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POST-

ELECTION **ISSUE**

THE LIBERAL ARTS,
THE NATION,
AND THE
WORLD

WINTER
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The Magazine of the College of Liberal Arts
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FROM THE DEAN

On fulfilling the promise of the liberal arts

As the world becomes increasingly technologically advanced and globally interdependent, we need the liberal arts more than ever before. They are the foundation of all academic learning.

We need the disciplinary knowledge of the liberal arts, their interdisciplinary connections and discoveries, and their insights. A world without the liberal arts risks being a world without values, without beauty, imagination, or pleasure—a world bereft of history, language, the arts, and any understanding of the complex social, economic, and political networks in which we live our lives, both professionally and personally. The liberal arts inspire; they enunciate the social, intellectual and aesthetic ideals we expect technology to serve. They are the intellectual treasures we human beings cherish and share around the globe.

This College of Liberal Arts is the achievement of more than a century of distinguished scholarship and creativity; I am proud and honored to be its new dean. In large measure, the reputation of the University rests on CLA – its largest college – and on the distinctive way in which we reach our highest ambitions.

My goal is to foster a unity that enables the college to remain creatively agile and astonishingly productive, and to shape an exemplary academic collective. I envision the college as ... a place where students benefit from an extraordinary college experience, learn from each other, receive professional and disciplinary training for their postgraduate careers, and assume responsibility for continued intellectual growth; ... a place where researchers and artists have the resources to achieve their most creative ideas, and learn and collaborate with each oth-

er within and across disciplines, in both a local and a global context;

... a place where faculty, students, and staff are so diverse that everyone embraces diversity as the foundation for academic excellence without question or hesitation;

... a place where the external community and alumni regard the college as a vibrant partner for continued collaboration in research and teaching.

All institutions of higher learning are facing external fiscal challenges as the first decade of the 21st century ends. Challenging times provide opportunities to reexamine and refocus our educational and research mission. I am confident that, regardless of external challenges, we have the talent, creativity, and commitment to accomplish our aspirations. Of course, we will need our friends in Minnesota and around the world to support our efforts, as they have so faithfully for over a century.

Together we can fulfill the promise of the liberal arts: to prepare the next generation to see clearly in a changing and uncertain world, to be original and independent thinkers, and to bring intellectual leadership to bear in a humane democracy.

Thank you for your continued support, and best wishes for a happy New Year!



James A. Parente, Jr.

Dean

Professor of German, Scandinavian and Dutch



PHOTO: KELLY MACWILLIAMS

VOTING: THE BODY'S POLITICS

When it comes to voting, the laws of attraction aren't as rational as we think.

In his new book, *The Political Psychology of Democratic Citizenship*, psychology professor Eugene Borgida and his co-editors, political science colleagues John Sullivan and Christopher Federico, review research about how we vote and why we can be so passionate about our political positions.

"Our understanding of political behavior has been dominated by a rational-choice model where people are engaged in deliberative thought and calculation," says Borgida. "But when we are asked why we evaluate a candidate the way we do, it's not as if we zoom into the prefrontal cortex, grab the real reason, and cite that reason. What we are more likely to do is tap into a pool of culturally accepted explanations and spout them, even though our preferences are being driven by other factors."

Those factors—emotions, values, and cultural understandings—all tag along with reason to the voting booth, says Borgida. They may even overshadow it. For one thing, our inclinations toward partisanship reside in the parts of the brain linked to emotions.

"Insofar as those structures control our feelings and fears, they may shed some light on the passion we have for partisan politics because they're coming from the same source as our emotions," Borgida says.



Eugene Borgida

Then there are the powerful forces underlying our biases. In spite of what we say, studies show that our decisions are affected by almost unconscious responses to a candidate's skin color or gender.

"We may not think we harbor general antipathies toward women or African Americans," Borgida says. "Yet, when they are running for the most powerful political office in the land, this hidden bias affects our perceptions of them, and our willingness to support them."

It may be possible to correct such hidden bias, Borgida says, but "it's not easy. Some of these ways of thinking are deeply ingrained."

Then there's ideology. For most of us, absorbing political information is like dining in a restaurant. We don't begin from scratch to form our positions on issues and candidates. Instead, we choose from menus that "chefs"—candidates, journalists, professional activists, and academics—have defined as the ideas that go into political choices and determined what it means to be liberal, conservative, or middle-of-the-road.

Clear-cut ideology makes it easier to sort through the cacophony of political voices. In those cases, people don't have to sort issue-by-issue because their ideology gives them a network of interrelated positions on a wide range of choices.

"It means that I have answers at my disposal to many different questions," says Federico, who also directs the University's Center for the Study of Political Psychology. "It's not just one question like 'Should we raise taxes?' or 'Should abortion be legal?'"

Of course, there are true independents, well-informed voters who do prefer to evaluate candidates issue by issue. In any case, though, Federico finds that people with a strong need to evaluate make more effective use of their knowledge.

"Having knowledge isn't enough to make people politically or ideologically engaged," he says. "They also have to approach the world with what you might call an evaluative eye. They have to care enough about the world to know what they like and what they dislike."

Many other psychological factors accompany voters to the polls.

One of the most powerful is the most simple: order of names on a ballot. The polling place can make a difference too; chances for a school-funding referendum improve if a school is the polling place. A candidate's face can frighten or reassure a voter because our minds make blink-like judgments in reaction to facial features.

We still should believe in the value of gearing up our brains for rational and deliberative evaluation of the candidates and issues. Nevertheless, it seems that a parallel—arguably, more powerful—process also takes place deep inside us at the same time. *Adapted from an article by Sharon Schmickle* ∞

NEW CLA DEAN JIM PARENTE

"VISIONARY LEADER AND STRATEGIC THINKER"

In October James A. Parente, Jr., was named dean of the College of Liberal Arts by Provost Thomas Sullivan, having served for more than a year as interim dean of the University's largest college. He received Board of Regents approval in November.

"Parente will be an outstanding and visionary leader and strategic thinker who will promote excellence across the entire college," Sullivan said in making the announcement. "Those who know his exceptional academic work know that it spans multiple time periods, disciplines and languages, and know also the enormous respect he has for the social sciences, humanities and arts."

A member of the University's faculty since 1993, Parente received strong support from faculty, students, staff, and alumni.

"With Jim, CLA has a Dean who is extremely thoughtful and has great ideas for where the college can go," said Susan Craddock,

Chair of the CLA Council of Chairs. "His obvious integrity and openness lend themselves to good working relations across multiple sectors of CLA and beyond, something that only improves the strength of CLA as a whole."

Bethany Khan, CLA Student Board member and former board president, said, "He is quite the well-rounded gentleman. He's really comfortable in his role as someone that we go to for advice, for help. When we bring him concerns and complaints, he's very knowledgeable."

Parente is former chair of the Department of German, Scandinavian and Dutch and former associate dean for faculty and research. He served on the faculty at Princeton University and the University of Illinois at Chicago. He earned his Ph.D. and M.A. in German languages and literatures from Yale University.

His awards include the National Endowment for the Hu-



Dean Jim Parente

PHOTO: EVERETT AYUBZADEH

manities Fellowship for Independent Study and Research and a visiting appointment to the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University. He is a discipline representative to the Renaissance Society of America and external evaluator for the National Endowment for the Humanities, a dozen scholarly journals and department and academic programs at UCLA, Harvard, Cornell and the University of Pennsylvania.

"As dean of this academically diverse and important college," Provost Sullivan said, "he will be committed to the values of deep, broad thinking and teaching, and he will ensure that CLA flourishes as an intellectual community." ∞

FACULTY

GREAT TEACHERS

Three CLA faculty are among those receiving distinguished teaching awards for the 2007-08 academic year. Timothy Johnson, associate professor of political science, received the Morse-Alumni Award for Outstanding Contributions to Undergraduate Education. Cesare Casarino, associate professor of cultural studies and comparative literature, and John Freeman, professor of political science, received the Award for Outstanding Contributions to Graduate and Professional Education.

BEST OF THE BEST

Congratulations to CLA's three new Regents Professors: Steven Ruggles, history; Eric Sheppard, geography; and Madelon Sprengnether, English. The Regents Professorship is the University's highest faculty honor.

AND THE AWARD GOES TO

Hisham Bizri, who was a winner of the 112th annual Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome. Bizri, assistant professor in cultural studies and comparative literature and a film-

maker, received the award in the visual arts category for developing *The Last Day of Summer* from a screenplay he wrote. The prize is considered the most sought-after award in visual arts and music in the U.S.

GUGGENHEIMS

Kathryn Sikkink, professor of political science, was named a 2008 Guggenheim Fellow for her work on the origins and effects of human rights trials in the world. Also receiving a Guggenheim was sociology professor Robin

Stryker, who was honored for her work in government regulation of equal-employment opportunity. This fall, Stryker joins the faculty at the University of Arizona.

DISTINGUISHED WOMEN

Ruth Karras, history, was one of two professors to receive the U's Distinguished Women Scholars Award this year. The award is sponsored by the Office of the Dean of the Graduate School and the Office for University Women (OUW).

