



A NEWSLETTER OF THE

Urban & Regional Studies Institute

Fall 2012

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The View from This Seat

Dr. Miriam H. Porter, Chair

I'm starting my second year as Chair of the Urban and Regional Studies Institute (URSI). Assuming this role has given me cause to ponder what the Institute really means to me. It has been part of most of my professional life. First as an URSI graduate student, then as alum returning for various events such as career day, guest speaker etc., and now as a faculty member for the past 15 years (yes it has been that long).

In my reflection, I've come to see URSI as a unique and distinct community. It connects all of us, past and current faculty and staff, students and alumni as people with a very special mission; that of public service. Each of us holds public service as one of our core values. We heard the call to be of service to our Country and to each other. That call has taken us down the same corridors and into classrooms where we have learned together how to apply this value to our work and to various other aspects of our lives.

Once we've left, URSI has continued to be there for us. We come back as guest speakers and share our experiences, teach as adjunct instructors and two of us have become tenured faculty. Future generations of managers and planners are mentored through internships in our organizations. We check in when there are troubled times in our careers or when we have good news to share. We can take a class to brush up on a skill which can now be done on-line or at a second campus in the Cities at 7700 France in Edina. We may serve on an advisory board to guide URSI's evolution to meet ever changing needs. At times we gather to socialize and create more URSI memories. Some of my best friends are in the URSI community.

Some people that I admire most have also come from this community. Our alum, Peter Dahm and his wife Linda have shown their appreciation for and commitment to the URSI community with two grants challenges. The first concluded last December. It was a \$15,000 matching grant challenge which was successfully met because of the generosity of many of you. Peter and Linda have now challenged us to match a \$30,000 grant by December of 2012. This endowment, called the Urban Studies Leadership Endowment, will provide support for our students with such needs as assistantships and scholarships. However, it's going to take a community rally to make this happen. All of us are needed to give support.

I've shared with you what URSI means to me. At this important time, please take time to think about what it has meant to you. Your generosity to the Urban Studies Leadership Endowment is greatly appreciated. Please see the following page for information on how to donate.

A member of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System and an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity University.

This document is available in alternative format to individuals with disabilities by calling the Urban and Regional Studies Institute at 507-389-1714 (V), 800-627-3529 or 711 (MRS/TTY).

Matching Gift Challenge:

Urban Studies Leadership Endowment

To give: follow the link below, in the designated box choose "other"

and type in "Urban Studies Leadership Endowment".

Your donation will be matched by fellow alumni Peter & Linda Dahm.

Below is how the donation page looks on the Minnesota State University, Mankato website.

Make a gift online here.

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Do you or your spouse/partner work for a company that matches employees' charitable gifts? Find out by searching our [matching gift database](#). If yes, please submit your company form to Minnesota State.

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If you have any questions, please contact us at university-development@mnsu.edu or call 1-800-662-2705.

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Faculty Updates

Dr. Janet Cherrington

[aka Dr J] continues to remain active in her field with memberships in the International City/County Management Association, the Minnesota Women in City Government, and Government Finance Officers Assn. In May 2011 she attended the Government Finance Officers' Association conference in San Antonio, TX. She coordinated URSI alumni's participation in Minnesota State Mankato's Career Day in February 2012.



Janet Cherrington

Janet continues to do research and publishing. In the fall of 2011, her article on "Urban Studies, Students, and Communities: An Ideal Partnership—A Case Study of Urban Studies Service-Learning," was published in the *Journal of Service Learning & Civic Engagement*. She has added online learning to her teaching load which now includes writing emphasis courses in Community Leadership both in the summer and regular sessions. One new facet she has incorporated into these courses is to have students conduct face-to-face interviews with their service learning mentors on what led them to work in the non-profit sector. Students then use this information to write a reflection paper.

