A Note from the Chairperson

What a year this has been! The national agenda is focused on homeland security, the debt is increasing, the employment and business sectors are wobbly, economic development and local growth and revitalization have been faltering. The power in the State has shifted to the suburbs, perhaps at the expense of the “Minnesota Miracle;” a mammoth budget crisis is being pushed down to the local level (dust off your books on “cutback management” from the ’80s); and local governments are facing substantial retirements—there is a changing of the guard in progress.

These are challenging times for URSI, too. We don’t know yet how much of the budget cut will come from operations, nor what effect increasing tuition will have. Our enrollments are holding, although graduate applications might be down slightly (reflecting a perceived insecurity in public employment or, perhaps, the evaluation of public service in our national and state discussions). Donations and income from URSI endowment are down (the stock market has been bad for all of us), but we still need to find the funds to support student awards and faculty research activity. But we face opportunities as well. We are developing graduate and undergraduate certificates (bundled of 3-4 courses around a common theme), and hope to bring them to the Twin Cities area. We are always looking for visitors to our classrooms and (depending on the budget cuts) adjuncts for our courses, studio/community-based projects, and internship opportunities. David Laverny-Rafter will be returning in the Fall after two years at the US GAO, Miriam Porter will be going on sabbatical (working on civic education), and H. Roger Smith will be retiring at the end of next year (talk about a changing of the guard!).

As always, keep in touch. Let us know as you move/change jobs. Check out our website (http://www.mnsu.edu/ursi/)—it has a bunch of useful links, job postings, news about the program. And, if you should be in the neighborhood, drop in!

URSI Graduate Student helps to make history in Mankato

Urban Studies graduate student J. Anthony Josey recently culminated a year long internship experience which made history in Mankato. Josey served as an intern in the city manager’s office in Mankato since August 2001. As the intern for the city manager, he worked with numerous departments and department heads.

In January 2002, after hearing a speech at the local Martin Luther King Commemorative Board’s annual community-wide celebration, Josey was moved and called to action when he heard that the state of Minnesota did not have a street named in memory of slain civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. After a brief conversation on the matter with the city manager, the process of making Mankato the first city in the state with that distinction began.

To bring this vision to fruition, required Josey to work with the City Engineer’s Office, the Traffic and Safety Committee, the Planning and Community Development Office, the City Council, as well as garnering the support of numerous stakeholders throughout the community.

After two city council work sessions, two city council meetings and numerous hours of investigating state statutes, facts and details, the City Council passed a

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ALUMNI NOTES

Angela Bersaw (Lohmann) and fiancé Peter recently celebrated their wedding day. Angela is employed with SRS Consulting in Plymouth, MN.

Tom Burt is the City Manager in Golden Valley, MN.

Jim Genellie is the Assistant City Manager/Director of Human Resources for the City of Hopkins.

Phil Honsey is the City Manager of Galian, OH.

Kris Jensen is a Planner and GIS Lead for the City of Hastings, MN.

Ryan Kragerud is a Planner for the City of Longmont, CO.

Jason Lindahl is a Community Development Assistant for the City of Anoka, MN.

Dave Mandt is the City Administrator of Watertown, MN.

Dave Minke is the City Administrator of Bemidji, MN.

Keith Mueticz is the City Manager of St. James, MN.

Dave Osberg, City Administrator of Hastings, was profiled in Public Management (January 2003).

Patrick Rev is the Associate Land-Use Planner for Allen County, IN. He married fiancée Paulina Hopee

Bob Streetar is the Community Development Director for the City of Columbia Heights, MN.

Bob Therres, City Manager of Blaine, served as President of the Minnesota City/County Management Association this past year.

Craig Waldron, City Administrator of Oakdale, was awarded his Ph.D. in March 2003.

Career Day 2003
by Miriam Porter

URSI has had a long tradition of bringing students and local government professionals together. One great opportunity for this is participation in the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences Career Day was held on January 29.

