

CURA Self-Study Report

**Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
University of Minnesota**

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CURA RESOURCE COLLECTION

**Center for Urban and Regional Affairs
University of Minnesota
330 Humphrey Center**



PREFACE

For 40 years, the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA) has been one of the nation's most unique higher educational institutional programs linking universities to their urban and regional communities. CURA connects the considerable research talents of University of Minnesota faculty and graduate students and helps focus those talents and energies on the broad range of urban-related problems and issues confronting our neighborhoods, cities, counties, nonprofit organizations, state agencies, and all of the people and groups for whom the urban crisis is still alive and for whom urban problems are still a day-to-day reality. Each year, CURA is involved in more than 100 different research projects and programs with faculty and graduate students from departments and colleges across the University. In the last five years, faculty and students with whom CURA worked hailed from more than 70 different departments (a complete list of home departments and colleges can be found in Appendix E). Each year, CURA also links the University of Minnesota with scores of people and organizations from throughout the state—more than 500 different organizations in the past five years (a complete list of organizations can be found in Appendix F).

The report that follows describes what CURA does and how it does it. It begins with a brief history and a statement of CURA's missions in the context of the principles and philosophies that have shaped its programs and activities. There is also a brief recap of CURA's last program review in 1995 to set the context for the current report.

The body of the report begins with a discussion of CURA's programs from 1999 to the present followed by a brief commentary on each of the nine substantive areas that have provided the major points of focus for our work. In the last half of the report, the discussion turns to more general topics including examples of significant accomplishments, CURA's role in University engagement, resource issues, and some analysis of recent University trends and their potential consequences for CURA's future roles.

The report concludes with a series of 13 appendices that provide more detailed information about the work that CURA has done since our last program review in 1995.

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CURA Self-Study Report

INTRODUCTION

The University of Minnesota, like many other universities and colleges across the country in the mid-1960s, faced considerable pressure from students, faculty, and communities to respond to the political and social upheavals that had left the nation in turmoil. Leaving aside the international dimensions of that turmoil surrounding the war in Viet Nam, Americans were finally facing the fact that in the post-World War II era, the United States had become an urbanized nation, and Minnesotans had begun to consider the consequences of the fact that Minnesota was an urbanizing state. We had to acknowledge the tensions among the races, widespread poverty, uncertainty about economic growth, families in disarray, serious weaknesses in our educational and healthcare systems, poor housing for many, increasing drug use and crime, failures in our physical infrastructure, and confusion in government. And no one could deny the evidence of serious cleavages in the nation provided by the almost daily television coverage of riots, shootings, fires, and lootings in many of our major urban centers, including Minneapolis. We called it “the urban crisis.”

In response to these issues and pressures and consistent with the University of Minnesota’s land grant mission to serve the people of the state, the University administration, the Board of Regents, and the state legislature created and provided resources for a new Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA). In a fundamental sense, the establishment of CURA to help the University respond to the urban crisis was quite consistent with the long-established traditions of the University to serve the state’s needs in agriculture, healthcare, and engineering (to name a few).

CURA’s mission was and is to help make the University of Minnesota more responsive to the needs of the larger community and to increase constructive interaction between faculty, students, and staff on one hand, and those dealing with urban issues and problems on the other hand. CURA encourages and helps support faculty and student research projects growing out of major issues of public concern to the citizens of Minnesota. In virtually all cases, this research is done in conjunction with persons, agencies, or community groups outside the University. In effect, CURA’s mission has been to do for urban issues and problems what the land grant university has done over the years in other areas such as agriculture and healthcare.

It is worth noting that the University of Minnesota is one of the most unique institutions in the country for establishing a center like CURA. The University combines—in one institution and in one location (primarily)—a preeminent research and graduate training university, a land grant university with a full range of agriculturally related research and extension activities, a full-range of professional research and degree programs including a medical school and hospital, and a large

undergraduate student body that resembles in many ways the student bodies in large urban universities across the country. Moreover, its Twin Cities location places it in the state's urban population center, which is also the fifteenth largest metropolitan region in the country and which includes, among other things, the state capital in St. Paul.

In March 1968, Professor Fred Lukermann, then Assistant Academic Vice President, outlined two broad aims for CURA: "work through organized agencies offices, and community groups, not independently as a University competing agency...the University serves as a pool of talent and resources involved in community programs through existing groups and agencies; . . . and respond to requests to the University and try to match those requests with available University resources, to assure maximum community relevance to our pilot projects."

CURA's first director, Professor John Borchert, reaffirmed and elaborated on those goals in the first issue of the *CURA Reporter*, which appeared in June 1970:

- CURA projects are pilot, experimental, or short term
- Projects which are unsuccessful will be discarded, and the center will help to build successful projects into an appropriate part of the academic or community agencies structure
- CURA will not develop permanent faculty or research staff, or offer degrees. It confines itself to projects for which there is not another practical administrative home.
- CURA will not work as a university competing agency in the community nor as a competing or independent agency within the University. CURA is an addition to a large, effective, long-standing community service effort which ranges from the Extension Division, to internships, and applied research programs of the professional schools, to the varied projects and services of departments and individual faculty.
- CURA's role is to sponsor projects which cross disciplinary lines, address major problems in the wider community, coordinate University and community resources, and stimulate new programs to make the University more responsive to community needs and increase the constructive interaction among faculty, students, and persons dealing directly with major public problems.
- Specific projects of the center generally fall within a half-dozen broad problem areas: housing, human relations, urban transportation, environmental management, local government organization, and the diffusion of information about these topics.

Borchert summarized his discussion and elaboration of CURA's mission in 1970, and this perspective remains CURA's guiding tenet:

Thus, CURA's role is development, not long-term operations. The issues and needs that arise out of the urban community, while they compel the attention of University faculty and students, are so multidisciplinary and dynamic that

they can usually be addressed by ad hoc combinations of people and disciplines, not by a structured department or bureau.

CURA's early history was described by Borchert in *CURA: The First Seven Years*, published in 1975. The report outlines the mission and values statements noted above and provides brief descriptions of CURA projects and programs during its first seven years of existence. CURA's early activities were wide-ranging in topic and scope, involved considerable interaction with individuals and organizations in the broader community, included many University faculty and departments, and utilized a variety of techniques for their accomplishment.

An examination of CURA's programs and activities in recent years demonstrates the consistency with the basic mission and with those early fundamental patterns, although—and this is consistent with CURA's experimental character—particular elements have changed over time.

In substantive terms, CURA's programs and projects are continuously redefined from the problem areas that Borchert outlined in 1970. But they remain consistent with the original concept for CURA in that they are all related to the urbanizing process and they all affect Minnesotans wherever they live and work. In the most recent decade, CURA's emphases have been on communities and neighborhoods, economic development and employment, education, energy and environment, housing, human and social services, health, land use and population, transportation, minorities and disadvantaged persons and groups, public policy, and governmental reform. In addition, CURA has special projects in geographic information systems (GIS), Twin Cities neighborhood revitalization and economic development, community organization capacity building, development pressures on the urban fringe, and survey research. As always, CURA's specific projects and programs with respect to these substantive emphases vary from year to year.

CURA has not been involved as significantly in some potential areas of interest because there are other units at the University of Minnesota already engaged there. For example, in the early days, CURA had a major transportation program. But most of that activity is now carried out by the Center for Transportation Studies (CTS), often collaboratively with CURA. Similarly, the University has numerous other centers and programs involved in education, youth and families, healthcare, etc. CURA's role is not to compete with, but rather to cooperate and collaborate with, the other centers, programs, and activities that exist elsewhere at the University.

Previous Program Review

In 1995, CURA underwent a full program review with an external committee. The committee was chaired by Royce Hanson (University of Texas at Dallas); other members included Kim Boyce (Minnesota Extension Service, Ramsey County), John DeGrove (Florida Atlantic University), Paula McClain (University of Virginia), and Sue Marx Smock (Wayne State University).

It is appropriate at this point to include some observations from the committee's report that speak to CURA's missions, principles, practices, and roles within the University. Writing in a cover letter to the external committee report addressed to the University community, Professor Charles Louis, then Assistant Vice President for Research, noted:

This review clearly identifies that we have a hidden jewel in our University that is playing a key role in linking the urban community to the University.

The committee identified that CURA is a major source of goodwill for the University among a variety of significant constituencies stretching from the State House to inner city and small town neighborhoods. Unlike conventional research centers, CURA does not have a specific research agenda developed by its director and associated faculty. Instead, it serves the University and urban constituencies by using its experience-based knowledge to match faculty and graduate students with research opportunities and needs. The approximately 75 annual internships CURA provides for students in the University graduate and professional education programs were identified by the committee as being exceptional among state universities. The committee went on to state that "CURA represents one of the most effective operations we have seen in leveraging small amounts of money for initiation of research projects into significant grants."

An important concern for the committee was the relationship of CURA to the urban programs of the Minnesota Extension Service . . . The committee identified that "although MES is undertaking urban programs in areas such as horticulture and food and nutrition education, it could take many years to attain the credibility and in-depth understanding of these and comparable urban problems that CURA has built in its areas of expertise over a generation."

As the chair of the committee stated in his letter, "CURA is a model of understated competence and accomplishment . . . it is our opinion that it would ill serve the University to eliminate or reduce CURA's role as the flagship of the University's urban presence."

The following comment from the external committee report itself summarizes the committee's perspective on CURA's operating principles and style:

[W]e have been mindful that its unique qualities make CURA difficult to evaluate by traditional standards of university research or outreach centers. Ironically, it appears to be understood and appreciated better by those it assists outside the university than by some within the institution . . . It is also a result of a philosophy of operation that may make it *sui generis* among university centers, and which, at first glance seems to embody contradictory approaches; it is university-wide in its access to resources; it is interdisciplinary in its approach to problems; it is comprehensive in its openness to issues; it is ad hoc in programmatic design; and it operates as a broker connecting the appropriate resources of a great university with urban and regional interests in need of the assistance those resources can provide. It is an outreach organization, to be certain. It is also an “inreach” operation, bringing scholars and students into contact with the community resources essential to their professional training and helping them to identify important new research and educational objectives.

CURA Substantive Foci and Programs

Both the substantive emphases of CURA’s work and the means for addressing these topics have evolved over time as we react to new issues and concerns and devise new approaches. CURA’s primary operating principle is and has been to remain flexible and nimble in order to respond to new issues in the community and new interests and expertise on the part of University faculty. As the 1995 External Review panel pointed out:

CURA projects are not selected on the basis of a predetermined schema. Rather they arise from three sources: (1) requests for assistance by community groups; (2) solicited and unsolicited proposals by University faculty; and (3) initiatives by CURA staff or other faculty who see an opportunity or need which might be met through a CURA-sponsored initiatives. . . . CURA had no formula for deciding which projects to support or initiate. . . . Rather than operate from a set of internally generated research priorities, CURA staff have maintained a continuing environmental scan . . . of community and faculty.

Within this context, this section considers CURA’s recent and current research foci, the evolution of these foci since our last review, and the recent and current programs at CURA designed to address them.

Substantive Foci

In *CURA: The First Seven Years*, Borchert identified housing, human relations, urban transportation, environmental management, local government, and the

diffusion of information about these topics as the primary substantive emphases for CURA during its early years. An examination of CURA's substantive interests prior to and since the 1995 review indicates that the range of issues has changed somewhat from Borchert's original formulation; economic development concerns have become more prominent, environmental interests have ebbed and flowed and have now become very important, along with energy concerns, housing and human service issues have different dimensions, education has taken on new importance, communities' health and vitality continue to grow in importance, and concerns of low-income and disadvantaged communities continue to evolve.

At the same time, institutional changes at the University of Minnesota have helped alter some of CURA's agenda. For example, the Center for Transportation Studies undertakes most transportation-related projects at the University; similarly, the Consortium for Children, Youth, and Families assumes responsibility for many research projects in those areas. There are now community-involved and engaged programs in the Academic Health Center, the College of Education, and the Law School, to name only a few.

In short, the list of foci proposed by Borchert in the mid-1970s has undergone some modification; University faculty and students have different training and interests today, project proposals coming to CURA from them and from the community have changed over time, and there is now added institutional capacity at the University to undertake and respond to the pressing urban and regional issues of the day.

In what follows, we briefly outline some of the major trends and emphases in CURA's work during the past eight or nine years as reflected by the projects and activities we have undertaken. More detailed descriptions of these and all CURA projects and activities are provided in Appendix H and Appendix L. It is particularly important to note the many community-based projects initiated by community organizations through CURA's Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization program, Community Assistantship Program, and Communiversity program because they reflect the concerns of citizen organizations approaching the University for research assistance.

