LSA Center for Engaged Academic Learning

THE POWER

LSA: Leading the Way in Connecting the World to the Classroom

As web-based forms of information delivery continue to expand, the residential university campus will increasingly function as the place where the proliferation of information is made meaningful through new forms of teaching and learning. Engaged Learning—the partnership of classroom experience in a rigorous curriculum with work outside the classroom—has both a long history at the University of Michigan and an important role in our future.

Engaged learning is already a hallmark of LSA and it takes many forms: research through the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program; travel abroad through the Center for Global and Intercultural Studies; service learning through Project Community; civic engagement through the Michigan in Washington and Semester in Detroit programs; layered...
teaching and service through high-school outreach such as the Telling It program or the Algebra/Young People’s Project; field experiences at Camp Davis, the Biological Station or the New England Literature Program; peer teaching, such as that found in the Honors Program; internships; intentional linkages with co-curricular student clubs such as M-Powered; and classroom-based experiences such as those found in Sociology, Chemistry, and many other departments. The Center for Engaged Academic Learning (CEAL) will be a primary venue for the creation, nurture, and support of the important innovations in engaged learning of the future.

THE OPPORTUNITIES

Why Engaged Academic Learning?
Although the experience and action that underpin engaged learning are important triggers for student intellectual growth, experience itself may not contribute to growth—and there is abundant evidence that, without adequate self-reflection, some experiences may actually be detrimental to a student’s learning. Consider the accounts of students who travel to foreign countries and find that their minds have not been expanded to accommodate the cultural difference of others, but instead they have had their existing schemas and ideologies confirmed: “the people are strange, lazy, backward, with dysfunctional cultures that have no hope of surviving in the modern world.” To avoid such failures of the engaged learning enterprise, we must insist upon the partnership between engagement and the academic knowledge that is produced and passed on by our faculty. Indeed, perhaps the single most important purpose of the university is to provide students a protected space and an opportunity to question their worldview.

This important work can only take place in a partnership that includes the classroom. The Center for Engaged Academic Learning must therefore serve a critical mission: supporting faculty innovation and student initiatives that make the most productive linkages between engaged learning and the academic learning that supports both liberal arts education and the research university.

LSA already hosts a range of innovative initiatives for engaged academic learning that could benefit from a centralized structure. We are in the midst of an exciting and challenging conversation about future pedagogy on campus, one that will prominently feature engaged academic learning. We have students hungry for more opportunities. And we are seeing among our faculty an increased desire to discover best practices, create new course structures, and find necessary support and advice. CEAL can help structure and support these needs, allowing U-M a leading role in shaping future pedagogies.
THE IMPACT

Where? And what?
With the impending renovation of the David M. Dennison Building, LSA confronts an unparalleled opportunity to build a Center for Engaged Academic Learning that is central to the experience of both students and faculty. In most universities and colleges engaged learning is relegated to the division of campus life or student affairs. CEAL will report to the LSA Dean’s Office, placing engaged learning at the center of our academic mission and better supporting CEAL’s three core functions:

Center for Engaged Academic Learning
$10M endowed to Name

Through your support for the Center for Engaged Academic Learning (CEAL), the quantity and quality of engaged learning opportunities will increase in measurable ways; student awareness and appreciation of such opportunities will increase; faculty members will have innovated new models for engaged academic learning that position U-M as a leader in the field; and the culture of teaching in LSA will have been transformed with greater interest and emphasis on the integration of classroom and experiential knowledge. Your gifts are needed to make these possibilities become reality.

Named Space, Programming, Technology
$6M endowed

As a programming venue, CEAL will devise creative opportunities to share the achievements and the possibilities for engaged academic learning with students, faculty, community and staff. The Dennison space will be planned to maximize student presence, with adjacencies to an open concourse space (always oversubscribed by student dance clubs), a café, and study/seating areas similar to those now well-used by students in Mason and the UGLI. Interactive, high-definition video will connect students abroad or in communities with on-campus preparation and reflection courses, and will maintain learning communities across distance.

Faculty Support Center
$2M endowed

As a training and support center for faculty, CEAL will create an intentional community for faculty interested in engaged learning and will assist with course development, community partner relations, and cross-campus coordination with entities such as the Ginsberg Center, the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching, the University Coursera committee, LSA Instructional Support Services, and the Program in Entrepreneurship. A monthly seminar and discussion series will make CEAL a crucial location for taking engaged academic learning pedagogy not simply as a practice, but also as an object of intellectual inquiry and exchange.

CEAL Support Fund
$2M endowed

As a location for institutional resources, CEAL will provide faculty with shared staff/services assistance for financials and logistics: vehicle rentals, expense processing, student payroll, and grant administration. Since faculty require support in developing new classes and transitioning old ones, CEAL must be able to offer resources in the form of stipends, graduate student support, and consulting expertise.

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.