

CCE CURRENT

Summer 2013

*A publication for alumni and friends
of the College of Continuing Education*

*Aspirations
taking flight.*

COLLEGE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

1913-2013

CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF EXCELLENCE

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

From the Dean



Greetings,

“Post-traditional students” was a term I heard used a lot by prominent speakers at the recent national meeting of the University Professional and Continuing Education Association. I can relate to being a post-traditional student—even now, as I keep learning and learning. Perhaps you can, too. It is a description that also fits our current students very well.

They—we—are looking to learn in new ways, use new media, pursue studies that lie at the intersection of two or more traditional fields, and continue learning at any and every time of life. It is a time that calls for innovation in higher education, and we at the College of Continuing Education try to be right there at the forefront. Most of the innovation we are pursuing is aimed at opening doors of opportunity for motivated and aspiring students of all ages.

This spring, 320 students are graduating from our College, many having completed an interdisciplinary or applied bachelor’s degree started years before, others adding a certificate or professional master’s degree to their resume. We are very proud of them. The inspiring stories of several of our alumni along with our current students are spotlighted in this issue.

Many had doors opened thanks to our generous donors. All told, this year, 124 students earned CCE scholarships, nearly half of whom were the first in their families to attend college. In a short time, those students will follow in the footsteps of the graduates crossing the stage this spring to receive their diplomas and let their aspirations take flight.

In this issue you can read about visionary new scholarships established by organizations in the construction industry in order to open doors of opportunity for students drawn to this important industry.

Post-traditional students and lofty aspirations meet educational innovations and open doors. It’s an intersection that makes a real difference for individuals, families, communities, and our society. I hope you enjoy reading the inspiring accounts inside this issue.

With warm regards,

Dr. Mary L. Nichols
Dean, College of Continuing Education
University of Minnesota

Summer 2013 CCE CURRENT

Opening Doors Celebrating the Next Century of Excellence

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Distinguished Educator and award-winning travel writer Catherine Watson shares what *she* learns from students.

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CCE celebrates Margy Ligon and Lori Graven, whose work developing lectures and conferences that connected the U and the public sparked imaginations for decades.

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Educational



Each year the College honors distinguished educators for their work. This winter saw the recognition of award-winning travel writer and editor Catherine Watson, who has taught over a dozen writing workshops for the College. Her Distinguished Educator acceptance speech, excerpts below, vividly illustrates the connection between the expert and the novice, and how education is a two-way street.

I really believe that continuing education *is* a second chance.

Whether it's to finish a degree that wasn't possible in the four years right after high school, or to make a course-correction in midlife, or re-invent oneself after retirement—whatever the reason, continuing education expands our view of the world and deepens our connections with it—and with ourselves as well.

And for a teacher, it's a two-way street. After every writing workshop I teach, I always come away a better writer. The questions students ask make me put into words what I believe about writing.

That makes teaching and learning a kind of mutual dance—or a symbiosis—between teacher and student. I didn't realize, until this fall, how long that symbiosis could continue to work in my life.

I'd always given my students what I hoped was wise and useful advice. But over time, I began to feel as if I were saying "don't do as I do—do as I say." I finally admitted that I hadn't been as courageous as I was urging them to be.

Many of them were tackling book-length memoirs. I write short personal essays, each with its own story arc. I've been comfortable with that. I figured these essays would become chapters, and when I had enough—presto!—I'd stitch them together and have a book-length memoir of my own.

But books need a story arc, too.

This fall, I was applying for a grant, which meant submitting a good portion of my manuscript. I was getting more and more frantic, because the pieces weren't connecting, and I was running out of time.

I kept trying to put my chapters in order, like links in a chain. Only they wouldn't link with each other. It was like trying to forge an iron chain when the individual links were already soldered shut.

This submission deadline forced me to ask myself the same question many of my students had asked: "How do you untangle the threads of your life and re-braid them so they make sense to someone else?"

Then, when I was feeling most hopeless, I remembered one of my College of Continuing Education (CCE) students. I'd urged her to figure out what her main theme was, and then use it as a clothesline. "Hang all your chapters off of that," I had told her. "They don't have to hook to each other—but they DO have to hook to that clothesline."

I suddenly saw what the problem was. All this time, I'd had the theme wrong. All these years, and I hadn't seen—hadn't known—what the book was really about. I'd been hanging the Monday wash on somebody else's clothesline.

I made my deadline, but by then it almost didn't matter. Fresh ideas and new, open links were springing up like fountains, and I felt I'd gotten my voice back.

This is the kind of symbiosis—the kind of enlightenment—that continuing education makes possible for students and teachers alike.

CCE has always made that kind of insight and enlightenment possible—and now, after 100 years, the mission of the College is even more relevant—and more needed than ever.

CCE programs offer us new ways of thinking, new understanding of ourselves and our role in the world, new goals, new outcomes, and new potential for making a difference.

