

## Leveling out the playing field

### *Great Conversations analyzes how Title IX put women's sports on the map*

In 1972, women's sports in America were not taken seriously. Fewer than 32,000 women competed in intercollegiate athletics. They received only 2% of schools' athletic budgets. Facilities were, at best, lackluster. And there was no such thing as an athletic scholarship for a woman.

Today, it's a different story. Prior to Title IX, 1 in 27 girls played high school sports; today, that number is 1 in 3. The sight of women's sports on ESPN no longer gives rise to a double-take. Almost 10 million fans attend women's college basketball games annually. On the bottom line, women's teams are making money.

What brought about this astonishing turnaround? A paragraph of legislation in the Education Amendments Act of 1972 known as *Title IX*.

You can learn more on October 11, when "**A Revolution in Women's Sports**" kicks off the College of Continuing Education's 2004-2005 five-part Great Conversations series – public discussions teaming U faculty with experts from around the world. This evening event will bring together two nationally renowned experts on women's sports to reflect on Title IX and its impact on women's sports in America. Professor Mary Jo Kane, the U of M's Director of the Tucker

Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport joins Dr. Donna Lopiano, Executive Director of the Women's Sports Foundation.

"In one generation," said Kane, "there has been a fundamental sea change in this culture in terms of attitudes towards women's sports. What Title IX did was give proponents of women's sports a big stick to sue for gender equity."

Title IX reads, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

In practical terms, the landmark legislation governs the overall equity of treatment and opportunity in athletics while giving schools the flexibility to choose sports based on student body interest, geographic influence, budget restraints, and gender ratio.

Photo by Tom Foley



Photo: Women's Sports Foundation



Mary Jo Kane and Donna Lopiano

The origins of Title IX stemmed from an era in which the civil rights of women and minorities were top-of-mind on our nation's political agenda. Equal treatment was sought in all phases of life, particularly in the workplace and in the schools.

Kane explained, "Title IX followed on the model of the Civil Rights Act in which there was a desire at the federal level to prohibit discrimination based on race. This model was part of a movement in the '70s to prohibit discrimination based on gender. It was aimed at educational institutions, and said they cannot discriminate on the basis of sex or gender. One area where there was overt discrimination was women's sports."

As part of this movement in 1974, Billie Jean King established the Women's Sports Foundation to ensure gender equity in athletic activities. At the time, women's teams were the exception to the rule rather than the rule. It was an unequal playing field because there was no federal law that compelled colleges and universities to offer equal opportunities for girls and women.

"Prior to Title IX," said Kane, "women's sports were at the mercy of athletic directors and administrations to provide opportunities, and their attitudes ranged from hostility to benign neglect. What the legislation did was to say to these institutions, 'if you do not provide equal opportunities for women, you are in violation of federal law.' That was the catalyst for change."

But it wasn't an overnight success. Congress stipulated a six-year phase-in period as part of the Title IX legislation to give schools adequate time to revolutionize their athletic departments. As expected, many institutions tried to avoid compliance by foot-dragging and coming up with creative ways to skirt the law. By the early '80s, however, women's sports had developed a strong infrastructure of coaches, facilities, and scholarships that they could build on. This laid the groundwork for the 1990s, when progress began to advance more rapidly – in the locker rooms and in the stands.

*Leveling out the playing field continued on page 3.*



Photographer: Steve Tripp. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

For more information, call 612-624-2345 or visit [www.cce.umn.edu/conversations](http://www.cce.umn.edu/conversations).

# education and career planning calendar

## Free Information Sessions

### Overview of Options throughout the University

Have you been taking a class or two – “testing the waters” – and are thinking about enrolling in a program at the U? Explore the U’s educational opportunities that can enhance your skills or help you find more meaningful lifework. This “Returning to Learning” session also covers financial aid and enrollment.

