The Changing face of CLA:
It's more than meets the eye

ON THE INSIDE

* What Are We Fighting For? Four CLA Scholars Get to the Root of War
* The Secret Lives of Scientists
To our readers: If you’ve been receiving CLA Today, you’ve probably noticed a makeover. Some of you have told us, frankly, that the look of our magazine was, well, so yesterday. We listened, consulted focus groups, brainstormed a new name, and selected an award-winning graphic designer.

The result is in your hands. We think the remake better reflects the breadth, values, aspirations, and impact of CLA.

So what’s in a name? We think reach says it all:

v.i. to stretch in order to touch or grasp something (as in reach out); to extend, engage, connect; to cross borders, break new ground

v.t. to attain or to succeed in achieving (as in reach goals);

to communicate with or make contact (as in reach an audience); to influence;
to embrace

n. scope, breadth, expanse, range, compass; bridge, connection; authority, influence

Our new magazine will continue, we hope, to reach beyond and across distances, cultures, and generations, as well as across disciplines. But even more important, we hope that it reaches you, our alumni and friends. Please do let us know what you think. We’ll listen.

EUGENIA SMITH, EDITOR • ANDI MCDANIEL, ASSOCIATE EDITOR • CLAREACH@UMN.EDU

ON THE COVER: Eddie Glenn (African American and African studies ’08) ponders the question “What’s so great about democracy?” Photo by Everett Ayoubzadeh. HERE: The Washington Avenue Bridge reaches across the Mississippi River toward the West Bank campus and the Minneapolis skyline. BOTTOM: Each year, students decorate the enclosure on the upper pedestrian deck with murals representing their various organizations and causes.
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FROM THE DEAN

A new CLA for a new Minnesota

Imagine a world in which Alzheimer’s and schizophrenia are distant memories, war is unthinkable, and legislators routinely shake hands across the aisle—and world leaders across oceans and national borders. Imagine that people around the globe have plenty of clean water to drink, nourishing food to eat, and decent and affordable housing.

Imagine that every child and every adult has access to high-quality health care and that every young person has a fair shot at a college education.

Imagine all of this, and more. This is the world we aspire to and are striving to create at the University of Minnesota.

**University transformation**

By any measure, the University is already a global leader in education and research that could put such a world within reach. But to be international leaders, we must prevail among formidable peers in a competitive higher education environment.

Through its ongoing transformation process, the University has set its sights high: to be counted among the world’s top universities. That means not only being the best, but also doing the best. It means delivering quality in everything we do.

CLA’s role is pivotal. The University can reach its goal only if every CLA academic program is among the best.

This isn’t just the dean speaking. The report of the University-wide task force on the College of Liberal Arts says, “We unequivocally affirm the central importance of the liberal arts and a liberal education to the University of Minnesota, the state, and the nation.” The report goes on to say, “For many Minnesotans, CLA is the face of the University.” And it urges that the University “take advantage of CLA’s unique disciplinary specialties and connections with the Twin Cities and global communities to foster powerful new avenues for research, teaching and communication.”

This is a powerful mandate, and a powerful vote of confidence in our college.

**Giant steps**

As we redefine and revitalize the University for this century, we are renewing our search for answers to the Big Questions that drive the human quest for learning. What kind of world do we want to live in? What kinds of discoveries and understanding will get us to where we want to go?

What do we know, what do we need to know, and what kinds of scientific and scholarly investigation need to be supported and sustained?

How, at the intersection of scientific and humanistic inquiry and cultural values, do we work together to solve problems and deliver the best possible outcomes? What kinds of technologies, investments, research paths, and public policies can move us forward?

How do we best share groundbreaking discoveries with our students and communities? How do we reach out to ensure that talented students from all walks of life can take advantage of what we have to offer?

These are huge questions, and they drive all that we do.

**Change grounded in core values**

In CLA, there’s no such thing as business as usual. Even our alumni magazine is striking out in new directions and sporting a new name—one that we believe captures what we’re about in this college.

We call Reach our “new” magazine. But like the college whose stories it delivers to you, it will continue to focus, as CLA Today always has, on groundbreaking discoveries by our spectacular faculty and on the lives and contributions of our remarkable students, alumni, donors, and friends. It has a new look, but it is still dedicated to maintaining the highest editorial standards and to strengthening our valuable relationships with our alumni and friends.

This year, you’ll see many new faces in CLA—extraordinary new faculty whose provenance includes the world’s great universities, and talented new students from all walks of life, from all 50 states, and from cultures and nations throughout the world.

You’ll see new programs taking shape—including the writing initiative that is featured in this issue. You’ll see new classrooms, new technologies, new collaborations, and new avenues of research.

This fall, we enrolled the best academically prepared and most diverse freshman class ever in our history, bringing access and opportunity off the pages of planning documents and into the lives of our students. Those students will explore the riches of a global and interdisciplinary curriculum that addresses the critical issues of our time in new and exciting ways and prepares them for a century whose directions and challenges we can only imagine.

And yet, however much we change, we remain committed to the core values that have positioned CLA at the heart of the University—dedication to sustaining the utmost excellence and integrity in research and teaching, and to sustaining deep respect for and engagement with students and communities across cultural, geographic, and disciplinary boundaries.

It’s a new CLA, but it still belongs to you—our alumni and friends. As our future unfolds and we travel in new directions, I invite you to join us.

—Steven J. Rosenstone, Dean and McKnight Presidential Leadership Chair
Recipe for a **Global** Education

In our “globalized” world, it’s no longer a novelty to know a second language—or to be up to speed on international events. It’s practically a necessity. Here in CLA, we believe global perspectives are fundamental to a liberal arts education. That’s why we’re so thrilled when students like Amelia Shindelar (’06), a double major in global studies and anthropology and president of the United Nations Student Association, snap up every opportunity to become more globally aware and engaged.

CLA’s cupboards are lavishly stocked with gourmet ingredients for a global education. As for how to put it all together, we asked Amelia for her advice. She graciously shared her recipe.

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**RECIPE FOR A GLOBAL EDUCATION**

1 insatiable appetite
2 years living in Europe
5 semesters of Arabic
2 semesters of Italian
2.5 years as a member of the United Nations Student Association
1 month in Tunisia
1 semester interning at Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights
19 family members who love to travel
2 passports (one expired)
426 books (an educated guess)
1 major in anthropology
1 major in global studies
1.5 hrs. per day of Minnesota Public Radio
A generous sampling of foreign films
1 semester interning in the U’s Human Rights Program
At least 10 courses with an international perspective
3 years as alumni coordinator for the Minneapolis chapter of AFS intercultural exchange programs
Plenty of patience and compassion
One large sense of humor
Passion, to taste

Toss all ingredients in one very large mixing bowl and agitate daily.

Chef’s note: All of these things, and many that I cannot remember, have shaped me into the person I am, and a person I am proud to be. I am not suggesting that you go out and do the same things I’ve done; this is just what has worked for me. If you are more interested in China than the Middle East, go there instead. But whatever you do, don’t leave out extensive language training. Languages not only give you the ability to communicate with people, they give you a different way to look at the world. ☯

**AMELIA SHINDELAR WILL JOIN THE PEACE CORPS IN FEBRUARY 2007.**
Internationally recognized photographer Wing Young Huie ('79, journalism) doesn’t consider himself an activist. But that hasn’t prevented his work from having a profound social impact—hence his receipt of the 2006 Hubert Humphrey Public Leadership Award, an honor shared by such notable public figures as Madeleine Albright and Walter Mondale.

Huie’s work offers an authentic, artful look into the cultural complexities facing diverse populations in the United States. For his most recent project, *9 Months in America: An Ethnocentric Tour*, Huie and his wife traveled through 39 states photographing Asian-American culture and other “hyphenated” cultures to reveal the sometimes surprising ways they’ve woven their lives and identities into the American fabric. The images include a meditating Falun Gong protestor, an Asian-American beauty queen, and the founders of the Asian Worldwide Elvis Fan Club.