All of this adds up to a second chance. I think that's magic—genuine educational magic.

Class is "in" this summer

Personal enrichment programs such as those taught by Catherine Watson take place throughout the year.

Details on summer programs:
www.cce.umn.edu/learninglife
or 612-624-4000.



Opening doors
for students
to make a difference
in their community

Student Voice: **Anthony Osifuye**

Degree concentrations: **Health and Wellness Thematic, Pre-Med**

After working in a grocery store in high school, I knew I wanted a health and nutrition focus to my college studies and eventual career. I saw customers who would come through with mostly processed convenience food items, as opposed to some of the healthier items. I noticed a pattern over time of individuals who were on food stamps and aid making these choices.

It spurred an interest in health disparities across socioeconomic groups, and so when I was looking at degree plans, I wanted a focus where I could combine

public health, nutrition, and medicine, and make an impact.

That's why the Health and Wellness thematic option of the Inter-College Program (ICP) was perfect. This way, I could look at the health and nutrition idea from different angles, from all across the U. From social science to physical and biological sciences...it allowed me to develop a very comprehensive picture.

My career goal is to go into the medical field, ideally working in an underserved population with a diverse community.

My Inter-College Program degree gives me broader background that will help me do that kind of community work and be a stakeholder in the community, in addition to giving me the course work in the hard sciences.

I think my unique degree path will also be an advantage when the time comes to apply to med school. Graduate schools look at what you choose to do, and they see a lot of the biology and other hard sciences. I think an individualized degree, with a variety of courses, it makes me stand out a bit. It isn't a typical program.

Student Voice: **Valentine Eben**

Degree concentrations: **Information Technology Infrastructure, Global Studies, Social Justice**

Scholarships: **Julius Nolte-Harold Miller Scholarship and Karin L. Larson Interdisciplinary Education Scholarship recipient**

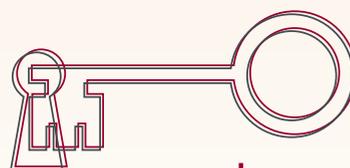
I grew up in Cameroon, where the government owned and controlled all the media outlets, T.V., radio, print, etc. As a child, I often heard stories of intellectuals and journalists killed or jailed for daring to question this regime, as well as stories about what life was like in the days of joined administration with Nigeria; about the electoral politics, and freedom of the press or freedom of association, etc.

So, when I was a teenager in the late 1980s, I followed with awe the pro-democracy protests in Eastern Europe. Before long, similar uprisings spread to Africa; and as the pro-democracy movement spread, I joined other community organizers to try and duplicate the uprisings in Cameroon. Because of my involvement in these protests, in 1998 I had to go into exile in Europe.

While there, I continued working in grassroots organizations. Aware of the importance of communication (i.e. media access) in garnering public

support for social justice causes, I became active in an alternative software foundation that provides internet services, computer training, and open-source software solutions to community-based organizations at very low cost.

My work [over the past 10-plus years] showed me how much more I could contribute to [these causes] with advanced IT training. That's why I decided to return to school in the Inter-College Program. It allowed me to put together a degree that covers exactly what I'm interested in—social justice, community organizing, and IT. The ITI portion will help me develop more technical skills, while my social justice and global studies courses will allow me to gain empirical knowledge about what others are doing to pair with the hands-on work I've been doing already. With my degree, I hope to help community organizations leverage technology in order to achieve their missions.



Advisers are key

Behind every student is an adviser providing assistance to help them shape a program to meet their needs.

"Valentine Eben's early years in Africa formed his consciousness and his thematic ICP degree focuses on how to support community involvement at the grassroots level through technology. Combining IT infrastructure with sustainability and global studies was truly unique; this demonstrates how a person's life experience and wish to effect change in the world can be expressed in the individualized degree."

-Karolyn Redoute, adviser

Student Voice: **Jennifer Hall**

Degree concentrations: **Ojibwe Language, Social Justice (Heritage Language Stewardship)**

Scholarships: **Julius Nolte-Harold Miller Scholarship, Karin L. Larson Interdisciplinary Education Scholarship, and WCA Gilford and Esther Remington Scholarship recipient**



Jennifer Hall

I'm passionate about two main areas. The first is the Ojibwe language, an endangered tribal language in Minnesota. The second is social justice, especially as it relates to language diversity. I think both issues can only be understood and improved when you work with society as a whole system. I was so happy to discover the ICP because it gave me a great opportunity to blend both of my passions into a unique, fulfilling course of study.

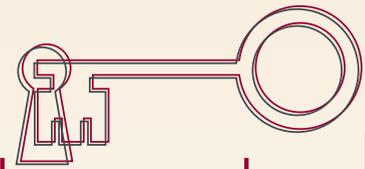
I've always had an affinity for languages. Ojibwe, in particular, is close to my heart because it's also a part of my heritage. It is a beautiful language, but endangered, and I wanted to be a part of the efforts to revitalize it enough so that it comes back into daily use. As for a whole-systems perspective to social justice, I became interested in it because I think it has a lot to teach us about solving systemic problems instead of reacting to the symptoms of a broken society.