Community and Neighborhood Studies

In general, the thrust of projects in the Community and Neighborhoods category has been in building the capacity of local organizations to deal with the problems and issues they face. Many of the proposals submitted to CURA for support involve needs assessments in their communities as populations change and new issues emerge. Some organizations need assistance with evaluating their programs to compete for funding. Frequently, they need research help to carry out a new or changing program. CURA's HUD-funded East Side COPC and New Directions grants supported a major five-year effort (through 2003) on the East Side of St. Paul involving three higher educational institutions and more than 75 community-based

projects. In addition, many of the NPCR, CAP, and Communiversity projects CURA supports fall into this category. CURA houses the Twin Cities Training Program for Community Organizers (TCTPNO) which is, as the name indicates, a program for training community organizers—originally in Minneapolis, now across the Twin Cities region.

A major emphasis at CURA for many years has been the development of geographic information systems (GIS) applications for community organizations. An important current program is M3D, a collaborative effort with the Minnesota Departments of Commerce and Revenue, the Metropolitan Council, Hennepin County, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, and 18 Twin Cities metropolitan area communities. M3D is funded by a U.S. Department of Commerce Technologies Opportunities Program (TOP) Grant. M3D has supported numerous community and neighborhood projects, including facilitating transit-oriented development along the Hiawatha Corridor, attracting workers to live closer to places of employment, connecting Twin Cities job centers to commutershed data, and carrying out workplace and residential analysis in several neighborhoods. One recent project has involved conducting data analysis for the University's study of its own impact on neighborhoods adjacent to the Twin Cities campus in preparation for a major initiative to revitalize those communities..

Another significant University initiative in which CURA has an important role is the University Northside Partnership (UNP), which eventually will involve numerous University programs and activities in Minneapolis' Northside neighborhoods. One of the first activities is the Northside Seed Grants Program at CURA, which will receive special central University funding for community-initiated research projects carried out by graduate research assistants supervised by faculty mentors.

CURA has a long tradition of activity with community and neighborhood organizations, but major new impetus was provided in 1993 with a U.S. Department of Education Grant, followed by the HUD COPC and New Directions grants and numerous subsequent grants from local foundations. The thrust of all the projects supported by these various sources has been building the capacity of neighborhood and community organizations to carry out their work by providing research and technical assistance, requiring that they initiate and compete for project assistance, and using graduate research assistants and faculty to undertake the projects collaboratively with the organizations. CURA has taken this model to the two central cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul and to Greater Minnesota communities; we are now beginning to move more deliberately into Twin Cities suburbs as they increasingly face new issues and concerns. At the same time, the University of Minnesota is undertaking two significant neighborhood- and community-based initiatives, one on the Northside of Minneapolis and the other in the five neighborhoods surrounding the Twin Cities campus. CURA has been, and will continue to be, significantly involved in both those initiatives.

CURA's work in this category also extends to ongoing collaborations with research organizations such as the Urban Institute. Currently, CURA serves as the

Minneapolis lead in the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, a collaborative effort by the Urban Institute and local partners to further the development and use of neighborhood-level information systems in local policymaking and community building.

Finally, the Faculty Interactive Research Program has supported a number of neighborhood-based projects. For example, several years ago a group of faculty from the Department of Geography received support to work with residents of the Phillips neighborhood in south Minneapolis to develop a GIS-based Phillips neighborhood environmental inventory that reflected residents' sustainability priorities, documented the challenges they face, and provided a community resource for neighborhood organizers and residents.

Energy and Environment

In the recent past, many CAP projects have focused on research related to environmental issues in small out-state communities, as have many of CURA's faculty sponsored projects. One Fesler-Lampert Chair holder, a civil engineering professor and former director of the University's Water Resources Center, worked on the application of remote-sensing technology to improve capabilities for monitoring and assessing water quality in Minnesota lakes and developing simulation models for the effects of humans on the cycling of biogeochemicals such as carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorous in urban ecosystems. The newly appointed Fesler-Lampert Chair, a professor of horticulture science, will study the impact of various federal incentive programs on the restoration of wetlands and prairies in the state, and the long-term impact of restoration and conservation programs on global climate change.

Several faculty projects that have received CURA support during the review period have used GIS technologies to map land-use and land-cover changes in the Twin Cities. Another project investigated the need for phosphorus in lawn fertilizer in the metro area and played a role in fostering legislation to ban phosphorus in fertilizer products sold in the Twin Cities. A recent project studied the presence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in some of the state's surface waters and proposed policy recommendations to address the problem. One of the more interesting environmental projects examined the presence of arsenic in well water in major regions of the state, and developed and proposed low-cost techniques to reduce arsenic levels significantly.

Most of the environmentally related projects in the recent past have involved water, in particular examining threats to water supplies and wetland restoration. During the energy crisis in the 1970s, CURA supported several projects exploring alternative biomass energy sources, primarily peat mining (Minnesota has a lot of unmined peat) and cattails—which by now have fallen out of favor, replaced by corn converted to ethanol and soybeans to biodiesel. There are numerous alternative energy projects in various places at the University as this generation's energy crisis unfolds. One

recent faculty energy-related project CURA supported was a study by a faculty member on the Morris campus looking at the utility rate system for reverse-metered electricity generated by wind power.

Policy and Government

Most CURA projects are indirectly related to government and public policy issues, and several in the recent past have focused directly on governmental activities and programs. CURA does not lobby for policy positions, nor does it take positions on governmental or political issues, although individual faculty members working on CURA projects may include recommendations for policy action based on their research.

In the recent past, CURA, along with the Minneapolis Planning Department, supported faculty research examining tax increment financing (TIF) programs. CURA also supported a project looking at women in public policy positions, and a Fesler-Lampert Chair holder carried out a major study of the impact on community participatory civic life and practices resulting from the introduction of computer networks into rural communities. A CURA Visiting Scholar from a sister institution researched and wrote a book on the history of the Metropolitan Council. CURA has supported more than one project dealing with the establishment and assessment of restorative justice programs and affordable child care policies. We have also supported a faculty member who reviewed the effectiveness of alternative urban areawide review as an environmental review and planning tool and assisted the Minneapolis League of Women Voters with two studies of the structures and practices of governance in that city.

Health, Human and Social Services

CURA has sponsored several recent projects in the area of healthcare, including the North Minneapolis Healthy Communities Initiative, which looked at disparities in healthcare delivery systems, and a Faculty Interactive Research Program project on newborn screening and counseling for Thalassemia, a genetic blood disorder prevalent among people of Asian descent that affects an individual's ability to synthesize hemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells that transports oxygen and other nutrients throughout the human body.

A large part of CURA's work in human and social services is carried out by Professor Esther Wattenberg, whose long-term, part-time appointment at the University is shared by CURA and the Center for Advanced Studies in Child Welfare (CASCW) in the School of Social Work. Wattenberg's research is focused on various aspects of child welfare. For example, she has studied and held workshops and conferences on such issues as child welfare and American Indian sovereignty, social services for American Indian children at risk, placement options for vulnerable and endangered

adolescents, children in shelter placement, and the capabilities of rural counties to provide adequately for child welfare.

Five faculty-directed human service studies were also carried out in the recent period—one examining the demand for and affordability of childcare services in rural Minnesota; a second looking more directly at the consequences of welfare reform (since 1996), particularly for those who were members of various racial and ethnic groups; a third studying the effectiveness of state child support guidelines in meeting the fiscal needs of children of divorced, unmarried, and never-married parents; and a fourth looking at the needs of child witnesses to violence and the potential for community collaborations to increase access to care for such children.

Another major social services project involved work with Dakota County on the Dakota Healthy Families program, an intensive, home visiting program for first-time parents. Support from CURA's Community Assistantship Program helped to expand this initiative to the entire seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area.

In addition to the focus on human and social service issues for children and families, CURA also participated actively with an ad hoc group of state and local social service professionals who had done a meta-analysis of social work research on the aftermath of welfare reform and whose report was widely distributed to interested parties.

Finally, as the Hennepin-University Partnership becomes more fully developed, it is anticipated that more and more joint projects will develop between the University's social and human services teaching and research departments and the extensive social service departments at the County.

Economic Development and Employment

A number of the community-initiated projects for which CURA has provided graduate research assistance are concerned with economic development and employment issues in particular communities. These projects range from market analyses for various agricultural products to urban neighborhood revitalization projects and transit-oriented development, especially in connection with the new light-rail system in Minneapolis.

One of the Fesler-Lampert Chair holders studied economic and employment topics in connection with her award. Ann Markusen from the Humphrey Institute worked on several projects related to her interests in the economic role of arts communities and economic issues faced by artists as they pursue their careers. For a different project, CURA supported Markusen's analysis of the creation of quality jobs and career paths, which workforce development approaches seem most successful, and the long-term effectiveness of various economic and workforce development strategies.

Other examples of economic-related projects include an overall assessment of the impact of the economic expansion of the 1990s on various sectors of the state's workforce, an evaluation by Tim Kehoe (Distinguished McKnight Professor and adviser to the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis) of the comparative impact of NAFTA on the economies of Minnesota and Wisconsin, a study of direct foreign investment in Minnesota, and an analysis of the impact of proposed changes in the state's sales tax system.

Finally, primarily through the federally funded M3D project, CURA has recently undertaken quite a few economic development and employment studies using GIS technology, primarily having to do with travel to workplace, commutersheds, and other studies of the spatial separation of work and residence.

Housing

CURA's major recent housing emphasis has been related to housing affordability, the relationship between subprime loans and foreclosures, and the relationships between residential and work location, some of which focuses on the spatial mismatch hypothesis. In addition, CURA supports and manages the Housing Forum, which is a monthly brown-bag forum on housing issues that is free and open to the public. The format of the forum is usually a panel discussion on a timely housing-related topic, a research presentation, or an examination of an existing program or initiative that addresses housing issues.

During the review period, CURA supported a professor from the Humphrey Institute who conducted a major analysis and evaluation of the aftermath of the razing of a public housing project on Minneapolis' Northside. The evaluation was ordered as part of the *Hollman v. Cisneros* lawsuit assessing the distribution of low-income housing in Minneapolis and the results of efforts to relocate and house low-income former residents of the public housing site.

CURA also supported an assessment of the results of the Land Use Planning Act of 1976, a state law requiring communities in the metropolitan area to plan to participate in their share of the region's low- and moderate income housing needs. CURA also has led in developing (with Minneapolis) the MNIS program, an early warning program to identify problem properties and their tendency to lead the way in the deterioration of local neighborhoods. In recent years, MNIS has taken on a broader perspective, focusing more on the application of GIS techniques to neighborhood housing issues. Many of the recent neighborhood-based projects involve housing and are related to the original MNIS mission. The M3D project also supports many projects directly or indirectly connected to housing issues.

Underrepresented and Disadvantaged Groups

The most prominent theme in CURA's recent work with underrepresented and disadvantaged groups has been with new immigrant groups to Minnesota and the Twin Cities. Earlier in the period covered by this review, we were concluding our Southeast Asian Refugee Studies (SARS) Project. Since then, CURA's focus has been on Latino migrants to the area and, more recently, the new Somali populations in Minneapolis and St. Paul. The current holder of the Fesler-Lampert Chair has spent the year studying the connections between Latino and non-Latino groups in several Greater Minnesota communities with significant Latino populations.

For several years, CURA also has housed and provided ancillary support for Hispanic Advocacy and Community Empowerment through Research (HACER), a nonprofit organization that conducts research on issues of significance to Hispanic and Latino populations in Minnesota. There is some interest in eventually having HACER become part of the Department of Chicano Studies at the University, but serious planning for such a move is not yet under way. Recently we have provided some space for a similar but newer organization representing the local Southeast Asian communities called the Center for Southeast Asian Research and Education (CSARE). In addition, the person who heads up the Twin Cities Training Program for Community Organizers program is beginning to work more directly with Hmong youth on the Northside and with Somali groups in various locations in the Twin Cities.

Other CURA projects in this category have covered a wide spectrum of groups and their concerns. In the late 1990s, CURA supported faculty work by Ann Masten, who directed the Institute of Child Development at that time, looking at school success for children of families who become homeless. During the period of the federal COPC and New Directions grants, CURA, undertook numerous projects with St. Paul's East Side community organizations, virtually all of which represented communities of color, notably African American and Latino. CURA supported several projects with the American Indian Policy Center, published four print editions and created a searchable online version of the *Directory of Nonprofit Organizations of Color in Minnesota*, and funded dozens of Commiversity projects that provided graduate research assistants to organizations representing communities of color.