Although his work has brought into view many issues facing diverse U.S. populations, Huie insists that at first, “My allegiance was to photography rather than to any social issue. My goal was to translate what I saw into the language of this miraculous, two-dimensional piece of paper.”

Years later, he says, “after having photographed thousands of differing points of view, representing citizens of Lake Street, and other rural, suburban and urban communities of my home state Minnesota, as well 39 other American states, I have come to understand that there is a larger purpose to what I do.”

THE GLAMOUR OF GLOBAL SERVICE

Until recently, Rebecca Mitchell had received minimal media attention—despite her receipt of the prestigious 2006 Harry S. Truman Scholarship (certainly no small potatoes). But Mitchell’s most recent brush with fame has her worn out—from the multiple interviews and photo shoots that came with it.

The media arrived when Glamour magazine named Mitchell one of its top 10 college women in the nation for 2006. The honor recognizes campus and community involvement, excellence in the students’ field of study, leadership experience, and unique, inspiring goals.

An honors student in biology, society, and the environment, Mitchell plans to pursue a combined doctorate and master’s degree in public health. She’s been on the parliamentary debate team for the last three years, worked as a research assistant at the U’s Stem Cell Institute in embryonic stem cell research, and worked with the Medical School’s Positive Youth Development Program.

Perhaps the most pivotal experience for Mitchell came during the summer of 2005, when she traveled to Kenya to do volunteer work, with dual placements at an orphanage and a local hospital. At the hospital, she worked at an STI (sexually transmitted infection) clinic, where many women who had been monogamous discovered they had contracted HIV from their husbands.

Moved by the women’s plight, Mitchell set her sights on a career in public health with a focus on women’s reproductive health. And, partly out of her dissatisfaction with the volunteer agency that arranged her placements in Kenya, she decided to make things easier for future volunteers. So she founded the Student Project Africa Network (SPAN), a nonprofit organization that she runs with four other students serving on a volunteer executive board.

Of course then there’s the Glamour-ous life, three jam-packed September days in New York City, where Mitchell and her co-honorees spent time with top female professionals and were “wined and dined.” The experience “celebrated the multifaceted woman,” Mitchell says. “It was great.”

The three-day whirlwind also gave Mitchell newfound respect for Glamour magazine. “It’s a woman’s struggle to not be put in a box,” she says, adding that the magazine is dedicated to empowering women and recognizing their achievements.

ADAPTED FROM A STORY BY RICK MOORE, UNIVERSITY RELATIONS.
Ronald Greene
Communication Studies
Ronald Greene believes that issues of civic responsibility should be viewed through a wide-angle lens.

“It’s important to puncture the myth that if we just make better citizens, the world will be a better place. That assumes the responsibility for civic improvement rests solely with the individual.” Green believes the institutions and structures of democracy are just as important.

It’s important to create arenas where citizens feel comfortable in debate, he explains. “It’s hard work getting together to solve civic problems. People are nervous communicating their political leanings in a public forum. Their feelings might be hurt; they may be proven wrong about an idea; they may be inclined to sublimate their expression by being ‘Minnesota nice.’” But, says Greene, “Democracy works from the local level up.”

Wendy Rahn
Political Science
Wendy Rahn argues that globalization itself is causing a decline in civic-mindedness around the world.

“The modern nation-state has less importance in the lives of individual citizens in a ‘globalized’ world,” she says. And that causes problems—not just for commitments to conventional democratic virtues, such as being informed or voting in national elections, but also in terms of participation in “global citizenship.”

In a recent study, Rahn examined groups of 14-year olds in 28 nations around the world. She discovered that the more “globalized” the subjects were, the less likely they were to be civically involved in their own nations. Yet, she found no evidence of greater involvement in newer, more globally oriented forms of civic-mindedness, such as concern for the environment.

Thomas Augst
English
Thomas Augst says the United States is simply still working out the kinks in its civic structure. Our democracy is a work-in-progress, he says, and current issues of civic engagement should be viewed in the context of their origins.

For instance, he explains, “The classical statesman-citizen figures of the founding era were working within much more limited parameters than we are today.” Not only was the young country a fraction of its current size, but at the time, full citizenship was exclusive to white men of a certain economic status. Presumably, political dialogue isn’t as difficult when citizens are so alike.

“One of the great challenges of civic engagement is finding a way to extend the classical ideals of democracy to a large and diverse populace,” says Augst. And that, he adds, is one of the roles of higher education.

What are your thoughts about what it means to be a U.S. citizen today? How does higher education factor into your experience of citizenship? Share your opinions with Reach at clareach@umn.edu, and we’ll post them to our forum on the CLA website (www.cla.umn.edu).
Wondering what tomorrow’s leaders have to say about the big, perplexing issues facing our nation and the world? On the Spot features impromptu reflections on these issues. In September, with elections just two months away, we asked students, “What’s so great about democracy?” and “What’s not so great?” interviews by Steve Mullaney ’08

“For a good democracy to function, there must be a proper representation of the population’s voice. Having a voice basically includes voting, knowing what you’re voting for, and getting that vote counted. If there is an impediment to any of those steps, the control starts to tip into the hands of the few and it is no longer a democracy.”

ANYA DIKAREVA (PSYCHOLOGY AND ART ’09)

“To most people, the meaning of democracy is the ability to have meaningful and substantive control over their lives in the public arena, but when the modes of production and distribution are in the hands of private corporations, citizens really have limited or no impact.”

JAMES BOURQUE (POLITICAL SCIENCE ’08)

“The problem with democracy is that political candidates get so caught up in winning they don’t care about what’s best for the country.”

JONI COLEMAN (CHILD PSYCHOLOGY ’08)

“Having a government elected by the people means the responsibility is on the people. So, when we try to place blame on a certain political entity, we have to grasp the truth that the problem is—or should be—the mistake of the people.”

CHRISTOPHER V. STEGEMAN (ANTHROPOLOGY ’08)

“The problem is not that people don’t believe in democracy, rather that they don’t believe in themselves. In other words, living in a democratic society does grant us some power to make a difference, but it doesn’t matter until people learn to look within themselves for the power and reasons to take action.”

EDDIE GLENN (AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES ’08)
Putting Access on the MAP

By Andi McDaniel

How the new McGuire Academic Program is responding to the needs of a changing Minnesota

Deep in the bowels of Johnston Hall, you’ll find a light on at 8:30 a.m. sharp. That’s when freshmen in the new McGuire Academic Program (MAP) begin to stream in to room B-29 each morning to share breakfast toast, lounge on worn blue thrift-store couches, and check in with each other and their peer mentors about how their first year at the U is going.

MAP just launched this fall, but already, MAP students have made themselves at home in this underground enclave, using the space and the resources it provides to tackle their first year head on. The 134 students in the program are enrolled in all seven freshman-admitting colleges across the campus, but CLA is “advising central.”

The high level of involvement pleases program coordinator Manisha Nordine. MAP’s goal, she explains, is to help high-achieving students from low-income backgrounds—many of whom are first-generation college students—reach their full potential at the U. That means orienting them to aspects of college life that other students take for granted, from day one to graduation.

“What that translates to is connecting them to resources, providing them with advisers, and providing opportunities for meaningful relationships with their peers, in the form of peer mentors,” she says.

Brianna Deal, one of MAP’s seven peer mentors, says her own freshman year was a “whirlwind,” and she sees great benefit to orienting students early on. “It’s just so valuable to have somebody reach out to you and say, ‘Here’s what we have to offer, here’s how I can help you. I want to get to know you better and help you deal.’”

The “McGuire Edge” gives students a jump start. Over six days, students get to know their peer mentors, each other, and the campus. One of the more popular activities this fall was “The Amazing Race, Edge-style,” a campus-wide scavenger hunt that helps teams of students learn their way around.

Carrying the Baton

By providing support to students from low-income backgrounds throughout their college careers, MAP functions as a sort of next step for programs such as LearningWorks and Admission Possible, which serve middle- and high-school students. In fact, to qualify for MAP, students must be alumni of one of those programs, or be “McGuire scholars,” students who have been selected for scholarships funded by the McGuire Foundation.