COOL COURSES

From acting to urban studies—and everything in between—CLA’s dazzling menu of course offerings gives students a chance to sample or specialize in nearly any field. Here’s a look at some new courses, intriguing seminars, and an exciting new major offered this fall.



A NEW MAJOR: RELIGIOUS STUDIES

CLA has offered a religious studies major for more than a decade. The focus, however, has been on biblical and ancient Mediterranean religions. The new major, offered for the first time this fall, is a more comprehensive interdisciplinary study of religion across traditions and time. “Given the reality of the post-9/11 world and the turmoil that a lack of understanding and dialogue among religious groups has brought in various war-torn parts of the globe, understanding different religious perspectives has become an obligation for responsible world citizenship,” says Cal Roetzel, co-chair of the Religious Studies Working Group and professor of classical and Near Eastern studies. Roetzel also holds the Sundet Chair in New Testament and Christian Studies. Providing courses in a broad range of traditions as well as the Christian/Jewish tradition can better serve our increasingly diverse students, says Roetzel. “We hope to eventually have options for the academic study of shamanistic religions like those

practiced by some Hmong students and their families,” he says.

AFRO 3910: DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN AND WITH COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

We tell stories to preserve memory, build identity, construct meaning, and make connections with others and the world. In this brand-new course, professor Walt Jacobs and graduate instructor Rachel Raimist look at how communities of color use storytelling to write history, learn, entertain, organize, and heal. Through writing, video, photography, sound, and artwork, students are developing digital stories about Twin Cities communities of color.

ENGL 3741: LITERACY AND AMERICAN CULTURAL DIVERSITY

This is one of several service-learning courses that gives students direct experience working at a community organization. Neither internship nor volunteering, service learning is a kind of independent immersion in the workforce, with the opportunity to share insights and experiences with classmates. In this class, students serve as literacy workers for two hours a week outside of class and coursework.

COOL FRESHMAN SEMINARS

These small seminars are taught in the fall and spring by tenured or tenure-track professors in topics of their own choosing. Here’s a sampling of CLA seminars offered this fall:

HUM 1905: UTOPIAS AND ANTI-UTOPIAS: CAN THE REAL WORLD BECOME THE IDEAL WORLD?

Students explore the ideal society and humanity’s potential for good and evil as envisioned by philosophers, writers, and cultural critics, from ancient to modern. The course is taught by assistant professor of humanities George Klinger.

LING 1901: HERE TODAY, GONE TOMORROW: LANGUAGE, ENDANGERMENT, DEATH, AND REVITALIZATION

We’re told that more than 90 percent of the thousands of languages that have existed through history will become extinct within this century. What does that mean? What’s lost when a language is no longer spoken? Freshmen explore these themes with linguistics professor Nancy Stenson.

POL 1903: EXPLORING CONSTITUTIONAL MEANING: FROM FOUNDERS TO MYSPACE

Constitutional principles have influenced some of the most controversial issues in American politics, including slavery, equal citizenship, racial discrimination, free speech, and religious expression in schools. Students are examining landmark Supreme Court cases as well as reformers who have challenged the Constitution, such as leaders of anti-slavery societies and women’s suffrage groups.

For more freshman seminars, go to: www.ofyp.umn.edu/fystudents/freshsem.

HONORS SEMINARS FOR FRESHMEN AND SOPHOMORES

The University Honors Program is highly competitive. Here are two of the honors courses offered by CLA faculty.

HSEM 2051H: THE RULES OF THE GAME: EXPLORING U.S. CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS

Students monitored the U.S. presidential and some congressional campaigns to assess how political theory and practice converged in 2008. They discussed how political scientists study and understand electoral politics, and also were encouraged to volunteer for a campaign of their choice. Assistant professor Kathryn Pearson is the instructor.

HSEM 2053H: PSYCHOLOGY OF THE PARANORMAL

Most Americans hold one or more supernatural, paranormal, or pseudoscientific beliefs like mind reading, fortune telling, psychokinesis, out-of-body experiences, and alien abduction. In this course, students evaluate the evidence for a variety of these claims, using critical and analytical methods. The course is taught by psychology professor Charles R. (Randy) Fletcher. ∞

DISSECTING HEALTH NEWS

Can you trust the news media to tell you what you need to know about your health? Not so much, says Gary Schwitzer, an associate professor of journalism and mass communication who reviewed 500 health news stories that ran in 50 major U.S. media outlets over 22 months.

Schwitzer and his colleagues found that news stories about treatments, tests, products, and procedures often omit information about costs, benefits and harms, other treatment options, and potential conflicts of interest. The results, says Schwitzer, can be unnecessary fear-mongering and consumer demand for unproven therapies.

One common fault is citing only relative risk (the risk comparison between two different groups) as opposed to absolute risk (actual probability). For example, ABC’s “Good Morning America” reported that breast cancer patients with relatively low blood levels of vitamin D were 94 percent more likely to have their cancer spread and 73 percent more likely to die than those with high levels of vitamin D. But nothing was said about an individual’s overall chances that a cancer would spread or cause death.

As for cost, Schwitzer says, “It’s unforgivable that more than 75 percent of health journalism articles ... failed to address cost.”

Although he says that we’re also getting some of the best health journalism ever, “the valleys between the peaks may undo a lot of the good by driving consumers to demand unproven therapies.”



Gary Schwitzer

PHOTO: KELLY MACWILLIAMS

Schwitzer’s work was published in the online journal *PLoS Medicine* in May. He publishes a Web site reviewing medical information at Health-NewsReview.org. ∞

ITSY-BITSIES & SPIDERS

If spiders make you bug-eyed, it may be because you’re hardwired to notice the little arachnids.

In fact, according to a report published this spring, although we may not be born afraid of spiders, we do seem to have inherited a sort of “brain template” that makes us sit up and take notice the very first time we see one—even if we’re just learning to sit up.

Jamie Derringer, who graduated from the U in May with a master’s degree in psychology, and a colleague are the first to show that infants may have such a mental template, one that seems to have evolved over centuries as a way to alert us that there’s a threat in our midst.

Derringer and David Rakison—an associate professor of psychology at Carnegie Mellon University, where Derringer earned her undergraduate degree—based their conclusions on their study of five-month-old infants.

They showed the babies computer images that were shaped like spiders, noting how long the image held the tots’ attention. The researchers found that the babies stared longer at shapes that closely resembled a spider than they did at shapes that did not. And they showed no evidence of having a brain template for a nonthreatening organism.

“Spiders hold infants’ attention much more than do flowers,” says Derringer, noting that, although they clearly notice the spiders, the babies aren’t scared of them. “They learn that,” she says. “What we see is

that they seem to have a built-in mechanism that recognizes what might be a threat.”

This study builds on earlier work conducted by a variety of researchers pointing to an innate ability of primates and other animals to respond to predators.

The brain template predisposing babies to respond to spiders may be activated by the age of five months. That is when infants are about to start to crawl, explore—and possibly encounter spiders, says Derringer, who is now pursuing a doctorate at Washington University in St. Louis and continuing to collaborate with Minnesota researchers.

Such built-in predator awareness serves a couple of purposes, say the researchers. First, it facilitates learning early in life so that fear responses can be rapidly associated with the stimulus in question when specific behavior is observed. Second, in childhood and beyond it allows for rapid identification of a potential threat. This automatic “attention-grabbing” characteristic of fear-relevant stimuli could engender quicker reaction to threatening situations. ∞



DEAR MR. PRESIDENT

“A president’s hardest task is not to do what is right, but to know what is right,” Lyndon Johnson once said. Facing challenges ranging from economic woes at home to political instability abroad, the new American president will need all the good knowledge he can find. We turned to CLA faculty members whose research and expertise might translate into good advice and asked them what they would tell him. Here’s what they said.

IF YOU HAD FIVE MINUTES ALONE WITH PRESIDENT-ELECT BARACK OBAMA, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL HIM? OUR EXPERTS HAVE THEIR SAY.

BY DANNY LACHANCE



“MAKE VISAS AVAILABLE FOR BLUE-COLLAR WORKERS. PUT UNDOCUMENTED, FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS ON A PATH TO LEGAL RESIDENCE.”

We often use terms like “amnesty” and “illegal immigrant” as neutral descriptors of policies and people. But to Donna Gabaccia, professor of history and director of the University’s Immigration History Research Center, they reflect an approach to immigration that has been quick to criminalize those who cross borders seeking work and slow to recognize how our own policies have incited those border crossings.

“The problem is not that criminal people are waiting to sneak across the border,” she says of the nation’s estimated 10 million undocumented immigrants, “but that the immigration policy is out of sync with the needs of our economy.” Gabaccia notes that restrictions we’ve placed in recent decades on immigrants from places like Canada and Mexico did not always exist, but they now make “illegal” those who would have been easily admitted just a generation ago. What’s more, they were put into place at the same time we loosened the flow of commerce across the Mexican and Canadian borders with free trade agreements.