Utilizing the University's Desire-To-Learn (D2L) online software has expanded Jan's course offerings for students who live out-of-state, serve on military bases, or need flexible schedules to complete their degrees. This new teaching technology called D2L has also allowed Dr. J to provide supplemental materials using the Internet for all of her courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

On the community front, Dr. J remains very active in local government by serving on the Janesville Planning Commission. She also chairs the Janesville Economic Development Authority. If you would like more information about the courses Dr. J teaches or her publications, link to her Minnesota State Mankato website at: <http://www.intech.mnsu.edu/Cherrington> or email her at janet.cherrington@mnsu.edu.

A Case Study of Urban Studies Service Learning Dr. Janet Cherrington

Traditionally most colleges and universities attempt to develop within their students the necessary skills and knowledge to become life-long learners and effective, contributing members of society. As educators, we have come to view ourselves as a community of professionals who are committed to teaching and scholarship to enhance student learning and to benefit communities and the individuals our students ultimately serve. There has also been an on-going discussion in the educational realm about student service-learning, coupled with community involvement and university outreach. While service-learning is still evolving and has not settled into a shared language, it has established a set of common ideas and theories as well as generally accepted approaches. One important characteristic is that it be reciprocal in nature; that is, facilitating a service-experience with a learning experience. Taking reciprocity one step further, I have examined an integration of university outreach and student engagement that transformed knowledge into partnerships beneficial to the community, the university, the students and the faculty.

My article, Urban Studies, Students, and Communities: An Ideal Partnership—A Case Study of Urban Studies Service Learning explores an innovative multi-disciplinary collaboration between two institutions and community partnerships that jumpstarted the connection between learning and service for students.

It discusses the value of moving students off campus and into the surrounding environs to collect community data through field trips and interviews. This not only allows them an opportunity to interact meaningfully with different people, it also encourages them to assess their own relationship to the community. The power of immersing students in a community became evident from the classroom and the positive community response to the final product (a marketing brochure for the community).

The article goes on to explore how community-university partnerships provide an effective means to encourage and support students and faculty who wish to engage in interdisciplinary research and meaningful service-learning. Silka believes that "Universities have an explicit role to play that draws on their research function, but [also cautions that] they will need to learn about the community if such efforts are to have any hope of success."

From a pedagogical standpoint, these cross-institutional service-learning projects succeeded in "tak[ing] learning out of the traditional classroom and into the community to make it more significant and meaningful". Students learned how "to tell the story" of five small towns in Minnesota, through data collection, creative graphic design and effective media strategies. Most importantly, students gained a greater awareness of their role in the community as agents of change through an applied service-learning experience. Simultaneously, a diverse team of graduate, undergraduate, and technical students from two institutions of higher learning had the unique opportunity to participate in a "learn-by-doing" service-learning project that was a "win-win" for all. Using the combined talents of students, faculty, community leaders and city staff, this is truly a service-learning partnership that will fuel further volunteerism and community synergy.

Faculty Updates



Raymond Asomani-Boateng

Raymond Asomani-Boateng is entering his 9th year at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Raymond teaches mostly graduate courses in planning (Zoning and Legal Issues, Operational Planning, Environmental Planning) in Urban and Regional Studies Institute. Within Minnesota State Mankato Raymond is the architect who initiated

and brought to fruition Minnesota State Mankato KNUST (Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology) - Ghana partnership program. This partnership has opened up many opportunities for both KNUST and Minnesota State Mankato. It has also promoted faculty exchanges, collaboration in areas of research, graduate education and has led to increasing number of Ghanaian students enrolled in graduate programs at Minnesota State Mankato. Raymond is a reviewer for the Journal of Planning Education and Research. On April 6 2012, Raymond was appointed as a member of McGraw Hill Academic Advisory Board for Taking Sides: Clashing Views on African Issues. He is currently reviewing a book written by Richard Grant "Modern Africa: An Urban Revolution for Oxford University Press. Raymond is active in National APA and MN chapter of APA and is a familiar face at their workshops and conferences. mnsu.edu.



Ghana 2012

By William Mettee, Graduate Student

In May, I was fortunate enough to travel to African country of Ghana as a part of the Urban and Regional Studies Institute's field studies program. Myself, along with six colleagues, Dr. Raymond Asomani-Boateng and Dr. Miriam Porter departed Minneapolis on May 8, 2012 and arrived in Accra the next day for what turned out to be an unforgettable, life-altering two-week journey.