A panel of URSI alumni addressed a standing room only audience of students who were interested in learning about local government careers. The Career Day panelists were URSI Alum Dave Callister (1993), Carla Kleinwachter-Vita (2001), Mike Robertson (1990), and Anna Thill (2001).

Dave Callister is the City Administrator of Osseo. He talked about the special challenges of his job in a community with much redevelopment activity. He also talked about aspects of his job he really enjoys such as the ability to meet directly with residents to solve problems and sort through issues.

As City Administrator of Osseo, Mike Robertson manages a community which has a sizable geographic area that is undergoing significant growth. This brings about challenges and rewards for a city administrator. Mike highlighted the need for decision-making skills to be an effective manager.

Similar to Osseo, the Community of Isanti is undergoing growth. As City Planner/Director of Economic Development, Carla Kleinwachter-Vita finds herself in the middle of the many issues involved in this growth. She underscored the benefits of a supportive relationship between the city council and the city staff. Carla’s participation on the career panel provided an added bonus. We were able to meet her baby, Angelo (pictured below). While Carla was occupied as a panel member, Angelo was under the attentive and skilled care of his father, Joe.

Anne Thill’s discussion of her position as Director of Community Building for United Way, provided an added dimension to the opportunities to be in public service and to meet local needs. Anna talked about the social aspect of building communities. She discussed her role in helping people on a grass roots level and the personal satisfaction involved in that.

Following the formal panel presentation, the panelists met for lunch with URSI students and faculty. There, they continued to share their enthusiasm for and dedication to their work.

Our sincere appreciation is extended to Dave Callister, Carla Kleinwachter-Vita, Mike Robertson, and Anna Thill for taking time out of their busy schedules to share their insights and experience.
Non-Profit Certificate Program

This marks the first year of the newly approved Undergraduate Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership Program. The first core class had 24 students registered, including a number of graduate students who are interested in the nonprofit sector. This multidisciplinary program is a cooperative effort among four MSU departments: Recreation, Parks and Leisure Services, Sociology and Corrections, Social Work, and Urban and Regional Studies. Both Bill Bernhagen and Tony Filipovich are instructors in the core courses with a number of URSI faculty teaching electives for the certificate.

Staff Updates

Dr. Bill Bernhagen continues to serve as Coordinator for the recently approved multidisciplinary undergraduate Nonprofit Leadership Certificate program. This new program has attracted student interest far beyond expectations. Even graduate students from a variety of disciplines are taking these courses as individual study or for personal interest. In order to stay on the cutting edge of nonprofit research and local nonprofit trends, Bill attended the international ARNOVA conference in Montreal, Canada and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits annual conference this fall.

Bill also volunteers his time to serve as Academic Coordinator for Service Learning at MSU. The interest in service learning among students is growing across the curriculum and remains an emphasis area within URSI. Bill, along with Tony Filipovich, is also working with undergraduate students to conduct research on the effectiveness of service learning.

Dr. Bernhagen also remains active in research related to sustainable communities and teaches an undergraduate course in sustainability. Student interest in sustainable issues has resulted in an over-flow classroom this semester. Registration has increased every semester since the inception of this course.

Dr. Bernhagen and Dr. Filipovich are also actively involved in a regional health study with Region Nine. This research project will extend into the next several semesters and should result in state-of-the-art research on “end-of-life” issues.

Bill continues to teach honors sections and is also serving the Honors Advisory Council Committee for MSU. Additionally, Bill has three new courses this academic year that he has found to be exciting, interesting and a great learning experience.

URSI Grad Student - Continued from cover
resolution in April 2002 renaming Carver Road to Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. History had been made in Mankato, MN.

Josey did not stop there. During the process of searching for quotes by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to include in personal letters of thank you to the stakeholders, Josey stumbled on the web site of the King Center in Atlanta, GA. While there he discovered that they had a speaker’s bureau. This prompted him to go to the local MLK Commemorative Board and challenge them to make their next celebration a momentous occasion by inviting a member from the family to culminate this history-making event.

