

MichiganTech TECH TODAY

Michigan Technological University Faculty/Staff Newsletter * Published Daily by University Marketing and Communications

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1. Federal Stimulus Funds a Boon for Sustainability Studies at Michigan Tech, Part 2

by Marcia Goodrich, senior writer

Michigan Tech is receiving over \$3 million in federal funds from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, courtesy of the National Science Foundation. All four grants address sustainability topics. In the first part of a two-part series, we reviewed the three research projects made possible by federal stimulus funds. Today, we look at a new fellowship program that will improve doctoral students' communication skills by bringing them into middle school classrooms.

Global Watershed GK12 Fellowships: Diving Deep into Water Topics with Middle School Teachers, Students

Starting this fall, Michigan Tech PhD students will begin an in-depth, collaborative effort to bring the engineering, natural science and political aspects of water resources to middle school students and their teachers. Professor Alex Mayer (CEE), director of the Center for Water and Society, anticipates that the effort will go beyond raising young people's awareness of water issues. "Our goal is to give our doctoral students enthusiasm for communicating their work and a lifelong commitment to working with K12 schools," he said.

Graduate students can have difficulty explaining their research to those outside their discipline, said Mayer. Yet, good communication skills are critical on multiple fronts, including teaching, professional advancement, and particularly for generating public understanding and support for science. "Communicating with lay people is difficult even for us who have been in the business for many years," he said. "If our PhD students can learn to engage middle school students, they can reach any audience."

Over its five-year length, the \$2.5-million program will provide two-year Global Watershed GK12 fellowships to 18 PhD students, starting with five in summer 2010. The fellowships will consist of a generous stipend and tuition and fees. Each participant will be paired with a middle school teacher. Under the supervision of their teachers, the graduate students will deliver lessons on water-related topics, including their own work. They will also serve as a resource for their teacher on water-related topics.

The students will work in school districts throughout the western and central Upper Peninsula. In districts that serve a high proportion of Native American students, they will work with a consultant to make sure their lessons reflect native culture.

The program also has an international component. In cooperation with the Colegio Muñoz school system in Hermosillo, Sonora, Spanish-speaking PhD students will be paired with teachers in Mexico, in areas where water shortages have reached a critical level.

"They will give the teachers tools they can use even after the students leave their classrooms, and they will engage the middle school students to pursue careers related to water and watersheds," Mayer said. "They can become ambassadors to the community from their university and connect with tomorrow's citizens while furthering their own professional development."

It will take an extra commitment from the PhD students, adding about a semester to their studies. But it will also give them advantages, especially if they join a university faculty, Mayer said. The National Science Foundation requires that many grant proposals, including the prestigious CAREER awards, include a K12 component. New faculty members who have participated in these fellowships should have no trouble involving K12 students and teachers in their work.

Coprincipal investigators on the grant are Associate Professor Nancy Auer (Biological Sciences), Associate Professor Linda Nagel (SFRES), Chair Bradley Baltensperger (Cognitive and Learning Sciences) and Shawn Oppliger, director of the Western Upper Peninsula Center for Science, Mathematics and Environmental Education).

2. Workshop Addresses Being a GLBT Ally

by Kara Sokol, integrated marketing specialist

What is an ally?

The word has many meanings, but to members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community, the definition is straightforward.

"Simply put, an ally is a heterosexual individual who supports the equal and fair treatment of GLBT people," explained Pat Hopp, manager of Michigan Tech's Systems Administration Services and advisor for Keweenaw Pride, the University's GLBT student organization.

Hopp was the presenter at last week's ally workshop, held to educate the campus community about GLBT issues and the University's Safe Place program, a campus-wide GLBT inclusion and acceptance initiative.

The workshop--which drew a moderately sized but committed group of about 20, including students, staff and faculty members--was a candid and often humorous discussion about the purposes and responsibilities of allies.

Hopp--himself an ally who has been involved with Keweenaw Pride for 12 years, first as a student and then as an advisor--explained the need for GLBT supporters.

"Depending on who you talk to, GLBT people make up between 3 and 10 percent of the world's population," Hopp said. "There are not enough GLBT individuals to educate the remaining 90 to 97 percent. They need straight allies."

During the hour-long presentation, Hopp discussed the realities of being an ally.

"People will assume you're gay and you have to be confident enough not to let it bother you," Hopp explained. "You will most likely face some form of harassment. You may even lose some of your straight friends--but you'll also gain some new ones."

Hopp advised the group to listen to language--theirs and others'--and be willing to correct common slurs, including the widely misused "gay."

"The term 'that's so gay,' in reference to something stupid or bad, is used so often that it can be an overwhelming thing to try and correct," Hopp explained. "But don't stop trying--often, it's just a matter of habit."

Hopp's annual workshop is one of several initiatives in support of the Safe Place program, which maintains a registry of committed allies within the campus community. In addition, it provides education and advocacy to reduce heterosexism and create an open and accepting campus climate.

