



University of Michigan Museum of Paleontology

THE POWER

Paleontology at the University of Michigan has a distinguished tradition dating from 1837, when a “Cabinet of Natural History” was authorized at the first meeting of the Board of Regents. Our graduate program in paleontology, centered in the Museum of Paleontology, has long been recognized as among the top five programs in this field in the U.S. The University of Michigan Museum of Paleontology (UMMP) is a research museum devoted to studying the history of life, interpreting its meaning, and sharing these experiences with students. It provides staff, laboratory, and field support for faculty and students to conduct new and original empirical investigations of the history of life. Also, UMMP provides space and facilities for conserving, organizing, and studying collections of fossil specimens and accompanying information resulting from field investigations.

THE OPPORTUNITIES

Students are an important part of the UMMP. Undergraduates can receive a paleontology minor through the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, and benefit from working with the museum faculty and using UMMP facilities to conduct research and write their senior theses. Also, students gain hands-on experience in paleontology as undergraduate assistants working in the fossil preparation laboratory or by participating in research projects through the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program. In addition, students have opportunities for field work, either locally or in remote areas.

THE IMPACT

To retain world-class ranking, the UMMP must have resources to offer graduate fellowships to outstanding students who apply to our program, as well as to provide field support for their research. Graduate students are an important part of our program and their teaching, research and mentoring enhances our ability to attract talented undergraduates as well as leading faculty. In addition, gifts for equipment, both hardware and software, will enable us to keep current with ever-changing technology that is critical to our research and teaching mission.

Graduate Fellowship Support

\$1M endowed per student / \$50,000 annually per student

U-M's program of graduate education in paleontology, centered in the UMMP, is recognized as one of the top five in this field. We now admit fewer than 10 percent of our applicants and turn away students that could excel in our program. We would like to support excellent students by offering three fellowships per year, to be used on a rotating basis in conjunction with other funding sources. Our students enroll in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences or the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, and we combine sources of support to enable students to establish themselves as educators (Graduate Student Instructors) and researchers (Graduate Student Research Assistants), but current sources of support are inadequate for the number of excellent students we would like to train.

Undergraduate Research Support

\$50,000 to \$100,000 annually

Many undergraduate students are eager to participate in hands-on field research with our faculty. Currently, we accommodate these requests as best we can because interested undergraduates often add substantially to what we can accomplish, while at the same time discovering their own new directions for personal growth. However, financial constraints often limit our ability to take on new assistants. Gifts to support student research would make it easier to involve those interested in our field and prepare them more fully for subsequent opportunities.

Paleontological Field Research Support

\$50,000 to \$100,000 annually

New insights into the history of life can emerge from examining existing specimens in new ways, but sooner or later, testing new interpretations requires us to collect new fossil material, often in remote areas, using new methods that enhance the quality or quantity of data recovered from the fossil record. A fund that provides seed money for starting new investigations would help generate early results and would support both faculty and student research and training.

UMMP Equipment Fund

\$10,000 to \$50,000 annually

To meet our current needs and provide more uninterrupted access to equipment, we seek funding for regular upgrading of both hardware and software used by a broad cross-section of faculty, undergraduates and graduate students. For example, recent advances in morphometrics—the quantitative analysis of shape and shape-change that is critical to document patterns of evolutionary change—have been driven by increases in computing power and the emergence of new technologies, such as 3D optical scanning digitizers for capturing data on organismal form. It is urgent that we update our morphometrics equipment to support the groundbreaking research of our scholars and students.

Undergraduate Enrichment Fund

\$5,000 to \$10,000 annually

Attendance at a professional meeting conveys to students a sense that their contribution to their discipline could make a difference. They meet others in their field, both peers and potential mentors. They often experience such a deluge of ideas that it catalyzes both personal growth and professional development. Graduate students typically have access to resources that permit these experiences, but undergraduates often do not. We would like to provide this opportunity on an annual basis to students who would not otherwise have the financial resources to participate.

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.

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