



# NARSC NEWS



## Words from the Executive Director



In November, NARSC hosted the 67th North American Meetings of the Regional Science Association International. The meetings were a little different this year. Covid-19 meant that our traditional face-to-face format was replaced with a virtual event. While I am sure that all of us would have preferred to have been enjoying the sunshine of San Diego, I believe that we

made the best of the circumstances that were presented to us. Over the 5 days of the meetings we had 278 presentations spread across 86 sessions. Over 300 people registered for the conference.

Highlights from this year's conference were keynote presentations by Serge Rey (UC-Riverside), Kara Kockelman (UT-Austin), and Richard Church (UC-Santa Barbara). We also had a special session in memory of Sid Saltzman (Cornell University) who sadly passed away earlier this year. Another important presentation was made by members of the NARSC Diversity and Inclusion Committee, who reported on the findings of a recently completed survey on diversity and inclusion in Regional Science. All of these presentations are available for you to view on the NARSC YouTube channel. We also had a number of special breakout sessions devoted to a variety of topics. Thanks also to everyone who organized special sessions – please consider doing so again for next year's conference. Also, a huge thank-you to Isabelle Nilsson and Elizabeth Delmelle for organizing and overseeing the NARSC student paper competitions and the breakout sessions featuring those papers. And thank you to the faculty members who served as discussants in the student paper competition sessions and for the feedback that you provided to these young scholars.

No successful meeting happens without the hard work of numerous people behind the scenes. Soomi Lee served as Program Chair and put together an exciting and cohesive program. John Sporing who served as "Local" Organizer

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oversaw the technical aspects of the conference – this meant that he set up and coordinated 7 virtual meeting rooms on the Zoom platform. John was ably assisted by Bekka Apardian, Elham Shirinkaam, Caleb Stair, Shishir Shakya, Tuyen Pham, and Alexandre Scarcioffolo.

The 68th North American Meetings of RSAI are scheduled for Denver, Colorado (November 10-13). The first call for papers will be issued in early April, but please mark your calendars for that event. 2020,

Finally, thanks to NARSC Newsletter Editors, Isabelle Nilsson and Ran Wei for pulling together another interesting newsletter. If you have suggestions for future Newsletter content please do not hesitate to contact them.

Best Wishes to everyone for a safe, peaceful, and happy New Year!

Neil Reid

Executive Director

## Words from the Editors



We are delighted to bring you the latest issue of the North American Regional Science (NARSC) newsletter. This edition of the newsletter will provide readers with a summary of this year's annual (but first virtual) meeting and one of NARSC's new initiatives – the Diversity and Inclusion committee. Featured items of this edition include: the abstract of the presidential address by Kara Kockelman; a summary of the Boyce,

Hewings, Isard and Stough award winners; student paper competition results; biographies of new NARSC President Steve Deller, Chair Jason Brown, and Councilors John Winters and Isabelle Nilsson; and an update from the member NARSC regional sections.

Isabelle Nilsson and Ran Wei

Newsletter Co-Editors

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## Self-Driving and All-Electric: Anticipating the Travel, Trade, & Energy Impacts of Autonomous Trucks & Cars for US Markets"

### NARSC 2020 Presidential Address by Kara Kockelman



Our work has optimally site electric-vehicle (EV) charging stations across regions and the nation, and forecasted the travel impacts of privately owned and shared autonomous cars and trucks (or "AVs"). For example, we specified a random-utility-based multiregional input-output (RUBMRIO) model, driven by foreign export demands, to simulate changes in freight flows among 3109 U.S. counties and 117 export zones, via a nested-logit model for shipment or input origin and mode, and assuming that Atrucks lower trucking's operating costs by 25% (per ton-mile delivered). Under this setting, U.S. truck flow ton-miles were predicted to rise 11%, while rail values fell 4.8%. Introduction of Atrucks favors

longer truck trades, while rail's low price remains competitive for trade distances over 3,000 miles. Human-driven/conventional trucks continue to dominate in shorter-distance freight movements, while Atrucks dominate at distances over 500 miles. Ton-miles across all 13 commodity groups rose slightly by 3.1%, as automation lowered overall shipping costs.

Using a statewide travel demand model to forecast how trip generation, mode and destination choices, along with traffic congestion and travel patterns, are impacted, we forecast that many travelers' (and freight purchasers) will shift to more distant destinations (or supplier origins), causing average person-trip distances to rise, from 14 to 16 miles. Within the Texas Triangle megaregion, airline passenger travel is predicted to fall by 82%, as travelers shift to self-driving ground transport options. Without travel demand management (like credit-based congestion pricing and mandated tight headways between AVs), congestion issues will grow, due to an average 47% VMT increase, especially in the region's major cities (Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, and Austin). Automobile travel is anticipated to rise across all distance categories, with increases most evident between suburban and urban zones. Almost 9.6% of link flows will exceed capacity, relative to 4.6% of segments in the no-AV case (for year 2040). Six of the 15 freight industry categories experience a 5% or more increase in their truck trips, due to the introduction of Atrucks, with rising truck trades largely between Houston and other major Texas cities.

Looking at the entire continental US, a synthetic FHWA data set characterizing all 1.17 billion long-distance person-trips in year 2010 was used as a starting point. As alluded to above, drivers' willingness to pay to save travel time is expected to fall when the vehicles drive themselves, while ownership or rental costs rise, per mile-traveled, thanks to a more expensive technology option. The AV mode was added to the FHWA's nested-logit-based mode choice equations, and new destination, mode and other choices simulated. As noticed in the megaregion study, AVs' attractiveness is expected to dramatically reduce domestic airlines' revenues, by almost 50 percent for origin-destination pairs across the continental US. And ground transportation distances from long-distance travel rose notably.

