

## Center for Integrative Leadership Newsletter January-February 2015



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### >> CIL Spotlight

#### **CIL's Merrie Benasutti honored with Humphrey School's Outstanding Service Award**

Congratulations to CIL's Associate Director of Student Initiatives Merrie Benasutti for receiving the Humphrey School's 2014 Outstanding Service Award. Merrie was nominated for her on-the-ground leadership of the University of Minnesota's inaugural year of the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders.

The program brought 25 young civic leaders from 18 African countries to participate in a six-week academic institute focused on public management. Merrie's ability to build an interactive curriculum, involve faculty and outside leaders in the program and make fellows feel at home in Minnesota was critical to the success of the program. In the words of the Fellows, Merrie truly went "above and beyond" and "exemplified true leadership" in running the Program. CIL is proud of Merrie's commitment to the mission of the Humphrey School - to advance the common good in a diverse world - and her work with the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders, which CIL will host again this summer.

#### **The CIL Welcomes New Assistant Program Manager Katie Driscoll**

Katie Driscoll joined the Center for Integrative Leadership as Assistant Program Manager on February 23. Katie holds a B.A. in Cinema and Media Culture, with a Minor in Cultural Studies in Comparative Literature, from the University of

Minnesota, where she also played for the Varsity Women's Softball Team and was on the Big Ten All-Academic Team.

Katie received her Master of Public Policy degree, with a concentration in public and nonprofit leadership and management, here at the Humphrey School in 2011. Her subsequent experience includes working as a Project Manager, School Outreach Ambassador and Community Organizer for the Minneapolis-based consultancy Grassroots Solutions, and serving as a Community Board and Public Policy Committee member for the Southdale YMCA and the YWCA of Minneapolis respectively. We are thrilled to have Katie back at the Humphrey School.



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## >> CIL Leader Profile

### **Integrative Leader: Pakou Hang** **Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Hmong American Farmers Association**



Pakou Hang is a local leader who has worked across many boundaries- sectoral, cultural and economic- to bring positive change to the lives and livelihoods of Hmong American farmers in Minnesota.

As an immigrant and the second oldest of seven children, Pakou Hang has always felt the pressure of others relying on her. She vividly recalled being a kindergartner and interpreting for her mother at the Catholic elementary school Ms. Hang attended. "I remember being in a dark office with my mom and asking the school principal about tuition assistance for our family. The principal looked like Mrs. Santa Claus and she was a very kind woman, but I remember telling myself to be serious. I knew that I had to interpret every word correctly because everyone was counting on me." [Read more here.](#)

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## >> CIL & Students

## Graduate Student Integrative Leadership Series

A new opportunity for those interested in Integrative Leadership will be available for Spring 2015! The Center for Integrative Leadership will host a series of workshops and events to develop student knowledge and experience of Integrative Leadership. In this free series, graduate students will explore integrative and personal leadership through a series of experiential learning opportunities, speakers and conversations with local leadership.

The spring series will begin in March with a skill-building workshop focused on conflict resolution, a key skill for leaders working across boundaries. In April, we'll take a trip to the Midtown Global Market to learn about the cross-sector collaboration that resulted in its creation. To conclude the program we'll talk with Patrick Coleman, the Center for Integrative Leadership's Executive Leadership Fellow and his interdisciplinary team of graduate students who are conducting research and oral histories with former governors of Minnesota.

All are welcome! For more information about this series, contact Merrie Benasutti at [benas021@umn.edu](mailto:benas021@umn.edu)

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## >> CIL in the World

### CIL Co-Academic Director Myles Shaver Quoted in *The Atlantic*

Kudos to CIL co-academic director and Carlson School professor [Myles Shaver](#), who was quoted in the *The Atlantic* magazine's February 16th article entitled "[The Miracle of Minneapolis.](#)"

Professor Shaver's research finds that the Minneapolis - St Paul metropolitan area has the lowest rate of outward migration for employed, college-educated people who earn at least twice the national average income compared to the other largest 25 metro areas in the US.

*The Atlantic* article attributes the Twin Cities' fiscal equalization or "tax base sharing" and housing policies with positive outcomes such as good neighborhoods and schools that are both affordable and nice to live in, making the Twin Cities a rare economically vibrant U.S. city that also offers affordable housing.

Critics of *The Atlantic* article have observed that it paints an incomplete picture of our region by failing to acknowledge the racial disparities we also face in critical areas such as education, jobs and housing.

As Sean Kershaw and Juventino Meza of the Citizens League point out in their [Star](#)

[Tribune](#) response, it was integrative leadership, "the imagination and the capacity of the people who came together to govern for the common good and solve big problems," for example in creating the tax base sharing mechanism in 1971, that is "the true miracle" and can inspire us to come together to tackle these current and future challenges.

### **David Brooks' Article on Integrative Leadership**

In an excellent opinion piece in the New York Times from November 24, 2014, David Brooks examines "The Unifying Leader" who works integratively to bring people together and help build consensus. He calls for a leader who can set the stage for collaboration rather than remaining mired in polarized debate. Brooks goes on to highlight eight characteristic behaviors of such a leader. Read the article [here](#).

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## **>> CIL Around the University**

### **Finding Common Ground Forum: Food Policy**

The CIL and Center for Animal Health and Food Safety hosted a Finding Common Ground Forum on Friday January 16<sup>th</sup> to discuss the GMO food paradox: to label or not to label. Participants explored the controversies underlying GMO food labeling and students learned new strategies for facilitating dialogue on divisive issues. The Finding Common Ground forum brought together participants from academia, the private sector, government and non-governmental organizations to foster conversations. Questions such as does labeling of GMO foods create a false warning and how do we balance competing concerns of consumers, food processors and government agencies were addressed. Learn more [here](#).



## Food Issue Area Network

Recognizing that our food system is a complex web that impacts community and environmental health, the CIL joined the newly created Food Issue Area Network supported by the UMN Office of Public Engagement.

The Food Issue Area Network aims to strengthen student understanding of the food system by enhancing University academic learning with authentic, engaged experiences inside and outside the classroom.

Food system work requires leaders who have an awareness of the social, cultural, and environmental elements, as well as developed expertise and skills. The Food Issue Area Network will support University faculty and staff addressing food system issues by imagining new possibilities and new partners.

## The New MN Food Charter

University of Minnesota faculty and staff joined with other leaders in health, agriculture, economic development, local and state government, philanthropy and research have worked together to create the **Minnesota Food Charter**, a shared roadmap for how all Minnesotans can have reliable access to healthy, affordable, safe food. The Minnesota Food Charter was developed through a broad-based public process and is intended to guide planning, decision-making and collaboration for agencies, organizations, policy-makers, and public and private entities across the state.

Go to [www.mnfoodcharter.com](http://www.mnfoodcharter.com) to learn more and access a copy of the Food Charter.

**“Taking action together is our surest path to a healthy and prosperous future for all Minnesotans”**

**- MN Food Charter**

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## >> Upcoming Events

### Art of Hosting

*Beyond the Basics - May 6-8, Wellstone Center, Saint Paul*

This is a 3 day retreat for seasoned leaders and audacious change makers. The scope, complexity and scale of work we are being asked to engage with continues to grow. Now is the time to gather, take a breath and learn together. The core team (Tuesday Ryan-Hart, Tim Merry, Caitlin Frost, and Chris Corrigan) is experienced in working across sectors including education, communities,

business, government, non-profits and more. For more information check out the [Art of Hosting Beyond the Basics website](#).

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