2019
Ginsberg Center
Annual Report
GINSBERG IS

community engagement
equitable partnerships
student leadership
capacity building
learning in community
democratic engagement
collaborating for impact

SOCIAL CHANGE
Dear Friends and Partners,

For more than 20 years, the Ginsberg Center has worked to cultivate and steward equitable partnerships between communities and the University of Michigan in order to advance social change for the public good. Our three-pronged approach allows us to connect community organizations with students, faculty, and staff who are invested in addressing pressing social concerns; empower students to engage in positive change through applied social justice learning, leadership development, and meaningful service experiences with community; and work with faculty and academic staff to connect their mutually beneficial community engagement efforts to coursework, research and programs.

This year, Ginsberg significantly increased our capacity in all of these areas. We added more than 80 new community partners in Washtenaw County and Detroit and facilitated 110 new matches between university and community partners, including government, schools, and nonprofits. This growth has, in turn, substantially contributed to increasing the University of Michigan’s capacity in the areas of both public engagement and practices that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Central to all we do at Ginsberg is our commitment to U-M’s goal of graduating leaders equipped to create a more inclusive and equitable world and a better future. Each year, our support for U-M students increases significantly through grants, advising, and workshops. This year, we are particularly excited about our new sponsorship agreement with the Detroit Partnership and our leadership of the Big Ten Voting Challenge, which resulted in a significant increase in student voting in the 2018 midterm elections.

This year also saw substantially increased capacity in our essential work with U-M faculty and academic partners in all 19 U-M schools and colleges. We worked to help faculty integrate community engagement into all three core areas of their work: teaching, research, and service. We provided 18 research and teaching grants, and workshops for more than 100 faculty and staff members.

As always, we owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the generous donors who have been instrumental in making this past year so successful. That support has allowed us to continue and expand our role as a key resource in guiding U-M’s work with the communities it serves. We look toward the year ahead with optimism, enthusiasm, and a commitment to continuing to support U-M and our community partners in the name of ever-increasing impact for the public good. Read on to learn just some of the amazing things Ginsberg Is.

In partnership,
Mary Jo Callan
Our Mission

The Ginsberg Center’s mission is to cultivate and steward equitable partnerships between communities and the University of Michigan in order to advance social change for the public good.

We accomplish this through a three-pronged approach:

1. We empower students to engage in positive change through social justice education, leadership development, and meaningful service experiences with community.

2. We work with faculty and academic staff to connect their mutually beneficial community engagement efforts to coursework, research, and academic programs.

3. We connect community organizations with students, faculty, and staff who are invested in positive social change.

Ginsberg Center staff at our 2019 graduation open house.
WHAT WE DO MATTERS. HOW WE DO IT MATTERS, TOO.

Our principles guide our work.

centering on equity
Our students, faculty and staff, and community partners all share their interests, goals, and expectations.

moving from individual to collective action
We bring together parties with shared interests to amplify positive community impact.

starting with community
We match community-identified priorities with U-M resources.

acknowledging power
Our community partners are active agents with deep knowledge about their communities and practices.

connecting learning across contexts
We support students’ integrative learning, with an emphasis on reflection.

fostering long-term partnerships
We establish long-term relationships with our partners beyond the scope of a particular project or engagement.
GINSBERG 2019
by the numbers

245 academic partners from all 19 schools & colleges

$199,000 awarded via 18 grants to 31 University partners & 45 community partners

92 consultations with academic partners, supporting 30 courses, 15 research projects & 16 academic programs

71 student organizations supported through grants & advising

13,000 U-M students used TurboVote to get registered to vote
TOTAL STUDENTS SERVED: 4,240+

- Workshops: 2,900+
- Student Org Support: 600+
- Ginsberg Programs: 495
- Alternative Breaks Support: 200+
- Paid Student Employees & Interns: 45

STUDENTS IN ONGOING GINSBERG PROGRAMS: 495

- Michigan Active Citizens-Alternative Spring Breaks: 221
- Literacy Initiatives: 190
- Community Technical Assistance Collaborative: 41
- Student Advisory Board: 16
- Graduate Academic Liaisons: 15
- Fellows: 12

100+ new matches made between community partners, academic units & student orgs

82 new community partners, bringing our total to 260
This year, Ginsberg received funding from the PNC Foundation for a pilot program to cultivate and strengthen relationships with nonprofits in the Ypsilanti community.