**Location:** McNamara Alumni Center, U of M campus, East Bank.

**Dates:** November 15 (6-8 p.m.) or 30 (6-8 p.m.), or December 15 (6-8 p.m.)

### Overview of Education for Adults through the College

While similar to the Returning to Learning session above, this information session gives more detail on programs designed with adults in mind. Learn how earning academic credentials – whether from an undergraduate- or graduate-level certificate or degree – can fit your goals, your schedule, and your budget.

**Location:** Continuing Education and Conference Center, U of M St. Paul campus.

**Date:** September 28 (6-8 p.m.)

### Program-specific, In-depth Information Sessions

#### Inter-College Program (ICP)

This classroom-based degree allows innovative individuals to design their own unique bachelor’s degree pulling courses from among the University’s over 100 different majors. In small-group informational meetings, you’ll review the program in greater detail.

**Location:** Westbrook Hall, U of M campus, East Bank.

**Dates:** October 1 (noon-1 p.m.), 4 (noon-1 p.m.), 7 (9:30-10:30 a.m.), 8 (noon-1 p.m.), 11 (noon-1 p.m.), 15 (noon-1 p.m.), 18 (noon-1 p.m.), 19 (2:30-3:30 p.m.), 22 (noon-1 p.m.), 25 (noon-1 p.m.), 29 (noon-1 p.m.) and November 1 (noon-1 p.m.), 4 (9:30-10:30 a.m.), 5 (noon-1 p.m.), 8 (noon-1 p.m.), 12 (noon-1 p.m.), 15 (noon-1 p.m.), 16 (2:30-3:30 p.m.), 19 (noon-1 p.m.), 22 (noon-1 p.m.), 29 (noon-1 p.m.)

#### Master of Liberal Studies (MLS)/Innovation Studies Certificate

This master’s program is tailored to adult part-time students. The flexible program allows adults to draw on the expertise of the U’s faculty to tailor a program to meet their personal interests or professional goals. Meet with staff, faculty, and students to learn more about the degree. Also discover more about a new certificate option created in response to society’s growing need for knowledgeable employee-leaders. This graduate-level innovation studies certificate can lead into the MLS.

**Location:** TBD

**Dates:** October 12 (6-8 p.m.) or December 2 (6-8 p.m.)

#### Successful Manager’s Handbook Leadership Program

The U and Personnel Decisions International (PDI) have partnered to provide a new leadership certification program based on the popular *Successful Manager’s Handbook (SMH)*, 6th Edition. Learn about this new management training program that promises to develop managers and equip them with the skills, behaviors, and tools needed to be successful.

**Location:** Continuing Education and Conference Center, U of M St. Paul campus.

**Date:** September 29 (8:30-9:30 a.m.)

**For more information or to register:** 612-624-4000 or [www.cce.umn.edu/infosessions](http://www.cce.umn.edu/infosessions).

## Graduate School Test Preparation

### Grad School Test Prep

If you need help preparing for your graduate school exam, consider the comprehensive, inexpensive test prep courses offered in a classroom-based evening or weekend format:

- **Preparing for the GRE**  
Thursdays, Nov. 4, 11, 18, Dec. 2, 9, 16 (5:30-9:30 p.m.), U of M East Bank campus
- **Preparing for the GMAT**  
Saturdays, Oct. 9-Nov. 13 (8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.), U of M West Bank campus
- **Preparing for the LSAT**  
Tuesdays, Oct. 12-Nov. 16 (5:30-9:30 p.m.), U of M West Bank campus

Or, try these online test prep courses:

- **I-Prep for the GRE** (ongoing)
- **I-Prep for the GMAT** (ongoing)

**Cost** ranges from \$525-565 (including special fees)

**For more information or to register:** 612-624-4000 or [www.cce.umn.edu/testprep](http://www.cce.umn.edu/testprep).

## Career Planning Workshops

### What’s Next for Me? Exploring Career and Educational Options

In this two-day workshop, explore what’s out there, narrow the search, and learn as much as you can about prospective opportunities. A professional career counselor will take you through the following steps: resources and techniques for gathering information, networking and informational interviewing techniques, exploring educational pathways, decision-making, and more.

