for Transportation Studies’ annual Transportation Research Conference in St. Paul, the Annual Mid-Continent Regional Science Association conference in Bloomington, and the University of Minnesota Center for Small Towns Symposium in Morris.

**Esther Wattenberg**, CURA’s policy and program coordinator in family and child welfare, is coordinating the fifth in a series of reflective seminars for child-welfare supervisors and practitioners, planned for late this fall. A previous seminar on “The Role of Supportive Housing in Improving Responses to High-Risk, Young Parents and Adolescents in Cross-Sector Involvement,” was held in June. Summaries and other materials from the first four reflective seminars are available at www.cehd.umn.edu/ssw/cascw/events/past_events/. Wattenberg is also currently working on a piece titled “Code of Silence,” which addresses how minority communities deal with the police.

**Mike Greco** will serve as program manager for a new initiative at CURA this fall called the **Resilient Communities Project (RCP)**. This pilot program will match graduate-level courses at the University of Minnesota with one partner city each academic year to work on city-identified sustainability projects. This year, RCP will partner with the City of Minnetonka to work on 17 sustainability-related projects. For more information about the program, see the announcement about RCP on page 16, or visit www.rcp.umn.edu. Greco is also program co-chair for this year’s annual conference of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Planning Association, the national professional organization for land-use planners. The conference will be held at the Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria, Minnesota in September.

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**2012–2013 Faculty Research Awards**

CURA is pleased to announce the recipients of faculty research awards for 2012–2013 provided through the Faculty Interactive Research Program (FIRP) and University Metropolitan Consortium. FIRP was created to encourage University faculty to carry out research projects that involve significant issues of public policy for the state and that include interaction with community groups, agencies, or organizations in Minnesota. Grants are available to regular faculty members at the University of Minnesota and are awarded annually on a competitive basis. The University Metropolitan Consortium was established in 2006 to link the centers, programs, and faculty and staff at the University engaged in teaching, research, and outreach concerned with understanding metropolitan change and development. The mission of the consortium is to strengthen the University’s overall contribution to understanding metropolitan-urban-suburban issues by enhancing and extending the work of its existing programs and strengthening the University’s connections to those in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors who also work with these issues.

**Evaluation of Nutritional Quality of Food Donations to the Emergency Foodshelf Network.** The Emergency Foodshelf Network (EFN) is a coalition of 12 foodshelves in Hennepin County that aims to provide quality, nutritious food and support services to hunger-relief partners. Because poor diet quality and its associated morbidities disproportionately affect the populations it serves, EFN has identified a need to evaluate the nutritional quality of food donations. **Lisa Harnack (Epidemiology and Community Health) and Marilyn Nanney (Family Medicine and Community Health)** will partner with EFN to evaluate the nutritional quality of foods donated to this organization using a sampling of donated food items. The investigators will inventory and enter selected items into a nutrient-analysis software application that quantifies nutrient and food-group content. They will then analyze data from the software to identify nutritional shortfalls of donated foods. Findings will have implications for EFN and other public and private programs that serve as part of the nutrition safety net.

**Program:** Faculty Interactive Research Program

**Native American Youth-Gang Assessment Project.** Native American youth gangs have been on the rise across the country, and Native American youth are more likely than any other ethnic group to belong to a youth gang. The formation and rise of Native American youth gangs requires context-specific information and a culturally appropriate response. **Ross Velure Roholt and Katie Johnston-Goodstar (Social Work)** will complete a comprehensive assessment of youth-gang activity with a Midwestern tribe. Using a community-based, participatory, mixed-method research approach, the investigators will gather data on community demographics, youth-gang characteristics in the community, youth-gang problems and issues in school, community perceptions of youth-gang activity, and community resources to provide a rich understanding of the youth-gang issue in this community. Their assessment will inform tribal government policy, services, and youth programs to address and reduce Native American youth involvement in gangs.

**Program:** Faculty Interactive Research Program

**A School-County-University Collaboration to Evaluate High-School Achievement: Longitudinal Analysis of Participants in the Lead Peace Middle-School Service-Learning Program.** Every year, one student drops out for every four students who graduate from high school in Hennepin County. Educational disparities are particularly marked for children of color. In partnership with Minneapolis Public Schools and Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department, Lead Peace was initiated in 2003 to reduce violence and improve school connectedness among middle-school students in North Minneapolis. **Barbara J. McMorris (Nursing) and her team will evaluate high-school outcomes for middle-school participants recruited in 2007, and assess their risk and protective factors for**
high-school success. The researchers will collect Minneapolis Public School records (e.g., attendance, grades, graduation) through the 2011–2012 school year, as well as data on student involvement in County intervention services (e.g., Minnesota Family Investment Program, corrections, early childhood programs). Results will be used to showcase Lead Peace as an example of best-practice programming that impacts academic outcomes in support of Hennepin County’s Accelerating Graduation by Reducing Achievement Disparities (A-GRAD) initiative.