CURA is already involved directly in the developing University Northside Partnership (UNP) through the special Northside Seed Grant program for community-initiated research projects and through representation on several of the advisory committees. The expectation is that CURA's role on the Northside will evolve as the partnership continued over the next several years.

Education

CURA has been involved with projects on various educational issues, although many of the University's contributions to such issues are made directly by faculty and students as part of their work in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD). University President Bob Bruininks has made strengthening pre-kindergarten through 12 education one of his primary initiatives. In addition, the Institute on Law and Poverty at the University's Law School conducts substantial research on the implications of racial and economic segregation for academic achievement. And a new consortium focusing on post-secondary educational success has been established by the University's central administration to, among other things, work directly with public school districts in the state. In short, the University in recent years has made major investments in improving pre-collegiate education and bringing University faculty to focus on this issue.

At the same time, CURA receives many requests for research support from CEHD faculty each year, particularly through our Faculty Interactive Research Program. Many of these proposals—and consequently, much of the research CURA has supported in recent years—focuses on educational issues for children disadvantaged for various reasons, such as mobility, poverty, limited English proficiency, and limited parental involvement.

Recent Faculty Interactive Research Program grants have supported projects looking at the preparation of teachers for diverse school contexts, academic risk and resilience among homeless and highly mobile children, and class size related to student achievement. Other recent projects have explored the issue of American Indian dropouts, looked at ways of increasing school success for children of color, investigated public school responses to charter schools, and examined a Dakota language immersion program for American Indian children. Finally, several community-initiated graduate research assistant projects have focused on local educational issues.

Land Use, Population, and Transportation

CURA collaborates frequently with the Center for Transportation Studies (CTS), particularly on projects that have broader regional significance. CURA participated actively in CTS' Transportation and Land Use Project and John Adams, the first of CURA's Fesler-Lampert Chair holders, carried out related work on the patterns of development in the Twin Cities. CURA also shared leadership on and provided support for a project involving a policy-oriented history of the interstate system in the metropolitan area. This project resulted in a book published jointly by CURA and CTS and subsequent presentations about the project at transportation conferences, including one in Paris in September 2007. The report also is serving as the dissertation for the graduate student who was the research assistant for the project. At the moment, CTS and CURA, along with the Metropolitan Council and several

Twin Cities local governments, are embarking on a major long-term effort to assess the economic, travel behavior, housing, and other consequences of the development of transit corridors in the metropolitan region.

Many of CURA's land-use research activities during the review period involve mapping and GIS projects, including leadership involvement in MetroGIS and University GIS organizations; production of watershed, land-use, and population distribution maps in cooperation with the Metropolitan Council and the State Demographer; a faculty interactive research project that developed new approaches to modeling urban sprawl in the metro area; a faculty interactive research project on the impact of bus rapid transit on the West Broadway corridor in Minneapolis; and a faculty interactive research project on the links between life-style choices and land-use and transportation policy.

CURA has also supported a variety of non-GIS faculty research projects in this category, ranging from an investigation several years ago of the economic implications of alternative land use plans in exurban communities to a recently funded project on the MnDOT bidding process for repair contracts.

Finally, many CURA community-based and community-initiated graduate research assistant projects have involved the application of GIS technologies to neighborhood planning and economic development issues, such as developing a master plan for the Elliot Park neighborhood and planning the development of the Midtown Greenway corridor.

The Evolution of CURA Research Foci

Although CURA's basic areas of substantive interest have remained relatively stable over the years and served as a way to organize study projects and topics, the particular emphases have changed over time as the issues confronting urban and regional communities have changed. In our last review in 1995, we noted that there seemed to be increased interest in issues of race and poverty and in concerns of neighborhoods and community organizations. There was also some evidence of renewed interest in regional governance and housing affordability.

As we look back over the range of topics studied in our various projects and programs during the past 12 years, very few consistent themes appear. Some of this is the result of changes in the "outside" world. We have been through a rocky economic period as well as the trauma of 9/11 and its aftermath. The globalization of the world's economic system is having numerous local implications, including restructuring of the Minnesota and Twin Cities economic bases and significant immigration of new populations to the region. Welfare reform has had its successes and failures and our current K-12 education system seems inadequate to meet the needs of the future. There is now more serious concern about environmental

degradation than at any time in CURA's history and energy issues are once again on the public agenda, much as they were 30 years ago.

Many concerns that had a distinctly central inner-city flavor, even 12 years ago, now find manifestations in suburban and rural communities. The concern for the viability and capacity of neighborhoods and community organizations remains an important CURA emphasis, and will likely continue and evolve as the central cities pull back their support for such organizations and as new forms and structures are developed in suburban and non-metropolitan communities.

CURA has a long history in spatial analysis, which has now been translated into GIS technology that is growing at a furious pace and is rapidly developing a multitude of applications. We will certainly continue to support this development in various ways, including supporting student research projects and maintaining the skills of our senior staff.

The third obvious candidate for continued CURA work will be the range of issues of importance to low- and moderate income populations, particularly those that are new to the region. CURA had strong connections to the movement of Southeast Asian populations to the Twin Cities 25 years ago, especially the Hmong. More recently, CURA has been focused on the Latino migration to the Twin Cities, as well as suburban and rural areas. Most recently, we have begun to develop projects with the Somali and other African communities in the Twin Cities.

CURA Programs, 1999–Present

Throughout the past decade, CURA has continued to develop, evolve, and evaluate the means and mechanism by which it carries out its projects and programs. The matrix shown in Table 1 provides a visual representation of the substantive topics of emphasis for CURA over the years, and the programs and activities through which CURA focuses on these topics.

At the moment, the central CURA programs include five competitive programs—the Faculty Interactive Research Program, the Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs, Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization, Community Assistantship Program, and Communiversity—as well as three non-competitive programs—the New Initiatives program, the Center for Community and Regional Research (at the Duluth Campus) and the Minnesota Center for Survey Research (Twin Cities East Bank Campus). Two valuable graduate student internship programs, the State Agency Internship Program and the Local Government Planning Internship Program, were suspended in 2004 for lack of resources. In addition, federal funding has ended for Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPC) and the St. Paul East Side COPC program at CURA, and we are not yet eligible to apply for new grants.

Table 1. CURA Programs and Substantive Foci

CURA Programs	CURA Substantive Foci (Program Areas)								
	Communities and Neighborhoods	Economic Development and Employment	Education	Energy and Environment	Housing	Health, Human, and Social Services	Land Use, Population, and Transportation	Under-represented and Disadvantaged	Policy and Government
Faculty Interactive Research Program (FIRP)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Fesler-Lampert Chair	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Community Assistantship Program (CAP)	■	■		■	■	■	■		■
Communiversity	■	■	■	■	■	■		■	
Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR)	■	■			■	■		■	
New Initiatives	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Community Development Work Study Program	■	■							
Consortium for Met Studies									
EDGE Project	■				■		■		
Hennepin-University Partnership (HUP)									
Northside Seed Grant	■	■			■	■		■	
Housing Initiative					■				
Minneapolis Neighborhood Information System (MNIS)	■	■			■		■		
Minnesota 3-D (M3D)	■	■			■		■		
Twin Cities Training Program for Neighborhood Organizers (TCTPNO)	■							■	
University-Neighborhood Network (UNN)									
Visiting Scholar	■						■	■	■
Center for Community and Regional Research (CCRR)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Minnesota Center for Survey Research (MCSR)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
East Side COPC*	■	■	■		■	■		■	
Local Planning Internships*	■	■			■		■		■
State Agency Internships*		■		■	■	■	■	■	■

* Indicates programs that are inactive or have been completed

At the same time, CURA has initiated several new programs during the last few years—most with external support, however, so their long-term viability is unclear. The federally funded Minnesota 3-D (M3D) program will soon be ended in its current form, but there is now new funding to continue parts of the program's work and to integrate it into broader GIS initiatives just getting under way at the University. The Northside Seed Grant program is secure for another two years. The Hennepin–University Partnership (HUP) is in its third year with Hennepin County and University funding, and the Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs is supported by University endowment funds. The EDGE Project, which focuses on planning and development issues in communities on the metropolitan fringe, has been supported by foundation funds and likely will evolve into a collaboration with the Humphrey Institute's Urban and Regional Planning program and receive new funding from the same local foundation.

Current Core Programs

CURA houses five core programs, two of which support faculty research, and three of which provide research and technical assistance to neighborhood and community organizations. As it has done since its inception, CURA also supports dozens of other projects each year under the rubric of New Initiatives.

The **Faculty Interactive Research Program**, which supports “engaged” research between University of Minnesota faculty members and the “community,” has been under way since 1984. The purpose of this program is 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. Projects must have an applied orientation, as well as serve the research interests of the faculty member. The program provides summer support for faculty on nine-month appointments and graduate student research assistance for nine months. On average, four to five projects are funded per year. The results of these research projects are published in the *CURA Reporter*.

The **Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs**, begun in 1999, is one of four endowed chairs administered by the Graduate School and 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 endowment generates support, for one year, for the research activities of a University of Minnesota faculty member for work on a project related to urban and regional affairs in Minnesota. Funds may be used to obtain release time or other support for the project and may be used for either new or current projects. Each winter, CURA solicits candidates for the Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs, undertakes a selection process, and forwards recommendations to the Dean of the Graduate School, who makes the final

determination and appointment. The results of these research projects are published in the *CURA Reporter*.

The **Community Assistantship Program (CAP)** provides applied research assistance to community-based nonprofit organizations, citizen groups, and government agencies throughout Greater Minnesota. Program goals include enhancing the capacity of community-based groups in rural Minnesota to meet their goals by providing relevant applied research that supports community projects, and providing students with opportunities to apply their research and technical skills to real-world community challenges while gaining experience that offers an advantage in the job market. CAP provides approximately 200 hours of student time (260 hours during summer) to work on a project defined by the community. This is a competitive program and only the best projects are funded. These projects typically have a clear product that will be used to achieve an organizational goal. The results of these research projects are documented in a written report by the student assistant available on the CURA website.

The **Communiversity** program provides 195 hours of graduate student assistance to help a community-based nonprofit organization or agency with a specific project. Priority is given to groups serving diverse communities. Requests for support must involve a project with unique value; requests for general support for the operations of an organization are not considered. Agencies or organizations receiving assistance are responsible for selecting a student to work with from a pool of applicants and supervising the student in completing their work. Student assistants may be asked to undertake an entire project or complete a portion of a larger project. The results of these research projects are documented in a written report by the student assistant available on the CURA website.

Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR) provides research assistance to Minneapolis, St. Paul, and suburban neighborhood organizations and community development corporations. NPCR supports student research assistants—and occasionally faculty researchers—to carry out community-initiated and community-guided projects. The program involves nine colleges and universities within the Twin Cities area, and is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Outreach Partnerships Centers Program, the St. Paul Companies, the St. Paul Foundation, the Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC), the McKnight Foundation, the Minneapolis Foundation, and CURA. Besides focusing on the needs of individual neighborhoods, NPCR uses workshops and conferences to share information more broadly across neighborhoods. Workshops have led to continued cooperative efforts among many Twin Cities neighborhoods. Occasional faculty research projects on issues of topical or multi-neighborhood significance are supported. Proposals for such projects are considered as they are submitted. The results of these research projects are documented in a written report by the student assistant available on the CURA website.

CURA's **New Initiatives Program** is always looking for a good new idea and supports many projects outside our existing program areas. Project proposals can come from faculty, community organizations, government agencies, and/or students. The usual approach has been for someone to contact CURA to discuss the idea; if it looks worthwhile, we will encourage a brief proposal. For some projects we may try to seek matching funding support. Where "ability-to-pay" is an issue, CURA will cover the costs. Maximum project size is generally a half-time graduate student assistant for one academic year; support for one semester is more typical. The results of some of these research projects are documented in a written report or an article in the *CURA Reporter*.