Using Minneapolis-St Paul's 7-county, 9.5-million daily person-trips, we micro-simulated 2% to 20% of regional and core trips as though served by shared autonomous vehicles (SAVs), in order to ascertain the effects of different trip-making intensities and curb-use restrictions. Results suggest the average SAV in this region can serve at most 30 person-trips per day with less than 5 min average wait time, but generate 13% more vehicle-miles traveled (VMT). With dynamic ride-sharing (DRS) in place, SAV VMT fell, on average, by 17% and empty VMT (eVMT) fell by 26%. Compared to idling-at-curb scenarios, parking-restricted scenarios (on the region's 100 busiest blocks) generated 8% more VMT. Relying on 52 mi/gallon hybrid electric SAVs, as opposed to a 31 mi/gallon conventional drivetrain SAV, is estimated to lower travelers' energy use by 21% and reduce tailpipe emissions by 30%, assuming no new or longer trips. Similarly, a 106 mi/gallon equivalent battery-electric fleet does much better by lowering energy use by 64%.

Due to the environmental and energy challenges of conventionally fueled ground transport, much greater use of battery electric vehicles (BEVs) is a critical pathway for most developed countries. However, a lack of fast recharging infrastructure and limitations on BEV range limit their purchase and use. It is important to have a well-designed charging station network, so we used the same FHWA long-distance travel data to place charging stations along many of the nation's highways, with the objective of maximizing long-distance trip completions. Each scenario assumes a constrained number of charging stations – from 50 to 250, and an all-electric-range (AER) of 60–250 miles. The problem was formulated as a mixed integer program, and a modified flow-refueling location model (FRLM) was

solved via a branch-and-bound algorithm. Results reveal that the 60-mile-AER trip-completion rate varies between 31% and 65%, as we increased station count from 50 stations to 250 stations. At least 100 mile-range BEVs appear needed, to avoid long-distance-trip issues for the great majority of U.S. households. This research illuminates an effective method to decide the number and locations of fast-charging stations for different conditions, to enable faster decarbonization of our transportation sector.

The 5 papers summarized above can be found here:

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11116-019-10027-5>,

[https://www.caee.utexas.edu/prof/kockelman/public\\_html/TRB19TXMegaregionAVs.pdf](https://www.caee.utexas.edu/prof/kockelman/public_html/TRB19TXMegaregionAVs.pdf)

[https://www.caee.utexas.edu/prof/kockelman/public\\_html/TRB18AVLong-DistanceTravel.pdf](https://www.caee.utexas.edu/prof/kockelman/public_html/TRB18AVLong-DistanceTravel.pdf)

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1361920920307641>

[https://www.caee.utexas.edu/prof/kockelman/public\\_html/TRB18LDEVCS.pdf](https://www.caee.utexas.edu/prof/kockelman/public_html/TRB18LDEVCS.pdf)

*Kara Kockelman is a registered professional engineer and holds a PhD, MS, and BS in civil engineering, a master's in city planning, and a minor in economics from the University of California at Berkeley. She has been a professor of transportation engineering at the University of Texas at Austin for 22 years, and is the recipient of an NSF CAREER Award, Google Research Award, MIT Technology Review Top 100 Innovators Award, Vulog's Top 20 of 2020 Influential Women in Mobility, and several ASCE and WTS awards. She serves as the 2020 President of the North American Regional Science Association and on the Eno Center for Transportation's Advisory Board, as well as 3 TRB Committees. She has authored over 170 journal articles (and two books), and her primary research interests include planning for shared and autonomous vehicle systems, the statistical modeling of urban systems, energy and climate issues, the economic impacts of transport policy, and crash occurrence and consequences.*

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## Kara Kockelman wins the 2020 Walter Isard Award



Dr. Kara Kockelman is the 2020 recipient of the Walter Isard Award for distinguished scholarly achievement. Kara Kockelman is Professor of Civil Engineering at University of Texas at Austin. She has held multiple named Chair and Distinguished Professor positions during her career and now holds the Dewitt C. Greer Centennial Professorship in Engineering. Professor Kockelman has held many visiting and honorary Professorships at numerous institutions around the world. She has won countless awards and honors. For example, she was voted one the world's Top 100 Young Innovators for MIT's Technology Review, and was the recipient of the Western Regional Science Association Tiebout Prize, NARSC Hewings Award, and the American Society of Civil Engineers Energy Division's Stephen D. Bechtel Jr. Energy Award. Dr. Kockelman served as NARSC

President in 2020 and organized the 2009 NARSC meetings. Professor Kockelman is a frequent speaker at universities and workshops, being especially popular for her recent work in high technology and autonomous vehicles. Dr. Kockelman received her Ph.D. in Civil Engineering from University of California at Berkley.

Professor Kockelman represents the best of Regional Science in interdisciplinary research. Her main contribution exemplifies the long line of Regional Scientists examining transportation, with her recent work being at the interface of technological innovations and transportation. As of fall 2020, she has

published 174 peer-reviewed journals and 25 book chapters, as well as two edited books. She has also served as Associate Editor of *Journal of Regional Science* and on the editorial boards of *International Regional Science Review* and *Papers in Regional Science*, among others.