With that funding, we were able to create 19 community-University matches with 17 local agencies in Ypsilanti. Each match connected a community partner with U-M resources that have helped build their capacity to deliver on their respective missions.

“Matches such as these help meet community-identified priorities and provide the most impact, maximizing the public good done by both community organizations and the University of Michigan. PNC’s support of Ginsberg’s work has already shown positive results for partners in communities such as Ypsilanti, and we look forward to expanding the relationship,” says Dave Waterhouse, Ginsberg’s Associate Director.

Among this year’s match partners was Mentor2Youth, an Ypsilanti-based nonprofit that helps at-risk Washtenaw County youth secure a bright future by creating a school-to-career pipeline. The PNC Foundation funding has helped Ginsberg broaden this organization’s impact by matching Mentor2Youth with U-M resources to deliver a series of STEM workshops for elementary-aged students. Ginsberg worked with Michigan Works! Southeast to support its Expungement Fair for convicted felons. Ginsberg also partnered with Michigan Works! on the local Summer Youth Employment program.

Through relationships with nonprofit, education, and government partners—and the support of funding partners like the PNC Foundation—the Ginsberg Center continues to develop a dynamic inventory of community-identified priorities and needs. The resulting partnerships leverage corporate, campus, and community resources for increased impact—all in service to the public good.
I’ve always been passionate about social justice work. While volunteering with America Reads, I learned about more ways in which the Ginsberg Center connects people to community organizations.

After my sophomore year, I found the Community Action and Social Change (CASC) minor through the School of Social Work. While engaging in CASC, I learned even more about the Ginsberg Center and how they support students to engage in the community. I also learned about how other students use the Ginsberg Center, such as Ginsberg’s Community Leadership Fellowships.

I participated in Alternative Breaks (AB) through Hillel and then applied for Ginsberg AB grants for my student organizations. These grants were what made our trips possible, and I am so grateful for what Ginsberg does for students and the community in making service programs accessible to all.

I’m currently working on getting my Masters of Social Work. I hope to stay involved with Ginsberg over the next year and a half because, if I learned anything from my time with the Center, it is that the Ginsberg Center is a gateway to new opportunities.
Sometimes the sign of a successful partnership is completion of a single project. Other times, the natural continuation of a project is to embed it into U-M curriculum. Karen Farris, Professor in the College of Pharmacy, explains how a Ginsberg-brokered partnership evolved from a pilot project with the Ann Arbor Housing Commission (AAHC) into an interprofessional course.

Our initial pilot program was funded by a Ginsberg Center Faculty Community Engagement Grant, with the goal of developing a mutually-beneficial partnership with the Ann Arbor Housing Commission to improve community health and sustain community health education for interprofessional student health teams. We took pharmacy and nursing students into one of the AAHC facilities and did health fairs, conducting blood sugar and blood pressure checks, and more.

Since then, Ginsberg has helped us expand the possibilities of what we could do. They also helped us refocus on community-identified priorities. And, of course, they’re the ones who brought the AAHC to the table.

We’ve connected this partnership with a course I teach that is part of the College of Pharmacy curriculum. The needs of the community organizations are driving the course. We talk about social determinants of health, with a strong focus on housing insecurity and food insecurity. We are achieving community service and student learning and community partners have told us that the residents want to help our students learn. We have an opportunity to meet all of our missions at the University and to have a significant impact on our local community.

This is my 10-year plan: that when I retire from U-M there will be a College of Pharmacy program that is going in to the community on a regular basis, helping the AAHC do whatever needs. Looking forward, Ginsberg can continue to help us build this U-M-Ann Arbor Housing Commission collaboration and bring different people to the table.

This partnership—and its expansion into actual curricula—helps me think that my original vision of taking health students into AAHC was too limited. There’s so much more that the University of Michigan has to offer. The Ginsberg Center helped me see that. The residents have helped me see that. There’s just always so much more we could do.
In 2018, Ginsberg helped Ella August, Assistant Professor of Epidemiology in the School of Public Health, find and connect with community partners for her two courses that focus on writing for public health, in what she terms the Real World Writing Project. Her students work with community partners to provide them with written products they need, including newsletter articles, information sheets, and brochures.