New and Growing Programs

The **Community Development Work Study Program**, a joint initiative of CURA and the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, supports students in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) or Master of Public Policy (MPP) program with a career interest in housing and community development issues. Preference is given to economically disadvantaged or underrepresented students who intend to work in Minnesota upon graduation. Community and economic development, like many other fields, is continually in need of dedicated professionals with diverse backgrounds and a deep understanding of the problems and potential of economically distressed and socially isolated communities. The goal of CDWSP is to ensure that students from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds are able to gain the training and experience needed to join the ranks of those who will direct and implement the future development of communities in the United States. Through the program, fellowships are made available to students to pursue a graduate degree in urban and regional planning or public policy. During their degree program, students also gain practical experience through an internship with a community development agency. CDWSP Fellowships cover academic costs and salary for a professional internship (10 hours per week during the first year, 40 hours per week during the summer, and 20 hours per week during the second year). CDWSP is a national effort of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide financial support to educational institutions to recruit and support economically disadvantaged students of color committed to community development.

The **Consortium for Metropolitan Studies** was established by the University of Minnesota in 2006 as an effort to link the various centers, programs, institutes, faculty, and staff at the University engaged in teaching, research, and outreach efforts related to 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 our existing programs and strengthening the University's connections to those individuals, communities, and activities in Minnesota, the region, and nationally, who are working with those issues on a daily basis." The consortium is engaged in a broad range of activities, including increasing the level of engagement

between University activities and public- and private-sector efforts in Minnesota; emphasizing interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches; supporting research and educational activities; and sponsoring workshops, conferences, and other public events to engage with and facilitate the broader public discussion in Minnesota on metropolitan, urban, and suburban issues. CURA director Tom Scott chaired the consortium's Interim Steering Committee, and Professors John Adams (Geography) and Judith Martin (Urban Studies) co-direct the consortium, which is temporarily housed at CURA. The consortium is also advised by an executive committee and a consortium advisory council.

The **EDGE Project** is in transition. During the past three years, it was an exploration of the capacities of small communities on the fringe of the Twin Cities metropolitan area to plan for and respond to what are usually rapid development pressures and issues once they begin. Communities face serious fiscal consequences as well as issues concerning schools, environmental protection, affordability of housing, development densities, transportation and accessibility, etc. At the same time, they frequently lack the capacity or resources to shape their own destinies in these matters. The exploratory phase of this project has ended, and we have recently applied for a major grant from the McKnight Foundation to continue the project with more active research specific to particular participating communities and providing some level of technical assistance through graduate students in the Humphrey Institute Master of Urban and Regional Planning Program.

The **Hennepin-University Partnership (HUP)** was jointly launched by Hennepin County and the University of Minnesota to capture value for both organizations through a more strategic collaboration—connecting the two organizations where mutual benefit can be found. This includes collaboration on important community-based research, sharing of academic and practitioner expertise, and providing students with field experience. The vision is to make the connection between the state's premier research institution and largest county more strategic—to build from existing and historical collaborations toward a sustained and productive relationship—connecting where it counts. Three important areas of recent collaboration are underway; a multi-unit study of the impacts of transit corridor development to better understand the new and pending LRT and other transit-way developments, faculty and other University research involvement in the County's efforts to improve the long-term outcomes for young people, and University involvement in the County's efforts to reduce the levels of homelessness.

The **Northside Seed Grant** program is intended to create projects to support identified and emerging Community-University partnerships in North Minneapolis. The particular focus on the Northside is intended to help address the urban problems that confront the communities in North Minneapolis, including high poverty, crime, and alienation. The grants support community organizations that operate programs serving residents of the Northside community by providing student research assistants and faculty researchers to carry out neighborhood-initiated and neighborhood-guided projects. The program provides approximately 200 hours of student time to work on a project defined by the community (260 hours

during the summer). Support is also provided for a faculty adviser and for direct assistance to the community organization. The program is supported by supplemental funds from the University; six projects are underway including such organizations as the Folwell Center for Neighborhood Initiatives, the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council, the Lucey Craft Laney Community School and the Phyllis Wheatley Community Center.

Current Small-Scale Programs

The **Housing Initiative** brings together a range of faculty and student research and community-service projects related to housing. Projects may be the result of faculty and student initiatives or may spring from requests by community organizations. In the past, projects have focused on issues such as subsidized housing in Minneapolis, the zoning practices of suburban communities, and the provision of social services in public housing high-rises. A central element of the Housing Initiative is the **CURA Housing Forum**, which brings together faculty, students, and community members to discuss housing issues in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Forums are held during the academic year, are free and open to the public, and generally take one of three forms: panel discussions, action-oriented dialogues, or presentations of research findings from faculty or student projects. Presentations from the forums are archived on the CURA website.

The **Minneapolis Neighborhood Information System (MNIS)** is a collaborative capacity-building effort intended to meet the needs of community-based organizations by providing access to property data that could inform community revitalization efforts, as well as housing intervention and investment strategies. Partners in this project include the City of Minneapolis, select Minneapolis neighborhood organizations, and CURA. Initiated in 1999, MNIS was originally conceived as an early-warning system that could predict and prevent housing abandonment by tracking indicators such as unpaid taxes, housing code violations, or delinquent utility bills, allowing neighborhood organizations time to intervene before families lost their homes. Although the early warning system concept remained part of MNIS, beginning in late 2000 the program shifted focus to the broader applications of geographic information systems (GIS) for community revitalization. Participating neighborhood groups receive training, project assistance, GIS expertise, and access to property information, as well as opportunities to share ideas about GIS projects and housing strategies with other neighborhoods. Neighborhood organizations are instrumental to the design, development, and implementation of all MNIS projects. The results of MNIS research projects are documented in a written report available on the CURA website.

Minnesota 3-D (M3D) is a dynamic, GIS-based Internet application that brings together labor market, housing, and development information and analysis for the Twin Cities metro area into one easy-to-use tool for economic and community developers. By combining labor market origin-destination data on Minnesota jobs

and workers with housing and transportation data, this tool will increase the capacity of project partners to plan and develop housing and economic development programs that narrow the growing spatial mismatch between housing and employment in the Twin Cities region. The M3D project is a partnership between the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, the Minnesota Office of Revenue, the Metropolitan Council, Ramsey and Hennepin Counties, and various Twin Cities neighborhood organizations and community development corporations. The project is funded by a Technology Opportunities Program (TOP) grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce. The application is available online at <http://map.deed.state.mn.us/M3D/>. The results of these research projects are documented in a written report available on the CURA website.

The Twin Cities Training Program for Community Organizers (TCTPNO) is a program to help neighborhood organizations in need of skilled community organizers. CURA has been training neighborhood organizers since 1994 through the TCTPNO. This program trains people to work effectively in organizing and staffing neighborhood organizations. It trains new organizers through an internship program and increases the skills of existing neighborhood staff through workshops and other programs. Among the fruits of TCTPNO's work are the ideas, support, and alliances that have emerged.

The University Neighborhood Network (UNN) is a resource for students, faculty and community groups interested in working together to address issues that are important to the community using community-based research principles. The projects fulfill a self-defined need of the organization and provide an applied learning experience for students. Neighborhoods that participate in the program identify projects with which they need assistance. UNN then locates faculty who teach courses that meet the organization's needs, and students who have an interest in the proposed project. Participation in UNN is coordinated through UNN's web database. Using the database, faculty can post information about their courses, neighborhoods can post proposed projects, and students can choose a specific project that matches their interests and fulfills their course requirements. All projects are completed during the course of one semester—either January through May or September through December.

The Visiting Scholar Program is an informal means by which CURA has served as a temporary home for incipient projects. Typically visiting scholars receive outside funding and work on projects concerning public policy in Minnesota. Generally CURA provides office space and an environment that supports their project, and CURA often publishes the results of their research. Previous visiting scholars have included land-use consultant George Orning, who led the Sustainable Lakes Project Jim Solem, former regional administrator for the Metropolitan Council, who has led the EDGE project on planning needs of communities on the metropolitan fringe; William Johnson, a political scientist at Bethel College who wrote a book about the Metropolitan Council's experience with growth management, which CURA published; Howard Mielke, who helped create the Lead Toxicity Project

which projected an analysis and maps of the lead content in Twin Cities' soils; and Charlie Warner, who developed data on the vanishing stock of low-income housing in Minnesota and helped create the Minnesota Housing Partnership. Many of the research projects sponsored by the Visiting Scholar program result in *CURA Reporter* articles or full-length published reports available from CURA.

Current Off-Site Programs

Located on the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) campus, the **Center for Community and Regional Research (CCRR)** supports cooperative research involving UMD faculty, UMD students, and community agencies in northeastern Minnesota. Project proposals are submitted by UMD faculty, and costs normally are shared equally by CCRR and co-sponsoring agencies. A wide range of projects—often addressing matters of considerable local importance—have been facilitated by this partnership. The results of these research projects are documented in a written report by the faculty member or students that is available in the CURA library.

Located on the East Bank of the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus, the **Minnesota Center for Survey Research (MCSR)** provides survey research services to University faculty and administration, state and local government agencies, and nonprofit organizations working on issues of public policy in Minnesota. The center also provides consultation in areas such as study and questionnaire design, survey administration, data file construction, and data analysis. Each year, MCSR conducts two omnibus telephone surveys—one of 800 households in the metropolitan area and one of 800 households throughout the state. Omnibus surveys keep costs low by allowing government agencies and nonprofit organizations to each ask a few questions as part of a larger survey. Although MCSR is self-supporting and charges for its survey research services, it provides a limited amount of free survey research consulting to individuals and organizations. The results of survey research projects are documented in a written report available from MCSR. Omnibus survey results are available in the CURA library.

Completed and Discontinued Programs

The **East Side Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC)** combined federal funds and local partners in a new community development strategy beginning in 1998. The national COPC initiative is a program of the Office of University Partnerships of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The overall purpose of COPC is to involve colleges and universities in locally driven community development. The primary strategy used by COPC is to provide funds to pay higher education students, faculty, and staff for work on community-designed development projects.

In September 1999, the East Side COPC educational partners were awarded a \$400,000 grant (the maximum possible) to initiate the program in St. Paul. The East Side COPC linked the resources of three institutions of higher education (Macalester College, Metropolitan State University, and the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs) with the needs of community groups and residents on St. Paul's East Side. In its years of operation the East Side COPC program supported several faculty members, 52 graduate students, and 33 undergraduate students working on more than 75 community-based projects. The program was then awarded a HUD New Directions Grant in 2001 to support work through September 2003. All of the original East Side COPC partners continued to cooperate in the New Directions effort, which became known as the New East Side Partnership.

The **Local Planning Internship Program**, which was created in 1990, offered University of Minnesota graduate students enrolled in the Humphrey Institute's planning program internship opportunities with local government planning offices. Awarded on a competitive basis, the internships gave students hands-on learning experience with planning projects while providing local communities with valuable research and technical assistance. Reductions in state funding to higher education in 2002–2003 forced the suspension of the program. During its 13-year existence, the program placed more than 35 graduate students with planning departments in five counties and sixteen cities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The **State Agency Internship Program**, founded in 1986, fostered opportunities for graduate students to work outside the University of Minnesota while providing technical assistance and research skills to state agencies. The program provided a graduate student to work on research, program development, program evaluation, or other short-term projects for a state agency in Minnesota. Projects were selected on the basis of importance to the state and value of the learning experience for students. Agencies receiving an award selected the best student from among available applicants and supervised their project work. The agency paid half the student's salary and CURA paid the other half. Reductions in state funding to higher education in 2002–2003 forced the suspension of the program. During its 17-year existence, the program placed nearly 100 graduate students with more than two dozen state agencies.

Illustrative Examples of More Significant Accomplishments

It is not possible to keep close track of the outcomes or impacts of all of CURA's projects, many of which are small scale and important only to particular organizations. This section lists some of CURA's more significant accomplishments over the years.

Geographic information systems (GIS) technology (1968)—CURA was an early national pioneer in the creation of this computer-based technology, which is

capable of generating detailed electronic maps and has literally transformed how researchers, planners, and others approach the study of land use. As an outgrowth of this early work at CURA, the Minnesota Land Management Information Center was formed in 1977 to provide service and technological support to government agencies and private organizations using GIS technology. CURA continues to support a significant amount of work in the area of GIS technology, and recently received grants from the Department of Commerce totaling nearly \$1 million to help neighborhood organizations, cities, and townships in the metro area use the technology for planning, housing development, and other purposes.

All-University Council on Aging and the Center on Aging (1969)—The All-University Council on Aging at CURA began as an effort to provide a focus to aging-related research and outreach activities at the University by providing financial support for research, creating a network among University faculty interested in aging issues, and establishing a graduate minor in aging at the University. In 1995, the council spun off to the University's School of Public Health and changed its name to the Center on Aging, a state and national leader in basic and applied aging research.

