked at the role of alcohol in trauma cases among geriatric patients. What prompted that?
A: I worked in the ER and shock trauma for about 15 years. At that time, an emerging issue was trauma among older adults. How do you manage a geriatric patient with multiple falls or car accidents? Was alcohol a factor? I looked at six years’ worth of data from the Maryland Trauma Registry. My analysis showed that alcohol definitely played a role, especially in falls. Among all geriatric injury causes, patients who had fallen had the greatest proportional increase, from 28 percent in 1996 to 43 percent in 2000.

Q: What do your findings show?
A: They strengthen the need for alcohol screening among patients of all ages. Addressing alcohol-use problems is an important injury-prevention measure even in older adults who may not realize how aging can impact the effects of alcohol.

Q: Predictions indicate that by 2030 there will be about 72 million seniors — roughly 20 percent of the U.S. population. What do these numbers mean for nurse practitioners?
A: The aging population brings unique challenges — multiple chronic illnesses, management of prescriptions, the need for dementia care. Because only three percent of the approximately 150,000 U.S. nurse practitioners are geriatric certified, nurse practitioner programs are increasing gerontology content in their curriculum.

Q: How is the nursing school addressing the demand for more nurse practitioners with expertise in gerontology?
A: Our courses, open to students of other disciplines, address interprofessional gerontology and behavioral approaches in dementia care and geriatric pharmacology. Students learn to figure out what’s triggering a patient’s agitation instead of simply prescribing a sedative. Evidence indicates that interactive learning among health care professions improves health care quality and safety. Nursing and social work students have started this in our interprofessional course.

Q: What are you planning to research next?
A: I’d like to look at data which may suggest that patients who have been hospitalized for a fall are more likely to suffer car accidents within three years of discharge. As some people age, the ability to multitask and manage their cognitive processes diminishes. Seniors with a high risk of falling have shown slower response time to unexpected events while driving. If falls are really a predictor of car crashes in older adults, the need for fall prevention is even more critical.

— C.L.

For more about Selway’s work, visit her Web page at nursing.cua.edu/faculty/selway.cfm.
Scholars Discuss Path to Peace

The path to peace in the Middle East is built on a foundation of human rights and religious freedom, said Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, archbishop emeritus of Washington, at Catholic University’s Sept. 9 conference Religious Freedom & Human Rights: Path to Peace in the Holy Land: That All May Be Free. Meeting at the Edward J. Pryzbyla University Center, Church leaders, scholars, and policy makers examined the relationship of human rights to religious freedom in the Holy Land from Jewish, Christian, and Muslim perspectives with the hope of contributing to the peace process and fostering respect among the peoples of the region.

Cardinal McCarrick said religious freedom means more than just a place to worship. “The Holy Father said to us, very clearly, freedom of religion means you are able to live your religion, to proclaim your own message and who you are, with gratitude to God,” he said. “That is a basic human right.”

Stephen Schneck, director of CUA’s Institute for Policy Research & Catholic Studies, which co-sponsored the conference, said by focusing on religious liberty, the organizers hoped to offer a fresh perspective on the path to peace in the Holy Land. “The on-ground realities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict compromise the religious liberty of all the region’s people of faith,” he said. “Jews, Muslims, and Christians find the conflict compromise the religious liberty of all the region’s people of faith,” he said. “Jews, Muslims, and Christians find the conflict compromise the religious liberty of all the region’s people of faith.”

In July, University President John Garvey and 10 students traveled to World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, where 3 million people participated in a vigil and Mass celebrated by Pope Francis. Junior sociology major Sarah Seski, of Grosse Point, Mich., says that during adoration at the vigil, “you could see millions of people on their knees. You could feel God’s adoration at the vigil, “you could see millions of people on their knees. You could feel God’s presence.”

Feeling God’s Presence at World Youth Day

At the worldwide gathering, the students attended praise and worship sessions, dinners with other pilgrims, and talks by Church leaders, including Cardinal Timothy Dolan, archbishop of New York and a CUA trustee and alumnus. One day, Garvey and the students traveled to the 98-foot-tall Christ the Redeemer statue at the summit of nearby Mount Corcovado. In a small chapel at the base of the statue, Rev. Marek Sybot, O.F.M. Conv., associate chaplain for faith development, celebrated Mass for the CUA group and other pilgrims who spilled outside.