MAP is one of several new University/K-12 outreach initiatives that CLA is leading—all reflecting the college’s staunch commitment to access. The purpose of increasing access is not just to level the higher
Access to Success

While CLA strives to make academic success a reality for a broader swath of young people, the questions remain: What exactly is “success” in the first place? Is it even measurable? CLA faculty from a variety of disciplines are studying the ways our society tests success, particularly in education—and drawing fascinating conclusions about how well our measures measure up.

As the age of “No Child Left Behind” makes standardized tests ever more central to the public education experience, it’s crucial that we keep tabs on how well the tests are doing the job. Political science professor Scott Abernathy has taken on this challenge in his new book *No Child Left Behind and the Public Schools*, in which he explores the challenges and pitfalls of measuring education from the top down—and looks at what it would take for the No Child legislation to live up to its promises and ensure that our kids are getting a “good” education.

Meanwhile, Nathan Kuncel (psychology) is trying to find out whether success is in your future. Kuncel’s research focuses on the various predictors of academic and workplace success. By studying how well certain tests—such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and the Miller Analogies Test (MAT)—predict student achievement both in school and beyond, Kuncel has been able to debunk that old myth about how “school smarts” don’t apply in the real world. As it turns out, the skills required for success in school aren’t so different from the skills that matter in everyday life.

Paul Sackett, the Beverly and Richard Fink Distinguished Professor of Psychology and recipient of the American Psychology Association’s Distinguished Scientific Contributions Award, is known internationally for his research on “employee selection systems”—one of those crucial hurdles that could stand between you and the job of your dreams. Sackett’s work has helped assure that ability testing—whether in an educational or a work environment—improves selection for high performance as well as for ethnic, racial, and gender diversity.

Of course, if MAP didn’t inspire students, all this talk about access would be just that—talk. But already, there are clear signs that the program’s goals resonate powerfully with student needs. Asked how he knows their efforts are paying off, peer mentor Mike Clark says he just sees it in their faces. “They don’t have to come in here, but they do,” Clark says, referring to MAP headquarters. “They could easily be going out to a coffee shop or restaurant with their friends, but no—they come in here. Because they want to be with this community.” Nordine grins, “We have students waiting in the morning to come in, and the place is still buzzing at the end of the day.”

As the University forges ahead to implement the recommendations of the various task forces that have been charged with strengthening the U, it’s worth noting that the McGuire Academic Program advances several of those recommendations—namely, those related to outreach, access, and diversity. “The health of the McGuire Program,” says Manisha, “reflects the health of the rest of the University.” Judging from the crowded couches in MAP’s Johnston headquarters, the University is in good health indeed.

education playing field for Minnesota’s young people but also to better reflect and serve Minnesota’s rapidly changing population.

“We’re constantly embracing new immigrant populations,” says Nordine. “Students represent these new communities and multicultural identities as well as traditional communities.” Such diversity “prepares all students to be citizens not only of Minnesota and the U.S.—but also of the world,” says Deal.

The ripples will spread as students take their education with them into communities and workplaces throughout Minnesota and beyond—bringing about lasting social change. “The revolution is going to occur,” says Nordine, “as these students enter the workforce. It’s in their respective jobs—in their relationships with majority populations in their jobs—that the change is going to happen. That’s when race and class bias are going to lose their grip—because diversity will be part of people’s everyday experiences.”

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Put it in Writing

A CONVERSATION WITH TWO OF THE MASTERMINDS OF THE UNDERGRADUATE WRITING INITIATIVE, WITH A DEPARTMENT COMING SOON TO CLA

"If you can't get your point across, then there's no point in having a point," says Anton Nikolov, a student in political science and history. We think he's on to something.

Hear that clicking sound? It's people at keyboards trying to get their points across—in reports and memos, newsletters, patients' charts, legal briefs, e-mails; to their bosses and colleagues, customers and constituencies. In a world of visual communication, "strong writing skills" remain near the top of every list of job qualifications.

So how is the University of Minnesota addressing the need for proficient writers in a wide variety of fields? With an innovative writing initiative, to be housed beginning fall 2007 in a new CLA department. The department will bring together faculty and resources from across the U—from the Center for Writing, the Department of Rhetoric, the Department of English, and the former General College.

The initiative is expected to make the U a national leader in the study and teaching of writing. Its more immediate purpose is to provide top-of-the-line writing instruction to all students, in every major, across the entire University.

As for what the writing initiative will look like on the ground, we've asked a few key players to give us the scoop. Here's what Kirsten Jamsen, director of the Center for Writing, and Laura Gurak, who will chair the new department in its first year, had to say.

REACH: So, what's the significance of the new writing initiative?

KJ: It's the affirmation—the assertion—that writing is essential to undergraduate education at the University of Minnesota. Writing is not something you "master" in one class and then move on. It's fundamental to the learning you do, no matter what discipline you study, and no matter what level. That's what makes this so exciting.

LG: It will bring all of the talents, research, skills, and outstanding teaching from around the U under one umbrella—into the same boat, in a way. We won't have one program for St. Paul students, one for CLA, one here, one there. We're bringing it all together. Writing instruction and practice will be an integral and ongoing part of every undergraduate student's education.

REACH: So, how do you develop a writing curriculum that can be used in such a broad range of disciplines?

KJ: The fundamental principles and the teaching methodologies cut across disciplinary lines. And we'll have lots of training for faculty, the content people. The big questions to ask about our students when they graduate are: Are they fluent as writers? Do they know how to brainstorm, to draft, to revise, to edit, and to polish? The other question involves the interpreting of rhetorical situations—so a nursing student, for instance, can say, "I'm writing something to be read by patients, so it's going to be a lot different than what I write for doctors or wrote for my ethics class." I teach students how to "read" the environment and the audience, and adapt their communications to the rhetorical situation and to different media as well. These strategies for fluency can be used by students in all disciplines.

REACH: So basically, you're teaching them to be versatile writers.

KJ: Yes, we're teaching not just "good writing," but how to communicate in writing with real readers. Of course I want my students to walk out of here and write grammatically correct sentences and well-organized paragraphs. I also want them to be able to synthesize what they think and know into writing that really communicates. I want them to feel in control of their ability to communicate in just about any situation.

"I did more writing in course X, which doesn't have a 'writing designator,' than I did in course Y, which did." We decided there should be a way to look across the curriculum and say, "How can writing be woven throughout?"
METULA, Israel—Sometimes war erupts in the most gorgeous places, boggling the mind with its juxtaposition of beauty and death.

This resort town of white stone houses with terra-cotta roofs, set on winding roads along a ridge that overlooks the villages of south Lebanon, is one such place.

“I have a panoramic ‘Katyusha view,’” Allen Dallas says. Dallas, 39, a South African Jew, immigrated here in March to escape the high crime rate of his old homeland.

“Metula, you fall in love with it as soon as you see it,” he says, waiting tables at the Alaska Inn. “When the snow melts, everything is blossoming and green. It’s a very tranquil place—well, it was a tranquil place.”

The tourists are gone, as are two-thirds of the 1,500 residents, driven away by Hezbollah’s Katyusha rockets. Journalists from around the world, covering the war, fill half the Alaska’s 70 rooms; its owner, Reuven Weinberg, is the son of Holocaust survivors who came to Israel in 1948 and bought the hotel in 1964.

In 1970, when Weinberg was 17, he was wounded in an attack by Palestinian guerrillas. “From (Yasser) Arafat’s group in Lebanon,” he clarifies. “Then, he made the trouble. And now this guy (Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah) makes the trouble. And when he will die, another guy will make the trouble.”

Weinberg, 53, sounds utterly cheerful explaining the dismal prospects of the life-and-death struggle outside his hotel.

That is part of the contradiction found so frequently in this region: Many northern Israelis recount good friendships with Lebanese as readily as they do the border skirmishes, rocket attacks and occasional wars, all dating back decades.

All night long until dawn Tuesday, Hezbollah mortars and Israeli artillery dueled, shaking the Alaska Inn’s windows and walls. Air sirens wailed and a loudspeaker ordered everyone into bomb shelters.