Professor Kockelman has made key contributions in a wide range of research primarily focused on transport and land-use decision making; shared and autonomous vehicle systems; statistical modeling of travel behavior; location choice; energy and climate issues; economic impacts of transport policy; and vehicle crashes. Professor Kockelman's recent work on autonomous vehicles has been especially hailed as being at the frontier for this emerging technology. Her research has significant societal value, being frequently used in transportation and land-use policymaking.

Professor Kockelman is widely cited. As of early November 2020, she has accumulated nearly 8,700 citations in Scopus and 19,000 in Google Scholar. Her work has appeared in *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, *Annals of Regional Science*, *Journal of Regional Science*, *Papers in Regional Science* and the 2017 *Regional Research Frontiers* edited volume, among many other outlets. Her research has been supported by some 80 grants and projects, exceeding \$35 million in funding to date.

Professor Kockelman is widely recognized for her significant theoretical and methodological contributions to Regional Science over the course of her career.

## Carlianne Patrick wins the 2020 Geoffrey Hewings Award



Dr. Carlianne Patrick is the winner of the Hewings Award for Outstanding Achievement by a "Junior" Faculty. Dr. Patrick is an Associate Professor of Economics in the Andrew Young School of Policy Studies at Georgia State University and a Research Affiliate with the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research. She received her PhD in Agricultural, Development and Environmental Economics from Ohio State University.

Dr. Patrick has numerous scholarly accomplishments in her young career. She has eleven refereed publications, four of them sole-authored, and numerous papers under review or in progress. Top regional science journals in which her articles appear include the *Journal of Regional Science*, *Journal of Urban Economics*, and *Regional Science and Urban Economics*. Other notable journals in which her articles appear include *Economic Development Quarterly*, *Economic Inquiry*, *National Tax Journal* and *Small Business Economics*. Her articles are becoming widely cited, she was invited to participate in several panels, including those by the American Tax Policy Institute and Public Choice Society, and she was chosen as a Lincoln Institute Scholar. Dr. Patrick has already begun training the next generation of scholars, serving on numerous doctoral dissertation committees, including serving as chair, and publishing with graduate students and other junior faculty.

Dr. Patrick's research investigates how local variation in economic incentives and other conditions affect economic outcomes. One strand of her research focuses on the effect of, and theoretical justification for, policies aimed at altering firm decisions, such as where to locate. Another strand explores the effect of local public good and tax policies on households' location decisions. A third strand studies how locational characteristics influence labor market outcomes.

Beginning during her doctoral studies, Dr. Patrick's research has led to several awards by regional science associations: 1) the Southern Regional Science Association's Barry M. Moriarty Prize for Best Graduate Research Paper, 2011; 2) the Regional Science Association International Dissertation Award, 2012; and 3) the Regional Research Institute's Miernyk Research Excellence Medal, 2016.

Dr. Patrick has been notably active in regional science organizations. She serves on the editorial board of *The Review of Regional Studies* and on the Committee on Supporting Women and Minorities for the North American Regional Science Association. She previously served on the Executive Council for the Southern Regional Science Association and on the North American Regional Science Council. Dr. Patrick has annually attended meetings of the North American Regional Science Council, the Western Regional Science Association, and the Southern Regional Science Association.

## John Sporing wins the 2020 David Boyce Award



Dr. John Sporing is the 2020 recipient of the Boyce Award for distinguished service to the regional science profession. After earning a PhD in economics from American University, John Sporing entered regional science through his career with the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. During his tenure with the BEA, he ensured the agency's regional division economists were engaged with regional science academic scholars. Through his leadership, regional science scholars gained access to prototype BEA data products that proved essential for quality academic regional science research. During this time,

John cultivated cross-agency relationships between the U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics to have their demographers, economists, and statisticians actively involved in the Southern Regional Science Association (SRSA), NARSC, the Midcontinent Regional Science Association (MCRSA), and the Western Regional Science Association (WRSA). In many ways, his 25-year career in the federal government centered on developing and maintaining key data products that were guided by regional scientists through regional science networks. Without John's leadership in developing detailed regional economic data products, much of the applied work undertaken by U.S. regional scientists would not have been possible.

Without minimizing these contributions, his key contributions have been in the area of service to its RSAI organizational affiliates – SRSA and NARSC. John took over leadership of SRSA during a period when it was in a tenuous financial condition after a poorly attended conference that had negative impacts on the organization's balance sheet. After taking over as its Executive Secretary, he used his administrative skills to negotiate favorable contracts for future conference sites. In the early years, he was very adept at working with host hotels to mitigate financial burdens to SRSA. John is detail-oriented and addresses all the small items in advance of and during annual SRSA meetings so that other officers and council members can focus on their primary leadership responsibilities. John's "no stone unturned" approach provides a comfort to leadership knowing that membership will be effectively served each year as a part of the annual meeting. Indeed, the new Executive Director of the Midcontinent Regional Science Association has already turned to John for advice, council and help as he undertakes making conference arrangements for MCRSA. In this regard, John provides great leadership to the organization.

John has also led several key strategic initiatives on behalf of SRSA during his tenure. One of these was the establishment of SRSA as a 501c3 non-profit. John's leadership in transitioning the SRSA to a 501c3 lead the way for similar changes with the Midcontinent Regional Science Association. Second, John led an effort on behalf of SRSA leadership to initiate SRSA mini conferences on university campuses of members to highlight the regional science profession.

John's skill at organizing conferences and negotiating hotel contracts that are favorable to the SRSA has been an invaluable resource to the NARSC. The 2018 and 2019 NARSC conferences have been largely organized (hotels, meeting spaces, meals, receptions, and breaks) using John's expertise in helping improve the overall experience of the NARSC conference and ensuring favorable contracts for NARSC. During NARSC meetings, it is rare not to see John behind the NARSC registration desk. If he is not there it is usually because he is attending to some conference-related "crisis".