Shoreland Management Act (1969)—In 1969, the Minnesota State Legislature passed the Shoreland Management Act to ensure preservation and wise development of land bordering lakes and rivers by requiring appropriate setbacks for septic systems and buildings. This groundbreaking legislation, the first of its kind in the nation, resulted directly from work on the Lakeshore Development Study at CURA, which investigated various threats to Minnesota's precious lakes and wetlands.

New Careers Program (1969)—The United States in the 1960s was, in the now-famous words of the *Kerner Commission Report*, "a nation moving toward two societies, one black, one white, separate and unequal." The Johnson Administration's "War on Poverty" was a response to the social ills and civil disorders that grew out of this fundamental dilemma, and the New Careers program emerged as one of the most innovative and far-reaching means of repairing the inequities of the past. The idea behind the program, which was funded by the U.S. Department of Labor, was to provide a work-study opportunity for unemployed and underemployed adults, who could work as a "bridge" between schools and social agencies on one hand, and inner-city residents in need of education and social services on the other. The University of Minnesota was the first and only major institution of higher education to commit itself to providing an educational component for the New Careers program. Enrollees spent half their day employed as paraprofessionals in preparation for careers in human and social services, and the other half enrolled in college classes, primarily through the General College. The program, which was administratively housed at CURA beginning in 1969, changed the lives of many of its participants, the agencies in which they worked, and the curriculum and counseling services at the University. CURA and General College recently hosted a reunion and reception at the Campus Club for graduates of the program, at which special guest Vice-President Walter Mondale and many New Careers graduates spoke eloquently about the historical significance and impact of this innovative program.

Government Training Service Program (1976)—In 1976, CURA sponsored a conference that examined the quality and coordination of training and continuing education programs for public officials. The conference led to the creation of the Minnesota Government Training Service Program. This joint powers organization (which recently became an independent nonprofit organization based in St. Paul) offers workshops and seminars, sponsors conferences, and provides skills training to government employees on issues ranging from telecommunications to cultural diversity.

Artspace (1980s)—Finding and retaining affordable live/work space is an age-old problem for artists. Artists frequently gravitate to old warehouses or industrial buildings, but their very presence in a neighborhood often sets in motion a process of gentrification that drives up rents and, over time, forces out the artists. This is precisely what happened in Minneapolis' historic Warehouse District in the 1970s, prompting the creation of Artspace in 1979 as an advocate for artists' space needs. In the early 1980s, CURA provided critical support for the development and evolution of Artspace by providing a graduate student with experience in grant writing. The student prepared several successful funding proposals that not only ensured the continued viability of the organization, but also provided an opportunity to assess Artspace's long-term strategic direction and demonstrated that grant-makers were open to this new mission. Since then, the scope of Artspace's activities has grown dramatically and it is now America's leading nonprofit real estate developer for the arts.

Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (1986)—The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits is an influential "chamber of commerce" for the nonprofit sector in Minnesota that engages in lobbying, conducts research, publishes an annual nonprofit telephone directory and economic report, and sponsors educational events and internships for nonprofits. The council was created as a direct outgrowth of the Philanthropy Project at CURA, a three-year project that gathered information on patterns of grant-making in hopes of persuading corporations and foundations to increase the proportion of grants that went to disadvantaged communities. The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits continues to lead the national movement of state associations for nonprofits that work for a more politically visible role for the nonprofit sector in the United States.

Minnesota Housing Partnership (1987)—Minnesota Housing Partnership (MHP) assists Minnesota communities in the creation and preservation of housing that is affordable to low- and moderate income people through loans and grants, technical assistance, organizational capacity-building, and public policy initiatives. The catalyst for the organization's creation was CURA's support of MHP founder Charlie Warner, who in the mid-1980s spent several years at CURA as a Visiting Scholar investigating the issue of low-income housing. Under Warner's leadership, MHP first organized in 1987 as an informal coalition of community groups and nonprofit developers working for affordable housing. In 1989, the organization incorporated as a member-based nonprofit organization. Today MHP has earned the

respect of affordable housing advocates throughout the state as it continues to support housing for all Minnesotans.

Minnesota Ground Water Protection Act (1989)—In 1984, CURA supported the Duschee Creek Water Quality Study, which documented agricultural and land management practices by local farmers that affected water quality in southeastern Minnesota's Duschee Creek. The groundbreaking study, and an accompanying documentary about the project, persuaded a local state representative formerly opposed to water quality regulation to push for state legislation protecting water quality, resulting in the landmark Minnesota Ground Water Protection Act of 1989.

Nationwide legislation on establishing paternity (1990)—In 1990, CURA launched research on establishing paternity that has changed the laws of every state in the nation. The Paternity Project documented the benefits of establishing paternity for children of unmarried parents, and discovered that the period in the hospital following the birth of a child provides the best opportunity to establish paternity. The project gained national recognition by Congress in 1992, and as a result of this research, all states now require hospitals to determine paternity immediately following childbirth.

Centro Campesino and the University Migrant Project (1994–2001)—The University Migrant Project (U-Migrant Project) began in 1994 when concerned Latinos and others initiated conversations among migrant farmworkers, researchers at the University of Minnesota, and various agencies that serve migrant communities concerning the issues affecting the state's approximately 20,000 migrant farmworkers. The U-Migrant Project was housed at CURA and received additional support from the Office of Multicultural Affairs, the Executive Vice President and Provost, Minnesota Extension Service, and the Office for Special Learning Opportunities (OSLO). The project focused on educating the University community and the public about migrant farmworkers and issues affecting their lives, and also sought to improve migrant workers' living and working conditions. In 2001, the U-Migrant Project evolved into the nonprofit organization Centro Campesino (Farmworkers' Center), a membership-based advocacy group for migrant workers in Minnesota and the Upper Midwest.

Hollman v. Cisneros Consent Decree Evaluation (1998–2001)—In 1998, CURA was contracted by the Family Housing Fund and the State of Minnesota to conduct an evaluation of the implementation of the consent decree in *Hollman v. Cisneros*, a lawsuit alleging that the public housing and Section 8 programs in Minneapolis perpetuated racial and low-income segregation. The consent decree, which was signed by all parties to the suit, involved a series of dramatic policy changes aimed at deconcentrating family public housing in Minneapolis. A research fellow at CURA conducted the three-year evaluation, which produced a series of eight reports that concluded the implementation of the consent decree had produced mixed results with respect to the construction of replacement housing units, the reduction of race and poverty concentration in public housing in the Twin Cities, and the use of special housing mobility certificates.

Ban on Phosphorus in Lawn Fertilizer (2002)—In 1992 and again in 1999, CURA supported research that led to changes in state laws regarding the use of phosphorus in lawn fertilizer. These two research projects found that soils across the Twin Cities and throughout Minnesota are naturally high in phosphorus, and that applying additional phosphorus via lawn fertilizers was a significant contributor to eutrophication, the “greening” and subsequent degradation of water in Minnesota lakes and rivers. In 2002, the Minnesota State Legislature passed the Fertilizer, Soil Amendment, and Plant Amendment Law (Minnesota Statutes § 18c) prohibiting routine phosphorus use on lawns in the Twin Cities. The ban was recently extended statewide.

Reducing arsenic levels in Minnesota well-water supplies (2003)—In response to research showing that long-term exposure to low levels of arsenic increases the risk of skin cancer and disorders of the circulatory, nervous, and digestive systems, the federal government in 2001 significantly lowered the maximum contaminant level (MCL) for arsenic in U.S. drinking water. Many small communities throughout Minnesota, Iowa, and the Dakotas have unique geology that contributes to concentrations of arsenic that exceed the new federal level. In Minnesota alone, approximately 100 public water systems that rely on groundwater as their source, and thousands of private wells, exceed the new standard. Because the construction of a water treatment facility capable of removing arsenic can cost \$1 million or more, Minnesota’s small water suppliers are faced with a severe financial burden in complying with the new drinking water standards. Two CURA-supported researchers worked with state and local governmental agencies to develop groundbreaking low-cost alternatives for public water systems and private well owners to meet the new federal drinking water standards, including changing well operation practices and drilling new wells at different depths or locations.

In short, although many of the projects we support have limited impact beyond the immediate need which they are designed to address, CURA throughout its history has been an incubator for more significant projects and initiatives that have improved the lives and well-being of all Minnesotans.

Project Benefits for Faculty, Students, and Community-University Engagement

CURA expects, of course, that faculty and students who participate in CURA projects will benefit directly from their experiences. Ideally, CURA projects will serve faculty by contributing to their research agendas, perhaps leading to scholarly publication or additional external research support, as well as informing and enhancing their graduate and undergraduate teaching. Although it is too difficult for us to follow up on or track all of the short- and long-term outcomes of CURA projects for individual faculty involved in them, faculty members who were surveyed as part of this self-study review were asked to evaluate their most recent CURA experience. Nearly all

(97%) rated the overall process with CURA either “excellent” (80%) or “good (17%). The majority (80%) reported that they were either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the outreach/engagement component of the project, and 97% were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the research component and its value for their career. More than half (57%) had published the results of their CURA project in a professional journal or monograph. Of the other 43%, more than two-thirds (67%) reported that they planned to publish the results in a professional journal at a future date. Nearly one-third (31%) of respondents reported that their CURA project led to funding for additional related projects. Of the other 69%, nearly one-half (42%) reported that they were planning to write a proposal for additional funding for the project. Complete results from the survey are reported in Appendix I.

Students also benefit in many ways from CURA projects, in addition to the financial compensation they receive as research assistants. Again, results from the survey reported in Appendix I illustrate the range of benefits, both tangible and intangible. For some students, a CURA project becomes an element of their overall educational experience, as evidenced by a number of illustrative comments received from the survey:

“My research opportunity via CURA allowed me to research a topic in which I had a personal interest and one which gave me a head start advantage in my course work.”

“The work that I did with CURA was a great complement to my public policy degree.”

“CURA allowed me to have a well-compensated community experience that complemented my graduate degree program”

For some students, a CURA project helped form career goals:

“One of my projects with CURA was my first research experience where I collected and analyzed data. I found it helped me gain some foundation skills and reinforced my desire to become a researcher/academic.”

“My CURA internship led me directly to my current position. The internship grounded my graduate school experience in a real-world community-driven perspective. . . . I’m still proud of the product I helped write as an intern.”

For many students, the CURA involvement has led directly to professional positions or further academic achievements following graduation:

“CURA has provided the trampoline to my career.”

“This CURA project topic became the focus for my capstone project, and contacts from this work led to the job interview.”

“My experience at MCSR helped me get my present job . . . [T]he opportunity really helped me obtain my masters and work towards my Ph.D.”

“My CURA internship led directly to my current position.”

“I gained a lot of good hands-on experience and professional contacts that continue to aid in the work I’m currently doing. I would highly recommend CURA internships for current U of M students. My experience was invaluable.”

Finally, it is evident that CURA has helped strengthen connections between the University of Minnesota and the many communities and organizations throughout the state with whom we have undertaken projects. As an unsolicited comment we recently received from the director of a community program on Minneapolis’ Northside noted, “CURA has been providing steady support for organizations like Northside Food Project for many years, and your role in the community is a vital force in creating goodwill between communities and the University of Minnesota.” A quote from University President Robert Bruininks that we use in some of our promotional materials summarizes quite well the value of CURA’s efforts to create meaningful connections between the University and the community:

The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs represents the best of the University’s public engagement mission. For nearly 40 years, CURA has worked in partnership with urban and rural communities, bringing University expertise and high-quality research to bear on the needs that communities themselves have identified. I’m proud of CURA’s record, its enduring and active community partnerships, and the impact this collaborative work continues to have on the people of our state.

CURA Connections

As the preceding two sections indicate, the fundamental characteristic of CURA’s programs, projects, and activities has been the connections and relationships with faculty members and students across the University (see Appendix E) and with organizations, agencies, and individuals outside the University community (see Appendix F).

The simple counts for CURA projects and programs for two recent periods illustrate these connections:

	1999–2002	2003–Present
Number of Projects (avg/year)	140	90
Number of Faculty members (avg/year)	27	25
Faculty Departments Represented (total)	39	73
Number of Graduate Students (avg/year)	110	74
Student Departments Represented (total)	49	73
Government agencies, nonprofits, and community organizations engaged	294	511

Although CURA's community connections have been primarily in the Twin Cities metropolitan region, there have always been projects in Greater Minnesota, and increasingly we are working with other non-metro organizations and with the other campuses of the University of Minnesota. We have just reorganized and regularized our relationships with the Duluth Campus to strengthen our connections and help increase the involvement of faculty in community-based research projects through the CCRR program. We worked closely with the early development of the Center for Small Towns on the Morris campus, and now that they are thriving, we continue to maintain a strong relationship with them. We have very recently helped with the establishment of the Center for Sustainable Development on the Crookston Campus and will, no doubt, participate more actively in Rochester as that campus evolves. CURA collaborates wherever possible with the Regional Sustainable Partnership here at the University, and increasingly with the McKnight Initiative Fund program and the Center for Rural Policy and Development, all three of which are focused on the needs of rural Minnesota.