“It was really important for me to work with community partners, for a couple of different reasons. I know that our public health students got into public health because they want to make the world a better place. Students find meaning in working with real people and helping to make people healthier, helping to support community organizations, and providing support to their members and the broader community. There’s a lot of potential for students to feel engaged and satisfied that they’re contributing to the world in a meaningful way.”

Connecting with partners to expand the reach of Ginsberg’s Connect2Community volunteer portal

by Sarah Gallagher, Ginsberg’s AmeriCorps VISTA member

As the Ginsberg Center’s AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteer in Service to America) member this past year, my goal was to continue the collaborative work between Ginsberg and two local partners, United Way of Washtenaw County and Eastern Michigan University. As I worked in and between all three spaces towards the shared goal of increasing positive community engagement, I had the privilege of embodying Ginsberg’s commitment to sustainability in community partnerships.

Two years ago, the Ginsberg Center worked with Eastern Michigan University’s VISION Volunteer Center and the United Way of Washtenaw County to connect our three online volunteer portals. Combining resources eases the burden on community partners by streamlining access to volunteers. A large portion of my responsibility was to update and optimize the use of the combined portal system, Connect2Community.

I gathered feedback from the community and synthesized data on how the volunteer portals are currently being used in order to offer suggestions for improvement. I also worked to increase the site’s reach by heading a portal communication plan for United Way, creating outreach materials and meeting with or presenting to 17 student groups to talk about responsible volunteerism and using the portal as a resource. We’ve been able to connect EMU’s and U-M’s resources, enabling partners from beyond Washtenaw County to display their opportunities easily on both university sites.

The work has resulted in increased engagement with the site on all three platforms. With volunteer recruitment reported as the biggest volunteer management concern in Washtenaw County in our recent survey, the connected portals offer a valuable resource for reaching a large number of volunteers with a single post. I am proud of the part I played in making this resource available and accessible to more students, community partners, and potential volunteers.
GINSBERG IS... student leadership

We support students in developing and expanding their skills and commitment to leadership and social responsibility to ensure that producing “leaders & best” and contributing to the public good go hand in hand. Through fellowships and other leadership opportunities, we encourage students to reflect on and clarify their own values about the world they want to help create and we help them embrace the idea that leadership is more than a position—it is also a commitment to lifelong behaviors of taking action with others, for others.

SEANNA LEATH: “GINSBERG IS A BRAVE SPACE”

During my time as a Graduate Academic Liaison at Ginsberg, I have gained incredible insight into what it means to help others think through how to engage in equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships with communities, whether that involves a one-time service opportunity or a semester-long course.

Through facilitating Entering, Engaging, and Exiting (E3) workshops, you learn about how the Ginsberg Center connects community organizations with students, faculty, and other resources at the University. The workshops encourage students to reflect on how our social identities influence our interactions with community members. Ginsberg is a “brave space”—a space dedicated to pushing us beyond our comfort zone to make us better scholars, community partners, and people.

Now I’m leaving U-M and Ginsberg to become an associate professor of community psychology. I don’t know if there’s an organization like Ginsberg at my new institution, but I am strengthened in knowing that I will carry my experiences from the Center with me. My time at Ginsberg has provided a blueprint. A blueprint of a brave space.
Caroline Kelly: Ginsberg is a hub for developing and applying student leadership skills

By Caroline Kelly, Ginsberg Community Leadership Fellow & Student Advisory Board Member.

Ginsberg is a home for all things social justice. The staff and students involved in the Center are sources for my inspiration and work in the spheres of social work and public policy.

I joined the Ginsberg Student Advisory Board (SAB) my sophomore year. The SAB provides a space for student leaders to come together to discuss how the Center can further its work and presence in the lives of all students on campus. This past year, I joined Ginsberg as a Community Leadership Fellow. Through this fellowship, I work for Washtenaw Housing Alliance, an organization dedicated to eliminating homelessness in our community, and attend bi-weekly meetings with my cohort where we explore themes related to leadership and social justice.

My experience with staff and students at Ginsberg has been transformative. Many of my conversations have centered on community engagement, and how engagement can look different to community members and students. These conversations took place within the Center during Student Advisory Board meetings, fellowship meetings, as well as workshops that were a part of my Community, Action, and Social Change (CASC) minor coursework.