The Israelis are still launching airstrikes, too—to support their ground forces, they explain, despite a declared 48-hour stand-down after a misdirected strike killed about 56 Lebanese—and jet fighters regularly shriek overhead.

As night fell, young Israeli soldiers prepared to assault Hezbollah guerrillas—checking weapons and packs, painting each other’s faces black and gray under dim street lights. Some joked and smoked cigarettes; others made last-minute phone calls to loved ones. Many expressed grim determination over what was to come.

A commander walked among the troops, reminding them of their missions, of how to avoid friendly fire and take care of wounded comrades.

The night seemed so still—until the soldiers move across the border into Lebanon, and the tanks, artillery, mortars and rockets erupt again. ☹

Excerpted with the kind permission of the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review. For the full article—and more of Betsy Hiel’s dispatches from the Middle East—go to http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/middleeast/reports/s_464378.html.
Following what has been called “the bloodiest century,” the 21st century’s opening years have been no less bloody and battle-scarred—by U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, by the Second Congo War, the Darfur conflict, the Ivory Coast civil war, the “war on terror”; the list goes on. It often seems that, as a species, humans have learned precious little about war—about whether and how wars can be prevented or how, once under way, they can be stopped. That’s not for lack of effort. In fact, some of the most important new scholarship on 21st century warfare is taking place close to home, in the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota. 

Reach interviewed four top young university scholars, each of whom seeks to understand and to educate us about war in the new millennium. One is studying why modern civil conflicts last so long—in a word, are “neverending.” Another is studying the effects on American democracy of a prolonged “war on terror” and the erosion of civil liberties. A third has put her safety on the line to probe deep into the clan culture of an area of the world—Central Asia—that may rapidly become a new seat of radical Islam. The fourth is working, both through interviews and with boots on the ground, to understand the broader military and security implications of the Iraq War. Each of these scholars—sociologist Ann Hironaka and political scientists Ron Krebs, Kathleen Collins, and Colin Kahl—has a fresh and vital take on modern conflict.
Ann Hironaka
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, SOCIOLOGY
Neverending Wars

As a student in the mid-1980s, Ann Hironaka was like a lot of her peers. A nuclear showdown between superpowers still seemed possible, and there were ongoing conflicts in Angola, El Salvador, Lebanon … seemingly too many places to count. Hironaka and her fellow activists took aim at these wars, trying to stop them. But, says Hironaka, “The solutions that people were proposing were not very convincing to me. My dissatisfaction with the activism was that the answers were just too simple.”

Hironaka thus turned from activism to academia, earning her Ph.D. at Stanford in 1998. Today, she is studying modern civil wars as an associate professor of sociology at the University.

Before 1945, Hironaka notes, civil conflicts were contained, decisive events lasting just a few years. Not anymore. Today, they are enduring struggles—roughly three times longer than earlier conflicts—fueled by animosities that often reignite even before the ink dries on the peace treaties.

But why? That little-considered question is Hironaka’s focus. In her book *Neverending Wars* (2005), she posits several explanations. One, ironically, is the liberation of colonies that marked the end of the colonial era after World War II. As the great powers abandoned their colonies to self-rule, they left behind power vacuums—newly sovereign states with recognized national borders but little in the way of functioning institutions or centralized authority.

Whereas European and American bureaucracies had evolved over decades and centuries, new Third World nations were forced to adopt new systems of governance almost overnight. The result was a bevy of extremely fragile, disorganized states with unstable power structures.

“In a sense,” Hironaka writes, “the international system has locked the problems of states into specific territorial arrangements, and perversely created conditions that encourage lengthy civil wars in recently independent states.”

Another problem, a legacy of the Cold War, is outside intervention. “Civil wars tend to be lengthened when there is intervention, especially when there is intervention on both sides,” Hironaka says.

During the Cold War, the United States and Soviet Union routinely intervened in regional civil wars in weak states, providing money, arms, and military bases, and also training soldiers and sending in troops. Today, interventions by strong states are practically the norm. And so, increasingly, are interventions by non-state players, such as organizations like Hezbollah in Lebanon, and al-Qaeda in Iraq.

Intervention is little studied, except in legalistic terms, says Hironaka. Debates focus on whether a U.S. intervention is constitutional, for example. But that’s not the issue, she says. “To me, what really matters is the huge amount of resources that the United States is putting into the various conflicts around the world—and other countries, too, not just the United States. These conflicts wouldn’t be able to last as long without external resources.”

Hironaka’s work to date has been about understanding root causes. Down the road, she hopes to move into more solution-based work aimed at U.S. policymakers. “If we knew why states fight these wars, and continue to fight them, we could talk about what is reasonable,” she says. But the issues are far from black and white, she cautions.

Indeed, protracted civil wars may not be the worst of the world’s evils. Civil wars often begin as insurgencies against oppressive regimes. Interventions to end them could squash pro-democracy and human rights movements and fortify dictatorships. “Do we want that?” Hironaka asks. “If we’re not willing to ask such questions, then we really can’t have this discussion.”
A Question of Rhetoric

As endless wars go, the “war on terror” would appear to be Exhibit A. As the war in Iraq continues unabated, how do we talk about it and react? And how does democracy fare as war rhetoric heats up and restrictions on civil liberties are imposed in the name of national security? These are questions that Ron Krebs is exploring in his study of 21st century war.

Krebs, an assistant professor of political science who recently received the prestigious McKnight Land Grant Professorship, has always been interested in how democratic institutions evolve and function, especially under duress. His current research is a natural successor to his earlier work on the role of military service in advancing full citizenship rights for minorities.

The common thread is how movements and events are framed rhetorically. “In my recent book [Fighting for Rights: Military Service and the Politics of Citizenship], I argue that one of the ways military service shapes citizenship is by making available to minority groups a certain kind of rhetoric—‘We’ve sacrificed for our nation and consequently we deserve appropriate rewards,’” says Krebs. “That got me thinking about political rhetoric during wartime.”

For his current project, Krebs’ working hypothesis is that the ultimate effects of war turn less on objective realities than on the way events are rhetorically framed. “The framing of war is inherently a political maneuver, and I want to understand more about the dynamics under which that occurs,” he says.

Another, more surprising, hypothesis is that in contrast to unconventional or limited warfare, total war is generally less disruptive to liberal democracies. That’s because total war is readily understood to be a deviation from the norm, an unpleasant but limited interruption of business as usual. When such wars occur, “damage to civil liberties rarely persists long beyond the war itself,” says Krebs.

Limited interstate wars as well as counterterrorist campaigns, especially those that drag on with no apparent end in sight, tend to “redefine expectations,” Krebs thinks, making it more difficult, at war’s end, to restore the prewar democratic status quo. Citizens become accustomed to rewritten rules, and restrictive measures that initially emerged out of crisis (say, 9/11) become accepted as routine.

The immediate trade-offs between security and civil liberties in the “war on terror” are worrisome, says Krebs, but the long-term impact is of even greater concern. Without an identifiable front or battlefield, and with fewer major high-profile battles than daily skirmishes, wartime comes to seem almost indistinguishable from peacetime. Meanwhile, crisis rhetoric keeps the war on the front page and the public skittish, and civil liberties are gradually eroded in the name of national security.

Over the long haul, Krebs asks, “Do people renormalize to new civil liberties base lines? Do they accept wartime measures as ‘the new normal’? Or is there a backlash against wartime over-stepping, with greater long-run protection for democratic contestation?” The answer, he suggests, is that it depends—on such factors as the kind of war fought (total, limited, unconventional, or imperial), on the type of democratic regime (presidential or parliamentary), and on the nature of the wartime restrictions (formal or informal, transparent or hidden).

The answers have enormous implications for the health of democracy in times of stress, says Krebs. “What is of greatest concern to me is the silencing of opposition. The language of crisis makes it difficult to have a sustained national conversation.”

For democracy to survive, Krebs cautions, we must maintain “an appropriate balance between security and liberty in an anxious age.”