Finally, through the evolution of the federally funded COPC program, we have developed working connections with eight of the other higher educational institutions in the Twin Cities through our NPCR program and other collaborative initiatives.

Our 1995 review listed many more faculty connections, mostly because we counted faculty members associated with two large CURA-sponsored organizations: the All-University Council on Environmental Quality and the All-University Council on Aging. As general interest in environmental issues waned some years ago, CURA disestablished this program, and there are now other University structures, particularly the newly created Institute on the Environment, undertaking a University environmental program. Similarly, the Aging Council and its programs and staff were eventually moved into the University Aging Center in the School of Public Health.

Reduced numbers in recent years are also the result of the increasing costs of compensating faculty for their research and other CURA involvement, and the dramatically increased costs of graduate research assistants, whose compensation can include a full tuition benefit as well as wages and health benefits. For example, for most of its history, the Faculty Interactive Research Program (which is one of the primary ways we have of introducing faculty to engaged research) provided two

months of summer salary for the faculty member and a 0.5 FTE graduate research assistant for one year. Recently, we have had to reduce the grants to one month of summer salary and a 0.5 FTE graduate research assistant for nine months. Most of the complaints we receive from faculty about the FIRP program are that the grants do not include enough money to adequately support the projects they wish to undertake.

Although CURA's capacity to support programs, faculty members, and students is substantially less than it was at the time of the last review, interest in CURA programs remains strong and widespread across the University. The most recent competition for Faculty Interactive Research Program support, for which three to four awards are granted each year, garnered 34 faculty applications representing 25 different departments across the University.

CURA Visibility and Research Dissemination

One of CURA's weaknesses as identified in the 1995 external review report was our lack of visibility within the University and the need for CURA to disseminate more broadly information about its activities and the results of its projects and programs. For many years, the dissemination of the results of CURA projects was limited to occasional monographs and the quarterly *CURA Reporter*, which was distributed widely in print format both inside and outside of the University.

The following section describes how we have substantially increased the dissemination and availability of CURA's work—primarily through electronic means, although we also have enhanced the production quality of the *CURA Reporter* as well. It has always been a CURA goal to make the results of our work as available as possible, and recent innovations and the addition of more technologically adept staff members have helped significantly. Given staff and budget limitations, we still do not do as much with forums, seminars, workshops, and conferences as we would like, but we anticipate that we will be able to strengthen this element of outreach through collaborations with the Metropolitan Consortium and other centers.

CURA Website (www.cura.umn.edu)

CURA was one of the first research units on campus to create a website during the mid-1990s to disseminate research results from our projects to faculty, students, and the public. Since that time, the CURA website has grown significantly and has undergone several major revisions, including a complete redesign in 2005 to reorganize the website around the needs of the four major groups CURA collaborates with: faculty, students, communities, and government agencies.

The CURA website provides a wealth of information about our programs, projects, and publications. As the website has grown, so has the number of external websites that link to CURA's (see Appendix D).

One of the most significant improvements to the website in recent years is the addition of several searchable online databases that allow greater access to resources available through CURA. For example, the CURA Publications Catalog (www.cura.umn.edu/search/index.php) provides a keyword searchable database of more than 2,000 CURA publications, many of which are available for immediate download as PDF files. Similarly, the keyword searchable CURA Project Database (www.cura.umn.edu/CuraProjects.php) provides summaries of selected recent CURA projects, helping to disseminate the results of these projects and stimulate ideas for future projects.

The CURA Reporter

The *CURA Reporter*, a quarterly report of research, is CURA's flagship publication. In continuous publication since 1970, the *Reporter* contains feature-length articles on recently completed projects at CURA, as well as updates on our latest publications, projects in progress, and new programs and initiatives. Subscriptions are available free of charge upon request. Currently the *Reporter* has a subscription readership of more than 6,000, including faculty and students at the University of Minnesota and other colleges and universities, local and state agency employees, community organizations and activists, practitioners, and interested private citizens. Sample issues of the *Reporter* are provided in Appendix K.

In 2005, our editorial and production staff undertook a major redesign of the *CURA Reporter*, moving the publication to four-color production. This change has allowed us to present visually complex material in a much more readable fashion, as well as visually enhancing the appearance and professionalism of the *Reporter*. Our current managing editor has made it a priority to include more short articles and updates on projects we sponsor, helping to highlight and disseminate results from many additional research projects each year. He also has regularized the publication schedule for the *Reporter*, which tended to be somewhat erratic under our previous editor. Finally, the *Reporter* has been available online in PDF format since 2000, increasing our distribution and readership significantly.

The CURA CORNER

The *CURA CORNER* (www.cura.umn.edu/CURACORNER.php) was recently inaugurated as an online and e-mail publication to increase outreach to community organizations. Published three times yearly to coincide with our program application deadlines, the *CORNER* is intended to keep neighborhood organizations, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other community partners

informed about the activities of CURA's Community-Based Research Programs (CAP, Communiversity, and NPCR).

Other CURA Publications

Most CURA projects result in a report or other publication written by the faculty member or graduate research assistant involved with the project. CURA maintains a resource library to house these publications, and makes copies (or photocopies, if the publication is out of print) available upon request. Since 2000, most of these publications have also been made available as PDF files through the CURA website and Publications Catalog. A complete list of publications produced during the review period can be found in Appendix J and Appendix M.

Forums and Conferences

CURA frequently uses forums and conferences to share results of projects and programs with a wider audience. For example, CURA has hosted a semi-annual GIS Exposition for the last several years to share results of the MNIS and M3D programs, and to facilitate networking among GIS users in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Each year for the last four years, CURA has also sponsored and participated in a Community–University Open House to share results of some of our community based projects. The CURA Housing Forum is another example of an ongoing effort to share information about housing research projects—both those sponsored by CURA, as well as those emanating from other quarters—with the general public.

CURA Resources

CURA's funding, as described briefly in Table 2, comes from four primary sources: general University Operations and Maintenance funds from the University of Minnesota, an allocation to CURA from the University's State Special's appropriation, grants and contracts, and income (primarily through CURA's survey research center, MCSR). The financial resource picture for the past 14 years is shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2 shows the pattern for CURA's basic budget for operating and general program purposes provided from University resources. As the footnotes indicate, the sizable increases in the last and current fiscal years are the result of University accounting changes, which do not translate to increased programmatic dollars. In addition, for the current fiscal year there is a real increase of \$73,000 to support a new GIS staff position. Otherwise, for the rest of the period, CURA's budget has been flat; it certainly has not reflected inflationary increases, the significant increases in the costs of graduate student research assistants, or the fact that in most of those

years, the University granted employee salary increases that had to be absorbed out of the department's budget.

Table 2. CURA Funding from University Sources, Fiscal Years 1995–2008

Fiscal Year	O & M	State Special	Total	Pct. Change*
1994–1995	\$210,095	\$969,064	\$1,179,159	
1995–1996	\$132,060	\$1,019,064	\$1,151,124	-2.4%
1996–1997	\$117,682	\$1,019,064	\$1,136,746	-1.2%
1997–1998	\$175,032	\$1,019,064	\$1,194,096	+5.0%
1998–1999	\$227,311	\$1,018,735	\$1,246,046	+4.4%
1999–2000	\$250,216	\$1,049,235	\$1,299,451	+4.3%
2000–2001	\$285,650	\$1,074,050	\$1,359,700	+4.6%
2001–2002	\$379,147	\$1,074,050	\$1,453,197	+6.9%
2002–2003	\$398,675	\$1,027,311	\$1,425,986	-1.9%
2003–2004	\$477,430	\$903,573	\$1,381,003	-3.2%
2004–2005	\$430,941	\$903,573	\$1,334,514	-3.4%
2005–2006	\$430,941	\$903,573	\$1,334,514	0.0%
2006–2007	\$650,151	\$903,573	\$1,553,724	+16.4% [†]
2007–2008	\$772,131	\$903,573	\$1,675,704	+7.9% [§]
TOTALS	\$4,937,462	\$13,787,502	\$18,724,964	

* Pct. Change reflects percentage change from previous year's allocation.

[†] The substantial recurring increase from 2005–2006 to 2006–2007 was due to the University allocating costs of "central services" to departments and transferring partial funding for the increased costs to departments.

[§] The increase from 2006–2007 to 2007–2008 was due to recurring increases to fund CURA's GIS Coordinator plus funding for the increased costs of "central services" charged to departments.

Table 3 shows the total "external funding" for the same time period—including grants, contracts, and endowment funding—and also shows the total level of CURA's spending for each of the years. This table provides an indication of the level of CURA's expenditures each year, which have averaged about \$2.17 million. It also shows the percentage of total expenditures from externally generated funds, which have averaged about 38% during this period.

Appendix B provides a brief description of the larger grants and contracts to CURA during the past several years. As the descriptions indicate, the projects supported cover a range of activities including identifying early markers of neighborhood deterioration, analyzing the spatial mismatch hypothesis, studying the planning and decision-making needs of small communities on the developing metropolitan fringe, and supporting the Hennepin-University Partnership.

Table 3. CURA Funding from External Sources Compared to Total Funding, Fiscal Years 1995–2008

Fiscal Year	External Funding*	Total Funding [†]	External Funding as a Pct. of Total Funding
1994–1995	\$789,136	\$1,960,980	40%
1995–1996	\$782,984	\$1,906,563	41%
1996–1997	\$984,553	\$2,147,522	46%
1997–1998	\$767,807	\$2,006,817	38%
1998–1999	\$1,178,357	\$2,454,085	48%
1999–2000	\$843,039	\$2,149,990	39%
2000–2001	\$849,034	\$2,346,560	36%
2001–2002	\$930,366	\$2,437,874	38%
2002–2003	\$842,587	\$2,290,537	37%
2003–2004	\$816,263	\$2,163,118	38%
2004–2005	\$600,100	\$1,963,893	31%
2005–2006	\$824,513	\$2,089,531	39%
2006–2007	\$729,414	\$2,321,637	31% [§]
TOTALS	\$10,938,153	\$28,239,107	

* Externally funded expenses include those from sales of services, gifts, sponsored contracts and grants, and endowment funding.