“We have ever-rising movements of goods across borders, but we try to stop the flow of people who ordinarily accompany commerce,” Gabaccia says. That’s problematic, she says: Liberal trade policies contribute to changes in the labor market that compel workers to cross borders and become “illegal.”

To address this problem, Gabaccia thinks the president should work with Congress to make a variable number of visas available to blue-collar workers and give currently undocumented workers the opportunity to attain visas. But would that unfairly punish those who pursue lawful entry to the U.S.? “It’s not a question of waiting in line,” she says. Most undocumented workers are blue-collar, for whom “there are almost no visas in the first place, only a few thousand a year. So our policies are creating illegality.”

And the consequences of “illegality” are significant, she says. Although anti-immigration voices see a threat to our national identity in granting residence to undocumented workers or expanding the number of visas for blue-collar workers, the alternative poses an even greater threat to who we are. “A democratic nation wants as high a percentage of its residents as possible engaged in the political process,” she says. When more than 10 million people living among us have neither the privileges nor the duties of citizenship, we become less democratic.

“The problem is not ‘illegal immigrants,’” Gabaccia says, “but illegality itself.”

DONNA GABACCIA, HISTORY



“DON’T CLOSE OFF TRADE.”

In response to a troubled economy, we heard campaign-season calls to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the 1993 treaty lowering the costs of trade among the United States, Mexico, and Canada. It’s a popular idea in states like Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, which lost high-paying manufacturing jobs after NAFTA was implemented. Renewing trade barriers may save or revive those jobs, some have suggested, by removing the incentives for companies to manufacture their goods in Mexico.

But renegotiating NAFTA would be a mistake, says Tim Kehoe, a Distinguished McKnight Professor of Economics and adviser to the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. The loss of manufacturing jobs is not caused primarily by the migration of manufacturing to Mexico, he says, noting “the amount of goods we’re producing in the U.S. is going up all the time. And if we measure how fast production—real output—is rising, we see it’s rising just as fast or faster in manufacturing as in any other sector.”

So what’s happened to those well-paying manufacturing jobs? Technology, says Kehoe, has taken over work once done by humans, and gets the job done faster. “To produce more and more goods we need fewer and fewer people,” he explains. That trend will continue regardless of agreements with other countries.

Dismantling or renegotiating NAFTA, then, is akin to Don Quixote attacking the windmills he mistook for threatening giants. What’s needed instead, says Kehoe, is a concerted effort by the next president to help our vulnerable populations respond to an economic climate that now requires a college education for entry into the middle class. With college enrollment increasing, many young people are adjusting to the change. But he’s worried about those who didn’t pursue higher education in the 1960s and 1970s because, even with just a high school education, they were assured good manufacturing jobs. What about them?

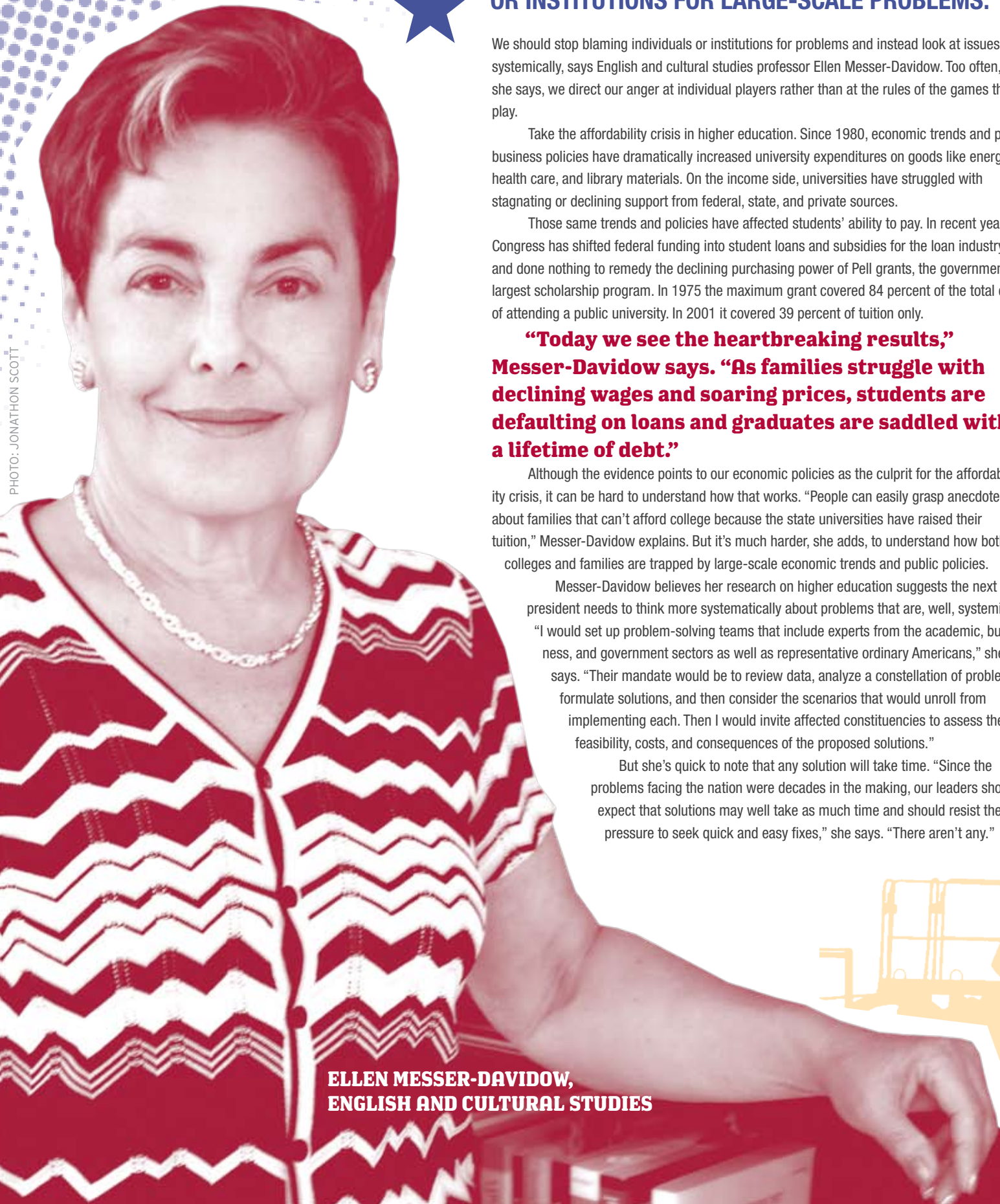
“There are retraining and education programs we can put into place. There are tax policies and subsidy policies we can use to help out those older workers,” Kehoe says. “The fact that we’re concerned about older workers who have skills that aren’t being valued by the market—that’s a good reason to develop public policy. But trying to somehow reverse technology or close ourselves off to trade with other countries because we think trade is the cause of these changes in employment patterns—that’s a big mistake.”

TIM KEHOE, ECONOMICS

PHOTO: AMY SHEPPARD

PHOTO: JOHN NOLTNER

PHOTO: JONATHON SCOTT



**ELLEN MESSER-DAVIDOW,
ENGLISH AND CULTURAL STUDIES**



“DON’T BLAME SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS OR INSTITUTIONS FOR LARGE-SCALE PROBLEMS.”

We should stop blaming individuals or institutions for problems and instead look at issues systemically, says English and cultural studies professor Ellen Messer-Davidow. Too often, she says, we direct our anger at individual players rather than at the rules of the games they play.

Take the affordability crisis in higher education. Since 1980, economic trends and pro-business policies have dramatically increased university expenditures on goods like energy, health care, and library materials. On the income side, universities have struggled with stagnating or declining support from federal, state, and private sources.

Those same trends and policies have affected students’ ability to pay. In recent years, Congress has shifted federal funding into student loans and subsidies for the loan industry and done nothing to remedy the declining purchasing power of Pell grants, the government’s largest scholarship program. In 1975 the maximum grant covered 84 percent of the total cost of attending a public university. In 2001 it covered 39 percent of tuition only.

“Today we see the heartbreaking results,” Messer-Davidow says. “As families struggle with declining wages and soaring prices, students are defaulting on loans and graduates are saddled with a lifetime of debt.”

Although the evidence points to our economic policies as the culprit for the affordability crisis, it can be hard to understand how that works. “People can easily grasp anecdotes about families that can’t afford college because the state universities have raised their tuition,” Messer-Davidow explains. But it’s much harder, she adds, to understand how both colleges and families are trapped by large-scale economic trends and public policies.

Messer-Davidow believes her research on higher education suggests the next president needs to think more systematically about problems that are, well, systemic. “I would set up problem-solving teams that include experts from the academic, business, and government sectors as well as representative ordinary Americans,” she says. “Their mandate would be to review data, analyze a constellation of problems, formulate solutions, and then consider the scenarios that would unroll from implementing each. Then I would invite affected constituencies to assess the feasibility, costs, and consequences of the proposed solutions.”

But she’s quick to note that any solution will take time. “Since the problems facing the nation were decades in the making, our leaders should expect that solutions may well take as much time and should resist the pressure to seek quick and easy fixes,” she says. “There aren’t any.”