## Peter Nijkamp wins the 2020 Roger R. Stough Award



Professor Dr. Peter Nijkamp is the 2020 recipient of the Roger R. Stough Outstanding Mentor Award. He is the first awardee for this recognition.

Professor Peter Nijkamp is an emeritus Professor in regional and urban economics and in economic geography at the VU University, and associated with the Open University (OU), Heerlen (The Netherlands), Jheronimus Academy of Data Science (JADS) of the division Smart Cities, 's-Hertogenbosch (The Netherlands), Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm (Sweden) and A. Mickiewicz University, Poznan (Poland). He is a member of editorial/advisory boards of more than 30 journals. He is also a fellow of the Royal Netherlands Academy of

Sciences, and past vice-president of this organization. He has served as president of the governing board of the Netherlands Research Council (NWO). In 1996, he was awarded the most prestigious scientific prize in the Netherlands, the Spinoza award. In addition, he is a Fellow of the Regional Science Association International (RSAI). Professor Nijkamp holds a Ph.D. (cum laude) from the Erasmus University in Rotterdam on new solution methods for non-linear mathematical programming models for industrial planning.

Professor Nijkamp has been an excellent role model of, one of the biggest supporters to, and an exemplary mentor to students and early career professionals. He has always made himself available to students and junior colleagues within and outside of his own institutions, from a wide range of academic disciplines, and at various stages of their careers. Professor Nijkamp is known and greatly appreciated by many for his continued support and mentoring after students' graduation and during their career development. In addition to offering financial and academic support, Professor Nijkamp has provided students and early career colleagues invaluable access to the regional science community in Europe, North America, Asia, and Latin America. He has been instrumental in broadening student participation in professional meetings with open arms welcoming new, often younger, students and faculty and welcoming new ideas and initiatives. Professor Nijkamp is especially keen to students and early career faculty from emerging countries and regions where the field and community of regional science are less developed and known. His leadership and contribution in supporting and championing for students and in broadened and inclusive participation in the regional science community are without limits.

Professor Nijkamp is widely cited. As of early November 2020, Professor Nijkamp has accumulated over 17,000 citations in Scopus and over 69,300 in Google Scholar. According to the RePec list, he is among the top 30 of well-known economists worldwide. Professor Nijkamp has published more than 2,000 scientific articles in the international literature, and over 40 monographs and 100 edited volumes.

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## NARSC Student Paper Competition Results

Chairs of the student paper competition this year, Isabelle Nilsson and Elizabeth Delmelle, would like to thank the reading committee for reviewing all 19 submissions which were received (14 graduate-student-led and 5 graduate-student-authored papers). Student papers were featured in five special sessions with expert discussants assigned to each paper. The chairs would like to thank all the discussants as well for providing students with their insights.

We would also like to thank Edward Elgar and the North American Regional Science Council (NARSC) for their contributions of prizes to these award winners; Edward Elgar contributed books, while NARSC provided a cash prize.

### Winner Graduate Student-Authored Paper: Ben Blemings, West Virginia University

The title of the paper is “Which Cutoff? Difference-in-Discontinuity Estimates of College Merit-Aid Effects on Academic Performance Using Kindergarten Entry Date Cutoffs in West Virginia”

Advisor: Daniel Grossman

### 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up Graduate Student-Authored Paper: Margaret Bock, West Virginia University

The title of the paper is “(Federally Funded) Country Roads: The Impact of the Appalachian Development Highway System on Mortality”

Advisor: Joshua Hall

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up Graduate Student-Authored Paper: Abraham K. Song, George Mason University

The title of the paper is “The Implications of State Business Incentives on Startups and Incumbent Firms”

Advisor: Zoltan J. Acs

### Winner Graduate Student-Led Paper (three-way tie):

#### Lucas Dias, University of São Paulo

The title of the paper is “Optimal Road Network and the Gains from Intranational Trade”

Co-authors: Eduardo A. Haddad & Andres Maggi

#### Neils Kuiper, University of Groningen

The title of the paper is “Do Urban Redevelopment Projects Create Jobs? Evidence from the Dutch National Restoration Fund”

Co-authors: Mark van Duijn & Arno van der Vlist



Tianren Yang, University of Cambridge

The title of the paper is “Unlocking the Long-Term Potential of Land Value Uplift in New Subsidiary Centres: How Does Planning Matter?”

Co-authors: Ying Jin

1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up Graduate Student-Led Paper: Daria Denti, Gran Sasso Science Institute

The title of the paper is “Where do Angry Birds Tweet? Income Inequality and Online Hate in Italy”

Co-author: Alessandra Faggian

2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up Graduate Student-Led Paper: Jeehee Han, Syracuse University

The title of the paper is “Does Proximity to Fast Food Cause Childhood Obesity? Evidence from Public Housing”

Co-author: Amy Ellen Schwartz & Brian Elbel

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## Meet Your New NARSC President: Steve Deller