The Center also explores relationships between Ann Arbor and community organizations. Through these conversations and workshops, I began to critically reflect on the ways that I entered and exited communities when I assisted in research studies throughout Southeastern Michigan or volunteered in Detroit. In my leadership positions, I also began to place an emphasis on reviewing how my student organizations viewed their work, ensuring it was collaborative and students were working with community partners, not just for community partners.

Almost all of the work and education at the Ginsberg Center is action-oriented. This allows students to apply what they have learned in the classroom, and apply it to the work that they are doing on the ground. Ginsberg encourages and fosters student excitement for working with stakeholders and partners within the community, while ensuring that students are taking the time to reflect critically on their personal and organizational growth and sustainability.

Ginsberg is an incredible resource for all students. Whether a student is looking for student organization funding, a service-oriented spring break, or an opportunity to engage with other students and staff around issues of social justice, Ginsberg is the place. Ginsberg Gatherings, informal Friday afternoon conversations at the Center, are still some of my favorite memories at the University. These gatherings provide a space to discuss current events in society or on-campus in an atmosphere where every person feels valued and comfortable contributing to discussions. ▲

“Ginsberg encourages and fosters student excitement for working with stakeholders and partners within the community, while ensuring that students are taking the time to reflect critically on their personal and organizational growth and sustainability.”
A central part of the Ginsberg Center’s approach is working with others to identify the gaps in community and University infrastructures that limit impact. Through strategic partnerships within community organizations and across University units, Ginsberg is focused on building capacity for long-term and sustained contributions for the public good.

Spotlight on: Connecting Michigan

Led by the Ginsberg Center, Connecting Michigan is an initiative created to explore the feasibility of developing a coordinated, broadly accessible, technology-enabled infrastructure for U-M’s community and civic engagement. This infrastructure will build upon and, where appropriate, coordinate existing decentralized networks and data collections about U-M’s community engagement efforts to more reliably connect faculty, staff, students, and community partners seeking to address pressing social concerns.

This initiative is a partnership between the Office of the Provost, the Office of the Vice President of Government Relations, the Ginsberg Center, and other key stakeholders with a goal of advancing the University’s mission and amplifying its contributions to the public good.

After conducting a series of participatory workshops and stakeholder interviews, the project team is moving forward with a two-pronged approach:

1) Technology Solutions: Connecting Michigan will develop necessary technology tools to create greater transparency and information sharing for responsible, collaborative, and highly effective community engagement. To that end, Connecting Michigan is advancing a shared Relationship Management tool pilot and a feasibility study for a data hub connecting existing campus information sources.

2) People-Centered Solutions: Connecting Michigan will create and connect formal cohorts of community engagement professionals (e.g., organized around role, geography, and/or focus). These cohorts will meet regularly to engage in shared training, planning, and information sharing activities and look for collaboration opportunities toward more ethical, mutually beneficial community engagement.
After a successful two-year pilot, Ginsberg's Community Technical Assistance Collaborative (CTAC) has proven its value to community partners and to students and has continued to grow in scope and scale. This year, Ginsberg further institutionalized the Collaborative by hiring a staff educator to coordinate projects and act as a consistent support for both community partners and CTAC student learning.

"CTAC uses data to understand and improve the quality and sustainability of services, which provides students from multiple disciplines with real-world opportunities to build their skills for future employment and practice," says Mary Jo Callan, the Ginsberg Center's Director. "Part of CTAC's innovation is in providing avenues for students to learn from expert faculty by engaging through courses, internships, co-curricular service, and paid work study roles. It's especially exciting that CTAC creates these guided pathways to learning while benefiting community partners."

This year, CTAC engaged 19 community partners in 26 projects. Examples included working with the Michigan Abolitionist Project (MAP), an organization focused on ending human trafficking in Michigan, to create a theory of change and identify key metrics to measure success. Emily Johnson, a board member from MAP, said, "We can't express enough gratitude for this program. The students' efforts will have significant and lasting impact for years to come."

CTAC also worked with Alternatives for Girls (AFG), an organization focused on supporting girls at risk in Detroit, to create surveys and a system to collect and store their data more effectively. "We didn't really have an efficient system to collect and store important information about our girls," says Alison Distefano, AFG's Program Manager. "CTAC helped us conceptualize what information we needed to collect, how to collect it, and a much easier way to store it so that case managers could readily use the relevant data."