The goal with my degree is to be able to use the principles of whole systems healing to learn to evaluate the myriad factors that have contributed to loss of the Ojibwe language and respond to

them in a way that would hopefully have a lot of leverage in support of revitalization.

I know it's somewhat of a unique combination, but I feel like it will be immediately applicable to my career goals and future plans. After graduation, I can see myself developing materials for immersion programs, teaching, or helping adult students learn how to speak it. I see my degree preparing me by giving me a foundation in Ojibwe... and for providing me the tools to think critically and work within a wider frame of reference when dealing with the issues facing language learners.

CCE has given me the flexibility to study in areas like Ojibwe, whole systems healing, anthropology, and education. This means that I'll graduate from the University with a unique degree that has given me the tools I need to be successful in any area I choose. It is a great program and has opened up many doors for me.



Advisers are key

Advisers work with students during the course of their degree to develop a deep understanding of their strengths and goals.



Karolyn Redoute

"Jennifer Hall came to CCE as a transfer student and has immersed herself in the study of Ojibwe and is working closely with faculty. I've watched her consciousness as a preservationist for native languages develop in the last two years. She will make a significant contribution to her chosen field."

-Karolyn Redoute, adviser

BUILDING A BALANCED WORKFORCE

The College and local companies work to boost the number of women and minorities in leadership roles in the construction industry.

This winter, the Minnesota Sports Facilities Authority announced that 20 percent of the construction work for the new Vikings stadium will go to women and minorities—with 11 percent of the construction contracts to go to women-owned firms and 9 percent to minority-owned businesses.

The group also set a “work force goal,” calling for 32 percent of all project work hours to be performed by minorities and 6 percent to be performed by women, which is in line with the new county-specific hiring targets unveiled last spring by Governor Mark Dayton and the Minnesota Department of Human Rights.

These targets are designed to bring the demographics of the construction industry more closely in line with the overall labor force—which is becoming increasingly more diverse.

And while the jobs are there, more work still needs to be done in attracting talented, qualified individuals to fill those roles. Says Peter Hilger, faculty member and internship adviser for the College’s Bachelor of Applied Science in Construction Management program, “Placing women and minorities into construction positions has not been a problem because they are so sought after. The issue is finding them.”

One of the best ways to find and draw top leadership talent into the program, Hilger says, is through scholarships.

In the past year, the College has received two major endowments, one from local company PCL Construction (\$100,000), and another (\$50,000) from the Twin Cities chapter of the Construction Financial Management Association (CFMA). Each of these will support a generous scholarship fund. The PCL Scholarship fund is geared to help women and minority students, in particular, become future leaders in the construction industry. The CFMA Scholarship is open to any student interested in construction management, finance, and accounting, with minorities and women encouraged to apply.

Scholarships like these benefit the students, but also the industry and the economy as a whole. Which is why his company was more than pleased to fund a scholarship, says John Jensvold, director of project development at PCL Construction.

“When the recent economic downturn began, the construction industry was already concerned over the long-term availability of trained personnel. The recession just served to mask an issue that was already on everyone’s minds just a few years ago. Our realization then is our realization again today—we need to actively grow the ranks of construction personnel at every level. Second, and just as important, we realize that women and minorities are going to play a key role in the long-term growth and health of our industry.”

CFMA scholarship committee chair Mike Michelson agrees. “[This industry] is one where hard-working people can earn an excellent wage, gain valuable skills, and advance to higher levels of responsibilities. I’ve seen multiple examples of trades people becoming project superintendents, project managers, even construction company executives given the right mixture of experience, education, and motivation. [In the wake of] the recession, fewer people have opted to enter [construction]...CFMA recognizes the need for motivated and energetic workers, and we are determined to get the word out about career opportunities in the field.”

It is a goal the College is happy to play a role in fulfilling. Says Dean Mary Nichols, “We are extremely proud to have such outstanding leaders in the industry partner with the College in this meaningful way.”

ADVISORY BOARD

Both PCL and CFMA are members of the Construction Management Program’s advisory board, where they and other industry leaders share their expertise, vision, and commitment to the future by helping educate the next generation of construction management professionals.



Scholarships illuminate *a new path*

*Scholarships help some of the best
and brightest students illuminate a
new path to their futures.*

*Here are the stories of just two of
this year's scholarship recipients.*

Timothy Church, CCE Centennial Scholarship recipient

Degree program: Bachelor of
Applied Science in Information
Technology Infrastructure (ITI)

A self-professed “computer geek,” Tim Church knew right away that the ITI program was the perfect fit for him.



“Working with computers comes easily to me, and I like helping people with them. I was often my family and friend’s go-to ‘computer guy’ when they needed help.

