A Note from the Interim Director

By Dr. Janet Cherrington

It has certainly been a year filled with not only excitement, but the many surprises that come with serving as interim director of the Institute. A flashback of recent activities reflects just how devoted URSI alumni are to supporting the Institute. Most recently, URSI experienced one of the most highly attended Career Days. In January of 2008, our panel of speakers cheerfully handled a crowded room that forced students to sit on the floor or stand during the insightful discussion. After the panel of Tina Rosenstein (Nicolelt County Environmental Services Director – retired), Mitch Berg (City Manager of Mahnomen), Troy Klecker (City Planner of Owatonna), and Brad Potter (Community Resources Planner with I&S Engineers) concluded their session, they joined URSI students and faculty for an informal lunch.

In October, I coordinated efforts to partner with Kwame Nkumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Ghana, West Africa, for a faculty exchange, which will have Miriam Porter going to KNUST and Kwau Kessey coming to teach at Minnesota State Mankato during the 2008 – 2009 academic year. To round off 2007, Beth Wielde, working with Minnesota State Mankato’s marketing director Ann Rosenquist-Fee, designed a new URSI logo, which appears on the newsletter’s cover page.

As we move forward, the department has finalized the faculty search process to fill the very big shoes of Dr. Perry Wood, who will retire in two years. Finding replacements to fill positions of key senior faculty like Dr. Wood is not a challenge just for URSI. A recent Star Tribune article reported that municipalities across the state are bracing for the retirement of local government employees who have run cities for decades. While URSI’s combined undergraduate and graduate programs have exceeded enrollment expectations, cities across Minnesota will still be facing a shortage of candidates to manage cities, recruit businesses, and plan neighborhoods. Across Minnesota, 43 percent of city, county, and school district employees are over the age of 50, according to the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) of Minnesota.

The reality is that while Baby Boomer retirements will affect many industries, local governments will be hit even harder. There are two predominant reasons for this: First, local government units have an older workforce that can retire earlier, and second, there is a shortage of young people pursuing careers in local government. My own personal experience in local government as a municipal manager and financial director reinforced the competition of employee recruitment when it took over two years to find my replacement as the finance director.

Unfortunately, as people have become less involved in their communities, knowledge about the need and phenomenal opportunities that will be opening up in the field just isn’t there. One solution would be passage of legislation that could allow city employees to work parttime without risk to their pensions; PERA hopes to introduce this legislation in 2009. One thing is certain; succession planning is a problem for URSI and the cities for which it grooms managers and planners that won’t be put off forever.

In closing, please remember we are always interested in hearing about available internships and employment opportunities, but we are especially interested in what’s going on in the lives of our alums – so please keep us in the loop by e-mail or phone. Contact information can be found on the back of the URSI Update.
Safety at Public Meetings: A Question of Balance

In Kirkwood, Missouri, a scene played out that has occurred hundreds of times, with hundreds of City Councils across the nation. A citizen, feeling disenfranchised because a Council decision didn’t go his way, comes to a Council meeting to air his grievances with the City. This time, however, it was different. The citizen, Charles Lee Thornton, had a gun and used it to kill two police officers, two Council members, the Public Works Director, and injure two others before being shot and killed by police. The Kirkwood incident was shortly followed by the arrest of Tempe, Arizona man for plotting a massacre at the Super Bowl after being denied a liquor license at a City Council meeting.

These tragedies highlight a question every city, county, and other ‘open-process’ agency needs to address: How should cities provide for the safety of public officials, citizen attendants, and staff while still following the spirit of the ‘open public meeting?’

Councils and commissions are often seen as the most accessible of elected positions. Yet Councils are charged with overseeing some of the most personal of citizens’ issues: property policy and their tax dollars. These issues hit very close to people’s hearts, and evoke strong feelings should they feel their rights are being squashed, whether this feeling is based on reality or perception.

Nonetheless, such incidents are rare. Don Borut, the National League of Cities Executive Director, has been fielding calls about safety at meetings, but he has stated that the League does not currently have any minimum safety standards for public meetings (D.M. Nanez, Arizona Republic, February 20, 2008). The StarTribune quotes Jim Miller of the League of Minnesota Cities as saying that “nearly every city in Minnesota has unruly residents and in most cases they’re harmless,” and was unable to recall any meetings that descended into violence on the level of Kirkwood.