Program: Faculty Interactive Research Program

- **Mapping Manure in West-Central Minnesota Watersheds.** Animal-feeding operations (AFOs) are now the predominant method of raising livestock in Minnesota and are associated with numerous water-quality impairments across the state, including reaches of the Pomme de Terre and Chippewa Rivers. In March 2012, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency began requiring that all large AFOs (more than 300 animal units) begin submitting annual manure records. Using manure records for a nine-county area in west-central Minnesota, Ed Brands (Environmental Studies, U of M–Morris) will create a database and maps of AFO manure generation, transfer, and application to land in two west-central Minnesota watersheds. The main products of this project will include county-, watershed-, and subwatershed-level maps that will facilitate implementation of fecal coliform total maximum daily load plans by local watershed groups and projects, and that can be used to inform revisions of state or county AFO policies.

Program: Faculty Interactive Research Program

- **Creativity and Achievement: Running Backwards.** Cities and metropolitan areas are built on the creative ideas and the innovations of their citizens. More than intelligence or standardized skills, creativity is essential for economic vitality. Measured creativity has declined in school children since 1991; this decline will have a greater impact on the vitality of the region than any shortfalls in math or science. This project will examine how educational systems support future economic growth by measuring the creative potential of school children in the metropolitan area. Brad Hokanson (Design, Housing, and Apparel) and William Bart (Educational Psychology) will evaluate the creativity of school children using the Torrance Tests and correlate ratings of creativity with standardized scores from the Minnesota Comprehensive Achievement Tests. The Torrance Tests were developed at the University of Minnesota by E. Paul Torrance, who tested local school children in the late 1950s and early 1960s. With the support of the College Preparedness Consortium, Hokanson and Bart will work directly with a school district’s research office to administer creativity tests to approximately 1,000 school children, results of which will be analyzed in conjunction with student achievement scores. This study will provide a better understanding of the creative capability of the future Twin Cities, which is ultimately what will drive economic growth. This project is a joint initiative of the College of Education and Human Development and the College of Design.

Program: University Metropolitan Consortium

- **Minneapolis–St. Paul Regional-Cluster Competitiveness Study.** The research team of Lee Munnich (Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs), Yingling Fan (Humphrey School), Nebiyou Tilahun (University of Illinois–Chicago), and Matt Schmit (Humphrey School) will produce an in-depth study of the Minneapolis–St. Paul region’s competitive-industry clusters. The study will provide a report on the 13 most competitive clusters, as well as the corporate-headquarters concentration in the Twin Cities metropolitan region, and develop benchmarks for comparing the region’s progress in these clusters to other metropolitan regions. This research will add to the knowledge base on the dynamics of regional economies and the factors that influence economic competitiveness. A regional-cluster advisory group will engage key academic, business, and government stakeholders, and will review the research produced by the team. Two regional-cluster industry forums will be held: the first, in September 2012, will host the regional partners for the U.S. Economic Development Administration’s Cluster Mapping Project; and the second, in May 2013, will highlight the results of the year-long study of competitiveness clusters in the Twin Cities.

Program: University Metropolitan Consortium

- **Reducing Out-of-School Suspensions of African American and African Immigrant Students: Building a Well-Educated Minnesota Workforce for the 21st Century.** Nationally and locally, black students are at risk for unemployment and underemployment due, in part, to disproportionately high out-of-school suspension rates. Yet, few studies have examined the perspectives of black children who have been suspended, their parents, or their educators. An understanding of the meanings of suspensions for these groups would offer multiple perspectives on the complexities of preparing vulnerable students to become productive adults, which is essential for tailoring an effective intervention. Priscilla A. Gibson, Wendy Haight, and Misa Kayama (Social Work) will use a narrative approach to explore the culturally nuanced meanings of suspensions through individual, face-to-face interviews. During focus groups, findings from the interviews will be presented to participants and other community partners for consultation on the design of an intervention for reducing suspensions of black children in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The research aims to improve opportunities for low-income black students to become educated, productive, contributing members of the Twin Cities metropolitan workforce. The findings also will be used as pilot data in a National Institutes of Health proposal to implement and evaluate the intervention.

Program: University Metropolitan Consortium