At first the Board was hesitant because they had never undertaken a task of this magnitude. The costs of bringing a speaker from the King Center started...
GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE
STUDIO PROJECTS

URSI graduate students Annalee Garlez, David Gross, Dan Jochum, Chris Vrchota, Peggy Wiese, and Tony Wippler presented their project, “New Ulm: A Vision for Downtown,” to New Ulm business leaders December 12. The project, completed for the Urban Planning Studio course taught by H. Roger Smith and Perry Wood, was described in a December 13 New Ulm Journal article.

URSI 653 class at Saint Peter city council meeting. (I to right) Cedrick Frazier, Cindy Froemel, Dr. J., Judie Ziemke, Jillian Connelly, Ken Ondich, Michele Koppinger

URSI graduate students Jillian Connelly, Cedrick Frazier, Joshua Jones, Michele Koppinger, Ken Ondich, Judie Ziemke and undergraduate Cindy Froemel presented their city management studio project “Building Communities...It’s No Small Chore...” to the Saint Peter City Council on March 31, 2003. The studio project was part of a five-pronged approach to build public awareness of the services that local governments provide and to promote excellence in professional management.

URSI students worked with Graphic Production students from a nearby technical college to develop a high-quality informational and photo brochure about the city of Saint Peter and an accompanying bookmark phone directory of city phone numbers and public amenities. On April 4, 2003, the URSI students also made a presentation to regional high school students to raise awareness about career opportunities in city and county management. The studio project focused on effectively using the International City/County Management Association’s (ICMA) public awareness tool kit and will be featured as part of a session at their annual conference. The URSI course was taught by Janet Cherrington and was featured in the spring Minnesota Women in City Government newsletter.

Staff Updates - Continued from pg. 3

Dr. Janet Cherrington [aka Dr. J.] continues to work on implementing new themes into the department’s city management curriculum. Her URSI 653 class in the spring focused on media relations in local government. Featured guest speakers from television, radio, and newspapers, as well as public relations consultants, provided real-world strategies for building relationships with the media. As part of the class studio, graduate students designed a community brochure and local government fact sheet for the City of Saint Peter. Applying the International City/County Management Associations’ (ICMA) “Building Communities...It’s No Small Chore” tool kit, the students also customized public service video clips, radio-spot announcements, and a print media advertisement for Saint Peter.

At the community level, Janet received a grant to mentor undergraduate student research on the immigrant housing patterns of Somalia refugees in Mankato. Statewide, Janet moderated a League of MN Cities conference session entitled “Reclaiming the Community,” with panelists from the MN Historical Society, the Chadwick City Council and Chadwick High School. Internationally, Janet shared her Introduction to the City applied learning model, integrating Internet-based visualization and multimedia technology, at the Society for Modeling and Simulation Conference. Attendees came from 20 different countries and heard Janet’s paper, which will be subsequently published. This and other conference proceedings-presentations can be found on Janet’s personal web page at www.intech.mnsu.edu/cherrington, under the “conferences” link.

With the award of tenure and promotion to associate professor, Janet looks forward to being a long-standing member of the Urban & Regional Studies Institute.

Tony Filipovich - I have been enjoying my first year back to full-time teaching, although it is amazing how much you can forget, and how quickly—which cords you need to use which projectors in which rooms, and how each machine will typically fail, and what is the likely work-around... Oh, yes, and all the reading I have to catch up on (five years was just long enough that I can’t trust that anything in my old notes is still current). But the students are great, and I am encouraged by how many of them are here because they want to make a difference when they get out—not just in terms of money, but also in terms of making the world we share in common a better place.

Even though the economic times are hard and issues of war and domestic security cast a shadow on the prospect of building our local communities, I remind the students that we have been here before—I can remember several recessions and wars—and, as the motto of my hometown, the city of Detroit, puts it, “Speramus meliora resurgat ex cineribus!” (We hope that better things will rise from the ashes.)