**Location:** 200 McNamara Alumni Center (200 Oak Street S.E.), U of M campus, East Bank.

**Dates:** October 6 and 13 (6:30-8:30 p.m.)

### How Do I Get There? Setting Goals and Taking Action

Now you know what you’d like to do, but figuring out how to get there isn’t always cut and dry. It may require more education, and it will typically require a considerable amount of determination to change direction and begin anew. In this two-day workshop, a professional career counselor will help you clearly define your goals and develop a concrete action plan.

**Location:** 200 McNamara Alumni Center (200 Oak Street S.E.), U of M campus, East Bank.

**Dates:** October 27 and November 3 (6:30-8:30 p.m.)

**Cost per workshop:** \$70 (\$60 for members of the University of Minnesota Alumni Association)

**For more information or to register:** 612-624-4000 or [www.cce.umn.edu/careerservices](http://www.cce.umn.edu/careerservices).

# GREAT CONVERSATIONS 2004-2005 Season

October 11: **A Revolution in Women's Sports** with Mary Jo Kane and Donna Lopiano

November 10: **An International Political Perspective** with Brian J. Atwood and Clare Short, M.P.

February 8: **Gender and Race in Medical Treatment** with Anne Taylor and Vivian Pinn

March 9: **The Design of Everyday Life** with Wendy Pradt Lougee and Henry Petroski

April 19: **The Struggle and Hope for Southern Africa** with Allen Isaacman and Graca Machel

All events take place at the Ted Mann Concert Hall and start at 7:30 p.m. Single event tickets are \$28.50, series tickets are \$115 (\$23.50 single/\$95 series for U of M faculty, staff, students, and alumni association members and President's Club members).

For more information, visit [www.cce.umn.edu/conversations](http://www.cce.umn.edu/conversations) or call 612-624-2345.

Photo courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society.



Relay race at state girls track meet, ca. 1978.

### *Leveling out the playing field continued from page 1.*

To illustrate this, in 1989 the University of Connecticut women's basketball team played a game before 287 fans. In 2002, an NCAA-record 24,611 fans attended a mid-season game between Connecticut and Tennessee.

While athletics has grabbed the spotlight and created the most controversy regarding Title IX, the legislation applied to *any education program or activity*. Women's gains in academic endeavors are equally impressive. For instance, in 1994, women received 38% of medical degrees, compared with 9% in 1972.

Opponents of Title IX claim that it requires quotas, which in turn leads to the elimination of men's teams. These claims have been rejected time and time again by the courts.

According to Kane, "Some advocates of men's sports believe wrongly, in my judgment, that Title IX may

help women athletes at the expense of male athletes. There's simply no evidence that's true. In some instances, athletic directors decide to eliminate men's sports as a way to comply with Title IX, but there's nothing in the law that says in order for you to add opportunities for girls and women, you must eliminate

opportunities for men. Those are decisions that are made at the local level by athletic directors."

Title IX is enforced through the Office of Civil Rights, the federal agency that oversees compliance. They use a three-prong test to determine whether or not a university is in compliance:

1) the percentage of male and female athletes is about the same as the percentage of male and female students enrolled in the school, 2) the school has a

"history and continuing practice of program expansion" for women, or 3) the school is "fully and effectively" meeting its female students' interests and abilities to participate in sports.

Donna Lopiano witnessed the evolution of women's sports due to

the enforcement of Title IX first-hand. At age eleven, she was chosen as a pitcher for the local Little League only to be disqualified when she went to pick up her uniform because of a "boy's only" rule. Five years later, she started playing women's softball, beginning an extraordinary athletic career that included participation in 26 national championships in four different sports and ultimately led to induction into the Softball Hall of Fame. As Director of the Women's Sports Foundation, she is making sure young girls don't face the same discrimination she encountered in Little League.