In a laboratory classroom on the first floor of Pangborn Hall, a low buzz of intense activity made by busy students vibrates through the room. Two young women gaze intently at a small circuit board and a little battery on the lab table in front of them. Little black wires stick out from the sides, and tiny red LED lights flash on and off.

“What letter do you want to make?” Erica Haschert, a junior at Elizabeth Seton High School in Bladensburg, Md., asks of her lab partner.

“How about an H?” says Heidi Tubbs. She is a senior at Oakton High School in Fairfax, Va. They take turns shifting the tiny circuit connections on the board. Their goal — to light the LEDs in the shape of a letter or a number. After a few seconds, Tubbs gives her partner a turn at the connections. “Here, you do these because if I keep looking at this, I’ll go blind,” she laughs.

These two, along with 34 other future engineers, are taking part in the School of Engineering’s annual Engineering New Frontiers camp for high school juniors and seniors.

Participants come from around the country — Maryland, Virginia, New England, Florida, Wisconsin, and Oregon. Organized by School of Engineering Assistant Dean and Associate Professor Binh Tran, Director of Student Services and Academic Support Peggy Bruce, and Clinical Assistant Professor Greg Behrmann, the weeklong camp is filled with hands-on activities, design projects, and tours of local engineering laboratories and workplaces, with one purpose in mind — to give these students a taste of what engineering, and what living on a college campus, are really like.

Other faculty supervised activities in their specific fields of engineering. In addition, five CUA engineering seniors served as counselors and assisted students throughout the program.

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“Not every high school can expose them to these fields,” Behrmann says. “We have a mechanical activity, which is building a mini-hovercraft; the civil engineering project is a water purification experiment.”

To introduce the students to a variety of engineering professions, the group visited the Naval Surface Warfare Center, the Montgomery Street Market construction site, a micro-manufacturing facility, and the National Rehabilitation Hospital, where they looked at medical robotics.

“It’s a nice way for students to find out if they want to study engineering,” says Behrmann. “Not every high school can expose them to computer science or other technologies. And the camp also helps bolster their applications for college.”

— J.C.
• Adjust Thermostats (no cost). Lowering your thermostat by just one degree can save a significant amount of carbon dioxide (and money!). Turning heat down at night, turning the heat or air conditioning off during the day when the house is vacant, and drawing curtains to keep the indoor temperature constant can also save a substantial amount of energy. Setting your hot water tank to 140 degrees or below will consume less energy than keeping it at a higher temperature.

• Save Electricity (no cost). Turn the lights off when you’re not in a room. Unplug chargers when you’re not using them. A mobile phone or laptop charger can still draw power even when it’s not connected to the device. Check to see if smart meters are available from your energy provider. In some communities, they are offered free of charge. They are designed to help decrease energy consumption by enabling customers to track and manage their energy use. Once we see how much power we are consuming, it’s easier to change ingrained habits.

• Save Water (no cost). Don’t leave the water running when you brush your teeth. If you have an older toilet, place a brick or stones in the water tank to displace the water so it will hold less. Toilet leaks waste a lot of water if not detected. To test your toilet, drop food coloring in the tank, and see if it leaks into the bowl. If it does, you’re not only wasting water, you’re wasting money!

• Conserve Inside the House (low cost). Using fabric towels and napkins that can be washed and reused instead of paper napkins will not only save paper resources, but also minimize waste. Placing aluminum foil behind radiators will reflect heat into the room. Hot water tanks will run more efficiently if you install insulative covers on the tank and piping. Keep HVAC air filters clean by changing them every few months so that less energy is required to push air through the filter. Use LED light bulbs, which last longer and use less energy than standard bulbs.

• Conserve Outside the House (low cost). Collect rain from your gutters in a rain barrel. Use this water to irrigate plants and the lawn. Inexpensive PVC pipes can be used to direct condensation from an HVAC unit to also water plants. Growing indigenous plants that are used to the local climate often requires less irrigation. Maintain the weather-stripping around windows and doors to prevent drafts and energy loss.

— Patricia Andrasik, assistant professor in the Master of Science in Sustainable Design program and head of sustainable outreach for the School of Architecture and Planning.

Memories from March on Washington
Alumnus Bob Duckworth (second from the left) shared this photo of himself as a student with a group from Catholic University at the 1963 March on Washington. "I knew after the march and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech the nation was at the historic beginning of a moral and political revolution to assure social and economic justice for all," Duckworth says. "It was one of the most memorable days of my life, as a CUA student and an American citizen."