Besides my teaching (I have been teaching everything from Intro to advanced graduate classes) and chairing the department (which has been a pleasure—we have been having some very productive discussions among ourselves this year; you should be seeing the results in the curriculum shortly), I have

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Staff Updates - Continued from pg. 4

began to rebuild my research agenda. I have been doing several evaluation projects for community health organizations (the Open Door Clinic here in town, and a project on assessing end-of-life care in rural Minnesota) and have continued my involvement with nonprofit community organizations (I am on the Board of the Mankato Area Foundation and the Mankato YMCA, and on committees of the Mankato Volunteer Center and the Mankato United Way). I will also be part of a team who will be teaching a day-long training for nonprofit Board members this April.

I am looking for case studies (or even just data that I can develop into cases) for the graduate quantitative methods course that I teach (I am particularly looking for data for economic base analysis, employment forecasting, and land use forecasting). I am also looking for ways to build more GIS projects into the classes I teach. If you are curious, information about me and my classes is available on the Web at http://krypton.mnsu.edu/~tony

Dr. Miriam Porter continues to serve in the International City/County Management Association’s (ICMA) Task Force on International Affiliations (TFIA). This year the TFIA met for two days prior to the ICMA conference in Philadelphia, PA. During the course of the meetings, the TFIA reviewed its accomplishments in the past year toward its mission to foster more meaningful international experiences for ICMA members.

One of Miriam’s goals in teaching graduate classes is bridging theory to practice. To that end, the Professional Seminar that she teaches has been significantly revamped to focus on the students’ development and understanding of professional skills required of local government professionals. Some of these skills that the course covers are conflict resolution, group leadership, civic education and media relations.

Last year was a milestone for Miriam. She was awarded tenure. Next year will also be a year of professional growth. She was granted a sabbatical leave to pursue research projects involving credentialed for city managers and her long-term research interest regarding civic education.

Dr. David Laverny-Rafter has been on leave from URSI while he conducts research for the U.S. General Accounting Office in Washington, D.C. While at GAO, he has been able to pursue research in his teaching and research area of transportation planning and in some new areas involving homeland security and local government. He reports that the work at GAO has been a challenge responding to Congressional requests for information and preparing testimony at the drop of a hat but it has never been dull.

Specifically, his research into homeland security required that he conduct detailed case studies of five cities around the country examining how they are coping with the homeland security demands made by the federal government. His transportation research involved investigating the implementation of hazardous materials regulations in aviation and examining the new rail transit systems (called “New Starts”) that have been approved by U.S. Department of Transportation.

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ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Research: This spring Sharifun Syed and Dr. Janet Cherrington were awarded a research grant to study the housing experiences of Somali immigrants in Mankato. Sharifun represented the study at MSU’s Undergraduate Research Conference April 14-15, 2003. The paper will be subsequently published online with the Journal of Undergraduate Research at www.intech.mnsu.edu/researchoffice/urc.

Drs. Bernhagen and Filipovich are working with two undergraduate students, Julie Sergot and Jeanne Zwart, who have been awarded a $1,000 grant by the Undergraduate Research Conference to determine the effectiveness of service-learning at MSU. This interdisciplinary research will be presented at the Undergraduate Research Conference in mid April and at a national service-learning conference in late April.

WHO’S WHO AWARD RECIPIENTS

During the fall semester of 2002 the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences Advising “U” collected faculty nominations for student candidates for the Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges Award. The award is bestowed on senior undergraduates who have demonstrated academic excellence in the classroom, civic leadership, and participation in extracurricular activities. This spring URSI recipients were Katie Guetter, Adam Kienberger, Kenneth Ondich, Michael Stahlberger, and Kristin Wentzflafl.

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Anthony Josey was chosen to receive this award and recognized at a special recognition breakfast on April 29, 2003. The selection process for this award was competitive. In making its decision, the committee examined the service experience of each nominee with particular attention to length of service, level of commitment to service, breadth of volunteer activity, initiative in providing service, creative and innovative solutions to problems, and leadership. Congratulations Anthony!

