

CONNECTICUT POST

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UB discussion is not . . .

well, it actually is rocket science

By ROB VARNON
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BRIDGEPORT — A former director of NASA's Goddard Space Center and the intellectual elite of IBM research engineers — the closest thing to rock stars the field knows — will be at the University of Bridgeport today to discuss advances in electrical and computer engineering.

UB's School of Engineering will host an all-day colloquium in room 107 of C. Dana Hall Auditorium, which will feature Mike Hinchey, former director of the space center and co-director of Lero, Ireland's Software-Research Center.

From 9:55 to 10:55 a.m., Hinchey is to talk about the explosion of new technology and how it could be fostering an overly optimistic sense of quality and trust in these complex systems, even as NASA takes on complicated and ambitious missions.

Trumbull resident Richard Freeman, a retired IBM engineer, applauded the university for opening up the venue to the public and giving people a rare opportunity to talk to "rocket scientists."

Freeman is not involved with the event or the university but spent more than 20 years working for IBM, engineering machines that enabled the use of credit cards in the 1960s.

He said the IBM engineers UB is bringing in are also among the best in the world.

At 1:05 p.m., Archan Misra, senior researcher at the IBM T.J. Watson Research Center, will talk about the development of cost-effective systems to move audio and video content on the Internet to improve access in poor communities.

"We revered Watson," Freeman said of his fellow IBM engineers who worked in the field. He said the men and women who worked at the center were living decades ahead of the rest of the world, and inventing it.

Tarek Sobh, dean of UB's School of Engineering, was excited about the event and speakers. He said it will begin with a breakfast at 8 a.m. and continue almost all day, closing with a panel discussion on building an innovative eco-system.