Patrick Brezonik Appointed to Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs

Patrick Brezonik, professor of civil engineering and director of the Water Resources Center, has been named to the Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs for 2003–2004. Brezonik’s appointment, which was announced in April, was made by Victor Bloomfield, Interim Dean of the Graduate School and Vice Provost for Research, based on recommendations from CURA.

When asked for his reaction to the announcement, Brezonik replied that he was “elated” to learn of his selection. “Awards like the Fesler-Lampert professorship separate great universities from ordinary ones,” he explained. “It is very rewarding to be recognized by one’s peers as worthy of a chaired position.” Brezonik noted that the Fesler-Lampert endowment “provides a wonderful opportunity for the university to encourage and support scholarship on urban and regional issues by its senior faculty. Time is one of the most precious commodities that faculty have, and the financial support that the endowment provides offers the all-too-rare opportunity to have focused time to spend on research and scholarly activities that are not driven by specific grant requirements.”

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 more than $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 CURA is “pleased to add Professor Brezonik’s name to the list of holders of the Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs.” Scott noted that Brezonik has “a long and distinguished record of research and teaching at the University of Minnesota, in addition to his significant contributions as the director of the Water Resources Center.” According to Scott, Brezonik’s current research, which involves the application of satellite imaging technology to measure the impact of human policies and behavior on urban water quality, “fits well with CURA’s long-standing concern for environmental quality and the development of technologies for the analysis of land-use change.”

After earning his Ph.D. in water chemistry from the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Brezonik taught in the Department of Environmental Engineering Sciences at the University of Florida at Gainesville for 15 years before coming to the University of Minnesota in 1981. Among his many professional activities and accomplishments, Brezonik has served as a member of the National Academy of Sciences–National Research Council Water and Science Technology Board; a National Science Foundation faculty fellow and guest professor at the Swiss Federal Institute for Environmental Science and Technology (EAWAG-ETH) in Zurich; a member of the research council for the Water Environment Research Foundation; director of the Water Resources Center at the University of Minnesota; and director of graduate studies for the University’s Water Resources Science program, which he cofounded. He has written, edited, or coauthored more than 150 articles, books, and papers on a broad range of topics in the areas of aquatic chemistry, limnology, biogeochemistry, and surface water quality.

Brezonik plans to use the resources provided by his appointment to continue work on two related projects: the application of satellite imagery and other advanced remote-sensing technology to improve capabilities for monitoring and assessing water quality in Minnesota lakes, and developing conceptual and simulation models that show how humans affect the cycling of major biogeochemicals such as carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus in urban ecosystems. Both areas of study attempt to quantify how human activity—particularly urban activity—impacts ecological systems. He also expects to develop a new graduate seminar on regional and global biogeochemical cycles.

The Fesler-Lampert Endowment is intended as a tribute to David Fesler’s grandparents, Bert Fesler and Jacob Lampert. The Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs is appointed for a one-year period, and receives approximately $45,000 for research, salary, and logistical support. The funds are jointly administered by the University of Minnesota Foundation and the University of Minnesota.