“ITI was a good fit for me, as I’m interested in the managing of systems angle—I’m fascinated by how computers connect; I enjoy setting up my own networking equipment at home, and playing with all of the settings. I felt like a computer science degree went too in-depth in areas I wasn’t looking for, and didn’t prepare me for the types of careers I wanted to explore.”

While he was excited about his studies, Church also was stressed about his rising financial costs, and worried that he might have to take time off from school in order to work more and save enough to pay for his final semesters. Becoming the first recipient of the CCE Centennial Scholarship changed all that.

“When I opened the letter saying I had been awarded the funds, I was ecstatic. Worrying about financial issues makes focusing on school very hard...this scholarship allowed me to pay off fully my spring semester and give full attention to my classes.”

Church is now ready to tackle his senior year, and then, hopefully an internship followed by a career in systems/network administration. “I’m so grateful for the opportunity. There are endless possibilities and opportunities for lifelong learning that come with this field. This scholarship opened the doors to all that for me.”

Liisa Beckman, Ingrid Lenz-Harrison Scholarship recipient

Degree program: Master of
Professional Studies in Integrated
Behavioral Health

In 1985, after three years of undergraduate work at the U, Liisa Beckman found herself “neither happy, nor doing well.” So, she left to join the workforce, moving cross country twice (to New York, and later to California) before returning to the Twin Cities and to her education—finishing her bachelor’s degree in deaf studies in 1999.

Since then, she has continued her work as a communications specialist and graphic designer. And while it is a job that Beckman has enjoyed, she felt there was an additional educational opportunity she needed to explore, one that tied directly to her personal history.

“I had been overweight since childhood. By my mid-20s, I was obese—dangerously so. My health was poor; I was on many medications; I was too overweight to have a child (something I very much

wanted to do)...and I was at loose ends. I was at the point where I didn’t want to live anymore.

“That’s when I found Overeaters Anonymous (OA), which saved my life. That was in 2000; in 2003, I became a 12-step sponsor. Through that role, I’ve gained direct insight into addiction and mental illness.”

She continues, “For years, I wasn’t sure what to do with my undergraduate degree, but now, after learning about CCE’s Integrated Behavioral Health program, I know precisely what I want to do. I would like to be able to bring what I learn in the Integrated Behavioral Health program about addiction and co-occurring disorders to bear on eating disorders/food addiction. The Twin Cities is home to one of the few deaf/hard-of-hearing inpatient addiction treatment programs in the country, and being able to work with individuals struggling with food addiction, in the deaf culture, would be a unique challenge.

It is a novel approach to the degree, and one Beckman could not have



undertaken without help from the Ingrid Lenz-Harrison Scholarship. “As a single parent, working full-time, finances are a challenge,” she says. “This scholarship eases some of that burden and helps make it possible. This degree will help me to combine a career and my personal interests—I’m ready to put my passion into practice, thanks in part to this generous gift.”

GOING PLACES

CCE graduates bring unique perspectives and interdisciplinary thinking to high-level administrative roles throughout the University.

Diana Harvey, Chief Communications Officer and Deputy Chief of Staff to President Kaler

Degree program: Master of Liberal Studies (MLS), 2009

For Diana Harvey, involvement with the U of M goes beyond simply going to school here or working here. It has had, she says, a “truly transformative impact” on her life.

She came to the U in the mid-1980s as a first-generation college student, and after graduating from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, went on to work in PR and communications in both the

corporate and nonprofit circles. Those roles sparked an interest in health care and education communications work, and in 2003, she returned to the U to work in communications, eventually being named the assistant dean for external affairs in the School of Public Health.

During her tenure there, Harvey made the decision to go to graduate school—and she found the MLS program that provides for self-designed degrees that include study across colleges and disciplines to be an ideal fit. “By that time, I had spent several years in higher education. Positions in my field often required an advanced degree, so pursuing an MLS degree made sense from a career advancement point of view. Plus, by this time in my life and in my career, I had a well-developed set of professional interests, but I didn’t necessarily have the formal education behind them. I was eager to take courses in public health and public affairs to complement my education and experience in communications.”

Harvey graduated in 2009; her areas of emphasis: public health, public affairs, and communications. In 2011, she was appointed to her current position of chief communications officer (CCO) and deputy chief of staff to President Kaler. It’s a challenging role, and one that keeps her on her toes—but it is also a position for which she is well-prepared, and enjoys tremendously.

“The most rewarding aspect of my job is getting to play a small role in telling the multitude of amazing stories coming out of the University of Minnesota every single day—the discoveries of our faculty members, the inspiration of our students, and the critical work of staff members. The U is making a difference in the lives of people here at home and around the world—it’s quite staggering when you consider the broad impact we, collectively, are having on our world.

Knowing and believing that, it is difficult to weather criticism of the U. The U is under intense public scrutiny. This

definitely makes my job more challenging, but at the same time it is motivating because it makes the job of communicating the University’s value all the more important. Personally, knowing the impact the University can have on people, makes it all the more rewarding for me to work here.”