When Kane and Lopiano share the stage at the Ted Mann Concert Hall in October, they will focus largely on the impact of Title IX. "What's happened with Title IX," said Kane, "is that for the first time in our history we have a critical mass of girls and women who play sports up and down the food chain. It would never occur to young women today that if they wanted to play sports and if they were willing to pay the price, that an opportunity wouldn't be there for them.

"A generation ago, it didn't matter how much I wanted to play sports, or how good I was, or how much I was willing to sacrifice. Those opportunities simply weren't there. The bottom line is in one generation we've gone from young girls hoping that there is a team to young girls hoping that they make the team."

Despite the progress of the last 32 years, intercollegiate athletics still has not reached a state of gender equity. In Division I colleges, women comprise over half the student body yet receive only 36% of operating budgets. There's still a need for parity with respect to access to opportunities, facilities, coaching, nutrition, weight training, and conditioning.

"We're still in the embryonic stages of this revolution called women's sports," said Kane. "It will take some time, but we must always continue to keep up the good fight, and eventually we'll get there. It will take long, hard work, but that's what sports is all about."

*"A generation ago, it didn't matter how much I wanted to play sports, or how good I was, or how much I was willing to sacrifice. Those opportunities simply weren't there. The bottom line is in one generation we've gone from young girls hoping that there is a team to young girls hoping that they make the team."*

—Mary Jo Kane

# More than the sum of its parts

*Interdisciplinary students combine areas of interest to create unique degrees*

For some degree-seeking students, one area of interest, or major, is not enough to fulfill their educational or career pursuits.

The value of an interdisciplinary major is that it opens up different avenues for students to explore their passions. Not only can they cover multiple areas of interest, they can combine these interests in ways that make their overall base of knowledge more complete and more appealing to a potential employer.

To get a better idea of what draws students to these programs, such as the Inter-College Program (ICP) or the Master of Liberal Studies (MLS), *CCE Times* profiled three interdisciplinary degree graduates who reflect upon their education, their experiences, and their future.



If you are interested in enrolling in one of these degrees, please call 612-624-4000 or visit [www.cce.umn.edu](http://www.cce.umn.edu) for more information. Or, you are invited to attend a free information session on September 28 (6-8 p.m., Continuing Education and Conference Center, St. Paul campus). To register, call 612-624-4000 or visit [www.cce.umn.edu/info](http://www.cce.umn.edu/info).

## Financial aid is available

For information about the wide range of financial aid and other resources available for the College of Continuing Education's credit and noncredit courses, visit the online Financial Resources Wizard at [www.cce.umn.edu/financialaid](http://www.cce.umn.edu/financialaid) or call 612-624-4000. Since deadlines vary by program, it is important to identify your options as soon as possible. Options may include grants, scholarships, loans, employer tuition benefits, funding from Dislocated Worker Programs and other government agencies, federal education tax credits and deductions, discounts, and tuition installment plans.

### **Yasin Garad** **Inter-College Program** **B.S., Public Health and Global Studies**

Ever since the early '90s, as a child living in a Kenyan refugee camp, Yasin Garad dreamed of a career in public health.

In 1991, this Somali native and his family were forced to move to the refugee camp because Somalia's government collapsed, resulting in a free-for-all battle for power among warring tribal factions. Garad lived there for five years, after which he fled to the U.S. without his family.

"I hold a very high opinion of public health. When I was in a refugee camp, I was exposed to a lot of public health problems. There's no clean water system, no sanitation system, and it becomes a breeding ground for diseases such as hepatitis and jaundice. It became apparent to me, even as a child, that public health was very necessary, very vital.

"I want to go back to Africa where I can talk to the people about community health education," said Garad. "If you have a master's degree in public health in Africa, you can get a job from the United Nations and other non-profit organizations, such as the Red Cross or the World Health Organization (WHO)."