“FORMULATE A FOREIGN POLICY THAT RECOGNIZES THE UNIQUENESS OF IRAN.”

Iran’s nuclear power program worries many Americans who believe the country may become a threat to global security, and the specter of Iran-as-the-next-Iraq looms heavily in national discussions. But CLA professor of history Iraj Bashiri says those discussions neglect a crucial point: Iranians are Indo-European in their ethnic origin. They share their earliest cultural ties with the West not the Middle East.

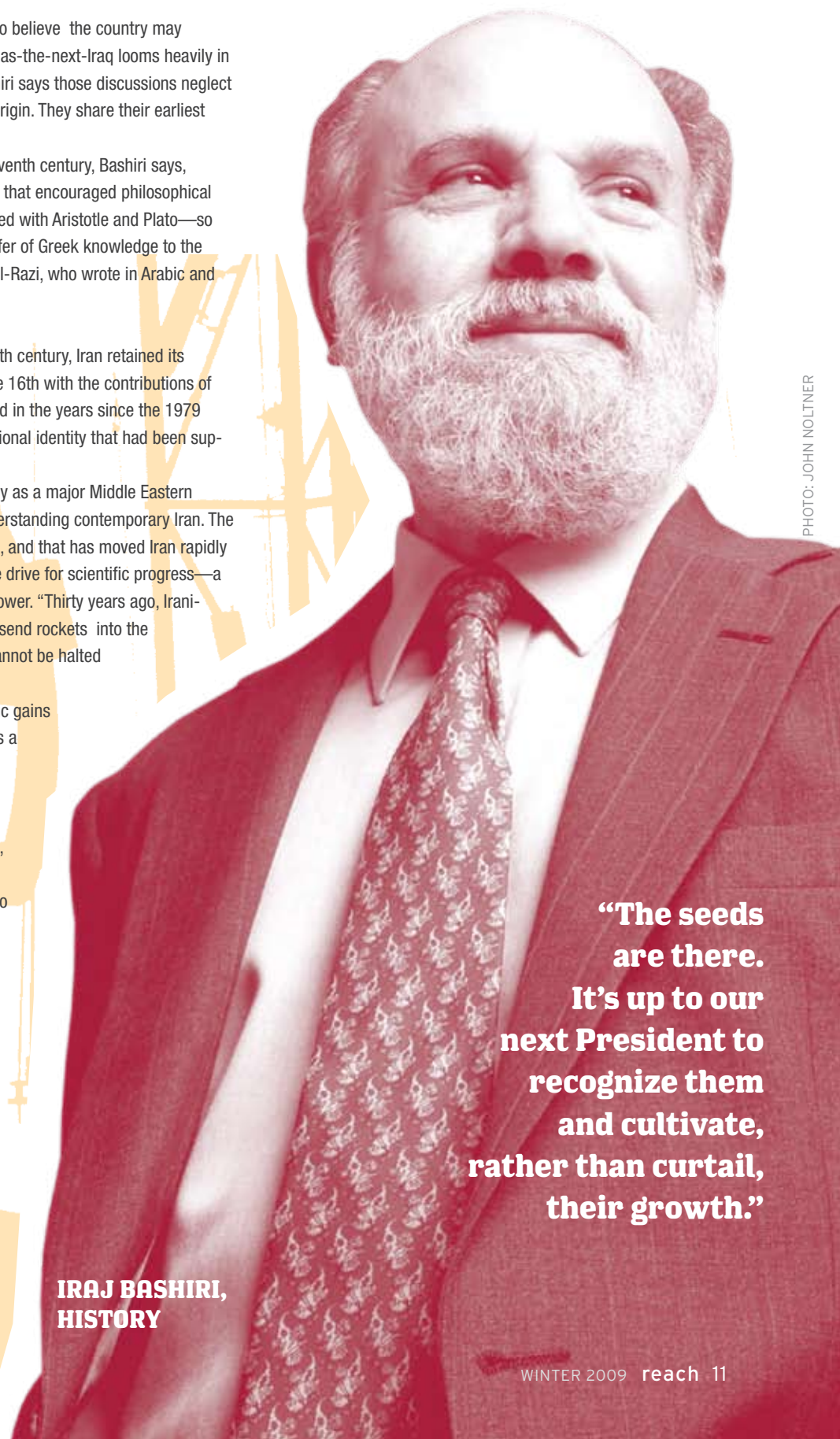
Before Iran was annexed to the Arab world in the seventh century, Bashiri says, Iranians were Zoroastrian, members of a religious tradition that encouraged philosophical contemplation. Iranian philosophers became deeply engaged with Aristotle and Plato—so much so, he says, that “Iran became a bridge for the transfer of Greek knowledge to the Western world. Philosophers like Avicenna, al-Biruni, and al-Razi, who wrote in Arabic and were influenced by Greek philosophy, were Iranian.”

After the Islamic world rejected philosophy in the 13th century, Iran retained its philosophical tradition and enhanced it tremendously in the 16th with the contributions of philosophers Mir Damad and Mullah Sadra. It has flourished in the years since the 1979 Iranian revolution, as Iranians have moved to reclaim a national identity that had been suppressed by Western domination.

Iran’s Western roots are obscured by its stature today as a major Middle Eastern power, but Bashiri thinks those roots are significant in understanding contemporary Iran. The philosophical thought that underlies Iran’s present thinking, and that has moved Iran rapidly to its present position in the Middle East, has promoted the drive for scientific progress—a drive Bashiri sees in its recent efforts to develop nuclear power. “Thirty years ago, Iranians did not have any manufacturing capability. Today they send rockets into the atmosphere.” It’s the type of progress, he believes, that cannot be halted by bombing a few installations.

Nor should it be. Rather than interpret Iran’s scientific gains as evidence of bad intentions, we might see its progress as a sign that Iranians may be reclaiming the common ground they once shared with the West. Bashiri sees Iranians turning, more and more, to reason and science as a way to address their problems. They face, after all, the same energy problems that we do. “Iran’s philosophical distinctiveness may make it more receptive to diplomatic negotiation about its use of nuclear power than we currently think possible,” he says. Of course, limits on Iran’s compatibility with the West will still exist so long as it remains an Islamic theocracy. But Bashiri is confident change is in the air. “Iran is on the threshold of an Enlightenment,” he says. “Reason is playing a major part in the decision-making of the Iranians as a people, as opposed to a government. The seeds are there. It’s up to our next president to recognize them and to cultivate, rather than curtail, their growth.” ∞

PHOTO: JOHN NOLTNER



**IRAJ BASHIRI,
HISTORY**

“The seeds are there. It’s up to our next President to recognize them and cultivate, rather than curtail, their growth.”

Mechanism design

Decades ago, the late U of M economist Leo Hurwicz developed an abstract theory called “mechanism design.” Just months before his death in June, he was honored with a Nobel Prize for the theory, which now shapes solutions to some of the world’s most mind-boggling problems. But what on earth is it?

BY DOUGLAS CLEMENT

Leo’s legacy



ON DECEMBER 10, 2007, the Nobel Prize committee assembled in Stockholm to present the 2007 award for economics to three American scholars.

Two of them took the stage to accept their gold medallions. The third, University of Minnesota professor emeritus Leo Hurwicz, remained in Minneapolis.

It wasn’t a protest, by any means, simply a recognition that international travel, especially for a worldly 90-year-old, is sometimes more burden than adventure. (And really – Sweden in December?)

Staying home was also symbolic of the work for which Hurwicz was being recognized: Rules aren’t immutable; changing them can result in better outcomes. The trick, mastered by Hurwicz, is in knowing how to change them.

So, also on December 10, Jonas Hafstrom, the Swedish ambassador to the United States, arrived at the Ted Mann Concert Hall at the University of Minnesota and presented the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences to Leonid Hurwicz—who was surrounded by more friends and family than could ever have flown to Sweden.

A better outcome, by design.

Abstract but applied

“Mechanism design” is the formal name of Hurwicz’s theory. It is a field he invented a half-century ago and developed over subsequent decades. Today, mechanism design is as fundamental to modern economic thought as quantum theory is to physics, and in its mathematical density perhaps as difficult to understand.

But while the theory is complex and abstract, it is also intensely pragmatic, and finds light now in a wide range of applications—from the creation of better voting procedures, to improved provision of credit to farmers in Thailand, to carbon emissions markets that may help curb global warming. Thanks to mechanism design, medical schools design procedures to find residency matches, donated kidneys find their way to the best recipients, and electricity producers better supply their markets.

It’s all due to theorems devised years ago in a small office in Heller Hall on the University’s West Bank solely because Leo Hurwicz asked the question: “Why should we take existing institutions for granted?”