Ann Jacklitch, Assistant Building Official, Capital Planning and Project Management

Bachelor’s Degree program: Construction Management (CM), 2012

As she turned 50, and her youngest child graduated from high school, Ann Jacklitch decided to finish her undergraduate degree at the U. “I had a two-year degree in architectural drafting and estimating, and was working as a plans reviewer in the University Building Code Division.

“Previously, I’d worked in architectural design for a number of places (including the U), and had also worked as a building inspector. I felt like I had a strong background in building codes, and in design, but was missing that third piece of the equation. Earning my Bachelor of Applied Science in the Construction Management program would give me that—it would give me a better understanding of the construction perspective/aspect, and enhance what I was doing in my career.”

That rounded perspective, Jacklitch believes, has been a crucial component in her academic and career successes. “So much of my learning was done in project teams—in groups that were made up of people of varying ages and experiences, as well as professional backgrounds.”

The value of project teams is underscored in her current role as assistant building official, a job she



Photo by Patrick O'Leary

Diana Harvey

moved into three years ago. One particular example, “frozen” in her mind, happened in 2010 following the post-blizzard collapse of the Metrodome roof. The Vikings were scheduled to host Monday Night Football at the Dome, but were forced to move to TCF Bank Stadium. Jacklitch was one of a team of several individuals from around the U who were tasked with getting the already-winterized TCF stadium ready for the game—in just eight days.

“It was a wide group—Athletics, Building Codes, Parking and Transportation, Environmental Health and Safety, Disability Services, UDS [University Dining Services], the representatives from the broadcast team, the police department, and more. We had to learn to work together seamlessly, in a very short amount of time. And I think anyone you talk to who was part of that, would say it was one of the best work experiences they’ve ever had.”

And even though she has been in the industry for many years, professionally, Jacklitch believes completing her degree has allowed her to see the world through new eyes.



“My degree qualifies me for so many things—project management, construction management, building codes. It really prepares you for so many management roles...When you open new doors with school, you start to see there are so many more possibilities where you can provide a different level of service or leadership for the common good.”

Bernard Gulachek, Associate Vice President for Information Technology

Degree program: **Master of
Liberal Studies (MLS), 2001**

Bernard Gulachek put his undergraduate degree in speech communication to good work at his alma mater—in the information technology field. And while at first it may seem off-course, after sitting down with him, one realizes that he is very much a people person, and what he’s doing relies as much on communication and soft skills, as it does technology and hardware.

Gulachek first started work at the U as a technology customer service representative in 1986, later moving to director of operations, then planning for the Office of Information Technology (OIT), and, most recently was named associate vice president for IT in May 2012.

“My roles here have been less about specific hardware, and more about managing people and systems. And while [these roles] have evolved through the years, they have typically been forward-looking. I truly believe that the research I did in innovation as part of the MLS program positioned me for success in this area, which requires a broad perspective.”

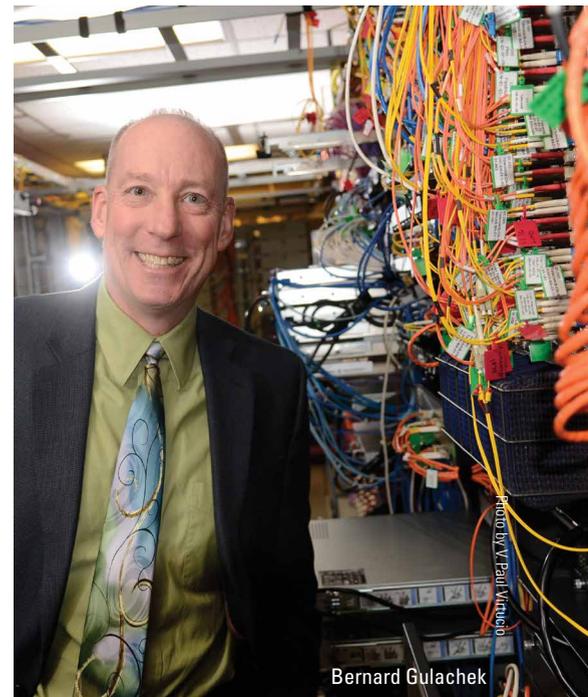
As the director of planning for OIT, it was Gulachek’s job to understand which new technologies they should invest in; which services and products should they sunset. In 2008, his title was changed to senior director for strategy and management, and he began to focus on strategies and initiatives for ALL of the U’s IT needs—not just OIT.

In his newest role, he has expanded on those duties, as his office works to accomplish President Kaler’s goal of aligning IT across the institution. It is his job to define roles, know where duplication occurs, and consolidate services.