National Student Exchange

For my final year before graduating with an Urban Studies major and minors in Economics and Geography, I have been taking classes at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities. This is being done through the National Student Exchange, a program that allows students to take courses at another campus throughout the United States while still paying resident (or home institution) tuition.

I was drawn to this program because of the availability of different types of courses at the U of MN. I’ve taken a public policy course focusing on regional issues; a land use law course examining the legalities of zoning, and a geography course that traced the history of the relationship of people, landscapes and the use of land. I’m currently enrolled in a real estate development course, a course on urban environment, and a course placing real property ownership in a landscape and location perspective.

Being in the Twin Cities has allowed me to experience a different urban setting and focused my interests in Urban Studies. I think this year has rounded out my education and added to what I’ve learned as part of the URSI program at MSU.

H.U.D. Fellows

Cedrick Frazier currently interns with the community building director at United Way. Cedrick provides assistance to the director in collecting community assessment data to be presented to the First Vision Council. This council determines allocations for agencies that provide services for the basic needs of the community. Cedrick also researches possible grant opportunities that may be available for programs that are provided by the United Way.

Mike Strodtman currently interns with the program director of the Minnesota Valley of Council Governments. At this time Mike is developing an affirmative action plan for the city of Waseca. Mike is also updating the zoning permit application and requirements for the city of Good Thunder, MN, along with conducting various surveys for different communities in the area.

Stacey has started a new internship with the city of Mankato’s Housing and Economic Development Department after working with Blue Earth County’s Environmental Services during the fall 2002 semester. Stacey is enjoying the opportunity to learn more about affordable housing programs administered at a municipal level as well as her chosen field of building rehabilitation and restoration.

Stacey has already worked on HUD dispositions to provide for low-income developments, administering a revolving loan fund or a Neighborhood Improvement Fund. She is also assisting in the facilitation of a Small Cities grant that targets the Lincoln Park and South Front neighborhoods. She looks forward to watching the grant process evolve into the construction design and bid process and hopes to witness the revitalization of two areas that will provide Mankato with a great deal of character.
Staff Updates - Continued from pg. 5

Professor Laverny-Rafter will be returning to teaching in URSI in the fall, 2003 and is looking forward to being back in the classroom and finding some time to write articles describing his research findings.

Dr. H. Roger Smith has continued to teach courses in urban design, historic preservation, and downtown revitalization. He also supervised a graduate planning studio, in which students completed a downtown revitalization plan for New Ulm. Dr. Smith will enter his final year of distinguished service to the department and MSU.

Dr. Perry Wood has continued his service to the department by co-supervising studio projects. This fall he oversaw the development of a downtown revitalization plan for New Ulm. Perry is also the Director of the Center for Applied Social Science Research at MSU. This spring, he co-taught the Community Based Problem Solving course with Dr. Smith, assisting with the development of the campus master plan.

SURI News

Ten SURI (Students of the Urban & Regional Studies Institute) attended the American Planning Association's conference in Denver, Colorado from March 29th to April 2nd. SURI members also lobbied at the state capitol on February 25th on issues concerning student aid/tuition, public employee pay freezes, transportation and various other topics. The club, composed of undergraduate and graduate students, meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month in 112 Morris Hall. Club advisors are professors Bill Bernhagen and Perry Wood. New students are invited to attend!

URSI Grad Student - Continued from pg. 3

at $20,000 plus expenses. But, after a few short months of deliberating back and forth the Board committed to the task and began writing grants and soliciting donations from corporate sponsors.

In the end, the Board held its celebration on January 30, 2003 with Martin Luther King, III as its guest speaker. In total, the Board raised over $23,000 in cash donations and another $20,000 in donated services. The event drew over 4,000 participants and garnered national attention through the Associated Press coverage on three different occasions. In the end, the community held an event that will have long lasting effects on those who attended or listened at home via KMSU live radio that evening.