Dr. Tony Filipovitch of URSI notes how Kirkwood, Tempe, and similar incidents of violence questions the nature of public life—“Socrates condemned to drink poison by a jury of his peers, Caesar assassinated by patriots, Reagan & Lennon shot by people who were ill. Openness (and attendant risk) is price of democracy, a price Socrates argued one must accept for the sake of the common good.” Research indicates that most cities, despite the recent tragedy, still support openness. However, they have implemented methods of security that strike a balance between openness and safety.

Two approaches many cities cite are uniformed or plainclothes security and metal detectors (Lawrence Journal World, 9 Feb 08, Arizona Republic, 20 Feb 08, Gazette.Net, Feb 14, 2008). Other techniques include intercom systems for emergency information, security cameras, designing City Hall buildings with the Council chambers located on a first floor or another wing, so the rest of the building could be locked down during meetings (Columbia Missourian, Feb 8, 2008). The Minneapolis StarTribune notes many communities in the Twin Cities area have a button that can be pressed in the case of an emergency that will summon police. Each city needs to determine the best emergency procedure for itself, based on the community culture, budget, and level of security desired by the community. There is no one uniform solution to how cities should provide security while maintaining a sense of accessibility. [You might consider organizing this paragraph around “active” and “passive” defensive systems—call buttons versus Newman’s defensible design.]
Dr. Raymond Asomani-Boateng continues his efforts to forge international ties between the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana and URSI. His efforts have led to faculty exchange programs between the universities, with a Summer Abroad program in May 2008. In addition to these efforts, Raymond’s Environmental Planning class in the Fall of 2007 was tasked by I&S Engineering to evaluate two artificial wetlands in Mankato and his Urban Analysis class of Spring 2008 is conducting a need assessment survey for Crystal Lake Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Janet Cherrington [aka Dr. “J”] was on sabbatical during the spring 2007 semester. She returned in the fall to serve as Interim Director of URSI during the 2007 – 2008 academic year while Dr. Filipovitch was on sabbatical. In addition to presenting at two major conferences, one national and one international, Janet also published several manuscripts. One is available online at www.livablecities.org/Cherrington_Janet.pdf, and the other will be published later in 2008 in the Journal of World Universities.

In the fall, Janet taught Public Information and Involvement, a special topics course offered periodically in the past. The new permanent course teaches future city managers and planners about marketing their communities and the principles of media relations. Janet continues to expand her

Making a Difference

When Dr. Raymond Asomani-Boateng was hired to teach in URSI in 2004, one of his goals was to initiate partnerships between Minnesota State University and his alma mater Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Ghana. Working with Minnesota State Mankato’s Vice President for Institutional Diversity Dr. Michael Fagin, the Vice-Chancellor of KNUST, Dr. Kwasi Kwabo Adarkwah, was invited as a keynote speaker for the 2005 Pan African Conference at Minnesota State Mankato. The visit culminated in the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Minnesota State Mankato and KNUST, thus setting the stage for Minnesota State Mankato’s first partnership with an African country.

In late 2006, there was a follow up visit of by delegation from Minnesota State Mankato consisting of a handful of faculty, deans, department chairs and the provost and vice president of academic
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URBS 651: Urban Finance course (designed for future planners and city managers without accounting experience) to include local government accounting, budgeting, and capital improvement planning. Janet remains active in her community by serving as the chairperson of the Janesville Planning Commission. In January 2008, she was appointed to the city’s Economic Development Authority for a three-year term.

Dr. Tony Filipovitch has been on sabbatical during the 2007 – 2008 academic year, coordinating a connection between URSI and Kwame Nkrumah University in Ghana, focusing on nonprofit leadership and directory development. In addition to his work with Kwame Nkrumah, Tony has published an article, “Institutional Change in Local Governance,” in the Rural Minnesota Journal, expected in print this fall.