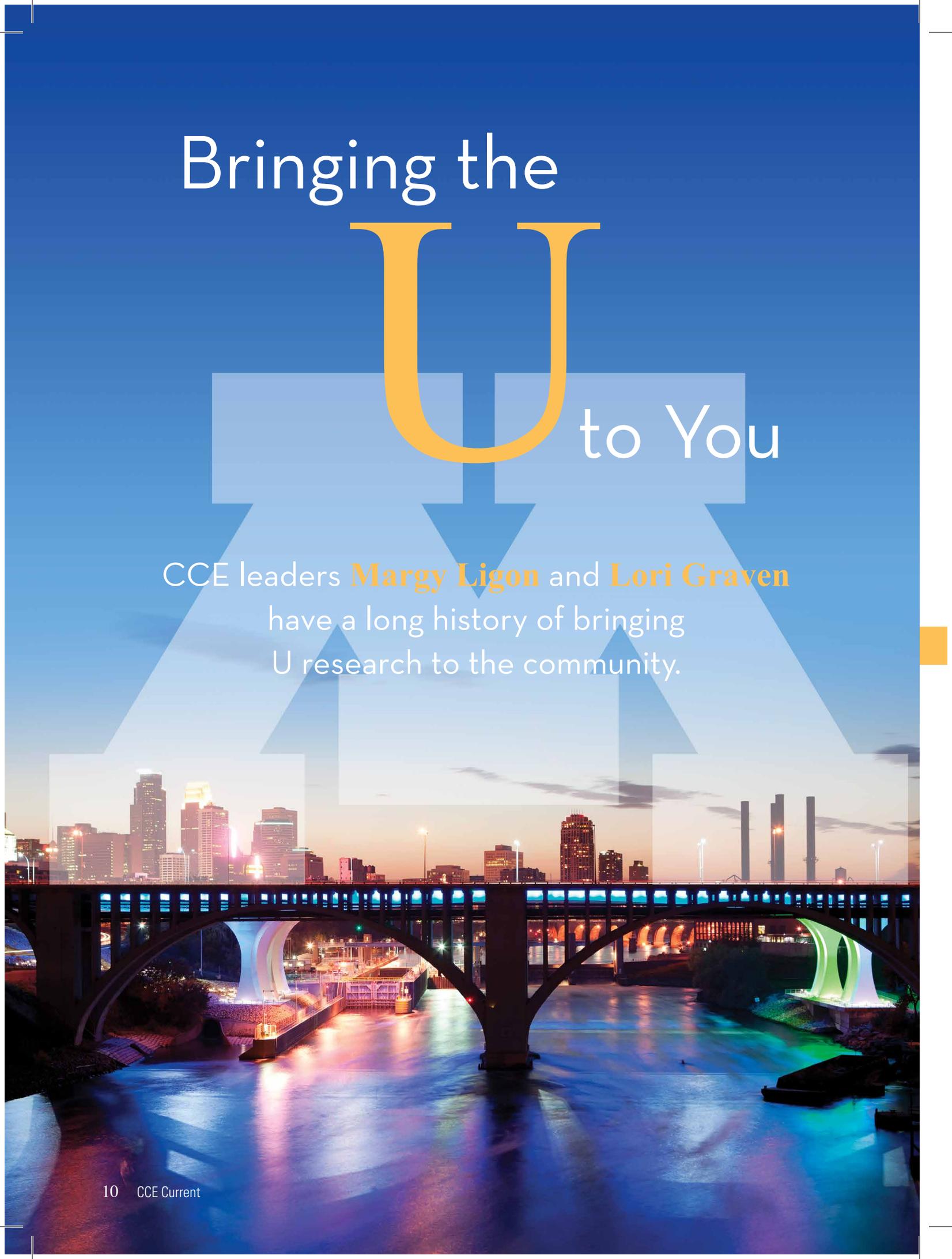
“It’s about finding the most efficient way to deliver the technology services that the institution needs—whether that is delivering at the department level, the central level, or by strategically sourcing to private industry. The goal is to maintain or improve service levels—but increase operational efficiency.

“What we’re doing is working to facilitate an IT community that is willing to work together through alignment, where duplicative activities are eliminated and complementary IT activities are harnessed to significantly advance the institution and its goals.”

Gulachek’s MLS work centered on the relationship between knowledge workers, information technology, and higher education, something that continues to be relevant to his career today, more than a decade after graduation. “It shifted my thinking away



from how to just keep technology running, to how technology would shape our world—which for me, was in higher ed. and how we work. This is exactly what I’m doing now: positioning the institution and the culture within it to meet the future from the technological perspective. It’s an interesting and rewarding challenge.”



Bringing the

U

to You

CCE leaders **Margy Ligon** and **Lori Graven**
have a long history of bringing
U research to the community.

Long heralded as an affordable and convenient way to access many of the best and brightest minds the U (and even the world) has to offer, CCE's personal enrichment offerings are a diverse palette of short courses, workshops, lectures, and events.