This extraordinary journey took us to the major cities of Accra, Kumasi, Axim, Cape Coast, Elmina and Sekondi-Takoradi, where we experienced a plethora of cultural and social ways of life so opposite of ours. During our second day, we had the distinguished honor of meeting two different tribal kings and attending a sacred ceremony celebrating the first planting of corn for the season. This customary celebration took place in Dutch



Accra and included parades and singing attended by hundreds of residents. Also, while in Accra, we visited the slum markets and had custom shirts and dresses hand-tailored for us made from authentic African material.

Moving on to Kumasi, we felt at home while staying on the campus of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. During our days in Kumasi, we visited the Ghana Cultural Center and spent a lot of time in craft villages and kente weaving villages. Between Accra and Kumasi, we spent two nights in Bepong, which is the hometown of Dr. Asomani-Boateng. We were given a great tour and saw the building where he grew up. The last few days were spent touring slave castles in Elmina and Cape Coast and staying in magnificent beachfront resorts.

Traveling to Ghana has allowed me to have a totally different perspective on life and the way I live today. The amount of poverty and starving children is one thing that I will never be able to forget. It has allowed me to appreciate everything I have and to not take anything for granted. Taking a field studies trip was the best decision I've made. It allowed me to learn so much about myself while experiencing culture so incredibly different than our own.

Faculty Updates

Dr. Miriam Porter serves as the Urban and Regional Studies Institute's (URSI) Chair. She often comments about what a talented and committed faculty and staff she works with as well as the top notch students we have.



Miriam Porter

Dr. Porter also co-chairs, along with the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the University Planning Committee. This committee is a good example of the University's commitment to shared governance. Faculty and administrative representatives work together on this committee to make recommendations to the University President and his cabinet. The years she spent in local government management serve as a great foundation for her current management and planning responsibilities.

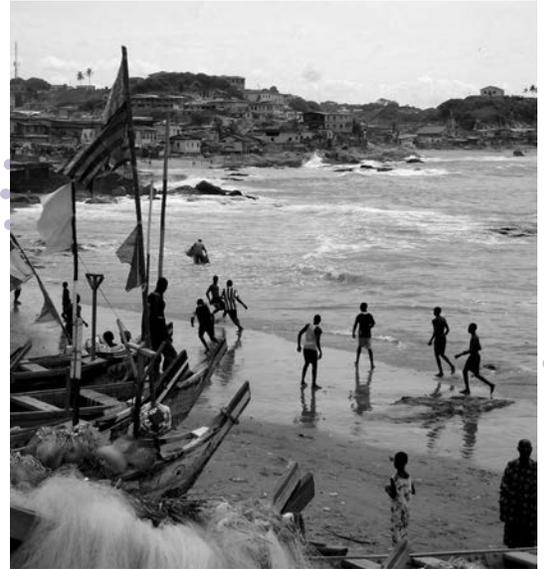
Over the summer of 2012, Dr. Porter and Dr. Asomani-Boateng led a field study in Ghana. The students were exposed to the beauty, challenges and culture of this developing country. The field study lasted for two weeks but the students were reluctant to leave. The good news is that there is another field study to Ghana planned for May of 2014. Students and alumni are welcome to participate.

After the field study, Dr. Porter stayed in Ghana for a month researching Ghana's disaster preparedness. Dr. Kessey from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and Dr. Raymond Asomani-Boateng joined her in this collaborative effort. During her stay, she and Dr. Kessey were invited to present their research at the African STEM conference which was hosted jointly by KNUST and the University of Michigan.

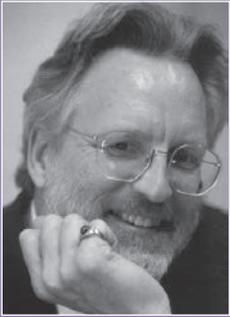
As many of you know, Dr. Porter worked in local government management for a number of years before she began teaching. The International City/County Managers' Association asked her to submit her story for inclusion in a recently published book, *Democracy at the Doorstep Too*. She was profiled in this book along with fifty-nine other women from the national and international local government management profession.