He initially spoke no English, yet he enrolled at Roosevelt High School in south Minneapolis, studied hard, and graduated in 1999.

When he came to the University of Minnesota the following year, he was interested in public health but couldn't get an undergraduate degree because the program only offers a master's degree. Instead, he majored in biochemistry, but after three years he realized that he would be better served by the ICP program, where he could study public health as an undergraduate.

Public health was always his main focus, but with the interdisciplinary nature of ICP, he tied in global studies to add an international relations perspective to his résumé. He concentrated on Africa, taking classes on the continent's ethnic conflicts, conflict resolution, tribal problems, dictatorship systems, and its social infrastructure.

Garad said, "I wanted to understand what sparked most of the conflicts that are happening on a daily basis there, especially in East Africa. I learned a lot about the history of Africa, both before and after colonization, and the direction of the people today."

He will eventually try to get a master's in Public Health Administration and Policy at the U of M. Today, he is in the Core Concepts certificate program offered by the School of Public Health, from which he will be able to transfer credits to the master's program.

"Some people go to school to earn money," said Garad, "I am pursuing my dream."



**Theresa Baultrippe**  
**Master of Liberal Studies**  
**Focus areas: History and Literature**

Theresa Baultrippe is a self-described lifelong learner. Her children, in fact, have always known her as a student, which is significant because her children are 16 and 23. She earned a B.A. in business administration from Metro State University in 1992, and while working at the U of M for the last 16 years, she's taken advantage of a tuition reimbursement program for staff. It wasn't until 1997 that she took her first Master of Liberal Studies (MLS) seminar, and she didn't apply to the program until fall 2000.

"I chose the MLS program," said Baultrippe, "because it offered greater flexibility and creativity for my educational goals than any other traditional academic programs. I wanted to pursue my passion for history and literature and the interdisciplinary nature of the MLS program was a perfect fit."

Her motivation was more educational than career in nature, but she does look forward to a career change as she pursues writing more diligently and seeks teaching opportunities. She believes the program is "perfect for people who like to learn and explore new ideas without the limitations of a traditional degree program, and for those who enjoy creating a course of study that reflects their personal interests and passions."

The MLS program does provide a unique learning experience, allowing students the flexibility to design their own curriculum and draw from the University's broad graduate-level expertise.

Her course work led her to discover a new passion for Caribbean history and literature, as well as personal narrative. For her final project, she created a written version of an oral history entitled *Bend to the Wind: My Life Journey from Jamaica to America. An Oral History by Melford Buchanan as told to Theresa Baultrippe*. It is the life history of her stepfather, a Jamaican immigrant.

"I enjoyed all of my course work, and I managed to complete several directed studies and that worked well for me. I'm able to work very well independently with good faculty guidance and I had the good fortune of two extraordinary faculty advisers, Lisa Norling and Roseann Lloyd. It was great the way the project came together. They recognized my vision and helped me pull it off."

Baultrippe, who graduated in June, is an avid reader who is currently catching up on books she's been meaning to read and researching opportunities to publish her final project. Upon reflection, she said, "The MLS program has helped me to look outside of the box and seek alternative ways to bring vision to fruition."



**Lori Mollberg**  
**Master of Liberal Studies**  
**Focus areas: Volunteerism and Innovation Studies**

As the alumni program director for the U of M's College of Human Ecology, Lori Mollberg claims the Master of Liberal Studies (MLS) program helped reinvigorate her work and give it a freshness that has also inspired colleagues to explore the Innovation Studies and MLS programs.

Mollberg, who graduated last spring, chose the MLS program for its "flexibility as well as creative inspiration to enhance my perspective and approach related to my current work in alumni relations and volunteer administration."

She liked that her innovation studies seminars were all directly applicable to her personal interests. In fact, a key requirement of these seminars is that they be relevant to a student's personal experiences, field and/or work life.