TIM BRADY ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS STORY.
Closeup on Intervention

Like most scholars, Colin Kahl is something of a bookworm, often content to be buried in academic journals, history books, and the latest edition of *The State of the World*. But when it comes to researching current affairs, Kahl believes there’s no substitute for gathering subject matter firsthand. That’s why he went to Iraq last June.

As part of his more general interest in “failed states,” Kahl has followed the Iraq war with a scholar’s trademark rigor. While he has previously focused on stresses and disruptions that weaken states from the inside—environmental destruction, demographic pressures, and resource scarcity, for instance—in this case he’s interested in disturbances from outside, such as intervention by “strong states” such as the United States.

“You can think of the first project as kind of examining the causes of state failure,” says Kahl, an assistant professor of political science. “I then became interested in interventions into failed states, and that led me to U.S. conduct in interventions.”

From January 2005 to August 2006, Kahl was a Council on Foreign Relations Fellow placed at the Department of Defense to gain on-the-ground experience related to his research. He spent time at three military pre-deployment training centers, observing U.S. units as they prepared for service in Iraq and Afghanistan. He also attended classes and conducted interviews at the Army’s Judge Advocate General’s School in Charlottesville, Va., and pored over extensive unclassified Pentagon documents and after-action reports from returning combat units.

In July, Kahl headed to Iraq for four days, to conduct interviews in Baghdad’s fortified Green Zone and at Camp Victory, the U.S. military headquarters at the former Baghdad airport. It was an intense and unnerving experience, he recalls. “We got shelled every day I was there.”

One result of Kahl’s experience is a 20-page article recently published in *Foreign Affairs* magazine. In it, he argues that despite well-publicized military abuses like the alleged massacre of civilians in Haditha, the American military has done a better job of avoiding civilian casualties than many critics assert.

Kahl knows he is courting controversy. “People on the left are going to see my article as too apologetic for the military, and people on the right are going to think that it’s too critical,” he says. Indeed, the American record in Iraq is not unblemished, Kahl acknowledges, but he contends that most units have behaved within the confines of the laws of war, at least in their treatment of civilians.

“Relative to U.S. conduct in other wars in the 20th century and the conduct of wars historically by all powers, the United States has done a fairly exemplary job in living up to its commitments under international law not to target civilians,” he says.

Kahl is now reporting on another aspect of the Americans’ Geneva Convention compliance—how well the United States is meeting its obligation to provide for basic security and public services in Iraq. So far, it looks as though the verdict might be less positive.

“In many ways, the United States has not lived up to its obligation to provide for a secure and stable Iraq. The current strategy is not working,” Kahl argues, noting in particular the absence of sufficient resources (including reconstruction dollars).

“To succeed, the U.S. has to fundamentally alter its strategy. That includes opening negotiations with all relevant parties, with the aim of setting firm conditions for continued U.S. presence; and supporting steps toward national reconciliation.”

This is quintessential Kahl—a kind of up-front, unsparing appraisal that Kahl contends is impossible if academics are unwilling to examine military culture close up.

“I doubt that people who don’t have those first-hand experiences can really understand,” he says. “I think the academy is not well served by people estranged from the military because they feel so uncomfortable with it. If you critique it from a distance, you’re missing a lot of the story.”
No one knows better than Kathleen Collins that research isn’t all about poring over books, Web sites, and microfiche. Sometimes it means traversing dangerous terrain and putting everything on the line.

Collins, assistant professor of political science, is an expert on Central Asian clan politics. She gained her expertise gathering data from the field—at some personal risk.

In regions where Islamic culture is especially conservative, Collins several times found herself grabbed by disapproving men in public bazaars when she was walking alone—despite adopting conservative dress and often a headscarf. Even in more secular areas, foreigners are a target of ordinary crime, she says. In northern Kyrgyzstan, she was mugged. “They knocked me down to steal my purse, coat, gloves, and passport belt,” she says. “I was black and blue for a month.”

Such is the lot of the Western female researcher in the Islamic former Soviet states of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan, as well as Azerbaijan, in the Caucasus. “It’s extraordinarily hard research to do,” Collins says. “Mostly, people are very kind to me. But just practical things—traveling alone, taking a bus or a cab, the way you dress—all of those things become real security issues.”

Collins persists because the region is so poorly understood. “There has been little empirical research on the question of Islam and Islamic mobilization,” she says. “Think tanks and journalists often make unfounded arguments which are taken seriously by policy makers.”

While doing research for her recent book, Clan Politics and the Transformation of Regimes in Central Asia, Collins began noticing a post-Soviet, Islamic resurgence in the region. Her current project examines that trend, which she says stems partly from disillusionment about the United States’ failure to support nascent pro-democracy movements in the area. Last year, for instance, Azerbaijan held an election that most observers believe was fixed. Yet despite pledges of support by the American ambassador, the U.S. State Department did not publicly criticize the electoral fraud or back opposition protests.

For most of the last decade, Central Asians did not generally consider Islam and democracy antithetical, Collins says. “In the early 1990s, the idea of democratization was much stronger than any sort of religious resurgence,” she explains. But as U.S. democratization efforts failed, people’s high hopes for democracy and a better life were dashed. “In part, I am finding that the increasing attraction—especially among youth—to Islamist ideas is driven by this disillusionment with democracy and the West,” says Collins.

By focusing so intensely on the Middle East, the United States has neglected Muslim Central Asia, Collins believes—and does so at its own peril. “Think about where these trends might take us over the long term. What is this region going to look like?” she says. “Where are these corrupt, authoritarian governments going? What will happen when these weak states fall apart?”

“Hopefully, we won’t see a dramatic rise in anti-American Islamism, as in Pakistan, or state collapse, civil war, and the creation of another Afghanistan or Somalia in this region. But that is not out of the range of possibility.”
Paul Brainerd (pictured with his wife, Debbi) founded The Brainerd Foundation to protect the natural environment of the Northwest, where he spent his childhood.
Giving Back to the Land

by Laine Bergeson

With a master's degree from CLA's School of Journalism and Mass Communication and a B.A. in business from the University of Oregon, Paul Brainerd ('75) began his career in hopes of making a contribution to the world of publishing. As it turned out, he did much more than that. Thanks to Brainerd's entrepreneurial spirit, visionary thinking, and (let's not forget) world-class liberal arts education, he would do no less than revolutionize the publishing world, from Kabetogama to Kansas City to the Kremlin.

Take Brainerd's impact on Russian history, for example. “I have a poster hanging in my office of Boris Yeltsin during the August 1991 coup attempt,” says Brainerd, proudly. “In his hands, he's holding a declaration in defiance of the coup. That document was made using the software we created.”

Brainerd is humbly describing PageMaker, the groundbreaking software program he designed that brought basic publishing capabilities to the masses. With its unveiling in 1985, PageMaker became the prime mover of desktop publishing—a phenomenon that turned the publishing world from an oligarchy, reserved for the few who could afford expensive publishing technology, to a democracy, where anyone with a few hundred bucks and a personal computer could transform an amateur idea into a world-class publication.

It is fitting, then, that as Russia began to develop its own democracy and conservative communist hardliners engineered the shutdown of all the national presses, pro-reform nationals like Yeltsin fought back by using PageMaker to design and disseminate their party’s declaration of defiance. Brainerd’s entrepreneurship helped change the course of Russian history.

Brainerd’s remarkable story makes aspiring inventors wonder: What is it that catapults one person’s idea to a realm beyond the ken of others? What transforms a vision from groundbreaking to truly revolutionary? Passion, for one, says Brainerd. “Passion is paramount to success,” he muses. “It is critical to have a heartfelt connection with your work. If you don’t have that, there is no reason to be doing it.”

Another driving force is the willingness to take calculated risks. “I’ve taken risks throughout my career,” says the 59-year old Seattle resident, who dropped all his other pursuits to start Aldus Corporation and unveil PageMaker. “Risk taking can be very exciting. You get to explore new things.” But not just any risk will do; Brainerd stresses that each of his projects has pivoted not just on gut feeling, but also on thorough analysis and research—for which his liberal arts education richly prepared him, he says.