Looking Ahead to Ghana 2014

In the summer of 2012 Professor Raymond Asomani-Boateng (Director of Minnesota State Mankato Ghana Study Abroad Program) and Professor Miriam Porter under the Ghana Study Abroad program took eight students on a fourteen day trip to Ghana. The trip took us to some of the most exciting places in Ghana including the slave castles, Ankasa National Park, Nzulezu (village on stilts) Oku Falls and Prempeh museum (see pictures). The next trip which is in the spring of 2014 will be very exciting as the trip will be expanded to include middle and northern parts of Ghana, touring Mole Game reserve, home to elephants, lions, buffalos, chimps and rhinos; Paga Crocodile pond, and Paga Slave village (See Map below)



Faculty Updates



Tony Filipovitch

Tony Filipovitch

It's been a good year. While I enjoyed representing the Department as Chair for the last 9 years, it has been delicious to feel like a scholar again.

In the Fall, I worked with a team of our students (Smita Rakshit, Courtney Schmidt, Steve Maziarka, and Derek Eiden) to

identify and catalogue 75 sites in Mankato that have potential architectural or literary significance. This report (a database with thumbnails of each site) was presented to Mankato's Historic Preservation Commission in January. Late in the Fall, I was awarded a contract from the Center for Rural Policy and Development to study the impact of State and local regulations on business competitiveness. I did the work with Alex Cahill, a graduate student in the program, and the report was completed in the summer of 2012. In March, I was part of a team from the MCMA's Educational Initiatives committee (our alumni, Mike Ericson and Mike Robertson, were also on the team) who presented a panel at the annual MN Council for the Social Studies conference (it was in St. Cloud this year) on "Using i-County simulation to Teach Secondary Social Studies." A few weeks later, "Teaching the Social Studies through Your Local Community," an article that Talip Ozturk (an exchange fellow with us from Turkey) and I wrote for Educational Initiatives, was published in *Social Education*. This summer, I worked with a team of three graduate assistants (Courtney Schmidt, Joey Robison, and Shkelqim Daci) researching best practices in community engagement for a MnDOT project that will continue through summer, 2013; and I was awarded a Faculty Research Grant to work with another graduate student, Emmanuel Frimpong Boamah, on developing and testing a simulation model for optimizing parking provision on college campuses. Not only has it been fun to get my hands dirty with data again, but it has been a joy to share it with so many of our students. We really do have a talented and self-confident bunch of students in our program (but, of course, you already knew that—after all, you came through here, too).

Besides my teaching and research, I had some time for a few other things, too. I participated in

Filipovitch continued on page 7

My Turn With The City Professionals: An Encounter With City Managers/Administrators at the 2012 Annual Minnesota City-County Managers Association (MCMA) Conference

By Emmanuel Frimpong Boamah

Graduate Student

Urban and Regional Studies Institute (URSI)

Minnesota State University, Mankato



The closest description of my experience when I was selected as one of the two recipients for the 2012 Annual MCMA Conference Scholarship can be summed up in the words of Charles Spurgeon when he opined that "Luck generally comes to those who look for it, and my notion is that it taps, once in a lifetime, at everybody's door, but if industry does not open it luck goes away." As I organized my resumé and statement of interest, filled my application, requested for a letter of recommendation and was reflecting on the conference's theme of "Succeeding in

the New Era", there existed no ambiguity or whatsoever in my mind that the MCMA conference will be the "gathering of the saints" in city management. Exactly the gathering I needed to purge my sins of naiveté in the local government management career that I have chosen to pledge the rest of my adult life building.

URSI and Brian Gramentz (city manager of New Ulm and a member of MCMA's Board of Directors) coordinated all my travelling arrangements and I arrived at this scenic lodge (Grand View Lodge), Nisswa, Minnesota. The choice of conference location was enough for me to realize that the city manager/administrator career was one of high repute. The organizing, conference presentations and nature of camaraderie exhibited made me realize that the MCMA cared about its image and always protected its own. As ignorant as I was and seeing high profiled professionals casually dressed and relating to each other in the most humble of manners, I had no option than to ask Mr. Gramentz why this style. He just smiled and said that MCMA has evolved and grown to be a professional body which sees that the true value of our service as city managers/administrators is only manifested when done in humility.