CTAC, of course, also benefits the students involved; this year, 41 students learned important skills through a variety of roles. "It's very hard to come out of grad school, then put a resume together and try to get a job doing this work," says Sue Ann Savas, Clinical Assistant Professor of Social Work and one of CTAC's founders. "You really need to have a few projects under your belt. CTAC gives students an opportunity to practice and to lead under the guidance of faculty who do this work."

"This is complex, sometimes murky work, but that's where the learning comes in," Savas acknowledges. "For me, the work in the community is where the rubber hits the road. With CTAC, this is all about partnering with the community. We're not serving them, we're learning as much from the community partners as they do from us. That's very important. There's synergy."
Beyond exploring the community as a laboratory for learning, Ginsberg encourages students, faculty, and staff to recognize that community partners have valuable expertise that is necessary for the world-class education and research that Michigan seeks to provide. To that end, we provide training in the essential work of entering, engaging, and exiting communities mindfully and respectfully.

Every year, Ginsberg conducts workshops that prepare students for community-engaged learning in both curricular and co-curricular settings to support students doing community-engaged work. Our sessions are designed to be interactive, engaging, and tailored to the skills students need to engage with communities depending on community contexts and students’ levels of engagement. In 2019-2020 we offered over 100 sessions for graduate and undergraduate students across the university, including workshops open to any and all U-M students.

We offer a range of workshops based on participants’ awareness and level of community engagement, from students who are participating in a one-day service event for the first time to those who are leading out their own community-engaged projects. For each level, Ginsberg staff tailors our workshop content to meet the goals of the initiating faculty or student organization.

Our Introduction to Community Engagement workshops help students learn key principles of effective community engagement when engaging for the first time, often in introductory courses or programs. Applying Principles to Build Skills helps students develop and practice the skills needed to apply key principles of effective community engagement towards a tangible outcome. And, finally, for undergraduate or graduate students with significant community experience, our Applying Principles to Self-Directed Projects workshop helps participants apply key ideas and practices of effective community engagement to complete a self-directed project, such as independent research or a capstone experience.
Practical experience is a crucial component of a college student’s experience, especially those that provide opportunities to apply classroom learning in the real world. The Ford Summer Fellows program, funded by Ford Motor Company, provided such an opportunity for five Ginsberg students.

The program allowed students to contribute to community-identified needs while engaging in personal and professional development. Students expanded their existing knowledge, skills, and leadership experience through sustained work with a community organization in Southeast Michigan that directly addresses community impact areas.

Danyelle Reynolds, Ginsberg’s Assistant Director for Student Learning and Leadership, says: “What I’ve heard from these students is that their service will continue beyond the summer. That’s what we want: we want to develop alumni who take this ethic of staying engaged in their community with them.”

The students who worked as Ford Fellows this summer represented a variety of fields (Public Health, Community and Global Health, Public Policy, and Social Theory and Practice) and worked at a diverse group of community organizations in Southeastern Michigan.

Ginsberg supported the fellows with leadership development, project management, and understanding community engagement and how it applies to their academic work. Each community organization also received support so they could maximize their interns’ impact and maintain a learning environment for the student.

Says Dave Waterhouse, Ginsberg Center’s Associate Director: “We’re funding programs that work at the intersection of community priorities and student learning. Students are contributing more to vital communities of which they are a part and contributing to the growth and learning of companies and organizations with which they may have a connection in the future. There’s a real benefit to companies in the visibility of supporting those pieces.”

Isabella DiBlassio worked at the James and Grace Lee Boggs School in Detroit where she helped organize a community-focused mural by a local artist. “As I’ve considered how to best embody the practice of leadership going forward, I’ve realized that my place lies most importantly in learning. I want to take all of this back with me as I go forward with my university career,” she said.

Jason Golec had a similarly meaningful experience: “I came into Covenant Community Care with very little knowledge about how the American healthcare system interacts with patients facing a myriad of barriers related to the social determinants of health. My duties specifically focused on creating educational materials for our patients, such as planning diabetes management classes or creating resource booklets about behavioral health services. I know the lessons I learned this summer will not be fully shown until I have time to digest and reflect on my journey, but I feel that I am better equipped to enter and exit communities because of my experience.”

