As part of the Geography Department Colloquium, Dr. Susan Cutter will discuss “Disaster Resilience and Vulnerability: What to Measure, How to Measure, Why Measure?” This is open to the campus community and will be held at Buchanan 1940 at 3:30 p.m. on February 18. The Center for Spatial Studies (Department of Geography, UCSB) and Direct Relief International (DRI) are hosting Dr. Cutter’s visit.

Dr. Cutter is Director of the Hazards and Vulnerability Research Institute (HVRI, http://webra.cas.sc.edu/hvri/) at the University of South Carolina. She has been working in the field of risk and hazards for more than twenty-five years and is a nationally recognized scholar in this area. Her primary research interests are in disaster vulnerability/resilience science—what makes people and the places where they live vulnerable to extreme events and how vulnerability and resilience are measured, monitored, and assessed.

Cutter has led numerous post-event field studies of the role of geographic information technologies in rescue and relief operations in the September 11th World Trade Center attack and studies of evacuation behavior from Three Mile Island (1979), Hurricane Floyd (1999), and the Graniteville, SC train derailment and chlorine spill (2005). She has authored or edited twelve books, more than 100 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters. Her most recent book, American Hazardscapes, chronicles the increasing hazard vulnerability to natural disaster events in the United States during the last thirty years. Dr. Cutter serves on many national advisory boards and committees.

On February 19, Direct Relief International, a local organization committed to providing medical assistance to improve the quality of life for people affected by poverty, disaster, and civil unrest at home and worldwide, will host a meeting to plan the possible creation of a vulnerability mapping project in Santa Barbara County. Dr. Cutter will discuss the relevance of her work to DRI’s projects and interests at a small meeting at the DRI offices during the lunch hour.