My greatest admiration at this conference was when almost every conversation I had with those I met started with "Oh Minnesota State Mankato, I'm from there". They will then start mentioning the names of the professors in URSI and briefly share with me their experiences. As I got to know of how URSI had impacted the life of all these professionals in one way or other, it struck me then that "the light at the end of the tunnel" is much closer than I thought. In fact, MCMA has been shaped by URSI so much such that its coveted "Manager of the Year Award" is named after URSI's founder Robert Barrett. Why then should a graduate of URSI worry about making it in the city manager/administrator career if all it takes is

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Faculty Updates

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the Greater Mankato Inter-City Leadership Visit to Charlottesville, VA—a whirlwind three-day tour with community leaders, to see what we could bring home to Mankato. I published my reflections in a *Free Press* editorial, "[Learning from Charlottesville.](#)" Some of you may know that for many years I have, from time to time, done performances as Thomas Jefferson. The highlight of my "acting career" (such as it has been), though, was to perform as Mr. Jefferson for our group when we met at Monticello (talk about pressure!). I have also been helping the University establish the "Minnesota Center for Modeling and Simulation." This year we designed and won approval for a graduate certificate program in modeling and simulation, and we have been fielding (roughly) monthly brown-bag discussions on various modeling/simulation projects. If any of you are interested, Brian David Johnson (the corporate Futurist at Intel, featured recently in an interview in *Scientific American*) will be visiting our campus on March 19 (tentatively scheduled). The Center is also working with Mayo Health Systems Mankato (ISJ or ISJ/Mayo to you alumni, depending on when you were here) to create a Health Care Simulation Center (it looks like it will be operational in about two years). I have also been doing some work with teenagers for Mankato Area Healthy Youth, and am updating the report on Affordable Housing in the Mankato Area for Envision 2020.

As I already said, we have a great bunch of students. They are looking for real-world projects that they can pursue, to test what they are learning, to sharpen their practical skills, to build their resumes. Almost every project I have done has come from one of you asking for help (well, not every one—the modeling and simulation center comes from my own peculiar interests, both in game theory and in mathematical modeling—but I'm looking for projects that might apply my modeling/simulation/gaming skills, too). You don't have to have a fully-formed project; a noodle of an idea about something interesting for which you might have a lead on some solid information is often enough to start. Then we can sit down together, bounce ideas off each other, and see what sticks. Now that I'm not tied down on campus with Chair duties, I find my leash is a little longer—call me (or email— tony@mnsu.edu) and we can do tea (or coffee, or whatever is your poison).

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for you to do exactly what you have been taught and knowing that the URSI through MCMA will have your back.

In a chronological and coherent manner, the presentations were made to reflect on issues related to: Ethics considerations in the Profession; Leadership and Team Building; Current Innovations and Tools in Local Government Management such as "Lean Thinking"; and Time Management using a Japanese concept known as "MUDA" - which deals with getting rid of activities considered wasteful and unproductive in our lives. The most significant thing that struck me in these presentations was the line connecting theory and practice. For instance, as I sat with seasoned city managers/administrators trying to make decisions regarding some ethical scenarios presented to us, I remembered how we dealt with similar issues in my classes I had with Dr. Janet Cherrington-Cucore. Just as those ethical issues were difficult for us to unravel as a class, so was it difficult for even the professionals. But your mind remains at peace after you've made those decisions if you stick to the "principles" taught in the classroom.

Life's value is in sharing with others and MCMA have evolved to be an association of "Givers", especially to the young and upcoming professionals. When you have an older generation able and willing to "groom" the future "torch bearers" of our profession, all we have to do is to make ourselves available. Getting into MCMA conferences will therefore not be a bad start in getting that dream exposure, recommendation, internship or job as a young professional. And I'm most grateful to God, URSI and MCMA for the new chapter of friends and professional contacts opened in my life.



MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

Please Update URSI!

As alumni and friends of URSI move around in their careers and their lives, addresses (both work and home), email addresses, and phone numbers change. When you change jobs, move, or change your preferred email address, please remember to update URSI on these changes as well so we can continue to send you the URSI Update!

To change your contact information, please contact Missy Manderfeld at elizabeth.manderfeld@mnsu.edu, or call 507/389-1714, or mail the information on the form provided on the back cover.

Faculty Updates



Robert Hugg

Robert Hugg

Robert Hugg has remained busy within the department, the college, and across The University, particularly in the areas of online course design and educational technology. Bob designed, and is teaching, a class using a hybrid mix of in-person class meetings, online class meetings, and Minnesota

State Mankato's latest technological innovation, **Telepresence**. *Telepresence* allows students and faculty at different locations to simultaneously meet in a virtual classroom, explore class materials and activities, and interact in real-time. *Telepresence* is a cost effective, technology-rich option that sets the foundation for a truly virtual classroom – that integrates high quality technology, virtual in-person interaction with highly experienced faculty, and the ability to create a diverse class from multiple locations.

Bob continues to teach at the graduate and undergraduate levels in the areas of leadership, administration, and analysis and continues his work in curriculum design with focus on enriching the learning experience through use of technology. Bob continues to serve on multiple committees across The University. He remains busy building partnerships across Minnesota State Mankato in the areas of curriculum design, technology, data management, assessment management, and accreditation.

My Journey

By Robert Hugg

As I prepared to enter my ninth year teaching for the Institute (eight years of teaching as an adjunct faculty), I was delighted to be offered the opportunity to serve the Institute and students through teaching full time for the next year. As I began my preparations for the fall semester, I took a few moments to reflect on my journey, and how I arrived at this particular place in space and time. Those who know me understand that I tend to think in terms of *cosmic intersections*; while that may sound mystical, new age, or metaphysical, it really is just about recognizing this milestone, and all of the other milestones that have led, and prepared, me to continue to serve in a new capacity. Think *Chaos Theory* used as a lens to examine and reflect on life. Each step we have taken in the past has led us to the step we are about to take; each step has had an effect, in ways known and unknown, on who and how and what we are.

As a person whose deep core competencies are in organizational dynamics, change leadership, leadership and organizational management and administration, and conflict management, *Chaos Theory* is a fascinating and highly appropriate toolset. When you add to that mix a lifelong love of quantitative, qualitative, and heuristic research and analysis (a computer, a stack of data, and an intriguing research question can instantly unleash my inner geek), the term *cosmic intersection* takes on a completely new meaning. I am a true cosmic intersection: a merging of two fundamentally different modes: leadership, with its deep and inseparable connection to humans and the human condition, and technology and data with its *seemingly* cold, distinct, aloof separation from pesky (even messy) people. I say *seemingly*, because each mode (leadership and technology) can support, clarify, and facilitate the other; I believe that, to understand one well, you must use the tools and experiences the other has to offer. In other words, a deeper and more elegant approach and application of data-driven decision-making: a full, and perhaps symbiotic, creation of a toolset designed to help me (us?) serve better. The more we understand, and the better we understand, the more – and better - we can serve.

Serve. There is that concept again, *service*. I have spent most of my adult life in service and in leadership: to my nation, to my communities, to the profession of teaching, and to the belief that each generation deserves the chance to achieve more than the generation before them. My education and experience have convinced me that service and leadership are inseparable philosophies, as are leadership and teaching, and teaching and

Faculty Updates

Dr. Sandra King recently had an article published in *A Reader on Race and Ethnic Relations: Harmonizing Indigenous and Immigrant Voices*. Her article raises awareness about the challenges African American managers face in the workplace and the need for effective diversity management. The book is authored by Dr. Michael Fagin, Dr. Kebba Darboe, and Dr. Wayne Allen in the Ethnic Studies Department. Furthermore, the text is being used in one of Dr. Allen's classes this term.