“Students talked about all they’re getting from their fellowship placements, and it’s very powerful,” Danyelle says. “At the same time, organizations can do work that they haven’t had the capacity to do before now.”
Informed, engaged, active citizens change the world, so democratic engagement is a fundamental element of the Ginsberg Center’s work. By providing education around democratic processes, hosting workshops and dialogues around political issues, and actively working to increase U-M student voter registration, we aim to advance students’ democratic engagement and commitment to social responsibility.

Another big year for the Big Ten Voting Challenge

This year, perhaps no initiative better exemplified Ginsberg’s commitment to democratic engagement than our role leading the Big Ten Voting Challenge (BTVC), a nationally significant, conference-wide non-partisan competition aimed at increasing the rates of student voter registration and turnout. The BTVC is the embodiment of U-M’s mission to, in part, develop “leaders and citizens who will challenge the present and enrich the future.”

Coordinated by the Ginsberg Center, the team involved talented faculty, staff, and students, as well as partners across campus, including the President, the Provost, the Vice President for Communications, the Vice President of Government Affairs, the Vice President for Student Life, and many more active and committed partners. The BTVC is a terrific example of how partnership and collaboration allow us to exponentially increase the capacity and reach of democratic engagement initiatives across campus and beyond.

As a result of these collaborative efforts, the BTVC contributed significantly to the national conversation on student democratic engagement that resulted in significant, tangible increases in college-aged voter turnout nationwide. No institution exemplified the Challenge more than the University of Michigan. The Ann Arbor campus saw turnout growth of nearly 200%, going from a voting rate of 14% in 2014 to 41% in 2018, thanks to 10,000 more students casting their votes on Election Day.

Nationwide, eyes turned to U-M’s BTVC not just as a challenger, but also as a leader in generating interest, establishing partnerships, and inspiring action. Moving forward, the Big Ten Voting Challenge aims to continue our work increasing student democratic engagement initiatives, further increasing our reach and impact and keeping the University of Michigan at the forefront of building habits of democracy for years to come.
To me, Ginsberg is a vehicle for students to help serve the community. At times, college can feel limiting. As students, we learn about the world and we think about how we can change the world, but it often feels as if we have to wait until after college to start making a difference. Ginsberg allows students to use the skills they’re learning to improve the community now.

I joined the Ginsberg’s Big Ten Voting Challenge team at the beginning of my senior year to help combat low voter turnout.

My work with the Ginsberg Big Ten Voting Challenge Team involved various non-partisan work promoting voting and political dialogue on campus. From holding discussions on the Diag, to creating infographics explaining the Michigan statewide ballot proposals, to helping register voters, the work has been eclectic and interesting.

Increasing voter accessibility is a social justice issue. The right to vote is a guarded principle in our democracy. But it’s more than an abstract principle—it’s an act that our citizens must undertake every couple of years, and throughout American history the right to vote has been unequal because of unequal accessibility. Class, race, age, and gender have historically affected the right to vote. The fight to make voting easier and more accessible to new, young voters on campus is something I’m passionate about, and Ginsberg gave me the ability to make a difference.

Working with Ginsberg has taught me a lot, including developing skills I didn’t get in the classroom. This tangible work has complimented my classroom learning and has helped me become a better community organizer. After graduating, I joined a 2020 Presidential campaign, and the skills Ginsberg has taught me will be valuable to my career.

“Hands-on work at the Ginsberg Center is a wonderful complement to the work I’m doing in the classroom as a Master of Public Policy student at the Ford School of Public Policy. Not only do I contribute to the University’s democratic engagement efforts, but I also get to work alongside passionate and committed colleagues. I’m thrilled to see students across campus getting involved, registering to vote, and using their voices to advocate for social justice issues. I’m proud to be a small part of the Ginsberg Center’s work on these efforts.”

Kari Rea: Hands-on work with Ginsberg complements classroom work

Kari Rea, Ginsberg’s Team Leader for U-M’s work with the Andrew Goodman Foundation, which promotes social justice and civic engagement on campus
GINSBERG IS... collaborating for impact

The Ginsberg Center brings together U-M and community partners to foster connections and partnerships across disciplines and interests. By moving beyond often-disconnected individual or isolated efforts, we increase positive impact for both U-M and external communities.