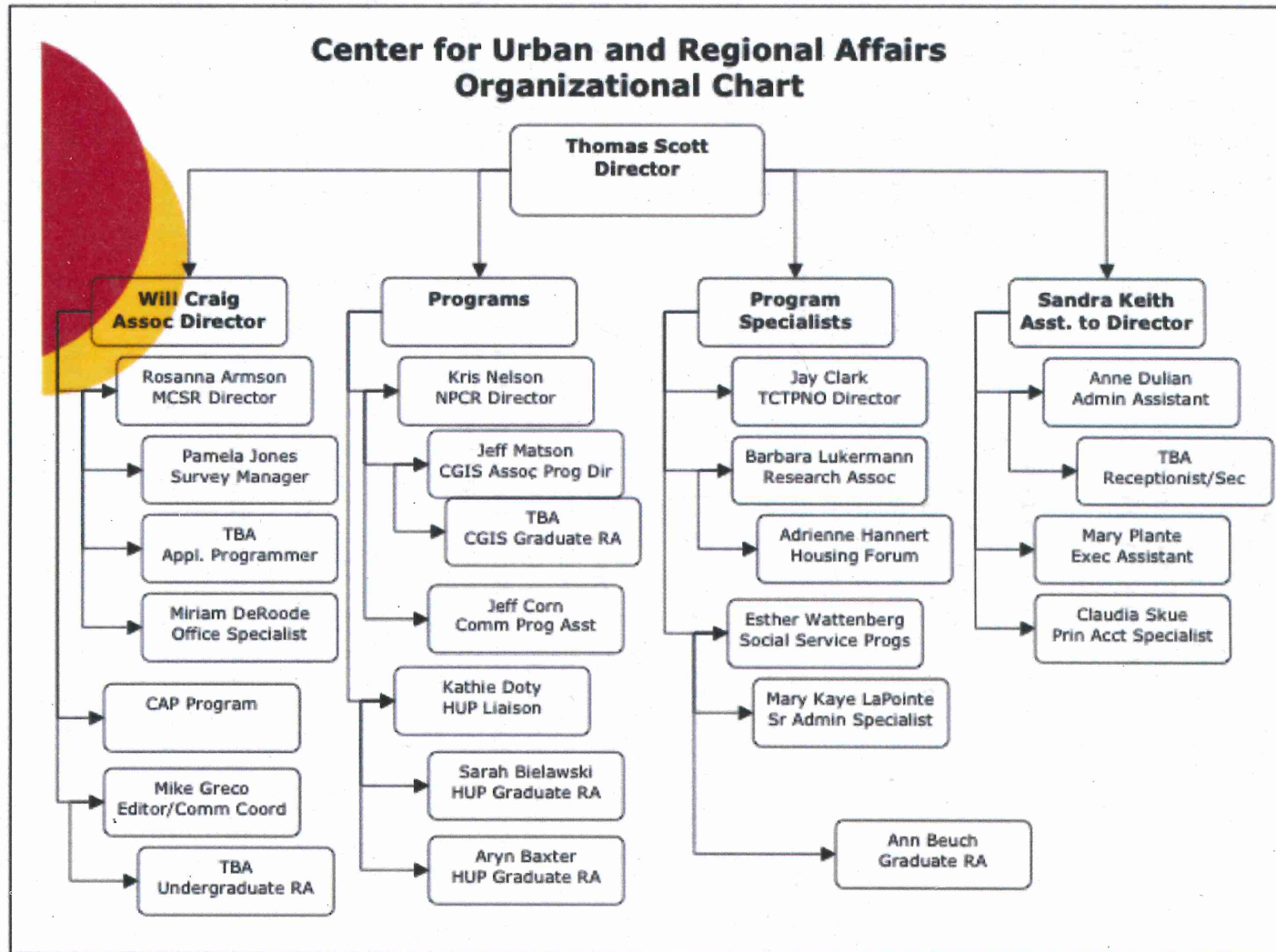
[†] Total Funding includes externally funded expenses as well as expenses funded by O&M, State Special, and IDC sources.

[§] The totals for 2006–2007 are preliminary.

Recent grant income has tended to come from private foundations, which have been very generous in supporting several CURA programs, most notably the Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR) program, the Twin Cities Training Program for Community Organizers (TCTPNO), and the Community Assistantship Program (CAP). This last decade also encompasses the COPC and New Directions grants from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the M3D grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce. In addition, the Fesler-Lampert Endowment funds are held in the Graduate School and provide about \$45,000 per year to support the Fesler-Lampert Chair in Urban and Regional Affairs. Finally, CURA does try to obtain matching grants from local community organizations to help support the CAP projects in Greater Minnesota, but the amounts are quite small and it's possible that the costs of negotiating and collecting the grants may exceed the amounts generated.

CURA resources include personnel as well as money, so it may be useful to provide a brief overview of CURA's staff and their responsibilities. (See also Figure 1, which shows CURA's organizational chart.)

Figure 1. CURA Organizational Chart



The professional staff includes the Director (Ph.D. and tenured faculty member in Political Science), the Associate Director (Ph.D and adjunct appointment in Geography), the Coordinator for Community Development Programs, the Communications Coordinator/Editor, and the Administrator. The support staff includes 1.25 FTE clerical positions, one 0.4 FTE accounting position, one full-time Community Programs Manager, and the Director of the TCTPNO program at about .75 FTE level. Two individuals, both former faculty members, each currently hold a .25 FTE/nine month appointment. MCSR has a full-time Director and two full-time staff positions. Since the last review, CURA staff has been reduced approximately by one Professional and 2.5 FTE support staff employees.

Each of the professional staff members has multiple responsibilities; each is partly responsible for certain of CURA's administrative functions, as well as developing and maintaining contacts and connections within the community and throughout the University. Kris Nelson and Jeff Corn are especially valuable because of their extensive contacts and connections to neighborhood and community organizations throughout the Twin Cities, particularly in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Will Craig has valuable connections throughout the University and particularly with state and local government agencies in the State. He is also well connected in the national and international GIS community. Tom Scott's connections are primarily throughout the University, local and state government, and in the public policy community.

Those responsible for particular programs (NPCR, CAP, etc.) are also asked to raise external funds to help support those programs. All CURA professional staff members are called upon frequently by others in the University and community to assist, give advice, and serve in various other capacities. All of this helps develop and maintain the networks, linkages, and understanding of the community and the University necessary for CURA's success, and to help fulfill the University's engagement mission.

The support staff has undergone significant change in the past five or six years. Virtually all of the staff who had been part of CURA for many years left the University. CURA hired a new Administrator with wide University experience and substantial understanding of new accounting, budgetary, and personnel policies and practices. She has significantly revamped the support staff and instituted a range of internal practices which were necessary for CURA to comply appropriately with the multitude of new and ever-changing University policies, regulations, and practices.

In addition, the CURA editor, previously a civil service position, retired and was replaced with a Communications Coordinator/Editor on a P&A appointment. The new editor has an M.A. degree in communication studies, and is well-versed in and takes advantage of the many new electronic editing, desktop publishing, and information distribution technologies now available. He effectively represents CURA with other communications personnel across the University, redesigned

and significantly expanded our website, designed and manages several internal and external project tracking databases, and manages production and dissemination of all CURA publications. In addition, he has worked to increase CURA's visibility at a time when the University overall is doing the same thing. He has increased coverage of CURA programs and projects in the external media and in University publications (see Appendix C), expanded the number of external links to the CURA website (see Appendix D), and significantly enhanced the quality and expanded the circulation of CURA's flagship publication, the quarterly *CURA Reporter* (see Appendix K).

Finally, most CURA projects and programs are carried out by faculty members and graduate research assistants in University academic departments and programs with support for their work provided on an ad hoc basis.

Summary, Conclusions and Prospects

Quite a lot has changed since CURA's last review, both from CURA's standpoint and with respect to the circumstances external to CURA. All have implications for CURA's work in the future.

Over time, CURA's resource base has become more constrained. This has led to reduced staff resources and reduced flexibility in the programs and projects that can be supported. And, it has led to more time and energy investment in trying to attract external sources of support. Some of the staff losses have been in support staff and they have been managed in various ways. The most important support staff weakness we now have is in not having someone to devote substantial time and skill to fund raising and related development activities.

The professional staff losses have included people who had spent considerable time developing contacts and becoming knowledgeable about both the University and the many different external communities with which CURA works. Over time, having a few such people who have developed knowledge about the state, the metropolitan region, local communities, neighborhoods, communities of color, colleges, departments, and faculty members at the University is an invaluable asset for a unit like CURA, whose major function is to link the University and the "community." To the extent that CURA's professional staff has been reduced, it diminishes our capacity to maintain those contacts and build the new ones so necessary to carry out our mission successfully. The 1995 CURA Review Report commented several times on this issue, emphasizing the vital importance of the multiple connections of CURA staff to its many constituencies.

CURA's most deliberate response to these resource reductions during the past decade or so has been to reduce some of our larger scale, longer term projects and to devote relatively more resources to a larger number of smaller-scale community-based and initiated research projects, most of which are carried out by graduate research assistants. The oldest of these programs, the

Communiversality Program, is directed toward nonprofit organizations that work with communities of color. This program has been maintained at approximately the same dollar level for many years, but the increases in graduate RA costs because of fringe benefits and shifting from the quarter to semester system have reduced the number of projects that can be undertaken. The NPCR program, which works primarily with neighborhoods in Minneapolis and St. Paul, has been the largest of the community-based programs, funded initially with federal grant support and more recently with CURA and local foundation support. The CAP program, focusing on Greater Minnesota communities, has been the most problematic, partly because of limited external funding, partly because of staffing issues (which have now been resolved), and partly because it has been difficult to develop partnerships with other Greater Minnesota-serving organizations.

There have been several major advantages of continuing to support a relatively large number of smaller-scale projects during the recent decade, even at the expense, perhaps, of supporting fewer larger-scale projects. Increasingly, graduate students want internship/real-world opportunities, so CURA projects serve their educational and career needs. Graduate students often discuss projects with their advisers and other faculty members, so the community projects are a simple way to inform faculty about—and sometimes involve new faculty members in—CURA's work. These community-based research projects are a relatively inexpensive way to have a University presence and involvement in many communities throughout state, and graduate research assistants are almost always excellent ambassadors for the University. The fact that we review perhaps 150 project requests each year from communities and organizations keeps CURA and the University on the minds of a great many people throughout the state, helps strengthen our network base, and keeps us in touch with the issues facing community and neighborhood organizations, mitigating to some extent the staff losses mentioned above. Finally, this considerable experience has allowed us to develop practices and procedures that help minimize operational problems and can serve as a model for others at the University wanting to engage in community research.

In the meantime, significant new developments related to CURA's work have occurred in higher education generally and at the University of Minnesota in particular. Five are especially noteworthy.

First is the "engagement" movement, which began several years ago with the signing of a declaration by many university and college presidents, including then University President Mark Yudof, emphasizing the importance of greater community engagement by higher educational institutions. The thrust of the argument has been that for some years, higher education has drifted away from the communities that support it, and that now a new commitment to increased engagement with those communities is warranted for the sake of students and for the sake of the value that greater town-gown relationships can have for all parties. A significant element in the new engagement approach is that the connections between higher education and communities must be true

partnerships; the traditional model of the university reaching out and doing “good” in and for the community must be replaced with a mutual collaboration, with all parties coming to the table as equals. The University’s commitment to engagement is serious; the President has made it part of his agenda, an engagement office has been established and is being directed by an Associate Vice President, the University is participating in several national engagement initiatives including active membership in a new multi-institutional organization called Urban Serving Universities, and even some departmental promotion and tenure standards are being rewritten to reward engagement activities.

The CURA Director was one of those who initially proposed that there be a central officer at the University charged with “engagement” responsibilities. Subsequently, he has served on the all-University Council on Public Engagement (COPE) advisory council and the steering committee for the Office of Public Engagement.

The second development has been the establishment of the University Metropolitan Consortium (UMC). The Consortium consists of the leaders of approximately 20 programs and centers across the University, all of which directly address, in their teaching and/or research, urban and metropolitan issues. The Consortium will greatly facilitate increased communication and sharing among these centers and programs by sponsoring workshops, seminars, and conferences; by providing web-based information about common issues; by supporting Consortium-identified research and teaching activities; and, in general, by unifying and bringing together the many, sometimes disparate, activities across the University that address metropolitan concerns. The goals are to make the University’s contributions to metropolitan understanding greater than the sum of its various parts, and to enhance the meaningful interaction between the University and those in the community interested in metropolitan issues.

The CURA Director was part of the original small group that developed the consortium concept, was chair of the committee that drafted the proposal and recommendations for the creation of the Consortium, and currently serves on the Consortium’s steering committee.

The third development has been the creation of the Hennepin-University Partnership (HUP). The purpose of HUP is to increase the links and connections between the University and the state’s largest and most urbanized county, which is also home to both the state’s largest city and most of the University’s Twin Cities campus. The mechanism for carrying out HUP’s objectives has been the establishment of a liaison position funded jointly by the University and Hennepin County. The person in the liaison position is a University employee, is housed at CURA, and reports regularly to the County Administrator and the CURA Director. She works actively across the University and with all county departments to find ways for better connections to be made between the

University's educational and research resources and the needs of the county in its multiple roles.

The fourth development has yet to emerge fully. It began with a request from the President and Sr. Vice President, Robert Jones, in the fall of 2006, that a task force consisting of University and community representatives prepare a statement on the "University's Urban Agenda." The charge to the task force was to "create an overarching framework to ensure the proper coordination and alignment of targeted urban research initiatives and activities. Urban engagement has long been an important part of the public engagement of the University. We strive to improve the quality of the research and scholarship tied to urban issues while contributing to the public good. This is a great opportunity to leverage our research to help urban communities solve pressing challenges and to establish the University as a pre-eminent institution addressing urban issue."

The letter goes on to say that "many University centers, programs, faculty, staff and students are already engaged in teaching, research, and public engagement directed to address these issues. However, our collective work has not been effectively coordinated and aligned in ways that create an articulated, meaningful agenda that is visible across and beyond the University. We need to establish a transformative urban agenda to strengthen our overall effectiveness in working with communities to address urban concerns."