Dr. Sandra King

In addition to the above, Dr. King presented on change management at the International Academy of Business and Public Administration Disciplines (IABPAD) conference this past January. Her change management research spawned a selected topics course (URBS 4/581 – Change Management) designed to introduce students to this essential skill needed by managers and professionals in 21st century organizations. Students learn about a variety of approaches for managing change and are introduced to classic research and models to further aid their understanding of the topic. The class is especially useful for both graduates and undergraduates looking to add to their skills as they prepare to enter the job market.

Dr. King also presented at the Teaching Public Administration Conference (TPAC) in May. At the TPAC conference, her topic was "Preparing Future Public Managers to Effectively Lead Diverse Local Government Organizations and Communities." She is also scheduled to present at the 2013 IABPAD conference on "Diversity Management: What Can Government Learn From Business?"

For more information on URBS 4/581 mentioned above, contact Dr. King at sandra.king@mnsu.edu or 507-389-5727.

...serving. John Dewey, a world-renowned psychologist, philosopher, and the father of experiential education, once wrote that *Teaching is leading, and leading is teaching – they are the same*. More importantly, Dewey wrote that *Education is life itself* and, in fact, Dewey is generally credited as the creator of project based learning and hands-on learning. Dewey understood that, to truly learn we must also do, theory alone is insufficient. URSI has a long and well-earned tradition and reputation for graduating gifted and highly respected city planners and managers whose education (and the foundation of their success) was built on the convergence of theory, practice, mentorship, and experience. As a graduate of the Institute myself, I value the Institute as the community it was for me as a student, and has continued to be for me as a teacher. *Cosmic intersections.*

So, my reflections brought me full circle and helped me examine two foundational questions about this opportunity and myself: how and why do I, and my colleagues in the Institute, teach and serve? We serve through our education, knowledge, experiences, and hard-won expertise. We serve by creating a lens through which our next generations of leaders (our students) see the struggles and lessons of the past, and the experience of the present, as a prelude to the greatness they will achieve through their own service. We serve by sharing our practical and professional experiences, and by demonstrating compassion and patient tutoring and mentorship. We serve by collaborating so that we may innovate, so that we may collaborate, so that we may innovate – *a continuous cycle*. We serve by kicking open the doors to new experiences so that our students may walk through those doors and see – and experience – their universe in new and truly meaningful ways. We serve by weaving a tapestry of our life experiences, and education, and training and helping our students and our communities find real value in what we are and what we may contribute. We serve not because we can, but because we must. *Service and leadership are not what we do; they are what and who we are.*

For me, ability comes with the obligation to use those abilities to serve the greater good; I appreciate the Institute recognizing my abilities, and I embrace the obligation to serve. I am immensely honored and pleased to continue serving the Institute, and I look forward to guiding our students along their own unique journeys, and helping them find and experience their own cosmic intersections.

URSI Studio Update

Every Fall the graduate Urban and Regional Studies Studio course works with a local government or non-profit community organization on a "hot" local planning or management issue. This year the students have undertaken 3 ambitious projects involving communities who have contacted URSI for assistance. These 3 projects include:

- (1) The City of Madison Lake, MN has sought several studies related to examining the use of the Sakatah Bike Trail as an amenity that could stimulate the redevelopment of the city's downtown and redesign the trail to better serve residents of the community on a safe and efficient transportation system. The graduate students participating in this study include: Lindy Crawford, Amer Alshaibi, Robin Guise, Bill Mettee, Ashley Mellgren, Ashley Hudson, Joey Robinson, Samantha Barthels, and Courtney Kramlinger
- (2) The City of Albert Lea MN has requested the URSI graduate students work with the city departments in an environmental, economic and infrastructure analysis of providing a Frisbee-golf development in order to enhance the recreational opportunities in the city. The graduate students who are working on this project are Beau Mannino, Ross Brandt, Emmanuel Frimpong Branch, and Smita Rakshit
- (3) Elko-New Market, MN is interested in having graduate students help them with several planning studies including a study of downtown Elko, feasibility study of a regional trail for Elko New Market, and development handbook. The graduate students working on this project include Brian Finley, Ben Pierson, Kowshik Chowdhury

"2012 Studio Course works with several communities."