Professor Deller joined the University of Wisconsin-Madison faculty in 1993 after being on the faculty of the University of Maine for four years. He is a professor in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Wisconsin – Madison and a Community Economic Development Specialist within the UW-Madison, Division of Extension. He is formerly the interim director of the Center for Community and Economic Development, Division of Extension. His work is in the broad area of community economic development with a focus on smaller communities and rural areas. He co-authored the textbook *Community Economics: Linking Theory and Practices* and has co-edited five books, each focusing on community, rural and regional economic development. The most recent is entitled *Local Food Systems and Community Economic Development*. He has authored or co-authored 119

referred journal articles and published 31 separate book chapters. Some of his current work has explored the community economic impacts of mining, women owned businesses, manufacturing location decisions, local foods as a community development strategy and the role of taxes and public services in community economic growth and development. Other topics include rural crime, natural amenities and economic growth, retirement migration impacts on local communities and how public infrastructure influences local economies. Professor Deller has served as President of both the Mid-Continent Regional Science Association and the Southern Regional Science Association and was a member of the executive committee of the North American Regional Science Association for 13 years. He is the recipient of the North American Regional Science Council’s *Walter Isard Award for Distinguished Scholarly Achievement* in the Field of Regional Science. He is also the winner of the *inaugural Rural Renewal Research Prize* awarded by the Rural Renewal Initiative at Oklahoma State University. He is a Fellow of both the Southern Regional Science Association and the Mid-Continent Regional Science Association, the Associations’ highest honor. He served as co-editor of the *Journal of*

*Regional Analysis and Policy* for nine years, and is currently on the editorial board of six academic journals. He has been quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *USA Today*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Detroit Free Press*, *Vanity Fair*, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* and is a frequent guest on *Wisconsin Public Radio*.

## Meet Your New NARSC Chair: Jason Brown



Jason Brown is a Research and Policy Officer in the Economic Research Department of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City. In this role, he leads the regional and commodities research of the Bank. Brown also regularly briefs the Kansas City Fed's president, a member of the Federal Open Market Committee, on regional economic conditions in the 10th Federal Reserve District.

Prior to joining the bank, Brown was an economist at the USDA Economic Research Service in Washington D.C. He holds a Ph.D. in agricultural economics from Purdue University.

Jason conducts research on issues related to regional economic growth, emerging industries, natural resource development, and structural change in regional industry and labor markets. His research has been published in *Journal of Regional Science*, *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, *Economic Geography*, *Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics*, *Growth and Change*, *Economic Development Quarterly*, *Review of Regional Studies*, *Energy Economics*, *Resource and Energy Economics*, *Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists*, *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, and *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*.

Jason has been a member of RSAI, NARSC, and SRSA since 2006, when he first joined in graduate school under the supervision of the late Raymond J.G.M. Florax. He has served NARSC as councilor at-large in 2019 and 2020. He also serves on the editorial boards of *Journal of Regional Science* and *Review of Regional Studies*.

## Meet Your New NARSC Councilor: John Winters



John Winters is Associate Professor of Economics at Iowa State University, Editor at Papers in Regional Science, and President-Elect of the Southern Regional Science Association. John earned a Ph.D. from Georgia State University and a B.A. from Mississippi State University. Recent work has examined individual migration decisions, geographic differences in labor market outcomes, and regional economic growth. His migration research has focused on the migration decisions of college educated persons and students pursuing higher education and he has done work examining the external effects of high human capital workers on local labor markets. His research has been published in journals including *Annals of Regional Science*, *Growth and Change*, *Journal of Economic Geography*, *Journal of Human Resources*, *Journal of Labor Economics*, *Journal of*

*Regional Science*, *Journal of Urban Economics*, *Papers in Regional Science*, *Regional Science and Urban Economics*, and *Review of Regional Studies*.

## Meet Your New NARSC Councilor: Isabelle Nilsson



Isabelle Nilsson is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography & Earth Sciences at University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Dr. Nilsson's research is focused on transportation, housing, and local economic development. Her recent projects include explorations into the effects of rail transit investments on residential mobility and economic development; predicting neighborhood change; location behaviors within the craft brewing industry; and the relationship between poverty suburbanization and economic outcomes. Dr. Nilsson's research has been funded by the NSF and published in various outlets such as *Cities*, *Urban Studies*, *Papers in Regional Science*, *Journal of Transport Geography*, and *Geographical Analysis*. She is a regional editor of *Regional Science Policy & Practice*, a co-editor for the NARSC Newsletter, and vice-chair of the AAG's Transportation Geography Specialty Group.

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## Call for Applications: Benjamin H. Stevens Fellowship

The Benjamin H. Stevens Graduate Fellowship in Regional Science was established in 1998 in memory of Dr. Benjamin H. Stevens (1929-1997), an intellectual leader whose selfless devotion to graduate students as teacher, advisor, mentor and friend continues to have a profound impact on the field of Regional Science. Graduate students enrolled in Ph.D. programs in North America are eligible to compete for the Benjamin H. Stevens Graduate Fellowship in support of their dissertation research in Regional Science. The 2020-2021 Stevens Fellowship competition was judged by a Selection Committee composed of: Elizabeth Mack, Geography, Michigan State University (Chair); Amanda Weinstein, Economics, The University of Akron; Daoqin Tong, Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning, Arizona State University; Nicholas Nagle, Geography, University of Tennessee, and Steven Deller, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

**Margaret Bock**, a Ph.D. candidate in Economics at West Virginia University has been selected as the winner of the Twentieth Annual Benjamin H. Stevens Graduate Fellowship in Regional Science. The Fellowship will provide a 2020-2021 Academic Year stipend of \$30,000 to support Ms. Bock's dissertation research entitled, "The Road Less Traveled: Economic Analysis of Roads and Highways." Her research investigates the connection between roads and highways on several aspects of urban and rural locales including commuting, mortality, and mayoral elections. The results of this dissertation will be of wide-ranging interest to regional scientists and policymakers given current interest in the state of infrastructure in the United States, poising Ms. Bock to make several scholarly and practical contributions. Ms. Bock's doctoral research has been supervised by Joshua Hall, Professor and Chair of Economics at West Virginia University.