Minneapolis, December 10, 2007:
Leo Hurwicz accepts the
Nobel Prize in Economics from
Swedish Ambassador Jonas Hafstrom

“The success of emissions trading is further proof that the private sector brings forth enormous creativity in solving social problems if we introduce a profit motive and a price signal.” — Richard Sandor, U of M alumnus, founder of Chicago Climate Exchange



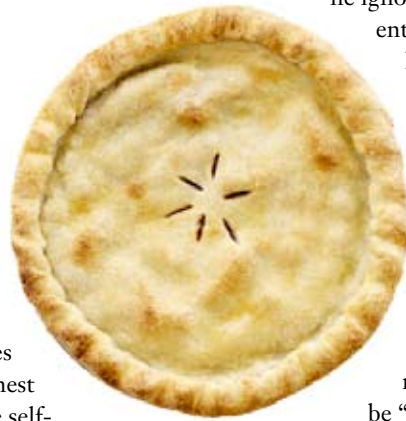
Easy as pie

“Mechanism design” is the idea that social, political and economic institutions (mechanisms) can be shaped (designed) to yield superior results.

“Whether one considers auctions, elections or the taxes we pay, our lives are governed by mechanisms which make collective decisions while attempting to take account of individual preferences,” wrote the Nobel Prize committee in explaining the economics behind the award. “Mechanism design can be described as the art of producing institutions that align individual incentives with overall social goals.”

Consider this familiar example: Two people agree they want to divide a pie equitably. How can they achieve that “social” goal? By the rules of the optimal mechanism, known to us all since childhood:

- 1) One person divides the pie into two slices.
- 2) The other chooses the first slice.



Because the second person, out of self-interest, will likely choose the larger of the two slices, the first person has an incentive to cut the pie perfectly in half. The rules don’t rely on either person being honest or altruistic. Rather, they harness the self-interest of each individual in such a way that the best possible outcome is achieved.

Rules for dividing a pie might seem child’s play, but changing the variables quickly increases complexity. Increase the number of people or pies, make one person the pie’s owner, introduce money or differing preferences or types of pie, and the rules—and the math—become much more difficult.

But what about the “invisible hand,” Adam Smith’s famous metaphor? A student of introductory economics learns that perfectly competitive markets harness the self-interest of individuals to achieve the best possible allocation of scarce resources. Doesn’t that cut through the confusion?

Not quite, the Nobel committee observed. Although these ideal competitive markets do a remarkable job of satisfying people’s preferences with maximum efficiency, “in practice,” the committee said, “conditions are usually

not ideal. Competition is not completely free, consumers are not perfectly informed ... [and people] may use their private information to further their own interests.”

This is where Hurwicz offered Smith a helping hand, designing mechanisms for situations that are less than ideal.

“People are not angels”

When Hurwicz began research on mechanism design, he ignored the issue of whether people would obediently follow the rules he designed. “Whenever I was asked to present some of my work,” he told an interviewer, “I would start by saying ‘Of course, the incentive problem is very important, but I will assume that people are angels ...’ At some point I decided that since I know people are not angels, perhaps I should not completely ignore the incentive aspect.” And that, really, was his breakthrough. Rather than rely on coercion or unrealistic assumptions about human behavior, he would insist that mechanisms be “incentive-compatible,” he said, “a system of rules designed in such a way that people would have an incentive to obey these rules.”

“What Leo brought to the table was the insistence that any mechanism must be incentive-compatible,” says V.V. Chari, professor of economics at the U of M. “That is, we cannot rely on individuals to act in some social interest. Instead we must expect them to act in their private interests. And given that, any mechanism must provide people with the incentives to take the right action at the right time. Leo developed that language and brought it to the forefront of economics.”

Global warming

Perhaps the most global of all applications of Hurwicz’s theory is climate change, the object of a mechanism



PHOTO: TERRY FAUST

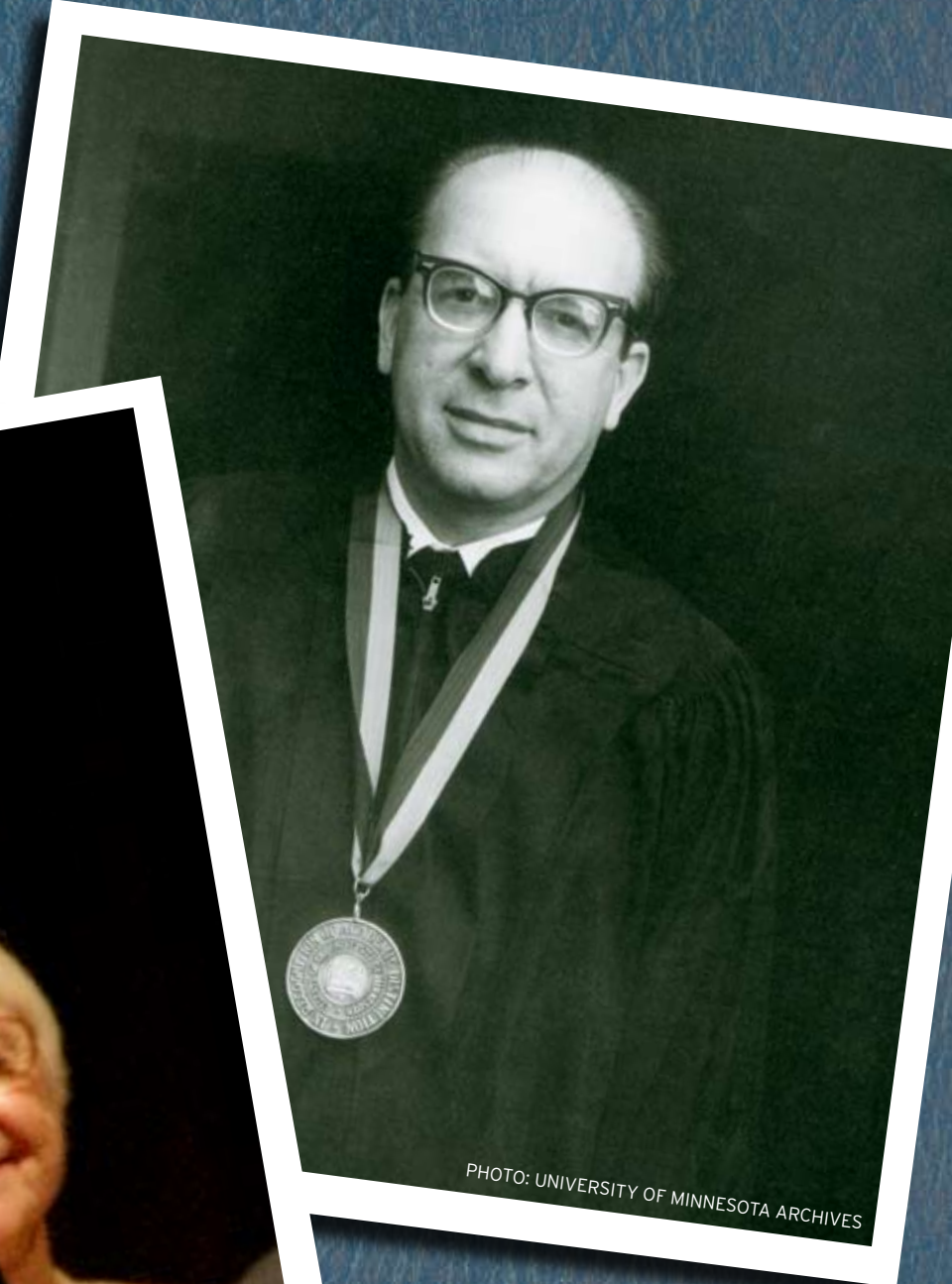


PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA ARCHIVES



PHOTO: EVERETT AYIOUBZADEH



PHOTO: TERRY FAUST

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: At Nobel celebration: granddaughter Rebecca Markovitz, Hurwicz, wife Evelyn, daughter Ruth Markovitz * Hurwicz in 1969, University of Minnesota Regents Professor * At Economics Department reception for family, friends, and colleagues; Narayana Kocherlakota, then department chair, emceeding * Accepting the Nobel Prize, with wife Evelyn at his side, and sister-in-law Lois Hurwicz

designed by University economics alumnus Richard Sandor (Ph.D., 1967).

In a 1995 alumni profile, Sandor highlighted courses with Leo Hurwicz as among the most valuable he took as he worked toward his doctorate in economics, saying they provided “a rock-solid foundation” for his future

work. That future included a professorship at University of California, Berkeley, and years as chief economist at the Chicago Board of Trade.

But today, Sandor is best known for creating markets for trading carbon emissions credits, a direct application of mechanism design. The

social goal: Curb global warming by limiting the quantity of carbon

released to the atmosphere.

The mechanism: the

Chicago Climate

Exchange (CCX),

a privately run

exchange

founded by

Sandor in

2003.

CCX is like a Craigslist for carbon dioxide. Its paying members—corporations and government bodies—commit to voluntary emissions targets, and if they manage to beat their target—producing cars or cement or electricity without emitting as much carbon as expected—they can sell those carbon credits to members that have exceeded their target.

The United States has yet to enact mandatory carbon caps, but European governments have already done so, and firms like Ford Motor Co. have joined CCX because they see it as in their self-interest to anticipate federal or state carbon regulations. As Sandor testified to the U.S. Senate several years ago, “The success of emissions trading is further proof that the private sector brings forth enormous creativity in solving social problems if we introduce a profit motive and a price signal.”