Dr. Miriam Porter is extending URSI’s expertise to work with the Public Achievement Program at Minnesota State Mankato. She assumed the director’s role in the fall of 2007. Public Achievement is a required clinical experience for all students enrolled as Social Studies majors. These students work as coaches with youth to engage them in civic projects. They work on problems or issues that the young people have identified and chosen. Public Achievement, in effect, draws on the talents and desires of ordinary people to build a better world and create a different kind of politics.

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affairs led by Dr. Raymond Asomani-Boateng. This partnership has started yielding good results as there have been a series of faculty exchanges between KNUST and Minnesota State Mankato since then.

Dr. Moaveni of engineering spent part of his sabbatical teaching at KNUST engineering department in 2007; Dr. Afranie, chair of the planning department at KNUST was at Minnesota State Mankato to research online teaching in 2006. Dr. Jerome Antonio from KNUST, is a visiting professor at Minnesota State Mankato teaching in the engineering department. URSI’s Dr. Anthony Filipovitch is spending part of his sabbatical doing collaborative research on non-profits in Ghana with Dr. Afranie. In the fall of 2008 Dr. Kessey from KNUST will be at Minnesota State Mankato teaching and doing research in URSI whilst Dr. Miriam Porter from URSI will be at KNUST planning department offering courses in city management. Through this partnership, a couple of Ghanaian students have been accepted to pursue graduate degrees in planning at Minnesota State Mankato.

Dr. Raymond Asomani-Boateng has also developed a two week Study Abroad program to Ghana. In the summer of 2008, Raymond and Dr. Miriam Porter will take six Minnesota State Mankato students (Jonathan Hammel; Janseen Karmon; Judith Ziemke; Monica Orth; Justin Rhein and Lotoya Carter) on a two week study tour in Ghana. 2008. This study tour will take the group to cultural and historic sites in Ghana, immersing them in the culture while exploring the planning and governmental aspect of the country.

URSI’s New Logo

An important facet of urban and regional studies is studying trends, updating technologies, and modernization while maintaining a connection to heritage. The new URSI logo attempts to accomplish that; create a modern logo design that retains the connection to its past.

The new logo features the URSI arrows that have been part of the department since its inception in the late 60’s, while creating a modern design scheme that highlights the department acronym. Adding “Minnesota State University, Mankato” and changing the traditional red to the University purple connects it to the university, adopting schemes used in its new marketing campaign.

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In the Mankato area, Public Achievement is a partnership between Minnesota State Mankato and Dakota Meadows Middle School in IDS #77. Miriam’s focus is to cultivate the spirit of public service and self-determination in the next generation.

Miriam is also preparing for a teaching assignment at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi, Ghana, Africa. This is part of a faculty exchange that Minnesota State Mankato and KNUST have arranged. Her role is to work with the KNUST faculty to develop an urban management curriculum. Miriam will be at KNUST for the 2008-2009 academic year. It’s a year of new beginnings as she embraces the opportunities which have been offered to her.

Over the last year, Dr. David Laverny-Rafter has taken his research and service “to the streets” by pursuing several applied research projects working with community organizations in the Twin Cities area.

In the transportation field, his role as the faculty member for the URSI graduate Studio course required that he supervise 4 graduate students who assisted University UNITED neighborhood coalition in St. Paul, MN with an analysis of the proposed Central Corridor LRT stations and their impacts on parking. In addition, as a member of the Policy Committee of Transit for Livable Communities (TLC) in St. Paul, he has assisted TLC with analysis of the proposed Central Corridor LRT line in St. Paul. The students examined the experience of “peer” cities that have implemented LRT and who have addressed related parking problems. (3) Minnesota State Mankato Bell Tower Open Space Study examined the impact of new buildings on open spaces and pedestrian areas on the Minnesota State Mankato campus. In order to obtain input from all stakeholders on these issues, an on-line survey was conducted of all students, faculty and staff and specific recommendations were made on conserving open space while accommodating new construction.