Equally acclaimed, the College's conference services and program planning unit also specializes in connecting the U to the general public—albeit from a different angle—as it fosters lively collaborative development, facilitates gathering of communities of professionals, and encourages dissemination of expertise through a host of conferences, workshops, and other events every year.

This spring, CCE celebrates the careers and accomplishments of the heads of each department—Margy Ligon in personal enrichment, and Lori Graven in conference services. Both Ligon and Graven will be retiring in June—each having left her distinctive stamp on some of the College's hallmark programming and offerings.

Margy Ligon

Featuring speakers and topics ranging from the historic to the slightly esoteric; from art and literature to science and nature; and from music and pop culture to politics and just about anything else you can find at the U, the personal enrichment programming is as varied as the interests of the audience attending.

For many people, offerings like LearningLife short courses, Saturday Morning Seminars, Headliners, and Great Conversations are their main connection to the University—making the College the face of the institution for them. Finding instructors and topics for short courses, and coordinating and producing events that keep participants coming back for more is no small task.

But for the past 13 years it has been a labor of love for Margy O'Neill Ligon. Energetic and effervescent, Ligon became the College's first director of personal enrichment programming in 2000, following a 25-year career in arts and nonprofit management. And for a politically savvy art historian with a voracious reading habit, there has been no better place to be.

"Like many in my generation, I dropped out of college to go vagabonding. And since my real passion was art, when I traveled I made pilgrimages to the world's great art museums," she says, explaining her career path.



After more than a year on the road, she returned to Minneapolis for a short stay—or so she intended. Ligon started taking art history courses in the evenings and received a scholarship from what was then Continuing Education and Extension. "I found the paperwork the other day and was shocked to see that my big scholarship was \$238. It seems so insignificant now, but it changed my life."

With the scholarship came the possibility of a work-study job at the Walker Art Center—the beginning of a 20-year tenure there, culminating as its director of education. Following that, she served as executive director of The Friends of the Minneapolis Public Library, again working to create standout public programming.

Both roles taught her a valuable lesson: "When you are looking for a scholar to put a topic in its social or historical context, you turn to the University of Minnesota faculty." It instilled in her a deep respect for the U's role in the

community, and so when an opening arose for a new position in the College of Continuing Education, she applied.

"I certainly wasn't looking to leave the library, but this was an amazing opportunity to return to my alma mater

and to create a high-profile lecture series that would connect the general public with some of that great research going on at the U."

Great Conversations rolled out two years later with Mark Yudof (then University president) and a former law student of his, political strategist Paul Begala, as the first speakers.

Says Ligon, "When I was setting up these conversations, I'd ask the faculty member, 'If you could talk to anyone in your field for an hour—who would it be?'"

"Within five minutes of Mark and Paul getting on the stage (in their cowboy boots), it was clear the format worked. It truly was a 'great conversation'—so fast and witty, and it was obvious they had a deep mutual respect and admiration for each other, personally and professionally."

While the formats for the different programs and offerings vary, the core mission of connecting the University

of Minnesota to the public has never wavered. “In Great Conversations and Headliners alone, we’ve presented 100 fascinating public discussions on topics ranging from global economics and human rights, to environmental issues and biomedical research,” Ligon says.

She continues, “This University is home to so many people doing such interesting work—and people in the community have clearly demonstrated that they want to know what’s going on at their University. When you time it with world events, or a national best-seller making waves, or a hot-button social issue—that connection is even more exciting.

“I’ve had a charmed 40-year career thanks in large part to the limitless talent and generosity of University faculty who were always willing to share their knowledge with the public, no matter the time or venue. It’s been an honor.

“But now,” she concludes with a smile, “it’s time to get back to traveling.”

Lori Graven

Lori Graven first came to the U both as a student and an employee in 1965, and in doing so, found a home away from home. In those first years, she worked in a number of “numbers” jobs.

“I needed the other half of my brain fulfilled, too,” she explains. So, in 1975, she took a program assistant position in CCE’s Department of Conferences—and from there worked her way up to the role she holds today of department head.

She has an ability to reach out to people, to connect, and to find a unique way to look at a problem, issue, or topic. That makes Graven very good at what she does. She and her conference staff members collaborate not only with U faculty, staff, and researchers, but also with industry professionals from the public sector to create thought-provoking experiences for attendees.

“Lori—and her staff—are the best at what they do. University academic members have a handle on the research [angle],” Gene Soderbeck of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and planning committee member of the Minnesota Water Resources Conference says. “Whereas the public members

can identify what’s happening ‘on the ground.’ Collectively, the different perspectives provide a better understanding of the water resource issues. When you pair that with Lori and the College’s proven administrative ability... it results in a positive experience for committee members, attendees, and presenters.”

U faculty member Ted Galambos agrees. He has been on the planning committee for and a speaker in the Structural Engineering Series for many years. Producing an event that combines what is happening both in the academic world and the practicing world “is extremely important, for all parties,” he says.