Private information

The Hurwicz theory also finds clear application in the government auctions that have flourished in recent years to sell public resources as tangible as timber and amorphous as radio frequencies.

When Hurwicz decided to deal with the fact that people aren’t angels, he meant, in part, that we don’t always speak the truth: We might not work as hard as we tell our bosses we will, we might tell a used car dealer that we can’t spend more than \$5,000 when our actual budget is twice that. This “private information” problem has been especially problematic when governments sell public resources because private buyers may understate the value they place on timber, for example, to get it at a bargain price.

Mechanism design theory has allowed economists to design better systems for selling public resources through auctions. “In the last

12 years or so, there has been a big

push to move beyond theoretical

mechanism design and bring

it to bear in real mar-

kets,” notes Peter

Cramton, an

economist

at the

Univer-

sity of

Maryland. “The shift is to what I would term ‘market design,’ where economists play a big role in the design of actual market mechanisms. Applications include timber auctions, spectrum auctions. The electricity market is another big area.”

“An auction is a particular mechanism and mechanism design has us thinking about what the incentives are for participation and bidding strategy and so on,” Cramton says. “A big aspect

“How do you design a government that is strong enough to make laws and enforce them, yet isn’t so strong that it overruns individual freedom? You see applications of mechanism design all over in political economy.”

—David Epstein
Columbia University

of it is addressing the informational issues and trying to establish rules so there is better information conveyed in the bidders’ bids.”

Voting mechanisms

It might be crass to suggest that elections are the ultimate government auction, but mechanism design is also finding direct application in improving voting procedures.

“Often we have problems like finding a voting system that will have certain properties, and the techniques we use to figure out the answer to those problems are mechanism design,” observes David Epstein, professor of political science at Columbia University. “The same theory used in economics to figure out a good auction mechanism is used in politics because voting is a type of mechanism. As we say, it’s a way of allocating or producing results and you get different results depending on how people value the object in question. Here it’s an election, not a spectrum to be auctioned off, but the idea is the same.”

Epstein has studied how legislatures and courts can design political maps so that voters can achieve specified goals. “Do you want a political map to promote ‘substantive representation’ or ‘descriptive representation’? That is, do you want to focus on the type of people that get elected or the type of outcomes that a legislature produces?”

Political scientists like Epstein help policymakers figure out what kinds of redistricting will further legislative goals. “In fact, the Supreme Court has a lot to do with that in the voting rights area,” he notes. “They’re going to lay down basic principles of redistricting and

given those principles, the different states will implement them.”

Of course, mechanism design isn’t confined to U.S. voting systems. Roger Myerson, one of Hurwicz’s Nobel co-recipients, has done recent work on how to structure voting that will promote democracy in Iraq. “Democracy doesn’t come by edict,” he told *The New York Times* last year, “but by institutions and mechanisms that

ensure politicians must compete for the trust of the voters.”

Epstein himself has applied mechanism design in international contexts, consulting with the World Bank. “These projects are on democratization and corruption, one of the oldest mechanism-design problems there is,” he observes. “How do you design

a government that is strong enough to make laws and enforce them, yet isn’t so strong that it overruns individual freedom? You see applications of mechanism design all over in political economy.”

From kidneys to credit

Indeed, once you start looking, mechanism design seems ubiquitous. The process of matching medical school students to hospital residencies used to be one of ultimate pressure and potential disasters. It’s still stressful, but techniques derived from mechanism-design theory have rationalized the process considerably, achieving optimal matches between new doctors and the hospitals that need them. The same is true for kidney donations, where finding the right recipients for a particular organ donation has long been open to delay and mismatch. Here, too, mechanism design has smoothed the process by establishing rules of the game that are incentive-compatible and oriented toward optimal solutions.

The arcane formulas and abstract theory that constitute mechanism design even find relevance in the daily life of farmers in rural India and Thailand, where University of Chicago economist Robert Townsend conducts his research. For nearly two decades, Townsend (U of M Ph.D. 1975), has studied the work patterns, production methods and credit markets of Indian and Thai farmers and found that mechanism design theory is an incredibly fruitful way of understanding those economies.

In the Indian villages that Townsend studied, for example, small groups of farmers would cooperatively rent farm acreage from a landowner. Through careful data gathering and analysis,

Townsend better understood how these farming arrangements actually worked. Would some farmers work less than others, pretending to be sick? If so, how would other farmers share the harvest? How was weather-risk shared between farmers and the landowner?

“We wanted to know if they shared risk within the village reasonably well or if dealing with incentives caused them to deviate from an optimal allocation,” says Townsend.

He’s studied similar situations in Thailand, as part of a 10-year research project to understand how microcredit—small loans given to farmers with varying arrangements for repayment—can be better structured.

“By writing down these explicit models in the tradition of mechanism design,” notes Townsend, “you can back out implications for observables.” That is, you can see how incentives and rules of the game resulted in observed outcomes. Then you can grasp whatever problems are amenable to solution. “If it’s an information problem, then potentially the [lender] might want to do a bit more monitoring to get more information about the borrower’s actions. Or if it’s a commitment problem [where borrowers don’t repay loans], then the [lender] ought to think about more stringent penalties imposed on borrowers.”

In both India and Thailand, Townsend’s exhaustive research has applied the theory of mechanism design at the most basic level. “We’ve been gathering an enormous amount of data and found that these principles apply throughout,” he says. “It’s all been geared toward first, understanding how things actually work, and second, thinking about possible remedies.”

Catching up

Had the contributions of Leo Hurwicz been recognized earlier, before he turned 90, he might have traveled to Stockholm for the award ceremony. But no one would suggest that the Minneapolis celebration was a lesser affair. By staying at home, he shared his honor with the people who surrounded him during the years spent creating and refining this seminal theory.

One of them, his son Maxim, shared these words at the gathering: “When Leo first started talking about mechanism design ... there was no immediate, concrete application for his theories. But these days we don’t have to look far to see what Leo was imagining and trying to explain a half century ago”

It has just taken a few decades for the world to catch up. ∞

glittery DIGITRY

BY MARY SHAFER

Ahhh,
the good
old days.

POSSIBLY YOU REMEMBER.

Squeaky chalk-on-blackboard.
Dry-as-dust textbook.
Thumb-sized professor way
down there behind the podium.

>> NOW FAST-FORWARD TO 21ST CENTURY CLA.

There's still a place for the lecture, to be sure, but for today's students, even PowerPoint presentations can seem positively outdated. Teaching and learning—not to mention research and outreach—have become wired, interactive, electronic, immediate, and, most would say, a lot more fun.

Take a look at some of the more innovative—and spectacular!—uses of technology around CLA.

ART TO GO

YOU THINK art IS STATIC?

Something only for the gallery wall? FASTEN YOUR SEATBELT.

Art on Wheels is a hands-on class in which students create video works with mobile projection units that include a specially designed bicycle, generator, laptop, powerful projector, and control interface. Students project their work onto urban buildings—or even trees and streets. The program is under the direction of assistant professor of art Ali Momeni.



PHOTO: SAM ENGLUND



THE EYES

HAVE

SOMETIMES,
YOU JUST
CAN'T GET
CLOSE ENOUGH.



And if you want to **MEASURE EYE MOVEMENT**, well, you have to get really, really close. To do that, researchers in fields like psychology and cognitive linguistics are using a device called an eye tracker. Set up in CLA's Social and Behavioral Sciences Laboratory in Blegen Hall, the eye tracker measures and records eye movements correlated with displays on a computer screen. The research applications are practically infinite—the tracker can measure everything from driver fatigue to reading rates in people with vision-field loss.



PHOTO: KELLY MACWILLIAMS



<< MULTIPLE CHOICE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Some students use “clickers” in the classroom these days. It works like this: The professor asks students to respond to a question. They do, using handheld devices. A computer tallies the results and, at the teacher’s signal, a histogram (bar graph) displays the results on a projection screen in front of the room. Because each student’s selection is anonymous and no one has to raise a hand, the clicker bypasses peer pressure. Known technically as “student response systems” (SRs), clickers are battery-operated and handheld—more or less like small TV remotes, except that the buttons are used to submit answers, rather than change channels. >>