In Spring, 2008, the Studio course implemented a Citizen Satisfaction Survey for the City of Mankato and Mankato Area School District. This survey is conducted approximately every four years (URSI Studio conducted the previous survey) and the findings are used by the City and the School District for planning and decision making. This diverse set of projects is typical of the Studio efforts and the outcome is a formal written report for the client (usually 15 pages with maps, tables and charts) and a PowerPoint presentation to the client. This year the project reports were especially well received because in most cases, the communities would not have been able to produce this level of analysis on their own. We wish to recognize the following graduate students for their hard work on the Fall, 2007 and Spring 2008 projects:

1. Atwood/Cosmos/Grove City School District: Andrea Uukrust, Rochelle Fischer, Joe Kohlmann

2. University UNITED: Dan Edgerton, Mike Elhard, Jacob Steen, Aaron Sedey

3. Minnesota State Mankato Bell Tower Open Space Study: Josh Aul, Steven Carleton, Ali Mayow


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provide research and service by serving as a member of the Housing Committee of the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council in Minneapolis, MN. Currently the Committee is very interested in addressing issues of housing affordability and the need to educate the public on alternatives to foreclosure. By offering a workshop on housing, the neighborhood hopes to assist residents to face the challenges related to the current housing financing crisis. In this regard, the workshop could provide a model for other neighborhoods throughout Minneapolis.

Dr. Beth Wielde began her year presenting a poster session at the American Political Science Association (APSA) conference in Chicago, displaying her work on 'Wonks and Warriors,' an examination of how public servants are depicted in popular culture film. She recently published an excerpt of the work in the November 2007 edition of the PA Times, the newspaper of the American Society for Public Administration. She has been approached to condense 'Wonks' into a chapter for an upcoming book about popular culture and government, and is working on turning the dissertation into a book.

Beth has also been involved in developing a series of architectural pattern books for the City of Mankato, focusing on the Washington Park and Sibley Park districts. This work includes inventory and analysis of the existing building stock, and identifying its overall architectural themes. It also includes Photoshop renderings of "conceptual restoration," where modernized buildings are revised to reflect the historic character of their original construction style.

Dr. J’s Research Sabbatical

During her sabbatical, Dr. Janet Cherrington continued working on her research to help communities deal with the “place-making” dilemma through university research, teaching, and outreach programs. Place-making means designing a community to satisfy the needs of its target markets. It succeeds when citizens and businesses are pleased with their community, and the expectations of visitors and investors are met. Since 2003, Janet has directed three URSI studio projects to promote the towns of St. Peter, Janesville, and New Prague and produced a marketing brochure for each. While Janet’s sabbatical lasted just one semester, she continued her research while pursuing her full-time university administrative, teaching, and writing endeavors in the fall of 2007 and spring of 2008.

In the spring of 2007, Janet was invited to present her research at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell’s Conference on Community-University Partnerships and the International Making Cities Livable Conference on ‘True Urbanism.’ In April, 2007, Janet was awarded a faculty research grant to continue her research on place-making. There are two components to the research: First, the short-term grant will allow her to travel to communities across the country and investigate how they are using marketing and tourism as a means to remain economically viable. Second, the long-term goal is to design a “place-audit” that would help those responsible for charting the community’s future to accurately understand what the community is like and why. The place audit will guide communities to systematically examine their economic, demographic, environmental, recreational, and other characteristics and sort them into strengths and weaknesses. In turn, this would assist communities in managing their marketing campaigns and communication efforts without hiring expensive outside consultants.

In October 2007, Janet was invited to present, virtually, at the international conference of the World Universities Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Her manuscript, Community-University Partnerships and Strategic Marketing Planning will be published in the refereed Journal of World Universities in 2008. While Janet’s sabbatical was limited to one semester, she is grateful for her first sabbatical and the research opportunities it provided.

SBS Announces the Perry Wood Community Service Award

For many years the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences has recognized students and student clubs for their exemplary service to the community. This year, we are pleased to announce that one of the students will receive the Perry Wood Community Service Award. The award is named after Perry Wood, a long time faculty member in the College, who has provided countless hours of service to the larger Mankato area. The Perry Wood Community Service Award will be given annually to the student determined to have achieved the most exemplary service to the community from among those nominated for the SBS Community Service Awards. The student will receive a $500 award in recognition of her or his service to the community.
Dr. Filipovitch’s Industrious Sabbatical

I have been on sabbatical this year (my last one was 14 years ago). My original goal was to develop the prospectus for a book (working title: *Living in town: An owner’s manual*). The idea was to go back to many of the ideas that I considered in the intro textbook I wrote 20 years ago, but this time write a book for the person on the street rather than students. But every time I sat down at my desk, a whole pile of unfinished articles kept pushing their way ahead in the line. So I decided to “clear the decks” and finish them. I already published one (“Institutional Change in Local Governance”), in the *Rural Minnesota Journal* this Fall.