Faculty at all North American Ph.D. programs are asked to encourage their best students to apply for the 21<sup>st</sup> Stevens Graduate Fellowship, which will support the winning student's thesis research in the field of Regional Science with a fellowship of \$30,000 for the 2021-2022 year. The application deadline is February 15, 2021. Full submission guidelines may be found at

<http://www.narsc.org/newsite/awards-prizes/applications/>.

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## Call for Donations: Benjamin H. Stevens Graduate Fellowship

In order to continue to offer The Benjamin H. Stevens Graduate Fellowship in Regional Science, the Stevens Fellowship committee seeks donations in ongoing support of this award. The Fellowship is awarded in memory of Dr. Benjamin H. Stevens, an intellectual leader whose selfless devotion to graduate students as teacher, advisor, mentor, and friend continues to have a profound impact on the field of regional science. Fundraising efforts to increase the Fellowship's endowment are ongoing. Donations may be sent to: The Stevens Fellowship Fund, Freestar Bank, 1205 S. Neil Street, Champaign, IL 61820 USA. Checks should be drawn to *The Stevens Fellowship Fund*. Donations may be made online at <http://www.narsc.org/newsite/donations2.php>. When you donate, you can request that your donation is made in memory of an individual in Regional Science. If you wish, your donation will be acknowledged on the Stevens Graduate Fellowship web page.

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## The First Iteration of NARSC's Diversity & Inclusion Committee by

Yuri Mansury (Illinois Institute of Technology)\*, Sandy Dall'erba (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign), Daoqin Tong (Arizona State University), Sarah Low (University of Missouri), Carlianne Patrick (Georgia State University), Eleni Bardaka (North Carolina State University), Mike Delgado (Purdue University), and Yilan Xu (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign).

### History

Regional science as a field is committed to promoting diversity and inclusiveness in its research environment, organizations, and conferences. The latest effort is the diversity and inclusion initiative that started over breakfast at the 2019 NARSC meetings in Pittsburgh. After several follow-up discussions online, the initiative began to crystalize in early 2020, leading to the proposal to create an ad-hoc committee. Neil Reid, who is the current NARSC Executive Director, has been instrumental in nurturing the early discussions and providing the necessary resources. The NARSC Council unanimously approved the creation of the NARSC Diversity Committee in February 2020. The name was subsequently expanded to the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, reflecting the commitment to increasing the participation of populations that have been historically under-represented in the Regional Science community.

The purpose that the committee strives to achieve is articulated in its **Mission Statement**:

"The NARSC Diversity and Inclusion Committee is committed to fostering an environment that embraces diversity, equity and inclusion in pursuing excellence in the field of regional science. The NARSC organization is composed of faculty, students, and professionals from a wide range of racial and ethnic identities, gender expressions, ages, nationalities, political perspectives, and socio-economic backgrounds. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee supports practices that promote inclusion and equality of opportunity for all."

Current committee members are (in alphabetical order by last name) Eleni Bardaka (North Carolina State University), Sandy Dall'erba (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign), Mike Delgado (Purdue University), Sarah Low (University of Missouri), Yuri Mansury (Illinois Tech), Carlianne Patrick (Georgia State University), Daoqin Tong (Arizona State University), Yilan Xu (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign). Dall'erba and Tong currently serve as co-chairs. Mansury is the current ex-officio

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NARSC representative. NARSC is a scholarly association that welcomes everyone from all backgrounds and perspectives, and the Diversity and Inclusion Committee invites faculty, students, and professionals interested in cultivating a culture of diversity and inclusion to join the initiative. Indeed, members of the advisory group are expected to rotate. And while acknowledging the plurality of perspectives, the committee employs scientific and data-driven approach to identify issues and solutions in a transparent way.

### **What the committee has done: the diversity survey**

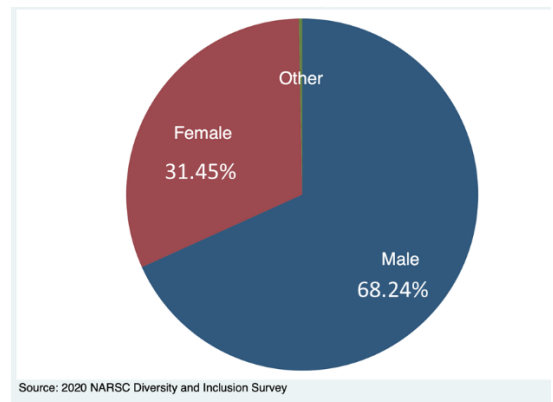
The committee began developing a survey questionnaire in March 2020. The purpose was to better understand the diversity and inclusion challenges that NARSC faces today through questions that track opinion on diversity and inclusion issues as well as collect data on demographic characteristics and professional achievements. Based on the survey, the committee aims to develop policies and initiatives that address diversity concerns in the effort to promote inclusion. Dall'erba, Tong, Mansury, and Reid drafted the initial questions in March 2020 with these goals in mind before the committee collaboratively reviewed and pre-tested the questionnaire over the past summer.

