

Markusen Named 2004–2005 Fesler-Lampert Chair

Ann Markusen, professor of planning and public policy at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, has been named to the Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs for 2004–2005. Markusen's appointment, which was announced this past June, was made by the dean of the Graduate School Victor Bloomfield based on recommendations from CURA.

Asked for her reaction to the announcement, Markusen said that the award "means a great deal to me both personally and professionally," and noted the importance of the Fesler-Lampert endowment in supporting research on urban issues. "Urban and regional affairs are vital to the lives of all citizens, but have been out of fashion as a funded research area since the Great Society," she observed. "Only now, thanks in part to the Fesler-Lampert endowment's earmarking of this field, are politicians and economic developers beginning to understand how central the quality of urban life is to the success of private sector businesses and the entire regional economy."

The Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs is one of four endowed chairs and two named professorships made possible through a generous contribution to the University of Minnesota by David R. and Elizabeth P. Fesler. The Fesler-Lampert Endowment in Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies was initially established in 1985 through a \$1 million grant from the David R. Fesler Fund of the Saint Paul Foundation, Inc. The gift was matched by a \$1 million allocation from the Permanent University Fund, and the combined endowment and matching funds have now grown in value to over \$9.5 million. The endowment is intended to stimulate interdisciplinary research and teaching through the appointment of distinguished, broadly learned scholars to endowed faculty positions at the University of Minnesota.

Tom Scott, director of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, said that he is "very happy to have Ann Markusen serve as the fifth holder of the Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs." Scott noted that Markusen has "a long and impressive record of research and teaching

related to urban and regional affairs, both here and at other institutions, including her service as director of the Masters in Urban Planning program in the Humphrey Institute." According to Scott, Markusen's current research, which focuses on employment opportunities related to high technology industries and the arts, "is especially relevant to CURA's interests in the changing face of Minnesota's economy."

Markusen has taught at the University of Minnesota since 1999 and also directs the Project on Regional and Industrial Economics (PRIE) at



Ann Markusen

the Humphrey Institute. A regional and industrial economist by training, Markusen notes that one of the hallmarks of her research is "its groundedness at the intersection of a particular industry or occupation and the regional and local economy." In this vein, she has written and engaged actively in policy debates on the energy industry in Colorado, steel in Chicago, high-technology and defense industries in California, pharmaceuticals in New Jersey, and most recently, artists in the Twin Cities. Lately her research has also tried to make the case that economic development ought to focus on "occupations rather than industries, stressing workers' skills, networks, and entrepreneurship as ways of building a resilient and diversified regional economy."

Currently Markusen and her colleagues at PRIE are engaged in

a five-year research project investigating the significance of artists' work to their neighborhoods and regions. "[Our] studies demonstrate that artists contribute to a local economy far beyond their recorded employment and wages," Markusen notes, "through direct export of their work and services, contractual work for area businesses, and induced innovation on the part of their suppliers." Equally significant, she and her colleagues found that artists' residences, performance spaces, and gathering places help to stabilize and revitalize the inner-city neighborhoods and rural communities where they are located, and contribute to an area's overall quality of life, something many potential new residents and businesses consider when relocating. This research is particularly important to Minnesota because artists are overrepresented in the Twin Cities relative to other metropolitan areas of similar size—evidence for the significance of the arts to the area's economic, social, and cultural vitality.

Markusen plans to use the resources provided by her appointment to conduct intensive field research on artists' clubhouses and live-work spaces in Minnesota, enabling her and her colleagues to investigate more closely the social and economic benefits of such spaces for neighborhood and regional economies, as well as their impacts on artistic creativity and livelihoods. "Our working hypothesis is that these benefits [to communities] can be planned and realized on a building-by-building basis," Markusen explains, and that such undertakings are "especially powerful if they are done as small-scale initiatives that involve local community buy-in." The results of this research can inform cultural policy debates at city and neighborhoods levels and will help policy makers allocate arts and economic development dollars among competing uses.

The Fesler-Lampert Endowment is intended as a tribute to David Fesler's grandfathers, Bert Fesler and Jacob Lampert. The Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs is appointed for a one-year period and receives approximately \$42,000 for research, salary, and logistical support. The funds are jointly administered by the University of Minnesota Foundation and the University of Minnesota.

Photo courtesy of Ann Markusen