Impact Michigan, Advance Detroit

THE POWER

The University of Michigan has a special relationship with Detroit that goes back to its founding in the city in 1817. The College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA) is committed to encouraging students to engage in the life of the metropolitan area through a variety of courses and programs that span the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences. As the preeminent public liberal arts college in the state of Michigan, LSA strives to be an asset to Detroit, offering programs that enable students to combine academics with community work of all sorts to prepare them for lives of leadership, service, and civic engagement.

THE OPPORTUNITIES

Students take classes at the Detroit Center, U-M’s downtown Detroit campus. They also are actively engaged in meeting with Detroit community activists and professionals, working alongside community leaders in a variety of organizations, and conducting research that is meaningful and beneficial for local non-profits and community groups.
Students gain new perspectives on urban issues through a variety of hands-on experiences. Projects have included: working for Detroit 300 Conservancy to study ways to better utilize Detroit’s 300 Parks; teaching in community after-school programs across the city; researching environmental justice and community empowerment for an ecological/economic development organization; and surveying community residents to provide community organizations with information about public perceptions of community safety issues. These internships and service-learning experiences prepare students for a future of leadership and civic engagement.

THE IMPACT

Your gifts for LSA opportunities in Detroit will make it possible for more undergraduates to gain fresh perspectives on complex issues, to see their work make a difference for neighborhoods and community organizations in the city, and to participate in life-changing experiences that may help them define their future goals.

Undergraduate Research Opportunities (UROP)
COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH PROGRAM
$150,000 to $200,000 annually

Funding for this program would enable us to develop new curricular initiatives to link classroom learning with community-based research opportunities in multiple sectors, including non-profits, governmental organizations, and even entrepreneurial ventures focused on community economic development. Working in collaboration with our community partners, we could enhance this program by developing courses and workshops to provide students with additional skills and knowledge that could be applied to their work in the community and also enhance their academic course work. Funds would be used for both course development to engage our community partners, housing stipends to enable students to reside in Detroit, and stipends for 25 to 30 students annually to conduct full-time summer research for community-based organizations in southeast Michigan, with a special focus on Detroit. Through these engaged learning opportunities, students would learn to apply and develop research skills in a real world context, conduct critical research to help non-profit community-based organizations and other organizations better serve their constituents, expose students to professional needs and opportunities, integrate these experiences with their academic work, and explore future academic and professional pathways.

Residential College
SEMESTER IN DETROIT (SID)
$2M endowed/$100,000 annually

The Semester in Detroit program transforms U-M students through substantive, sustained and reciprocal relationships with the people, organizations, and neighborhoods of Detroit. By living, learning, and working in the city, our students engage with community leaders in transformative work—strengthening themselves as well as the wider region. For the semester, students live in Wayne State dorms or other housing in key Detroit neighborhoods, enroll in a rigorous curriculum taught by Ann Arbor faculty at U-M’s Detroit Center, and participate in a community-based internship. As a result of this experience, many students choose to stay in Detroit to live and work. Funding is needed to enable more students to participate, regardless of their financial need.

- Student housing: $25,000 annually
- Student stipends: $40,000 annually/ $3,500 per student
- Sid coordinator: $35,000 annually

For more information: www.lsa.umich.edu/sid/ci.semesterindetroitvideo_ci.detail

Department of Sociology
PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY INITIATIVE
$50,000 to $100,000 annually

The department seeks to establish a formal conduit through which we can help translate scholarship to the public, especially the local region and the state of Michigan. Gifts will make possible initiatives that address public concerns and issues in Detroit and Michigan, and will provide opportunities for our undergraduates to engage directly with the community by connecting scholarship to practice. Funds could be used to enrich the Project Community and Community Organizing courses, thereby enabling more students to have the opportunity to gain service-learning experiences in education, criminal justice, public health, or community development settings. In this way, students will be able to get acquainted with the “real-life” applications of sociology by developing and honing communication skills to make meaningful connections and contributions to communities in metro-Detroit, as well as in other parts of Michigan.
Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

BIOKIDS PROJECT
$25,000 annually

The BioKIDS Project is engaged in educational research to improve science learning in high-poverty, urban classrooms, with particular focus on the Detroit Public Schools. The work centers on the fourth through eighth grades, a period when the performance of American students in science falls behind that of students in other countries. The focus is on curricular units and associated technologies that promote students’ deep understandings of current science topics. Students participate in eight-week life science programs collecting data on animal distribution in their schoolyards using iPhones or iPads and software originally used by African Animal Trackers. An electronic discussion board and the creation of their own web-based biodiversity maps allow students to compare and share their findings with other students and researchers around the world. They learn about science and scientific reasoning by asking and answering questions about species distributions, interdependence, human influence on diversity, and many other related concepts. Students learn to create species accounts with the maps, narratives and predictions they have generated, which are available for future reference and use by other students. Gifts would provide the resources needed to send U-M graduate students to Detroit classrooms to help students work on their projects, to bring Detroit students to Ann Arbor for a symposium where they present the results of their work, and for Detroit students to take a field trip with U-M faculty and students to a local nature area to actually see the organisms they’ve been investigating.

Department of Psychology

SERVICE-LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR UNDERGRADUATES
$10,000 to $50,000 expendable

Service-learning offers students an opportunity to apply the theories and concepts they learn in the classroom to real-world situations. It also encourages students to develop a sense of civic mindedness that is an essential element of a well-functioning society. The Psychology Department offers three distinct service-learning opportunities for undergraduate students. Established in 1995, the Detroit Initiative seeks to provide opportunities for students and faculty to engage in further education, service, and research in the Detroit area through a focus on community-identified priorities. The Michigan Mentorship Program offers a unique opportunity for undergraduates to help local “at risk” grade school students by acting as mentors. The purpose of Project Outreach is to have students learn about themselves as they learn about psychology by becoming involved in community settings. Students are engaged in real work in the community that is designed to meet community needs. Many students report that service-learning courses often result in profound life changes. Gifts would enable us to provide more opportunities for our students, as well as develop more partnerships with various community-based constituencies.

WAYS TO FUND YOUR GIFT

Your gifts of cash, pledges, or appreciated securities change lives. Wills, estate, and planned gifts allow you to create a lasting legacy that will enable the best and brightest minds to experience a liberal arts education, solve problems in a changing world, and yield ideas and innovations that will make a difference in Michigan and around the globe.