The online survey was fielded for the first time on July 9, 2020. Brad Smith, a NARSC technical support person, assisted with the mass distribution of the survey to a broad cross section of the Regional Science community. Demographic data collected include respondent occupation, home department, gender, age, race, ethnicity, and geography of residence. The survey also tracked respondent conference activities, measured by turnouts at regional science meetings and board meetings attended during conferences. Academic recognitions are measured by number of peer-reviewed publications, keynote presentations, awards received, and journal editorial boards served. Of particular interest are responses to questions that were posed as open ended. Specifically, "What do you think is the biggest diversity challenge currently faced by NARSC?" and the follow up "What do you think would be the solution(s) to the challenge you indicated above?"

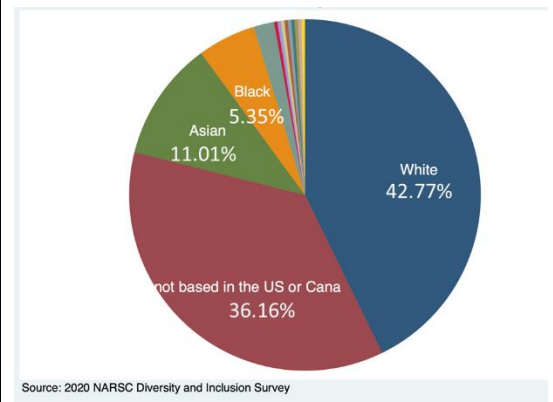
Reminders to complete the survey were sent out on August 12 and September 12 before the last round of data collection ended on September 17. About one-third of the total 395 respondents who completed the survey were female (see Figure A). 27 percent of respondents were 35-44 years old, followed by one-fifth each in the 45-54 and 26-45 age group, respectively. The racial composition of North American residents was 67 percent White, 17 percent Asian, and 8 percent Black (see also Figure B, which includes respondents from outside North America). At the same time, about 14 percent of North American residents identified as Hispanic/Latino. In terms of disciplinary background, economics was cited by 45 percent of respondents, followed by geography (12 percent), applied/agricultural economics (10 percent), planning (7 percent), and public policy (5 percent). Nearly 30 percent of all respondents were full professors, followed by associate professors, assistant professors, graduate students, and government employees at 20 percent, 13 percent, 12 percent, and 7 percent, respectively.

Subsequently, the committee divided tasks between the group that worked on the statistical analyses (Carlianne, Eleni, Mike, Sarah) and the group that focused more on the qualitative aspects of the analysis (Daoqin, Sandy, Yilan, Yuri). Among the notable results, the number of keynote presentations appears to correlate with the number of awards received at North American meetings. Frequency of attendance at North American Regional Science meetings is a statistically-significant predictor of the number of peer-reviewed publications as well as in the model for the number of awards received in North America.

**Figure A.** Gender composition of the 2020 D&I survey respondents



**Figure B.** Racial composition of the 2020 D&I survey respondents



Prepared by Yilan Xu (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign)

Turning to the qualitative components of the survey, respondents indicated that the top diversity challenges are addressing the lack of underrepresented minority groups, followed by creating a more inclusive environment. The proposed solution, according to the respondents, is to create a more inclusive environment, to promote social interactions during NARSC events and outreach activities, and to engage younger demographics. The preliminary results of the survey were presented at this year’s virtual meetings of the Regional Science Association International on a November 9th session, titled *Diversity and Inclusion at NARSC: Survey Results*.<sup>1</sup>

**What’s next**

The NARSC is a growing association with an outstanding core of supporters in the Regional Science community. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee seeks to increase the NARSC’s capacity to offer a collegiate environment that welcomes and supports all voices. Going forward, the committee solicits feedback and suggestions on the proposed solutions to the challenges identified in the survey. This is in parallel to the preparation of a draft of the analysis and recommendation report, in coordination with the NARSC Young Scholar Committee. We expect NARSC to learn from other Regional Science associations and other organizations in stepping up its Diversity and Inclusion efforts. It’s a long term teamwork.

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## Regional Section Updates

### *Canadian Regional Science Association (CRSA)*

During 2020 the Canadian Regional Science Association predominantly focused on the pandemic's limitations to focus on the establishment, refurbishing, and integration of the Journal of the Canadian Regional Science Association as a fundamental tool for Canadian Regional Science. Given the limitations of COVID-19, any organization of an event was deemed by the president inappropriate. In the early year, the Canadian Regional Science Association president was elected by the executive as

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<sup>1</sup> The session’s video recording is available at <https://youtu.be/qmMizadmSwY>

Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Canadian Regional Science Association. Under his mandate, an international and national committee of leading scholars was constituted to redefine the importance of a journal within the scope of Canadian regional science and work towards a global expansion of the Journal itself. After establishing the editorial board, and furthering the strategy of publications of the journal, including a new layout and reformatting of the website's content, the president of the Canadian Regional Science Association passed on the editorial responsibility to two members of the Canadian Regional Science Association. So far, the journal had two successful special issues for 2020. The pandemic's future remains uncertain, and therefore it is not easy to delineate a planned strategy for the Canadian Regional Science Association. The hope of the CRSA with the improvement of the situation worldwide will be possible to realize the conference for the CRSA. All materials were designed throughout late 2019 and up to April 2020, with the pandemic declaration. In this sense, from an optimistic perspective, it is hoped to realize an international conference utilizing SSHRC funding partnership grants in one of Ontario's small towns between the axis of Quebec and Toronto.

### *Mid-Continent Regional Science Association (MCRSA)*

MCRSA was scheduled to hold the 51st Annual Conference June 3-5, 2020 in Bloomington, MN. After the global pandemic was declared due to COVID-19, the MCRSA Board invoked Force Majeure and was released from the hotel contract without penalty. The Board decided to "pause," and held everything in stasis for the year. All Board members remain the same and we consider our membership to remain constant (although a few did pay the 2020 dues outside of conference registration). Looking ahead, we are currently free of contractual obligations, and we are planning a virtual conference in 2021 with IMPLAN. 2019 saw a reduced number of submissions for the Journal of Regional Analysis & Policy (JRAP).