The second goal for the sabbatical was to return to Ghana, to help Kwame Nkrumah University develop their own program in nonprofit management and leadership, and to do some research on the scope and size of the nonprofit sector in Ghana. I received a faculty research grant this Fall, and with additional help from the department I will be going to Ghana twice this year (the first time in March/April, just as this newsletter is coming out). I am working with Sam Afrane to develop a Directory of Nonprofits in Ghana, which we hope to publish by the end of the year. It will be the first of its kind for Ghana. Ghanaians tend to think of the nonprofit sector as NGOs (international nongovernmental organizations, like Doctors Without Borders or the Red Cross). As Sam learned more about what we do here, it became apparent that Ghana also had a significant indigenous nonprofit sector (Sam, for example, serves on the board for a microlending corporation). But no one knows the scale or the scope of that effort. We are also working to create a master’s level academic program in nonprofit leadership, and to do some research on the scope and size of the nonprofit sector in Ghana. I am so grateful to the University (and the taxpayers of Minnesota) for the sabbatical opportunity. As you all know, our daily worklives draw on our accumulated reserves as we respond to new challenges and new opportunities. The sabbatical provides the opportunity to review and reconsider what I have done before, the time to read and reflect and think about what is happening and what is yet to come, and the energy to return to the task with new vigor. As I look forward to returning to the department and teaching in the Fall, I feel like Rick, walking into the fog at the end of *Casablanca*—“Louie, this could be the start of a beautiful friendship.”

Nick Haggenmiller Receives Patrick Kelly Award

First year grad student Nick Haggenmiller received the Patrick Kelly Award, and will use it to attend *Budgeting for Budget Analysts*, a seminar sponsored by the Government Finance Officers Association.

The seminar focuses on graduate students entering the professional realm who may be encountering budgeting for the first time.

Haggenmiller will receive training on the role of the budget analyst and techniques used in the profession, the politics of budgeting, analysis and forecasting, and performance measurement. When Haggenmiller completes the training sessions, he will be eligible to become a certified budget/finance officer.

Patrick Kelly served on the City Council of North Mankato, and was known for his excellence in government service and interest in fiscal responsibility. The award assists students interested in local government finance obtain professional experience through internships, professional conferences, and in Haggenmiller’s case, workshop and seminar attendance.
Getting them in touch and keeping in touch with the Institute.

URSI Roster Update

Help us update our URSI Roster and mailing list by completing the following information and returning it to: Rita McEvoy, Urban & Regional Studies Institute, Minnesota State University, Mankato, 106 Morris Hall, Mankato, MN 56001 or fax it to 507-389-6377 or e-mail to rita.mcevoy@mnsu.edu. Thanks.

NAME: ________________________________________________________________________________________________________
TITLE: __________________________________________________________________________________________________________
COMPANY NAME: ______________________________________________________________________________________________
COMPANY ADDRESS: ___________________________________________________________________________________________
HOME ADDRESS: _______________________________________________________________________________________________
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I AM A: [   ] ALUMNI - YEAR GRADUATED: _________ , DEGREE: _______________________________________________________
[   ] FRIEND OF URSI
[   ] CURRENT STUDENT

I WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION ON:

[   ] SERVING AS A PROFESSIONAL MENTOR
[   ] PROVIDING AN INTERNSHIP
[   ] CONTRIBUTING TO THE URSI DEVELOPMENT FUND AT THE MINNESOTA STATE FOUNDATION (tax deductible)
[   ] CONTRIBUTING TO THE BARRETT ENDOWMENT (tax deductible)
[   ] CONTRIBUTING TO THE SMITH ENDOWMENT (tax deductible)

THANK YOU!