PHOTO: KELLY MACWILLIAMS

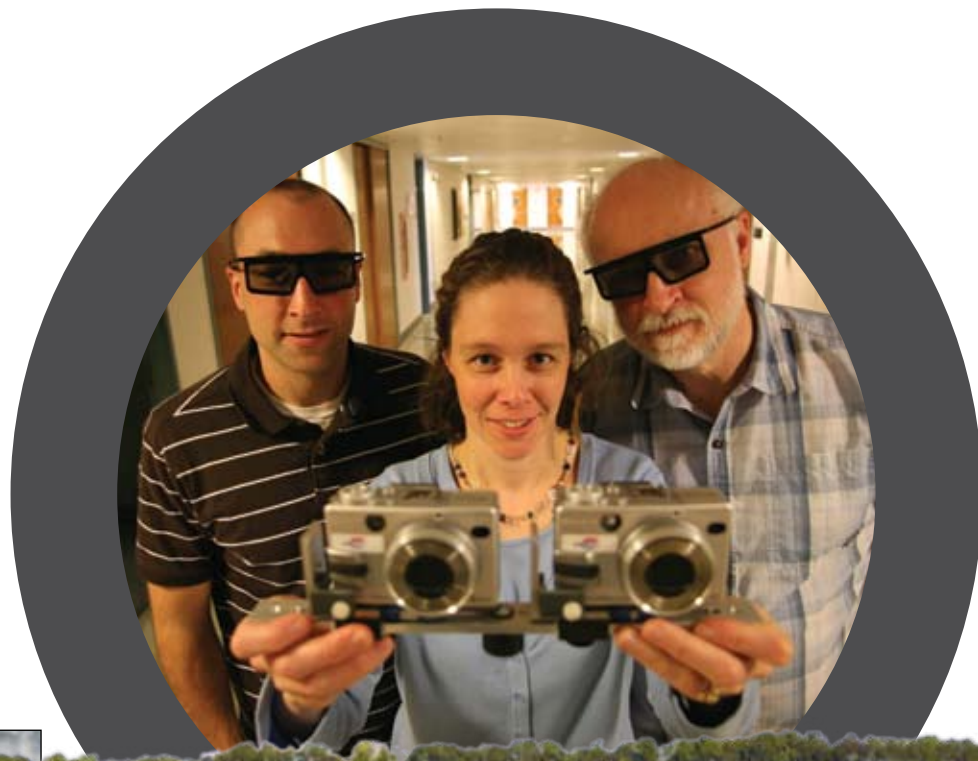




>> **THE BLEGEN HALL CLOSETS** that once stored maps are empty. No need for flat maps when goggles and a 3D projection system take you on virtual field trips: the GeoWall. Used mostly in geography and geology classes, it employs **TWO PROJECTORS AND POLARIZED GLASSES** to allow everyone to view at the same time. If it's not feasible to take an entire class on a field trip, for example, the GeoWall becomes the alternative. Geography assistant professor Susy Ziegler and two of her colleagues, senior cartographer Mark Lindberg and graduate student Dan Sward, have also used the GeoWall in the community with students and older adults.

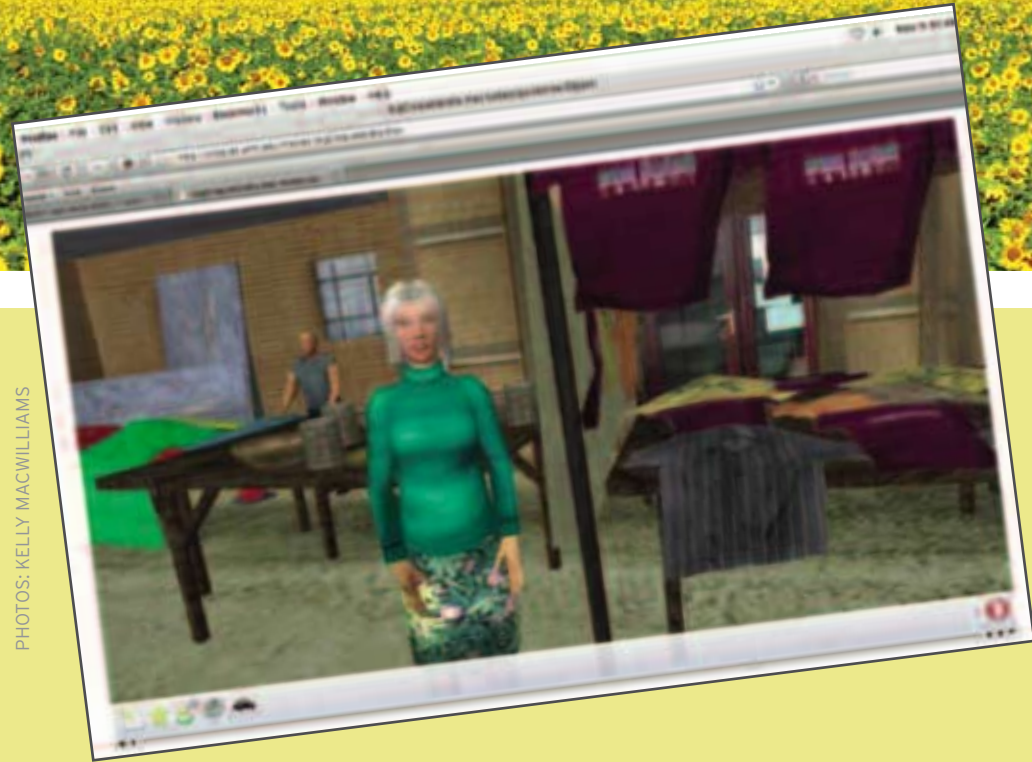


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<http://www.geog.umn.edu/geowall/>



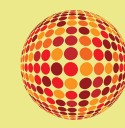
VIRTUAL

EARTH



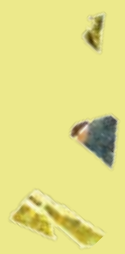
PHOTOS: KELLY MACWILLIAMS

IMMERSE ME



SO THE BEST WAY TO LEARN a language is to immerse yourself in the culture in which the language is spoken. How to do that in the classroom? Visit Croquelandia, a virtual Spanish world. Students must ask for help, apologize, and shop at the market, for example, interacting with several Croquelandia characters in the process. Each interaction requires students to choose from options that are grammatically correct but pragmatically different. That means they have to learn the culture as well as the language. Funded in part by a Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL) grant, the project has been led by Julie Sykes, a Ph.D. candidate in Spanish and Portuguese. ∞

>> **YOU CAN BE A TOURIST YOURSELF BY CHECKING OUT SYKES'S BLOG AND LINKING TO THE TRAILER**
<http://www.jmsykes.net/2007/11/croquelandia-trailer.html>



لطفاً دعاوت نکنید

بفرمایید

وارد در

The Persian language, written from right to left, does not always translate to English, thanks to both linguistic and cultural differences. For example, the first line, "Please do not taarof," has no direct English equivalent, nor does the second line—"befarmaayn"—an imperative verb and polite word for many situations. In context, its meaning could be "help yourself," or "sit down," among many others. The third line reads, "to enter [through] a door:"

By Judy Woodward

Speaking of Language

IF CULTURE IS THE PRISM THROUGH WHICH WE VIEW THE WORLD, LANGUAGE IS OUR ATTEMPT TO ORDER THAT WORLD AND GIVE IT MEANING. AT THE U OF M, NEARLY 40 LANGUAGE OPTIONS PROVIDE A WEALTH OF CULTURAL OPPORTUNITY.

IT'S YOUR FIRST VISIT TO THE HOME OF YOUR NEW IRANIAN ACQUAINTANCE AND YOU CAN'T WAIT TO TRY SOME OF THAT TERRIFIC ROSE-WATER-INFUSED CUISINE YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT.

Mahmoud Sadrai

Instructor of Persian and linguistics

Politely, your host offers you something to eat. You've been studying your Persian dictionary for just this moment, and you're ready. "Wow, thanks," you say in Farsi, smiling broadly in the interests of international understanding. "I'm starving!"

Congratulations. You've just revealed yourself to be a social barbarian, completely unversed in the elaborate rituals of *taarof*, the Persian social code that governs virtually every aspect of behavior in the highly nuanced world of Iranian hospitality.

"A different language is not just another vocabulary; it's a different vision of life," says Mahmoud Sadrai, instructor of Persian and linguistics. As a teacher of Persian, Sadrai believes that his job is to teach the culture as well as the vocabulary.

Persian is just one of the nearly 40 languages taught at the University of Minnesota. Every one of them holds the promise of introducing a new world and a fresh perspective on life, but only if the learner understands one critical point: When it comes to learning a language, your grasp of grammar may be impressive, your vocabulary large, and your ac-

cent native-like, but, if you don't understand cultural practices like *taarof*, you haven't learned the subject.

Sadrai defines *taarof* as an elaborate "system of politeness strategies." He explains the social misstep involved in accepting food too quickly. "In Persian culture, you are obligated to offer food," he says, but it's also rude to accept too quickly. "You can't accept until the third offer," he says. A brash American might note inwardly at that point that the food is getting cold, but he would be missing the point. Sadrai says, "Even though you know your position [in the social hierarchy] you must go through the ritual of self-effacement. Part of *taarof* is saving face, and allowing others to save face."

An all-encompassing system that covers every social encounter, *taarof* explains why, for example, it might take an hour to bid your Iranian host a polite farewell. Noting that *taarof* helps define and enforce social hierarchies, Sadrai says, "It's a way of giving deference, but the politeness need not be sincere."



Tomoko Hoogenboom

Former lecturer and lead teacher in the U's Japanese Program in Asian Languages and Literatures

Like Persian, Japanese is written from right to left. The above reads: Keigo "polite form," Sonkeego "an honorific expression," Kenjoogo "a humble expression," and Teineego, "a courteous expression."

