LSA Social Innovation Alliance Center

THE POWER

Leading the Way in Student-Driven Creative Innovation

The average student in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA) spends 12 to 15 hours each week in the classroom, as well as another 15 to 20 hours in additional learning through group projects, reading, homework, problem sets, and research. Students also are willing to invest an enormous amount of time and energy in another area. Michigan has more than 1,000 student organizations, ranging from social groups to social-change groups, from volunteer organizations to small businesses, from Squirrel Club to Dance Marathon. And LSA has a long history of support and sponsorship for many of these groups.

Our largest-ever fundraising campaign is ambitious, visionary, purposeful — worthy of the name “Victors.” The $400 million goal is built upon the cornerstone of the liberal arts: the idea that a powerful, pragmatic education can transform hearts and minds, can solve problems in a changing world, can yield ideas and innovation across every discipline. That’s why we are focused on raising money so that the best and brightest minds can have access to the College through robust scholarship support, no matter their financial circumstances. So too are we committed to helping every student acquire not just knowledge in the classroom, but experiences outside the academy including innovative entrepreneurial efforts and internships. We strive to support our faculty on the front-lines of research, and steward our planet, our community, our campus. To do all this, and so much more, the College needs you — because the world needs Victors.
THE OPPORTUNITIES

A Partnership that Honors Student Initiative

The College has been particularly impressed by the efforts of the student organization optiMize and has partnered with this group to co-sponsor an annual Social Innovation Challenge, which encourages students to exercise their full range of knowledge, creativity, and problem-solving ability by working in teams to propose solutions to social challenges. Some of these solutions are in the form of mobile apps, others are new non-profit organizations, while still others are business start-ups. Winners receive internship funding to support a summer working on their projects. To create the infrastructure necessary for optiMize to remain a sustainable student organization, the group has developed a clearly documented process for running the annual Challenge event, including the recruitment of next generation leaders, governance structure, and succession planning. And as primary sponsor of this organization, the LSA Dean’s Office has provided advice, financial support, and accounting authority.

We propose a new model based on this partnership—the LSA Social Innovation Alliance (SIA)—that takes our students seriously as generators of innovation, but also recognizes the limitations of a student organization. LSA SIA will offer a hybrid model, one driven by the excitement and energy of a student organization, but with LSA budget and administrative staff support that will enable optiMize to expand its reach, scale up its activities, and create new opportunities for further programmatic innovation.

Through the Social Innovation Alliance program, we will offer curriculum, internship support, innovation fellowships, and financial oversight, thus establishing a partnership that will support scores of student groups seeking to exercise an innovation mindset, take some risks, and perhaps change the world.

THE IMPACT

A Partnership that Seeks to Change the World

Your gifts will support a powerful partnership between LSA and student organizations seeking to change the world through social innovation start-ups, non-profits, and creative enterprises. Support would fund student-run operating expenses, including marketing, design, event coordination, and fundraising. Even more importantly, it would include the internship stipends that allow winning teams to move beyond proposals and into implementation and assessment.

LSA Social Innovation Alliance

$5M endowed to Name

LSA is actively seeking financial support to endow the Social Innovation Alliance program. The SIA program will leverage the creative churn and flow that characterizes student organizations and pair it with the institutional and historical knowledge of the College in order to expand and grow. With your help, the LSA SIA will create and support new forms of teaching and learning by integrating curricular innovation with the co-curricular work of Michigan students.

- Post Degree Innovation Directors
  $70,000 annually each

  Funding is needed for the creation of a 15-month SIA fellowship to be awarded to a graduating senior from the SIA community. The Fellow would be responsible for recruiting, coordinating and further developing SIA programs, as well as for the SIA budget for student-run operating expenses, such as marketing, design, event coordination, and fundraising. LSA staff will manage the partnership.

- Named Summer Innovation Fellows
  $60,000 annually
  5 groups of 4 students/$3,000 per student

  Support is needed to provide internship funding for Social Innovation Challenge winners who are chosen by a volunteer panel that is also a valuable network. Each winning team would receive funding to support a summer of work on their projects, to be followed in the fall by an assessment and report.
Social Innovation Challenge
$60,000 annually
The annual Social Innovation Challenge encourages LSA students to work in teams to propose innovative solutions to pressing social problems. Coached by a range of volunteer experts, the student teams will go through a process of problem identification, generation of solutions, benchmarking, and implementation planning. We seek financial resources to support social gatherings and work events to build a community around the Social Innovation Challenge, as well as for coaching support and curricular innovation.

One-Credit Developmental Mini-Courses
$50,000 annually
We are seeking support to develop a student-initiated one-credit course based on a problem-solving model pioneered in the LSA University Courses division over the last few years. This course, or multiple courses, would be designed to prepare participating students for the Social Innovation Challenge and to begin creating the SIA community. We also envision a Social Innovation practicum course, one that offers curricular support for students committed to Social Innovation projects.

Named Executive Leadership Fellows
$36,000 annually
$7,200 per student
We are seeking support for our cutting-edge model of student leadership, which utilizes students as genuine partners with our small LSA staff. Student leaders volunteer during the school year and become paid fellows during the summer. This model recognizes that top-down initiatives often struggle to respond to shifting student motivations. Student organizations are more agile, but have a "stop and start" problem—summers are wasted and momentum is extinguished. Our model takes the best of both structures. It is both stable and agile, reducing the need for full-time staff while also providing an unparalleled executive leadership and management experience for student leaders.

Social Innovation Alliance Programming
$25,000 annually
Gifts are needed for SIA program funding for student-run operating expenses, such as marketing, design, event coordination and fundraising, as well as programming, which could include speakers, consultants, community organizers and skill building workshops.

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.