### *Southern Regional Science Association (SRSA)*

The 59th annual meetings were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to cancellation, there were 138 papers submitted, 80 registrants (some travel restrictions were beginning prior to the regular registration deadline), and seven sponsors (total of \$5,700). All registrants and sponsors were offered a full reimbursement with several registrants and sponsors choosing to donate their registration fee or sponsorship to the organization rather than receive a reimbursement. The 2020 Barry M. Moriarty Graduate Student Award was still awarded and went to Brandon Genetin of The Ohio State University for the paper entitled "Field-of-study Mismatch and the Impact on Regional Growth". The 2020 Miernyk Research Excellence Medal, awarded by the Regional Research Institute at West Virginia University, went to Dr. Tessa Conroy of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, for her paper titled "The Need for Speed: Rural Broadband and Entrepreneurship by Business Size and Gender". Both papers were presented in a virtual format through the SRSA 2020 Award Winners' Webinar on May 1, 2020. The winners of the Dan Rickman Best Paper Award, awarded by The Review of Regional Studies, were Anders Van Sandt (Texas A&M University), Sarah Low (University of Missouri), Becca B.R. Jablonski (Colorado State University), and Stephan Weiler (Colorado State University) for their paper titled "Place-Based Factors and the Performance of Farm-Level Entrepreneurship: A Spatial Interaction Model of Agritourism in the U.S." The award will be presented at the 2021 SRSA meetings. Cynthia Rogers (University of Oklahoma) was recognized as the 2020 SRSA Distinguished Fellow, John Winters (Iowa State University) was elected as SRSA 2020-2021 Program Chair, Yong Chen (Oregon State University) and David Peters (Iowa State University) were elected to the Council, and one new SRSA Fellow was named: Steven Deller (University of

Wisconsin, Madison). The 2021 SRSA Conference will be held April 8 - 10, 2021 at Sheraton Austin Hotel at the Capitol in Austin, Texas. The Review of Regional Studies named a new editorial team (for the term April 2021 - April 2026), Dr. Tammy Leonard (University of Dallas) and Dr. Lei Zhang (North Dakota State University).

### *Western Regional Science Association (WRSa)*

WRSa's 59th annual jointly held with 26th Pacific Conference of the RSAI in Waikiki, HI got canceled due to COVID-19. It had over 220 papers with close to 250 participants from almost 20 different countries. This March, Gede Nyoman Mindra Jaya (University of Groningen with the advisor, Henk Flomer won the 34th Tiebout Prize. During our annual board meeting held virtually on April 29, 2020, Terry Clower was selected as WRSa 2020-2021 Vice President. Also, Rachel Franklin is selected as a new Fellow of WRSa. WRSa will hold its 60th annual meeting virtually on February 22-25, 2021 due to COVID-19. The paper submission due date is moved to October 30th. Alternative meeting plans (final plan will be announced by mid-December): hybrid or virtual or postpone the meeting. The final submission deadline will be extended to December 31st, partly to accommodate those who attend the NARSC meeting and do not have time to submit a full paper to WRSa by October 30th. Getis-Ord Lecture committee selected a speaker for 2020 meeting in Hawaii, Shaowen Wang from University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and he will be invited as the speaker for the 2021 virtual meeting. WRSa's 2022 meeting will be held in Scottsdale, AZ, Feb 17-20 (Thursday to Sunday). WRSa's 2023 meeting place will be held at Hilton Waikoloa Village Resort in Big Islands, HI, Feb 15-18 (Wednesday - Saturday). WRSa decided to have the 2023 meeting at Hilton Waikoloa Village Resort in lieu of this year's canceled meeting in Waikiki Hilton Resort. This waived any penalty or cancelation fee to Hilton.

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## Upcoming North American Regional Science Meetings

WRSa is planning to hold its 60<sup>th</sup> annual meeting virtually February 22-25, 2021. Please visit this [link](#) for updates.

SRSA is planning to hold its 60<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Austin, TX April 8-10, 2021. Please visit this [link](#) for updates.

MCRSA is planning a virtual conference in 2021 with IMPLAN. Please visit this [link](#) for updates.

The 68<sup>th</sup> North American Meetings of RSAI will be held in Denver, CO in 2021. Please visit this [link](#) for updates.

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## NERSA/NARSC Summer School 2021

With the support of RSAI's "Building Bridges Programme" and NARSC, the Northeast Regional Science Association (NERSA) will mount a virtual summer school program (tentatively) on June 21-23, 2021 from the campus of Cornell University. The summer school will be targeted to scholars who wish to participate in and learn how to do *problem-driven, interdisciplinary, and policy-relevant* research on a contemporary socioeconomic problem with a spatial context in an immersive setting. The focus of the program in the coming year is likely to be on regional responses to the effects of climate change. In



this inaugural staging of what is intended to be a recurring annual event, ten to fifteen pre-doctoral and post-doctoral students will be admitted to the program. Several more senior scholars, who might also wish to participate, will be allowed to do so. Several faculty members from Cornell's regional science program will lead the program, while several other regional scientists with appropriate area knowledge and skills will be recruited to round out the faculty. Stakeholders from appropriate government agencies, NGOs, or firms will be invited to participate for parts of days. Details on how to apply to the summer school will be made available shortly.