Daniel Nidzgorski Awarded CURA Dissertation Research Grant

Daniel Nidzgorski, a Ph.D. candidate in the Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior Graduate Program, has been awarded the 2013–2014 CURA Dissertation Research Grant. The grant provides one year of support to a Ph.D. candidate in good academic standing at the University of Minnesota for the purpose of completing dissertation research on a significant issue or topic related to urban areas in the upper Midwest region.

Nidzgorski’s dissertation research will provide the first comprehensive assessment of how urban trees affect nutrient cycling in soils and nutrient flows in groundwater by characterizing tree species in terms of how they affect nutrient levels in storm water and groundwater, which both contribute substantial amounts of nutrients to local waterways. This research will fill a major gap in understanding how trees influence the flows of nutrients through urban landscapes at the watershed scale, with consequences for local water pollution. Ultimately, this research can inform urban land managers and homeowners in selecting tree species for planting on public and private lands that reduce nutrient pollution and improve the water quality in local waterways.

An article summarizing Nidzgorski’s dissertation research will appear in a future issue of the CURA Reporter. For more information about the CURA Dissertation Research Grant program, visit www.cura.umn.edu/Dissertation.

Hari Osofsky Named 2013–2014 Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs

Hari Osofsky, associate professor at the University of Minnesota Law School and interim director of the Consortium on Law and Values in Health, Environment, and the Life Sciences, has been named the 2013–2014 Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs.

For the past two years, Osofsky’s research has focused on voluntary strategies among Twin Cities metropolitan-area suburbs to address climate change. Specifically, Osofsky has examined 12 suburban communities and how they have learned from other localities to find cost-effective approaches to reducing carbon emissions, as well as how these initiatives have influenced national and international efforts to address climate change. According to Osofsky, multilevel climate-change networks could be more effective in encouraging suburban participation in mitigation efforts by tailoring their strategies to different types of suburbs and by interlinking their initiatives and outreach.

Osofsky plans to use the resources provided by her appointment as Fesler-Lampert Chair to expand her analysis to all Twin Cities metro-area suburbs, collecting data and developing a framework for comparatively analyzing what each type of suburb within the region is doing to address climate change. In addition, Osofsky will compare the Twin Cities context to other metropolitan regions, allowing the Twin Cities to learn from what other regions are doing, and for those regions to learn from the Twin Cities. Both efforts can inform local, state, national, and international climate-change mitigation strategies.

The Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs is one of four endowed chairs made possible through the generosity and vision of David and Elizabeth Fesler. 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. The Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs is appointed for a one-year period and receives approximately $40,000 for research, salary, and logistical support. The funds are jointly administered by the University of Minnesota Foundation and the University of Minnesota. For more information about the Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs, including profiles of previous chairs, visit www.cura.umn.edu/Fesler-Lampert.