"Whatever we read, discussed, or learned, each of us in the class had the freedom to interpret and explore the topic and share insights as they related to our individual interests and professions. This allowed for tremendous productivity and diversity of outcomes and insights. It inspired individual leadership and responsibility among the students in the classes and fueled some fascinating discussions in the classroom and later in my workplace."

The MLS program has changed her approach to her work and life. "There are many places where our skills, knowledge, and passions can be applied. The MLS program has helped me confirm my commitment to lifelong learning, growth, and creativity as personal priorities, and it introduced me to new ideas."

Mollberg is more conscious now about exploring opportunities to apply her creativity on the job and that makes her work in alumni relations, volunteer administration, and events management more exciting, and it has also created some opportunities for her to create her own work and imagine new pathways for future work.

"An interdisciplinary education, for me, offers the opportunity for a more holistic approach to learning that relates to the way we really live and work – particularly as the world becomes more highly connected in terms of economy, technology, and health.

"There are many threads that connect disciplines, and people for that matter," continued Mollberg. "An interdisciplinary education supports the exploration of those intersections and relationships and encourages new kinds of research and efficiencies, new knowledge and technological applications, new insights, outcomes, and discoveries that might not be possible in a more rigidly defined course of study."

The mission of the College of Continuing Education is to provide adults with quality continuing education and lifelong learning opportunities for professional development, personal enrichment, career transitions, and academic growth.

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Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

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# Playing to your strengths, and weaknesses

*New business and human resources courses and certificates help participants round out their knowledge base*

*Erilynn Sushko gets a certain gratification from challenging people – not on a track, across a game board or in board room, but in a classroom.*

Sushko, who was a teacher before starting her 12-year history of leading professional development workshops, says that the 1,000-plus adults who have attended her workshops over the years have one thing in common: They want to improve. “They want to be there. They know their short-comings and their strengths. And they leave hungry for more. That’s great. That’s what education is all about,” she says.

The trainer, who holds an MBA and an M.A. in Education and owns “The Business Training Group,” developed and presented short courses through the University of Minnesota’s Carlson School of Management (via Employer Education Services) for 10 years. Those courses transferred to the College of Continuing Education this spring.

Sushko explains that over the years both attendees and their employers

have appreciated the program’s approach to continuing education – theory-based material that illustrates a field’s big picture and best practices, but that is punctuated with hands-on training, providing real-life techniques, skills, and tools.

“‘Applicability’ and ‘interaction’ are so important to the program. There are group projects, activities, role playing, and large and small group discussion. And, since each adult brings a lifetime of valuable insight, students find that they learn as much from each other as they do from the instructor.”

Those students represent a diverse spectrum of Twin Cities professionals. “In every class, there are a handful of people from larger companies and a handful from midsized to small companies. There are managers, supervisors, and employees. This is a great mix. For educational

*The Continuing Education and Conference Center provides a comfortable learning environment.*

purposes, that is what you want.”

This successful classroom formula will go unchanged this fall. Sushko will be teaching “High-Impact Presentations” on September 28, “Delegation: Enhancing Job Performance” on October 12, and “Verbal and Nonverbal Communications Skills” on November 11.

These courses, along with 27 others, can be applied to one (or sometimes more) of four different certificate programs – Supervision, Professional Development, Management, and Human Resources Generalist. Each is made up of 11-14 days of in-class instruction. All courses will be at the College’s Continuing Education and Conference Center on the St. Paul campus.

Attendees who take individual courses will likely “leave class with more to think about, more to discuss with peers, and more to apply on the job.” Those who complete a full certificate will get much more, sometimes even more than they bargained for.

Sushko likens it to getting a college degree. While it gives you in-depth expertise in one area, sometimes you take other courses outside your comfort zone, but you end up having a broader view of the world. “The certificates make a person more well-rounded,” she explains. It may be that you are taking a course in an area where you will not be expected to directly apply your knowledge, but you work with those who do. The course leaves you with a fuller understanding of colleagues’ needs and helps you communicate with them more efficiently, pinpoint potential project or process problems requiring their involvement, and simply appreciate the expertise they bring to bear on your organization. “My sense is that the majority of the students who went through my courses were enrolled in a certificate. Employers and students value them.”