Faculty Updates

Dr. David Laverny-Rafter.

This has been an active year for Dr. Laverny-Rafter especially related to urban travels. In an effort to obtain a greater appreciation of the cities in formerly eastern Europe, he and his wife Florence spent several days in Prague in the Czech republic. There they were especially interested in the level of historic preservation that has taken place in the old district of the city and the extensive use of streetcars throughout the city. Luckily, very little of Prague was bombed in World War II so much of the original medieval and baroque buildings are intact.



Dr. David
Laverny-Rafter

After Prague, we went on to Southwest France where we toured the cities of Basque regions. This area has preserved its culture and language (Yes conservation is the theme of these visits and they tell us a lot about how preservation can be a central feature to a revitalization plan).

The big news however of the 2012-2013 year is that I will be retiring from teaching this year. It has been a great joy working with all the students in URSI over all of these many years and seeing them develop into professional managers and planners. However time moves on and now I am ready for a new chapter. I hope you will keep in touch by sending me an email (lavernyrafter@earthlink.net).

Take care and best wishes.
David Laverny-Rafter



Photo of trail users on the Sakatah Singing Hills State Trail.

Faculty Updates

Beth Wiede Heidelberg

2011-2012 can be best summed up as a "learning experience" for Professor Heidelberg. In February, she attended training on the legalities and procedure for the Section 106 process, held in Washington D.C. by the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation (ACHP). In June, she attended training on business retention in historic downtown areas, held in Red Wing by the Minnesota Main Street program. She also debut the online Urban Law course, which focuses on the rules and laws planners and managers must be aware of in their professional practice. Heidelberg wasn't just focused on laws and policies, though – she produced the initial draft of the self-study report required by NASPAA as part of their accreditation process. However, the biggest learning experience of 2012 was how to complete all these tasks while caring for a newborn. Professor Heidelberg welcomed her first baby, Eleanor Lillian, on February 29th, and would like to thank the students and other faculty for their flexibility and help, given Eleanor's premature arrival.



Beth Wiede
Heidelberg

SURSI Update 2011-2012

Greetings!

Although we did not have any student groups attending conferences this year, we had a several fun events closer to home. In October a group headed down the hill to take a tour of the Mankato City Center Art Walk, and voted for our favorite sculptures. Some students also found opportunities to volunteer in the Mankato community at the Mankato River Ramble and the Mankato Marathon events that also took place in October. December brought us an event in St. Paul sponsored by APA MN. There several URSI students joined a group of University of Minnesota Planning students for a tour of the Union Depot project. The end of the semester was celebrated with a Holiday Party "Meeting" hosted by our current Faculty Advisor, Tony Filipovitch. We went bowling at Dutler's in Mankato around mid-terms to take a break and have a bit of fun, and invited students from the U of M to join us. Finally it was time to plan the Annual Spring Picnic and Awards Night held at the end of April. The grilled burgers were great and the Bocce Ball game was lots of fun, making the event a success in spite of the threats of rain (seems like it threatens rain every year!).

That brings us to the present! This year's leadership is yet to be elected, but I am confident that SURSI will have a great year in 2012-13. Some ideas and goals to keep up the benefits for SURSI students include starting some fundraisers to help students attend conferences, promote networking opportunities and hold more of the fun events that we did last year. We will also continue to strengthen the connections at we have with planning students from the U of M Twin Cities and St. Cloud through events and conferences. I am excited for the opportunities that SURSI has coming this year and the more distant future! The possibilities are numerous, and could be many more! As alumni if you have any event ideas or opportunities, we would love to hear them and you can contact us through the department or at sursi@msu.edu.

Samantha Barthels
SURSI President
Fall 2011 – Spring 2012





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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: Elizabeth Manderfeld, Urban & Regional Studies Institute, Minnesota State University, Mankato, 106 Morris Hall, Mankato, MN 56001 or fax it to 507-389-6377 or email to elizabeth.manderfeld@mnsu.edu. Thanks.

NAME: _____

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HOME ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____

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 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!