“The community is taking our graduates, and they deserve to know what they’re getting, so to speak. And the U needs to know what the engineers on the outside are working on, what the current issues, concerns, and projects are.

“It’s a two-way street. The U needs the public; the public needs the U. It really is a common community, and we need that connection.”

At some point or another, Graven says, she helped form those community connections with most every college and many departments across the University.

With offerings running the gamut from esoteric to outrageous, rock and roll to coherent multidimensional spectroscopy, after four decades of work Graven has seen a little bit of everything—including history in the making. In 1987, she organized a Warsaw, Poland, conference on religious tolerance that was funded partially by the United Nations and the Red Cross. “At that time, the Russian and Polish governments were truly trying to break down the barriers to religion in their countries, and we were being hosted by one of the Supreme Court justices from Poland.

“And while we were there doing this conference, the Polish legislature voted that there shall be tolerance among the people in Poland. It was a very exciting moment, unlike anything I’ve ever been a part of. A historic moment for everybody, really.”

Bringing the U to You continued on page 13.



Lori Graven

From the Development Director

Photo by Tim Rummelhoff



Everybody loves a good story. Stories often are the bedrock for our beliefs, thoughts, and feelings about people,

places, institutions, and causes. As you might imagine, I've been privileged to hear hundreds of wonderful student and alumni stories over the past decade.

While students, faculty, and teachers are critical to the University bedrock, I want to tell you a story about two University staff members who recently came together in an amazing way.

Fran Van Slyke-Zaslofsky began at this University in 1971 and started working with University College (now the College of Continuing Education, CCE) students and financial aid very early in her career. She enjoyed an affinity with these unique individuals who were often non-traditionally aged students. Because the students of this College travel a unique path to get the self-directed interdisciplinary education they need, they often struggle to pay tuition and to stay in school. Fran loved helping these students and loved her work.

As time passed, Fran brought her sons to the University of Minnesota Child Development Center where they spent the days reaping the benefits of activities and approaches coming out of the U's highly regarded Early Childhood Development Lab.

As some of you know firsthand, good day care can help make or break a parent's career. Without it, Fran would not have had the peace of mind and been able to utilize the rigorous work ethic she brought to the job. Nor would she have had such a tremendous impact on thousands of students' lives.

Fast forward to 2012. At the beginning of the CCE Centennial Celebration, just weeks before Fran was going to retire, she received a beautiful wood Regents Chair for her 40th-year anniversary at the University. Fran's gifts of time and treasure along with scholarship contributions made by her peers at the College and other generous donors have again enabled CCE students to be successful and achieve their educational dreams.

Always a believer in paying it forward, days after getting the chair Fran donated it back to CCE to use as a prize for the Centennial drawing. And as 2013 dawned, the winner, chosen at random, was a very nice person named Gloria DeRoode, who got so excited she teared up on the phone when I called with the news. And, guess where Gloria works—the U of M Child Day Care and Development Center, where the chair is now used for staff to rest between running around after the little ones.



Photo by A. Paul Virucio

Gloria DeRoode

I hope and expect these young children will grow up and follow their own paths to

good careers and rewarding lives, getting from and giving to the University along their way.

Best,

Kathleen Davoli, Director of Development
College of Continuing Education

Bringing the U to You continued from page 12

And, of course, when you work in a program planning business, there is always the chance for a last-minute crisis to test your resolve—and ability to think on your feet. “One time, we had a speaker who was so excited, and so animated in his talk...and he ended up with nosebleed...but he just kept talking. We had to sort of gently usher him off stage,” she laughs (ed. note: the speaker made a full recovery).

And while creating those connections and thinking on her feet can sometimes be a challenge, it's one that has kept Graven interested and intrigued. While she's retiring, she's not leaving altogether. “I've already had a couple of people around the U ask me to serve on their planning committees,” she laughs. “And that will be great—I can't not do something with this place.”

Spring awards

This May, the University honored Margy Ligon's work by presenting her with the 2013 President's Award for Outstanding Service, recognizing 13 years of brilliant and creative programming that has spotlighted the best of the University. As former President Bruininks said in his letter of support for the nomination, she has helped the “University of Minnesota through sharing its gifts with the citizens of our state.”

Lori Graven and the conference staff are proud to support the work that led Dr. Susan M. Galatowitsch, professor of restoration ecology, to receive this April the prestigious R1Edu award for

innovation in online learning through their work on ecological restoration online training courses.

Congratulations also go to Stephanie Platteter, who in April was the inaugural recipient of the Dorothy Durkin Award for Strategic Innovation in Marketing and Enrollment Management from the University Professional and Continuing Education Association. Durkin (1945-2011), a marketing pioneer, was associate dean at New York University. Platteter is executive director of marketing and college-wide enrollment management at the College.

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Learn more at giving.umn.edu or contact Kathleen Davoli at 612-625-1253.