“Education taught me how to do research and present it,” says Brainerd. “It was a building block. It provided me with the confidence and knowledge to do what I did as an entrepreneur.”

Brainerd defines success as “making a difference in other people’s lives.” In the first part of his career, he achieved this by making communication tools accessible to organizations with limited resources, such as churches and non-profits (and, of course, the democracy advocates in the former Soviet Union). By 1994, though, Brainerd was ready to strive for success in other areas, and he sold Aldus to Adobe. The financial freedom that followed the sale allowed Brainerd to devote himself full-time to another lifelong passion: environmental conservation. Having spent his childhood in the forests of southern Oregon, Brainerd was determined to help preserve the natural beauty of the region.

“I’ve always had a close connection to the outdoors,” says Brainerd, who founded The Brainerd Foundation, an organization focused on protecting the environmental quality of the Northwest and building citizen support for conservation efforts. The foundation makes grants, leverages funding, and encourages the involvement of other philanthropists—another cause close to Brainerd’s heart. He founded the non-profit Social Venture Partners to catalyze philanthropic activity among his peers.

“SVP helps the next generation of people who want to give back,” says Brainerd. And not just in dollars. The organization surpasses the norm (as do most groups with Brainerd at the helm)—encouraging participants not just to lend financial support but also to become involved with the causes they support. As Brainerd proudly attests, 65 percent of participants are actively involved.

In 1997, Brainerd and his wife, Debbi, found yet another way to give back to the community. With the purchase of 225 acres of land on Bainbridge Island, they founded IslandWood, a lifelong environmental learning center for children and families. Already, the center has distinguished itself as one of the most innovative environmental learning centers in the country.

Asked what he plans to add to his already chock-full schedule, the activist, philanthropist, and entrepreneur responds that, for now, he’s focused on making all the current ventures “continue and excel.” As for what isn’t in his immediate future, Brainerd chuckles, “We are so busy—my wife made me promise: no new non-profits!” Perhaps for the time being, he’ll have to be content with all the good he has already contributed to the world. ☮
Scientists are a motley bunch. But one thing they all seem to share is a tendency to cringe when they come across the stock image of the scientist in a white lab coat, pipette in hand, hunched over rows of test tubes, unaffected by personal relationships, ethical quagmires, or funding crises.

Such images perpetuate a myth about science—that its natural habitat is a sleek, sterile laboratory, beyond the messy realm of everyday life. In truth, the division between the laboratory and the real world is much more transparent. Scientists are just like the rest of us: they vote, fall in love, pay bills, and fret about jobs and relationships.
"If that research grant doesn't come through, this concoction might just as well be duck soup."

"Just two more hours and I have to go home and make dinner for Hugh and the kids. Then Dr. Cowlick can finish this experiment and take all the credit."
Despite the image of science as a separate arena from culture, politics, and social and economic pressures, such forces infiltrate the laboratory all the same. In an effort to better understand this interaction, a number of CLA faculty are examining how human factors—our values, beliefs, and assumptions—affect scientific outcomes.

Their work, part of the growing field of “science studies,” is changing how we think about science and scientists. Read on to learn how four of our own are dismantling the scientific mystique—and what they’re putting in its place.

THE CULTURAL LIVES OF SCIENTISTS

“Pesty environmental crazies.” For fifteen years, Rachel Schurman says, that was how many in the biotechnology industry referred behind closed doors to activists who opposed the use of emerging technologies to modify the genes of organisms like plants and fish.

That label may seem harsh, but Schurman, a sociologist studying the “culture” of science, isn’t surprised by it.

“Biotechnology workers—particularly the scientists—have a sense of themselves as apolitical and activists as political, which has made it easy for them to dismiss activists as ‘crazies,’” she explains.

But while they may not realize it, scientists are embedded in culture too, Schurman says. “Their ways of thinking and responding to the work they are doing are as much shaped by the norms of scientific culture as the activists’ views are shaped by their own norms.”

In their very first science courses, Schurman notes, scientists begin to internalize a conception of science as a pure, objective, value-free enterprise beholden to nothing but the truth. It’s not difficult to see why, Schurman says: science courses rarely include sustained inquiry into the economic demands, cultural desires, and historical contingencies that make science more than just a pristine quest for knowledge. Instead, students are immersed in the nitty-gritty tasks of designing experiments, collecting data, and conducting analyses.

Not surprisingly, that trend continues once they’ve earned their degrees and start working in laboratories full time. “They are thinking about the particular scientific problem they are working on, the scientific puzzle of the day,” says Schurman.

Over time, the boundary between doing science and thinking about its repercussions in the world has become rigorously patrolled. “In the professional world of science,” Shurman explains, “it is heretical to ask questions about the possible social, political, and economic effects of technologies such as genetic engineering and the ethical concerns they may generate.”

Schurman is quick to note that many scientists do think about the values that infuse their work. They worry about new technologies and their applications, and some even advocate for broader, more democratic discussion of the applications of scientific knowledge. The 100,000-member Union of Concerned Scientists, formed at M.I.T. in
1969, for instance, speaks out regularly about misuses of science and technology in society.

Still, those scientists who do want to think and write about values and politics risk ostracism from the larger scientific community, Schurman says, if they go too far in their criticism, publish in non-scientific journals, or, worse yet, move into public policy work full time. "Those who interact with the public are seen as tainted by political and cultural forces," she explains.

Schurman hopes that her work will prompt increased attention among scientists to ethical concerns. Acknowledgment of their susceptibility to social and cultural influences, she says, is a crucial prelude to ethical thinking—and even, it can be said, to good science.

"Because we live in a social world, it makes no sense to think of new knowledge and technology as coming into a neutral environment. Political, economic, and social relationships, as well as cultural norms, forged out of history, shape every new technology and every scientific development."

**THE POLITICS OF DNA**

Karen-Sue Taussig’s research has taken her into an uneasy realm of scientific smoke and mirrors. It is only when cultural influences on science are exposed, she says—when the great and powerful Oz is revealed to be, in the end, a man behind a curtain—that we can begin to understand the American love affair with genetic research.

Taussig, a medical anthropologist, finds cultural values and power relationships at every turn in her examination of the human genome project, the multi-million dollar research project that has yielded revolutionary new insights into the genetic code of human beings.

Taussig recalls the project’s earliest stages, when Nobel prize-winning molecular biologist Walter Gilbert was traveling around the country trying to generate support from the public.

“He would pull out a CD-ROM and announce, ‘This is you’”—suggesting that a human genome could be encoded onto a single electronic device. Gilbert’s dramatic demonstration appealed to certain cultural assumptions he shared with his audiences, including the assumption that life is reducible to molecular biological terms.

Genetic research projects like the human genome project thrive, Taussig says, in an individualist culture that values self-discovery, self-actualization, and immortality. By reducing everything from eye color to intellectual aptitude to the level of alterable genes, genetic researchers appear to promise to make controllable that which once seemed out of our reach. “The idea that we are free to choose our biology feels empowering,” Taussig notes.

These values and expectations are so ubiquitous, she says, that it’s easy to miss how profoundly they affect our thinking about what counts as science and what kinds of projects we choose to fund.

They also leave us vulnerable.

“People are sold a bill of goods,” Taussig says. “Scientists claim that there will be these dramatic interventions into human health.” But reality doesn’t always match up. “Every single gene therapy trial has failed utterly,” she notes.

Taussig doesn’t oppose the genome project and the genetic research it has spawned. “Intellectually, it is incredibly interesting science,” she says. “But politically, it is very vulnerable to misappropriation.”

But she can’t help but point out that support for such flashy science sometimes means forgoing less glamorous, but more reliable, scientific strategies for improving the lives of those who need it most.

“If we really wanted to improve the health of Americans, we’d have more early childhood health interventions, universal healthcare, nutritional programs, those kinds of things,” she says. “And if we wanted to improve the health of the world, we’d have universal vaccination, mosquito netting for malaria prevention, simple things that are inexpensive but take political will.”

“But reality doesn’t always match up. Every single gene therapy trial has failed utterly.”