WIDENING THE LENS

There are all kinds of reasons to learn a language, says Elaine Tarone, director of the University's Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA). Studies show, for example, that children in language immersion programs have greater cognitive flexibility and are more creative.

She also believes, though, that as Americans, we simply shortchange ourselves if we cling to our monolingual culture. "We have a limited view of being human if we see things through only one cultural lens," says Tarone, a Distinguished University Teaching Professor of Second Language Studies. "We Americans value freedom, yet we [risk] locking ourselves into one way of seeing the world."

Beyond mastering grammar and vocabulary, real com-

munication depends on learning what she calls the "pragmatics" of a language. "As you become more proficient in a language, the knowledge of the culture becomes more important," Tarone says. "In fact, the two are so interrelated that you can't assess proficiency without talking about what [students] know about culture."

Say, for example, you need to apologize for a minor social blunder. To do that, a student has to understand not just words and sentence structure, but also the cultural nuances and the social standing of those who may have been offended. "You have to suit the language of apology to the degree of offense . . . [and] to use the language at that advanced level, you need to know the culture," she says.

But acquiring a level of proficiency that ensures cultural

as well as linguistic competence is no easy matter. Tarone points out that there are times when a student's native culture can consciously or unconsciously sabotage the learning process. Take the delicate matter of what Western society defines as plagiarism. American students are raised to be individualists, accustomed from their earliest school days to reformulate and synthesize assigned reading "in their own words."

Not so for students from some Asian cultures, says Tarone. "They may come from a culture where the learning model is to memorize from the experts," she explains. "They say, 'I am not worthy to change this expert's words.'" For these students, putting something in their own words is not the sign of healthy engagement with the subject matter, but the mark of a presumptuous usurpation of scholarly authority.

Such difficulties are not confined to Asian students striving to master English. Tomoko Hoogenboom, who was a lecturer and lead teacher in the U's Japanese Program in Asian Languages and Literatures last year, knows her American students have extra difficulty mastering the elaborate forms of *keigo*, the Japanese system of honorifics used to establish formal social relationships. "In Japanese culture," she says, "there are so many ways of politeness. You need to find out where you belong."

Every public encounter in Japanese involves establishing oneself as a member of an in-group or an out-group, says Hoogenboom, and using specific language prescribed for each role. She explains that so apparently simple an exchange

as entering an office and asking to speak to the boss can involve an exhausting linguistic calculus for those not comfortable in the intricacies of *keigo*.

The person who enters the office makes it clear that he or she is a member of the "out-group" by referring to the boss with special honorific forms. The staffer to whom the question is addressed must underscore his or her own "in-group" status by referring to the boss in what Hoogenboom calls "extra-modest" language.

Add to this ritual the fact that there are separate language forms reserved for men and women, and it's no wonder that Hoogenboom has her teaching work cut out for her. To help her students, she says, "We create role-playing situations. Each student gets a status card." When the cards are reshuffled and the student gets a new one, "[he or she] needs to change the style of speaking." Hoogenboom says, "Most of my students are fascinated by the differences from American culture."

But that doesn't mean they find them easy to understand. Tarone and her colleague Noriko Ishihara have written about the discomfort that some American students feel when they are expected to use *keigo* to superiors. "It's difficult for Americans to do this," Tarone says, citing an

LEARNING LANGUAGE,
LEARNING CULTURE

Elaine Tarone

Director of the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition





PHOTO: LASZLO REGOS, COURTESY OF TEMPLE ISRAEL

ERWIN KELEN

Full Circle^o

THE DEINARD CHAIR: A GIFT OF COMMUNITY

From Erwin Kelen's office on the 49th floor of the IDS Center in downtown Minneapolis, the city stretches out across landmarks, rivers, and just to the east, the University of Minnesota campus.

For Kelen, the city and the campus are inseparable. Here he has had a successful career as a businessman and venture investor. And here is where he earned a graduate degree after coming to the University as a refugee from Hungary.

"I had no papers to prove I had a degree," he says, though indeed he had graduated from the Technical University of Budapest. "The University accepted me, telling me that we'd just see if I could do the work."

The graduate degree Kelen earned at the U laid the foundation for his successful career—and he never forgot that. Wanting to give something back a few years ago, he settled on the idea of endowing a professorship.

In the meantime, the College of Liberal Arts had hoped for a long time to fund a position in modern Jewish history.

"We have had colleagues who have sometimes taught courses in this area, but we have never before had a scholar on the faculty who was trained in Jewish history and whose entire research, writing, teaching, and public outreach has been about Jewish history," says Eric Weitz, history department chair. "So this is a very exciting new departure for the department and for CLA."

Kelen was not only enthusiastic about the possibility, but he also knew that others would be as well. In fact, if this chair is about anything, it is about the power of committed people coming together for a cause in which they believe. By the fall of 2007, the contributions of a num-

ber of donors had created the Deinard Chair in Modern Jewish History, housed in and initiated by the Center for Jewish Studies.

Why "the Deinard Chair"? Amos Deinard, a founder of the Leonard, Street, and Deinard law firm was also a philanthropist, a lifelong activist on behalf of the oppressed—and Erwin Kelen's father-in-law. It seemed only fitting to name the chair after him.

This fall, Daniel Schroeter, a scholar recruited from the University of California-Irvine, arrived on campus to fill the position.

"Daniel Schroeter is an ideal scholar and teacher for us because his work intersects with so many other initiatives and programs in CLA," Weitz says. "His research has been primarily on the Jews of Morocco, so he connects with our burgeoning courses and programs on the Middle East. He will be part of the Mediterranean Initiative, especially the new program in Islamic Societies and Cultures. And as someone whose work concentrates on North Africa, he also intersects with our renowned program in African History.

"In short, he is someone with distinguished accomplishments in his area of specialization, but whose work and interests branch out far beyond that. E-mails and letters have poured into us from scholars around the world—in Morocco, Israel, France, Britain, Canada, and the U.S.—congratulating us on making a superb hire."

And for that superb hire, credit goes to those who made it possible in the first place. Other donors to the chair were Richard and Beverly Fink; Lyle Berman; Steve and Sheila Lieberman; Lawrence and Linda Perlman; and Frank and Carol Trestman.

Temple Israel, Minneapolis's first Jewish congregation, was organized in 1878. Its library is a resource for scholars studying the history of Judaism and the local Jewish community.



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FROM MARY HICKS



PHOTO: EVERETT AYOUBZADEH

Fall. The sounds of the Marching Band float through the air. Our impressive new students have unpacked and quickly settled into their new lives on campus. No matter how many times I witness the rush of enthusiasm that comes with the season, I never tire of it. These young people hold the hope for our collective future—as members of the University community and far beyond.

It is a fitting moment to thank our generous donors for another impressive year in philanthropy: More than 5200 individuals gave CLA a total exceeding \$14.4 million!

Your gifts make an enormous difference. While impact can be measured by data (please see side bar at left), the stories told by students are an even better barometer:

“Words cannot describe how grateful I am to receive this scholarship. People like you really do change lives. And I want you to know you are changing my life right now. I will be working harder toward my dreams because you are giving me hope.”
 - Mai Lee Vang, Marilyn Sussman Scholarship recipient.

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“I came here after completing a master's degree in psychology. A veteran myself, [I became interested in] the experience of service members returning from military deployments in either Iraq or Afghanistan...and...this has become my primary research interest. Your gift...will enable me to continue my research and complete the class work [for] my degree.”
 - Samuel Hintz, Graduate Student Counseling Psychology Program

Today's students face climbing tuition costs and difficulty finding relevant part-time jobs, and they struggle to balance work and study.

As indebtedness from college loans threatens to cripple new graduates beginning their careers, we must recommit ourselves to helping them start their professional lives on an even footing, and become productive citizens soon after graduation. Private philanthropy is an important tool in making that happen.

You can help by participating in our scholarship and fellowship programs. Among them, the Promise of Tomorrow drive for undergraduate scholarships and the 21st Century Match program for graduate students allow you to double the impact of your gift.

If you are interested in changing a student's life through a private gift, please contact me at hicks002@umn.edu.

On behalf of the students, faculty and staff of CLA, I offer heartfelt thanks for your continued friendship and generous support.

MARY HICKS,
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SKI-U-MA-RCH!

This fall's homecoming at the Metrodome in downtown Minneapolis marked the end of an era for the Gophers. And if anyone is more excited about that than the football team, it must surely be the Marching Band. When the U of M's new TCF Bank Stadium opens—on campus! – by fall 2009, it will include 20,000 square feet of consolidated space the Band will call its own. No more storing instruments in the cramped Northrop Auditorium basement. No more practicing music in one spot and dragging instruments to another to practice marching. With plenty of room for both practice and band facilities, the new quarters will be among the country's premiere marching band facilities as it should be—for one of the nation's premiere marching bands.

A campaign is underway to raise funds for the new facility and for leadership scholarships recognizing outstanding band-member service and achievement. To make a gift, please go to the Marching Band website at www.music.umn.edu/marchingband, click on Make a Gift and scroll down to Give Now. Thank you!