Beyond matchmaking: Ginsberg and Ann Arbor Public Schools forge long-term, fruitful partnership

In May, Ginsberg hosted the first convening of multiple university courses and programs currently working with Ann Arbor schools. Here, Nancy Shore, Strategic Partner and Volunteer Coordinator for AAPS, talks about the event, and AAPS’ partnership with Ginsberg:

We brought together a lot of different people, all from U-M programs that had students volunteering or doing work study in multiple AAPS classrooms. The idea was to provide a time when these groups could share with each other and get to know who was doing what in order to create some efficiencies and collaborate more effectively. It was an opportunity for them to learn from one another and better establish how they want to engage with the Ann Arbor Public Schools going forward.

As a result, we’re creating a more coordinated program for the coming year with a more unified direction including a standardized way to enter more schools. I think it’s going to lead to more effective volunteers and make it easier for these coordinators to have a better understanding of the process and the engagement.

Ginsberg not only facilitated the event but also knew how to best connect and engage with all these different programs at once. The Ginsberg Center is so much more than a matchmaker—they really are our continuing partner and are always looking for ways that they can help support us. It’s been an ongoing and really multifaceted partnership.

Helping to move the needle on housing affordability

Ginsberg recognizes that affordable housing is a cornerstone of social equity and that partnership between U-M and community partners invested in the issue must be strengthened and deepened. To that end, this spring the Ginsberg Center coordinated and facilitated a convening entitled Exploring Our Impact, which brought together U-M faculty and staff and community leaders to discuss affordable housing in Ann Arbor.

The convening built on the University’s role in creating an inclusive Ann Arbor, and explored crucial questions such as how U-M can deepen its long-standing commitment to communities, and how staff and faculty can draw upon teaching and research capacity in sustained ways to institutionalize our partnerships and commitments. It also increased awareness, spurred conversation across disciplines, and continued our focus to move forward the conversation about housing affordability in a way that is equitable and beneficial to all involved.
The Ginsberg Center ended 2018 with a bang, in part due to the debut of a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), Community Engagement: Collaborating for Change, created in collaboration with partners from U-M’s Global Engagement Team, the College of Engineering, School of Information, School of Social Work, and the Office of the Provost.

The project began in 2016 with the question that underlies all of our student engagement efforts: how do we better prepare students to do public engagement work? It turns out, it’s a question that was plaguing others too. After all, there is an abundance of service work opportunities for students at U-M but no formal structure (or requirements) for preparatory work. That means many students are diving into the process cold.

Our solution? The MOOC, a comprehensive introduction to public engagement work, developed with support from a grant from the Provost’s Office. Community Engagement: Collaborating for Change, available via edX.org, provides resources for learners to better understand community engagement and how they might more effectively engage in their practice.

The course comprises five individual modules, all determined based on input from faculty, staff, students, and community partners. Each module contains a variety of content, including videos, activities, reflections, and knowledge checks.

“We wanted the MOOC to be content-specific and available to anyone across the globe with internet access,” says Danyelle Reynolds, Ginsberg’s Assistant Director for Student Learning and Leadership. “It’s also really flexible. People can do the whole course or just the modules that are relevant to them.”

Many Ginsberg partners are already using the MOOC as part of their courses and programs. Our team has been adapting our community engagement workshops to build upon and deepen the learning from the MOOC.

For example, the Dow Fellows—part of the Graham Sustainability Institute—are completing parts of the first two modules in preparation for a Ginsberg Center workshop. They’ll apply content from the MOOC modules to their own sustainability-focused projects.

Ginsberg used a similar approach when partnering with the Practical Community Learning Project, an applied policy seminar in the Ford School in which students work within civic organizations. After assigning portions of the first module, a workshop built upon the ideas around ethical community engagement to further build their knowledge.

“It’s really a wealth of information that we hope will better prepare all of its users, including students and student organizations and faculty, to ethically and respectfully enter, engage with, and exit the communities they aim to serve,” Reynolds adds.
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Katie Richards-Schuster, School of Social Work
Luke Shaefer, School of Social Work and Ford School of Public Policy
Maria Arquero De Alarcon, School of Architecture and Urban Design
*Nick Tobier, Stamps Art School & Design; Edward Ginsberg Center Senior Counsel to the Provost on Civic Engagement
Sue Ann Savas, School of Social Work
Teresa Satterfield, LSA Romance Languages and Literature

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Jimena Loveluck, Washtenaw County Health Department
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James Everhart, Food Gatherers
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Margy Long, Washtenaw Success By 6 Great Start Collaborative
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