Members of the Safe Place program help make referrals to community and University resources, promote GLBT acceptance in the classroom and workplace, encourage inclusive language, avoid stereotypes, and serve as a resource for other University staff, faculty and students.

For more information, or to register to become a Safe Place member, visit www.safeplace.mtu.edu .

3. Michigan Tech EcoCAR Team Hits the Road

by Marcia Goodrich, senior writer

For over a year, Michigan Technological University's EcoCAR Enterprise team members have been brainstorming and building a next-generation hybrid vehicle on their computers. Now they are ready to roll.

The team has taken delivery on a 2009 Saturn Vue Hybrid, a cross-over vehicle. General Motors, a major sponsor of EcoCar, donated new Vues to Michigan Tech and the 16 other US and Canadian universities participating in the competition.

To read more about EcoCAR and the Tech team's strategy, see [this story on the Michigan Tech News site](#).

4. Nominations are Open for Spring 2010 Finishing Fellowships

The Graduate School is now accepting nominations for the spring 2010 Finishing Fellowship competition.

Complete applications are due no later than 4 p.m. on Oct. 29.

Students are eligible if they:

- * are a PhD student.
- * expect to finish during the semester supported as a finishing fellow.
- * have submitted a Petition to Enter Full-Time Research-Only Mode.

No Finishing Fellowships will be awarded to students who fail to receive approval of their petition.

For information about the application procedure, [click here](#)

For questions, contact Debra Charlesworth at ddc@mtu.edu .

5. Reminder: Truffles for Truelove

Sweetest Day is Saturday, Oct. 17, and the Bake Shop can help you keep in good favor with your honeybun by serving up the sweet excesses of chocolate.

The folks at the Bake Shop are dishing up assorted, homemade, gourmet, chocolate truffles for this romantic interlude.

This is a first-time deal. Ernie Beutler, who oversees the Bake Shop, came up with the notion. In the past, the bake shop has served up pumpkin pies for Thanksgiving and brownies for Valentine's Day.

Now these enticing delicacies. The portion of six will include two truffles coated with peanuts, two coated with cocoa, and two coated with powdered sugar.

Each truffle will be nestled in its own individual ruffled "blanket" inside a heart-shaped, covered tin. Tins of six are \$4.95 each. Orders are being taken until 5 p.m., Wednesday, Oct. 15. Pickup is at the Campus Cafe from 11 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., Friday, Oct. 16. Pre-orders only at: bake@mtu.edu .

Beutler says the truffles are "amazingly good"--a judgment he makes only after long and laborious tasting.

6. Reminder: Campus Forum Set for Tomorrow

President Glenn Mroz will host a campus forum at 10 a.m., Tuesday, Oct. 13, in Minerals and Materials U115.

Release time will be provided for the hourly staff with the approval of their supervisor. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

7. Reminder: Flu Vaccine Clinic on Campus

The next flu vaccine clinic will be 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 13, Memorial Union Peninsula Room.

Cost of the vaccine is \$25, payable with cash, check (to Portage Health) or credit card.

For more information, contact Counseling and Wellness Services at 487-2538 or wellness@mtu.edu . To find out more about influenza and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's vaccination recommendations, [click here](#) .

8. Reminder: Health and Wellness Fair

The "How The Health Are You?" health and wellness fair will be from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 13, in the MUB Ballrooms.

There will be screenings for cholesterol, blood glucose, blood pressure, bone density, pulmonary function, body fat and several other health measures. The event will also have chair massages, food demonstrations and giveaways. Release time for this event will be provided for hourly staff with approval from their supervisor.

9. Flags Flown at Half-staff Today

Flags will be flown at half-staff today in honor of Army Spec. Paul E. Andersen of Dowagiac, who died in Baghdad, Iraq, while on active duty supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Andersen, 49, died Oct. 1 from injuries sustained when enemy forces attacked his camp using indirect fire. He was assigned to the 855th Quartermaster Company, South Bend, Ind.

10. Huskies, Oilers on TV

Fans will be able to watch Saturday's homecoming game against Findlay live on MichiganTechHuskies.com. Kickoff is 12:30 p.m. Click on the link on the football schedule page or on the streaming video ad on the main page. Cost of the stream is \$12 per month or \$60 for the year.

11. Education Session on Proposal Writing Set

Sponsored Programs is offering an educational session, "Proposal Processing," from noon to 1 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 22, in Memorial Union Ballroom A2.

Topics to be covered:

- * Research Excellence Fund (REF)--Infrastructure Enhancement, Research Seed, Mentoring Grant--all internal funding opportunities.
- * Community of Science (COS)--Finding funding and collaborators.
- * Proposal writing.

Register at: <http://www.admin.mtu.edu/research/vpr/registration/>

Desserts and beverages will be provided; bring your own lunch.

For more information, contact Dawn Pichette at 487-2226 or at dmpichet@mtu.edu

12. New Funding

John Lehman (Enrollment Services) has received \$27,600 from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, for GEAR UP/College Day Program.

13. KRC sale postponed

The sale of vehicles and equipment at the Keweenaw Research Center has been postponed. Details will be announced later.
