On November 10, 2005, approximately 500 people from the community and across the University gathered for the 9th Annual Rocco C. and Marion S. Siciliano Forum. Howard Rheingold, cyberspace author and guru, addressed an overflow crowd as he spoke on “Smart mobs: The Impact of Ubiquitous Instant Access on Social Networks and Social Relations.”

The Geography Department, under the leadership of Professor Harvey Miller, organized this year’s Siciliano Forum and a follow-along conference of experts who analyzed some social and political implications of this new technology.

Rheingold is the founder of Rheingold Associates, a company that helps commercial, educational, and non-profit enterprises build online social networks. He has served as a consultant to many organizations including the British Broadcasting Corporation, Ford Motor Company, and the Smithsonian Institute. Rheingold is the founding executive editor of HotWired, a commercial Webzine launched by Wired magazine in 1994. His writings have been published in French, German, Spanish, and Japanese.

Cell phones and PDA Pilots: we’ve all seen them and most of us own them. But perhaps something less familiar is the potential these handheld communication and computing devices carry to revolutionize social relations. According to Rheingold, the wirelessly linked PC will likely create social changes “more powerful than those unleashed by the printing press.”

With a click of a button a mobile phone with Internet access can mobilize people at a much faster rate than ever before. It can even mobilize complete strangers into large groups. Rheingold calls “smart mobs” or “flash mobs” — groups that are able to use this technology for good or ill. From silly, self-organized entertainment to democratic protests, to the recent riots and car-bombings in France and the September 11th terrorist attacks, the applications of this technology have already varied immensely.

“I believe that, just as with the automobile and the telephone and the alphabet, people with constructive ends in sight are going to create more freedom and more wealth, and they’re going to help make life better, and people with destructive ends in mind are going to be able to do destructive things on scales that they weren’t able to before,” Rheingold said. This range of possibilities should urge us, Rheingold advised, to become knowledgeable about the technology so we can have more influence on how it is used.

Rheingold’s lecture was the keynote event of the 2005 Siciliano Forum. Other Forum events included a panel discussion featuring Rheingold; Michael Ratty, University College London; Helen Couclelis, University of California Santa Barbara; and Brenda Scheer, The University of Utah. The panel was moderated by Professor Harvey Miller of the U of U Geography Department. Following the Forum the Department of Geography hosted two days of roundtable discussions with these and other world-renowned geographers.

When transcribed, Howard Rheingold’s lecture and the question-and-answer session will be available on the College Web site at www.csbs.utah.edu.

For additional information about the Siciliano Forum, contact Aleta Tew at (801) 587-3556.
In June, Anthropologist Dr. Donald MacEachron, project coordinator, reported that the team had been able to access remote granaries, many of them hundreds of feet above the canyon floor on the 3,000 foot tall canyon walls. Some of these granaries could store 1 to 2 cubic meters of corn. The Fremont used a system of logs and hand holds cut into the cliff walls to reach the adobe and stone granaries. With the assistance of the Utah County Sheriff’s Office, the entire team members are rapping into them. Donald emphasized that this is a long-term project. We look forward to hearing more about these fascinating discoveries in the years to come.

ROBERT H. HINCKLEY, JR. 1917-2005

We are saddened to announce the passing of Robert H. Hinckley, Jr., Monday, October 24, 2005. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Janice Scowcroft Hinckley. The son of Robert H. Hinckley, Sr., the founder of the Hinckley Institute of Politics, Robert H. Hinckley, Jr. carried on his father’s legacy of student engagement in politics and civic affairs.

Mr. Hinckley graduated from Ogden High School in 1936. He attended Stanford University for one year before receiving an appointment to the United States Military Academy. He graduated from West Point in 1942. Mr. Hinckley flew B-24 bombers in World War II, after flying 35 combat missions, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the French war medal, the Croix de Guerre. He then completed an MBA degree at the University of Chicago, after which he was stationed in Japan during the Korean War. He was awarded the Bronze Star for his service.

Mr. Hinckley, having achieved the rank of colonel, left the Air Force and returned to Utah in 1955. He then turned his “military-style energy” full strength to the matters of raising his family and building the car business.

Mr. Hinckley served as chairman of the board of the Hinckley Institute from 1988 until 1999. He served on the University’s Institutional Council. In 1996 he received the Honorary Alumni Award.

In the words of Kirk Jowers, current director of the Hinckley Institute, “I can’t think of anyone who has done more over the past 40 years for the U.”

We are excited to announce the Cassandra Network, a new member of The University of Utah community designed to connect women working in the public policy world with each other. Their January 12, 2006 kickoff event, a panel discussion entitled “How Women Influence Public Policy Decisions in Utah,” will present an exploration of the role that women play in shaping the policy discourse that influences our daily lives.

Panel members will include Karen Okabe, deputy mayor for Salt Lake County; D’Arcy Dixon Pignanelli, director of administrative services for the state of Utah; Weber State history professor and author Karen Mackay; and Natalie Gochner of the Salt Lake Chamber.

The Cassandra Network borrows its name from Greek literature. According to Homer, Cassandra was gifted with the foresight of foreseeing the future but with a catch—no one would listen to her. She warned the Greek army of the destruction that awaited them in Troy, only to have them scoff and watch as her prediction came true.

Trying to avoid that fate, the mission of the Cassandra Network is to meet the professional needs of female policy analysts and policymakers who work and live in Utah, including those who have felt isolated from their male co-workers and other women working in public policy.

The new group aims to provide a forum to discuss important policy topics and workplace issues around gender and to provide opportunities for women to network with other women for information about membership, upcoming meetings, and opportunities for involvement, visit the Cassandra Network Web site at http://www.cppa.utah.edu/cassandra.
MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

With the New Year and spring semester underway, we have much to report about the exciting developments in the College of Social and Behavioral Science.

The College, our students, the faculty, and the departments and programs continue to move forward at an almost unbelievable pace. Our new Institute of Public and International Affairs (IPIA) is providing a host of energizing challenges. Faculty members are working with colleagues in colleges and departments across the University to develop new interdisciplinary programs and innovative research projects in public policy, applied politics, international socio-political economics, and global management. As a universitywide center, IPIA will benefit the entire community as well as focus greater national and international attention on the University of Utah. The national search for the IPIA Director is well underway, and we expect to have a Director in place this summer. We also anticipate hiring new faculty in Anthropology, Economics, Geography, Political Science, and Sociology.

Although we are pleased and proud about our many new initiatives, we continue to worry about the financial well-being of our students. Tuition at The University of Utah remains among the lowest for public “flagship universities” across the U.S., but it has risen dramatically—by almost ten percent per year—for the past four years. With another tuition increase likely for next fall, scholarships given by our alumni and friends become more important each year. Tuition alone is over $4,000 a year now and, as you know, fees, books and supplies have been increasing every year as well.

The social and behavioral sciences are facing demanding times. We remain proud to be educating our world’s future leaders. Thank you for continuing to be interested in and supportive of our students and faculty. Please stay in touch—we are always glad to hear from our friends.

Sincerely,

J. Steven Ott, Dean