—Karen-Sue Taussig
Just as Schurman hopes her work will help move scientists toward greater self-reflection, Taussig wants to encourage citizens to reflect more about the forces that shape our perspective about what science is, and can do—and what it isn’t, and can’t do.

“We have such a faith in science in the United States,” she says. “I want people to realize that there is a politics to science.”

**SCIENCE—IT’S ONLY HUMAN**

While scholars like Karen-Sue Taussig and Rachel Schurman are examining how culture affects the way we relate to science, Steven Manson and C. Kenneth Waters are studying another part of the equation—how our relationship to science affects actual scientific results.

What happens, they ask, when the very premises scientists begin with, the foundational assumptions that they make about the world they’re studying, are flawed? And how should scientists respond to those flaws once they are recognized?

For years, McKnight Land Grant Professor of Geography Steven Manson says, many of the models that scientists have used to predict how humans will act have discounted the role that cultural values play in human behavior.

Rational choice theory, on which such models are based, assumes a certain universality to human decision making. Whether Kenyan or Canadian, we are all, according to rational choice theory, rational actors: Given a complete picture of a situation, we will act logically within it. And we make choices that bring us closer to what we value: money, power, health, and happiness.

But as many scholars in the field of science studies have shown, when push comes to shove, we are, well, only human. When we are the mice in the maze, we don’t necessarily make cold calculations based on narrow self interest. Cultural values, traditions, and habits all get in the way of our acting “rationally.” Indeed, these influences can help us make better decisions—or sometimes not.

Over the last 40 years, explains Manson, many have come to doubt the validity of rational choice theory because it doesn’t account for social and cultural factors. “A lot of our decision-making isn’t centered on ‘us,’” says Manson. “It’s centered on ‘us’ within a larger context.”

Sometimes, that larger cultural context influences us when we least expect it. “We can have an almost encyclopedic knowledge of everything from safety ratings to fuel efficiency when we’re buying a car,” Manson says. “But when people are asked about the cars they buy, they tend to say that they buy Hondas because their parents buy Hondas.” As social creatures who exist in the context of culture and family, “we can always question, reconfigure, or reject this social context,” he adds, but we cannot fully escape it.

Rational choice theory is an elegant and powerful way of answering many questions, Manson grants, but we also need alternative approaches. That’s why he’s developing “computational intelligence modeling,” a model of analyzing human decision making that, he says, attempts to “capture some of the social dynamics and personal biases that influence human behavior instead of just ignoring them.”

Recently, Manson used computational intelligence to help officials in the Southern Yucatan build accurate land use simulations. Using anthropological accounts of local Mexican culture that were formerly dismissed by scientists as too qualitative, Manson’s programs produced land use scenarios more attuned to the vagaries of the local culture—and therefore more likely to become reality.

**THE THEORY TRAP**

Scientists are fond of fundamental theories, the sets of principles that purport to explain everything that they observe in their respective fields. Theories, we’ve been led to believe, drive the production of scientific knowledge: they provide crucial frameworks for designing experiments and interpreting results.

Most of us are at least broadly familiar, by now, with the theory underlying genetics: DNA encodes genetic “information” that determines the processes of growth and development in organisms. Unbeknownst to us, philosophers have been poking holes in that theory for years, and developing alternative theories to explain the clear link that scientists have observed between DNA and the development of organisms.

C. Kenneth Waters, associate professor of philosophy, is intrigued by the debate—but he’s more interested in the very role that theory plays in science. For all of the importance placed on theories, they don’t necessarily dictate or reflect accurately what goes on in the laboratory. Instead of trying to replace one theory with another, he says, philosophers might more productively look at what scientists are actually doing in their laboratories. And what they do, in effect, is “tinker,” observe, and draw conclusions. Theory is largely tangential to this process of acquiring new scientific knowledge.

By altering or removing a gene and observing what happens to the process of memory formation in mice, for example, scientists gain knowledge about mechanisms involving memory-related brain cells. And theoretical assumptions about genes as the ultimate source of biological development are irrelevant to what they observe.

In the end, genetic theory is a kind of interesting distraction, with little bearing on what experiments have taught us about how development occurs at the molecular level. Indeed, says Waters,
rather than guiding research or helping us make sense of experimental results, it mostly performs an important public relations function beyond the immediate environs of the laboratory. “To think that we have these fundamental truths and that we’re working off of them creates a lot of excitement,” he explains. “It helps bring new scientists to the field, and it helps bring funding to the field.

“The process of gaining scientific knowledge works not so much because scientists are applying a fundamental theory. It’s because they have research strategies that are extremely effective in the laboratory.” And those strategies, combined with close and astute observation, are what yield good scientific results.

To be sure, the lessons scientists learn from their experiments about the role of DNA in cellular development may in fact be consistent with and seem to confirm a widely held theory. But that’s not the point or purpose of scientific investigation. Indeed, too heavy a reliance on theory could even get in the way, skewing the interpretation of results.

For all practical purposes, then, it doesn’t matter whether a theory is right or wrong. It is simply immaterial. In Waters’ view, it’s not by weighing the relative merits of competing theories but by standing in laboratories and listening to scientists hash out the details of experiments that philosophers will make discoveries about the nature of scientific knowledge. ∞

When humans are the mice in the maze, we don’t make cold calculations based on narrow self interest. Cultural values, traditions, and habits all get in the way of our acting “rationally.”
Among the degrees and documents that cover Michael Sieben’s law office wall is a dated black-and-white photograph of a drugstore. It’s a type of place you don’t see much anymore—a spot where you could pick up your prescription and then amble over to the soda fountain for a cherry Coke or chocolate shake.

In eighth grade, Sieben worked as a soda jerk in that drugstore, which belonged to his grandfather and his great grandfather before him. While Sieben didn’t continue the family’s pharmaceutical tradition (“Wrong side of the brain,” he jokes), the photograph’s presence does speak to his deep commitment to his roots and an awareness of the privileges he inherited. “I don’t take it for granted,” he says.

Over the years, the 60-year-old civil litigation attorney, former state legislator, and University Law School graduate has made a number of gifts to the U, gestures rooted in a sense of obligation to give back to the institution where his grandmother, father, and two brothers also received degrees.

But there’s one that seems to stand out. Sieben’s most recent gift—to create the John S. Wright Award for CLA students majoring in African American and African Studies—was inspired by a deep personal connection.

Sieben grew up in Hastings, where he continues to practice law as a partner in Sieben Polk LaVerdiere & Dusich and where his family name is so prominent it’s featured on street signs. John Wright has an equally successful career, but in the quite different world of academia, as an associate professor of African American and African Studies at the U. He grew up, by contrast, in the far less privileged world of north Minneapolis.

The connection between Sieben and Wright is a friendship dating back to their initial meeting as next-door neighbors in Middlebrook Hall. Over the years, the friendship has deepened, thanks in part to common interests—in chess, for one—and some fond memories, including a memorable camping trip out West.

To Sieben, the gift was a natural way to honor his friend. “He was such a great student,” Sieben says, “very, very bright, an unusual, extraordinary person. I respect him greatly. I wanted to honor him and help make the campus a better place, particularly for minority students.”

The fact that the gift will go to liberal arts students is also important to Sieben, whose own undergraduate degree from St. Cloud State University was in social studies.

“The College of Liberal Arts is so extraordinary,” he says. “It prepares young people for life. I think that employers are increasingly looking for people with broad education and deep skills. Our country’s future belongs to those who are highly educated, and a good bachelor’s education is where you start. You’ve got to get your fundamentals down and that’s what CLA does. It prepares you.”

At the same time, Sieben believes that private philanthropy is more important than ever to the University.

“We in Minnesota have strong public education from kindergarten through post-secondary,” he says. “But the state is not supporting it as it has in the past. This gift is my small way of saying we need to do more to support public education”—to step in to fill the breach.

“In a broad sense, the U has been a huge engine for economic development that people take for granted. It’s such an extraordinary place and we must recognize that. I feel strongly that those of us who have been blessed with education and experience should give back. We must make sure the country has good education available for everyone.”