For more information, visit [www.cce.umn.edu](http://www.cce.umn.edu) or call 612-624-4000.

# Continuing Education Opportunities for Government Workers

## 20th Annual Policy Analysis Conference October 20

In addition to keynotes on “The Evolving Role of Government” and “Globalization,” participants can attend concurrent sessions on transit, health care costs, economic development, higher education, and more.

## Work and Pay Policy Certificate (graduate-level certificate)

From policy makers, public policy consultants, and lobbying groups to labor leaders and employment lawyers, this certificate provides professionals the insight and ability to better understand and evaluate federal, state, and local policies that affect the employment relationship. Spring semester classes start in January.

## Organizational and Professional Communication Certificate (graduate-level certificate)

Good communication skills give us confidence and set us apart from other employees when competing for jobs or moving up the ladder. Certificate students can develop skills and confidence in public speaking, writing and editing, and project management. Spring semester classes start in January.

For more information visit [www.cce.umn.edu](http://www.cce.umn.edu) or call 612-624-4000.



Photo by Tim Rummelhoff

Kris Norman-Major

## Meeting of the minds

*In October, policy analysts from across the state will descend on the Continuing Education and Conference Center*

The combined work of Minnesota’s government employees – at local, state, and federal levels – is enormous, and enormously important. These professionals compile and analyze health statistics. They manage local governments. And, they set the direction for the area’s transit system, among countless other duties. Continuing education keeps them at the top of their field.

Through the College of Continuing Education, the University offers a host of learning opportunities tailored for government workers, including credit courses, certificates, and conferences.

One of this year’s highlights is the 20th Annual Policy Analysis Conference, which will be held at the Continuing Education and Conference Center on October 20. The conference is sponsored by the Economic Resource Group (ERG), a State of Minnesota consortium that promotes sharing of policy information. The conference is facilitated by the College, which brings the planning committee together, coordinates activities, and arranges logistics.

What will they do once they get there? Conference chair Kris Norman-Major explained, “The purpose of the conference is to allow policy analysts and others involved

in policy analysis to find out what the latest issues are and research that has been done recently. It’s a chance to learn about other projects and to network with others who are involved in such issues.”

Participants are mostly state agency personnel who are directly engaged in the policy process, such as house and senate research staff or staff from the governor’s office. Attendees can receive Continuing Education Units (CEUs), which some licenses require.

“Conference attendees learn about other research and data as well as network with others who work on similar issues,” said Norman-Major. It is also a chance to see how other issues overlap with ones that they might be focusing on.”

This year’s conference features two keynote sessions. The first will be led

by former governor Wendell Anderson, who will talk about the evolving role of government in our society. The second session is a roundtable discussion concerning globalization and its effect on employment and our economic system.

Gary Farland, former chair of the conference and member of ERG, added, “One prime example of good policy analysis at this year’s conference is a higher education study that was commissioned by Governor Pawlenty and conducted by the Citizen’s League.” The study will assess whether Minnesota’s existing higher education structure and organization are adequate for the future.

“Attendees will be able to gain an understanding of higher education and how effective it is,” continued Farland, “and also will provide visibility to researchers and their methodology. Many of the conference attendees are people who are engaged in analysis, so along with learning about issues, they’ll gain insight into the process of policy analysis.”

Perhaps the most important aspect of the conference is the exchange of ideas that takes place from policy makers across Minnesota. While most attendees tend to be from the Twin Cities area, some of them work at the state level and others work at the local level. Thus, the state workers are able to learn about local-level data and research that may have a bearing on state policies, and vice-versa. It’s a very beneficial exchange.

“One thing we stress is question and answer periods,” added Farland. “We leave a lot of time for discussion, socializing, and networking, and that appears to be very valuable.”

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