The initial draft report from the task force was submitted to the President and Sr. Vice President in mid-May 2007, and further steps await their reactions and suggestions. The CURA Director served as a member of the Urban Agenda Task Force.

The fifth University development has been a significant new interest in and involvement with several neighborhoods in Minneapolis, all of which are undergoing significant urban-related stresses. Essentially, there are two different initiatives under way. The first is the University Northside Partnership (UNP), which began in earnest about two years ago with the hiring of an internationally prominent faculty member in the Institute of Child Development and Psychiatry. Part of his interest in coming to the University was a commitment to help build a Family and Child Development Center so that he could continue the work he had begun at the University of Rochester. The decision was made to establish such a center on the near north side of Minneapolis in a community that is beset by high levels of poverty, limited employment options, educational and health issues for kids, and recently a very high level of home foreclosures. The near north side is part of a larger North Minneapolis community that includes two entire and a fraction of the 13 other Minneapolis Wards, as well as 16 neighborhoods. The discussions around the initial commitment to the Family and Child Development Center led to the idea of a fuller and more multi-dimensional partnership with the Northside; hence the establishment of the University Northside Partnership. At the moment, besides the potential development of the clinic, the University's other Northside initiatives are focused on economic development, early

childhood education, and a special edition of CURA's community-initiated research projects that involve a graduate research assistant, a faculty project adviser, and ancillary project support for the community organization. Several CURA staff people have been closely involved in the development of the University Northside Partnership.

The other University-based neighborhood project involves the five neighborhoods adjacent to the Minneapolis campus and was initiated by the Minnesota State Legislature during the 2005 session. The report and its plan were presented to the legislature in January 2007 and the full implications are yet to be realized. The primary message of the report, however, was that the University's presence in these five neighborhoods has consequences for them, and that the University needs to devote attention and resources to these consequences and to establish processes to involve the communities more directly in University decisions that affect them. Two CURA staff people were involved in the development of the study, one in her capacity as a planner and the other as a researcher analyzing and presenting data for the study and the final report.

The final development to be mentioned (but not elaborated on here) is different in concept and scope. It is the recent major commitment by the University to become one of the top three public universities in the world. This commitment has already generated considerable change throughout the University, with much more to come as nearly everything the University does is examined in the context of this new vision and resources are realigned to achieve the goal. One specific initiative that applies potentially to all parts of the University, including CURA, is a new emphasis on promoting interdisciplinary research and teaching. As an all-University unit, CURA has always looked for and supported projects from across the campuses, but most often within single departments or colleges. To be responsive to this new initiative, it will be important for us to examine more carefully the possibilities for projects that cut across disciplinary boundaries.

One of the most striking things about the list of recent University initiatives is that they describe pretty well what CURA has been doing for decades. CURA has certainly been "engaged" with Twin Cities and other Minnesota communities; CURA has been directly involved with most of the departments and units participating in the new University Metropolitan Consortium; CURA is actively involved in the unique Hennepin County-University Partnership experiment; CURA has focused on an "urban agenda" for decades; CURA has been directly involved in Minneapolis' Northside since CURA was established in the late 1960s (see the Spring 2007 issue of the *CURA Reporter*, included in Appendix K); and CURA has always emphasized inter- and cross-disciplinary approaches to urban issues.

In this new environment, we can't go far wrong if we continue to abide by the philosophy that CURA projects should (1) benefit our community partners,

- (2) serve the research and scholarly interests of participating faculty members,
- (3) provide new information and perspectives for a broader audience, and
- (4) enhance the educational experiences of participating students.

In addition, it is clear that CURA's fundamental operating principles also remain appropriate: We will continue to rely on University faculty and students rather than try to develop our own research staff. We feel that it is especially important to retain our experimental emphasis and preserve the willingness to try new ideas and approaches, discarding those that are not successful and "spinning-off" those that can survive elsewhere within the University or the larger community. CURA will continue to operate in a cooperative and collaborative mode with both University and community organizations. We will continue to develop a community-based orientation so that community organizations and agencies participate as full partners in CURA projects and programs. And we support a competitive model for selecting CURA-supported projects. Finally, we continue to recognize the value for CURA and for the University of having people on our staff who are widely knowledgeable about and trusted in the communities they serve, and the importance of faculty and students serving as good ambassadors for the University when they work with community groups.

Basically, CURA should continue with the philosophies and principles that have guided our work for 40 years. At the same time, however, it is important for CURA to recognize the importance of the new University environment and to participate as fully as possible in the challenges and opportunities it provides.

From the University's overall perspective, the most important element of this new environment is the commitment to become one of the nation's top three public universities. The primary reference group for thinking about this goal includes the University of California at Berkeley, UCLA, the University of Michigan, and the University of Wisconsin. A secondary group includes The Ohio State University, the University of Texas, and the University of Washington. All are public institutions, two (Wisconsin and Ohio State) are land-grant universities, and five (Berkeley, UCLA, Ohio State, Texas, and Washington) are located in major metropolitan areas. The University of Minnesota, of course, is a public, land grant, and urban-metropolitan university, which means that Ohio State is the most nearly comparable institution.

There are, of course, multiple strategies involved in moving toward this objective, but clearly, one of the strategies the University has embraced involves taking greater advantage of the University's urban circumstances and opportunities and developing them into one of the special assets that helps move us closer to our goal. As indicated above, the University has already taken several recent steps to move in this direction; we have established a Metropolitan Consortium, begun to prepare an "urban agenda," formalized an agreement for strengthening collaborations between the University and Hennepin County, established an Associate Vice President to enhance engagement with our communities, and initiated formal programs with neighborhood organizations in the communities

surrounding the University as well as the neighborhoods on Minneapolis' Northside.

At some point soon, it will be necessary to assign to a central University officer the responsibility for bringing together these various elements and developing a comprehensive and coherent plan for making the University's urban/metropolitan assets one of the signature elements in the University of Minnesota's progression to becoming a top three public institution. Various strategies and commitments will be required, and CURA will continue to play an important role. These strategies and commitments will almost certainly include the following:

1. Over time, the most important commitment will be to the strategic addition of faculty members and related staff for whom urban-related research and teaching are paramount. Hiring such people will send the strongest message that the University of Minnesota is serious about its urban agenda. Among other things, this will require the cooperation and support of the affected departments and colleges, and it will result in curricular innovations as well as the development of new graduate and professional programs.

Along these lines, for many years various academic leaders interested in strengthening higher education's role in urban and metropolitan America have proposed the establishment of an urban equivalent to the Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension models. The University of Minnesota has used such language in describing the proposed model for developing an active role on Minneapolis' Northside. Unfortunately, these discussions usually focus on the increased capacity the extension model would provide for community outreach and engagement, and do not dwell sufficiently on the academic research and teaching resources required to have something meaningful and useful to contribute to our urban communities. Discussions of the value of the extension model usually overlook the fact that rural extension representatives are backed by strong, well-supported faculty research and teaching resources. Similarly strong and well-supported urban faculty research and teaching resources will be required if this or any university is to make meaningful contributions to its urban communities.

2. An important early step should involve the systematic examination of what other leading institutions are doing to enhance their urban work and, more generally, what the University of Minnesota can do to raise its visibility among the various urban-related higher educational organizations. Some efforts along these lines are already under way. For example, the University of Minnesota has been active in the Urban Affairs Association for many years; indeed the current president of this organization is a faculty member in the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. In addition, various central University officers are becoming active in the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) urban-related committees, including a new associated organization called Urban Serving Universities.

3. Another early step should involve the development of some specific urban-associated graduate educational and training programs for those pursuing research degrees or professional degrees in education, design, public affairs, journalism, etc. And, of course, those specialized programs will need to be marketed aggressively to begin to attract top flight students from around the country.
4. There should also be a strong international component to the University's initiatives, because much of the rapid urbanization around the world is occurring outside the United States and a solid international/comparative dimension would give these initiatives greater relevance and credibility. It would certainly contribute to the University's interest in being on the forefront of a global perspective.
5. Another important element should be a more proactive and systematic effort to develop relationships with elected and appointed local government officials and management-level public staff members. Although this is already occurring at the University, these efforts could be more proactive, better coordinated, and involve University leadership more directly. We are currently participating in an experimental program along these lines—the Hennepin-University Partnership—and the lessons and best practices gleaned from that initiative should become more widespread as part of the University's urban commitment.

These are but a few of the key strategies and commitments that will be necessary if the University is to strengthen its urban mission as one of the key ingredients in moving us toward becoming a top three public research university.

Where Do We Go from Here?

As CURA looks ahead, it is not clear to what extent our role or roles may be modified as a result of the many newly developing University-wide urban-related initiatives. At minimum, CURA can continue with the kinds of programs and projects that have evolved during the past decade, with emphases on supporting faculty and community-based research, linking communities to University research resources, and inviting proposals for and developing innovative and experimental initiatives.

On the other hand, depending on the direction taken as the University's new urban agenda unfolds, the projects and programs of the newly created Metropolitan Consortium, the expansion of a direct University presence in the neighborhoods on the Northside and those adjacent to the University, increased University engagement, the future of the Hennepin-University Partnership, the efforts of the Consortium for Post-Secondary Success, and other new University initiatives, the emphases in CURA's programs as we work in collaboration with

these other initiatives could be somewhat different from what they have been recently.

From the University's perspective, there may need to be some organizational restructuring to bring these urban-related elements into closer alignment and to provide the institutional visibility and identity that will be required if this is to become a major defining emphasis of the University of Minnesota. Some other universities have promoted this kind of emphasis by establishing urban or urban and public policy schools, institutes, or colleges. Another possibility, as discussed earlier, is to establish an urban counterpart to the Cooperative Extension model. In this regard, the University is already proposing that its Northside initiative—with the physical presence of the University in the community, coupled with various associated activities and programs—would be analogous to the traditional Experiment Station (now called Research and Outreach Centers).

However, regardless of any organizational restructuring or the specific agendas of the various initiatives mentioned above, there are at least two new directions CURA should pursue in the near future, most likely in collaboration with others.

The first involves a serious effort at developing interdisciplinary research approaches and projects directed at urban and regional issues. With some exceptions, CURA's programs and projects represent multiple disciplines but are not often truly interdisciplinary. Interdisciplinary work is very hard to do, especially in university settings, but with recent successes in some of the scientific fields and with prodding from the national research funding agencies, the University—through the Graduate School and the Office of the Vice President for Research—has recently begun a new initiative to promote interdisciplinary work at the University. In recognition of this new emphasis, CURA—either on its own or with partners such as the Metropolitan Consortium or the Post-Secondary Success Consortium—should pursue and support on an experimental basis one or two initial interdisciplinary research projects that are focused on important issues for urban communities in the region.

The second direction involves strengthening our collective capacity to monitor and analyze where we are and where we're headed as core central cities, a metropolitan region, and a state within the context of rapidly changing regional, national, and international economic, social, and political systems. The sources of data and the tools by which to access and analyze these data have expanded and changed rapidly, just within the last decade. The number of organizations and projects analyzing and reporting on these data has grown at an even faster pace. Consequently, we are inundated with rankings, estimates, evaluations, and other measures telling us whether we are better off or worse off than someone else or measured against our own history. Being able to accurately and meaningfully document and track change in our social, economic, political/governmental, and environmental circumstances is increasingly important to decision makers and to the general public, as is the importance of sorting out, clarifying, and evaluating the plethora of reports currently being distributed. In many ways, the University

is the most appropriate agency to undertake this responsibility and CURA is a logical unit to provide leadership, in collaboration with the Metropolitan Consortium and other appropriate units, centers, and programs.

The discussion of current trends and appropriate futures could go on a great length, but instead we have chosen to end this report as we ended our last self-study report in 1994 with the following two paragraphs, which seem as appropriate today as they did then:

In many ways, CURA's work is more important now than it was when it began (in 1968). We talked then about an "urban crisis," a term not much used today. Yet the fundamental issues of poverty, tension among the races, poor education, crime, job creation, inadequate housing, economic development, chemical abuse, environmental degradation, inadequate health care, adequate human services, and family structures are as much with us as they were then. And we know now that these problems are not confined to the older parts of our large core cities, but can be found in all communities in one form or another.

We also know now that throwing dollars at urban-related problems, as we did in the 1960s and 1970s, does not make them go away, nor does ignoring them as we did in the 1980s. If we have learned anything in the past thirty years, it is irrefutable that better understanding and better knowledge can help us begin to make the kinds of fundamental changes necessary for lasting progress. This is where CURA comes in. This is what CURA helps make happen at the University of Minnesota.