“A Friendly Gesture
MICHAEL SIEBEN HONORS
A LONGTIME PAL WITH A GIFT TO CLA—A GIFT ROOTED IN FRIENDSHIP.

By Mary Shafer

[The University] is such an extraordinary place... I feel strongly that those of us who have been blessed with education and experience should give back.” —Michael Sieben
When Life Has Been Good to You

BY MARY SHAFER

When Beverly and Richard Fink visited the University campus this September, they looked on as students carrying huge, unwieldy boxes checked into dorms with the help of nervous, fretful parents. They toured the renovated Coffman Union, and marveled at the new pedestrian bridges that span Washington Avenue. In short, they took in the sights that make alumni a little nostalgic for their college days.

To top off their campus visit, the Finks met with Paul Sackett, the renowned professor of industrial/organizational psychology who had just been appointed to a new College of Liberal Arts endowed chair—the Beverly and Richard Fink Professorship in Liberal Arts.

The Finks’ decision to create the endowment seemed a natural convergence of their passions: They champion education, they’re passionate about the arts, and they lead the charge when it comes to community involvement. The unexpected delight, they say, is that the first professor to hold this chair is not only a distinguished scholar but also someone whose research interests dovetail with the values Richard (Dick) Fink brought to his own professional career.

“[Sackett] studies the issues that were critical to my company—cultural blending, measures of success, testing to determine people’s effectiveness. I was very pleased he was chosen.” Dick says.

And if anyone knows business, it’s Richard Fink. A 1952 U graduate and Rhodes scholar, he went on to graduate work at Harvard and then began his professional career in academia as a political science lecturer at the University of Wisconsin. Soon, though, he joined the textile business his grandfather had begun. It wasn’t what you’d call a glamorous beginning; he worked up a sweat pressing shirts in the laundry room and later progressed to delivery driver. In 1969, when G&K Services went public, he assumed the leadership—and over the next 40 years, the company grew to become a national leader in its industry.

Beverly is the educator and artist in the family, a self-described “18-year college dropout” who earned an associate degree from the U in 1952 before she left to raise four children. When she dropped back in, Beverly not only finished her bachelor’s degree but also earned a master’s in education for gifted children.

The demands of student life meant that her children had to endure the transition from “home-baked cookies to Oreos,” Beverly says. But her “older student” status had its advantages. “I wasn’t afraid to ask the cutest boy in biology class for help,” she chuckles. Later, she taught for 12 years in Wayzata Public Schools.

Although their careers have been in education and business respectively, it is the arts that have been the Finks’ steady passion. In their home—where paintings and pots by granddaughters and nieces are displayed beside works of well-known artists—their interests have coalesced into a shared dedication to philanthropy.

“The University should have enough resources that it is not completely subject to the vagaries of the budget process, especially if we want the U to be really prominent, to have a really stellar faculty.”

clearly, the Finks do want that for the U—and sharing their good fortune just seemed like a logical step. “When you live in a community all your life and life has been good,” Beverly says simply, “you have a responsibility to give something back.”
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Born to Give
STUDENT ALISON CARTER INHERITED A CHARITABLE PHILOSOPHY

If you were to sum up Alison Carter’s philosophy of giving in a few words, you might say simply, “Of course.” Of course giving makes a difference. Of course those who can give, should. Of course your gift matters, however big or small.

Carter’s words are all the more resonant given that she’s in that phase of life when, for most people, philanthropy is the farthest thing from their minds. That is, she’s 21—and yet, she’s the executive director of her family’s charity, The Carter Foundation. Alison is also a volunteer for Franklin Learning Center, an intern for the Alzheimer’s Foundation, and (most importantly) a valuable member of our development team here at CLA External Relations, where she is a mentor team here at CLA External Relations, where she is a mentor.

So, what is it about Alison that inspires her to share her time and resources before the idea of “giving because you can” is even on her peers’ radar? It’s a question she has a hard time answering—mainly because she’s never known it any other way.

As the daughter of two devoted philanthropists, Carter was taught to practice giving as early as her first allowance, with her parents reminding her to “save, give, and spend” a portion of it each time. So it was only natural that when her family decided to create a foundation she would have a crucial role. As she explains it, the foundation is partly “an excuse for the family to come together and provide for the greater good.”

Besides its philanthropic mission, the foundation has served as an educational tool for Carter and her younger brother. Judging from Carter’s attitude about giving, this trial-by-fire method of learning is working. And for added benefit—while she’s learning the ropes, her family’s dollars are out making the world a better place.

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Transformation and discovery. You’ve been seeing those words a lot these days in University of Minnesota communications. And they are what this inaugural issue of Reach is about. The fact of the matter is that CLA has been about transformation and discovery since day one.

Most of you know first hand about transformation. When you look back at your CLA education, you probably marvel at how much you changed during your student years. You may have felt more relieved than transformed the day you crossed the Northrop stage in your cap and gown, but perspective is all!

The University and CLA have changed, too, in some pretty dramatic ways. But we’re still transforming young people’s lives and making the world a better place. We’re connecting more and more with community partners and offering our students unprecedented opportunities to find their way and make their mark—including internships, collaborative research and creative projects, and service to people and neighborhoods.

Transformational gifts
If a CLA education transforms lives, so does philanthropy. You don’t have to look far to see the transformative power of your gifts to CLA: those gorgeous new and renovated facilities that dot the dressed-up campus landscape, with more to come; our astonishing faculty, brought here in part by donor dollars; and, of course, those hundreds of students whose prospects you have brightened with your scholarship gifts.

At our recent scholarship celebration, many students met their scholarship donors for the first time. As always, it was very moving to see students express their heartfelt gratitude to the benefactors who made their education possible. Their gratitude, like the rewards of the gift itself, will extend far beyond that moment. I know. I’ve seen it happen, again and again.

About a decade ago, friends and family gathered together to pay tribute to a dear friend who was one of the country’s leading journalists, by creating a scholarship in his honor. This man, Hedley Donovan, who became editor-in-chief of Time publications, always cherished his University experience as well as his Minnesota roots. So he would be pleased to see the dramatic growth in the scholarship endowment, and the many grateful students.

But here’s what’s even better: I just learned that one of the first Donovan Scholars, David Santore, has created his own scholarship for CLA students. When all is said and done, this is what transformational giving is all about—paying it forward! And I’m pretty sure that’s Mr. Donovan’s warm smile I feel over my shoulder ....

Sustaining access to opportunity
To keep the transformation going, and to keep our doors open to promising young people from all walks of life, we must broaden our reach, aspire to the highest levels of performance, and embrace the future. We can do all of this only with you by our side.

You and I both know that we must find ways to supplement the state’s shrinking investment if we are going to be a great public research university for the 21st century. As we look to you, our alumni, for support, we also expect that you will look to us for results—for access to the finest education for your children, for better ways to create a secure and vital future for everyone. Like all true partnerships, our relationship with you is reciprocal and collaborative.

As we look toward our future, let’s continue to count on each other.

That’s how we became great, and that’s how we’ll stay great. On behalf of the students, faculty and staff of CLA, please accept my heartfelt thanks for your friendship and support.

MARY HICKS, DIRECTOR, CLA EXTERNAL RELATIONS
612-625-5031, HICKS002@UMN.EDU

THE YEAR IN PHILANTHROPY

Fiscal year 2006 was a great one for CLA. More donors than ever stepped forward, and for the second year in a row, CLA led the University in total giving.

Here are the vital statistics:

Total number of donors: 7,409
Total number of gifts: 7,934
Total giving:* $15.7 million
Total giving for student support: $11.5 million

* Total giving includes gifts for academic programs, student support (scholarships and fellowships), capital improvements, faculty research and teaching, and outreach.

The University of Minnesota has reached the $150 million mark in its Promise of Tomorrow Scholarship Drive, but there is still substantial unmet need. You can help ensure access for thousands of students! Don’t forget that gifts to endowed scholarship funds may qualify for the President’s Scholarship Match, doubling the amount available to students.