

Outreach and Engagement Seed Grants at MSU

A Catalyst for Outreach and Engagement

MSU's Outreach and Engagement Council is a 17-member council launched in 2011 to strategically champion engagement at MSU through outreach, leadership, and service to fulfill the land-grant mission. The group serves as a campus-wide coordinating committee; guides university involvement in outreach and engagement activity; facilitates collaborations with community partners; and supports MSU's strategic plan goal of Engagement.

In Fall 2015, the O&E Council launched a seed grant program after research showed such programs to be an excellent catalyst for encouraging external and multidisciplinary partnerships. Funding for the program was provided by the MSU Office of the President. The Council invited proposals for grants that would address the needs of citizens in Montana and beyond and that would encourage external and multidisciplinary partnerships. When the proposal deadline arrived, council members were delighted to see numerous applications and ideas—far more than had been anticipated. Further, project ideas represented dozens of disciplines and community partners across the state.

Four awards of \$5,000 were issued that semester; four more were issued in Spring 2016 and four more most recently in Spring 2017 (Total: \$60,000 awarded). Successful proposals must meet a demonstrated community need; include reciprocal collaboration with off-campus partners; and aim to improve quality of life and benefit the public good. Project proposers are encouraged to include MSU students in their plans.

Funded programs ranged from architecture to modern languages to archaeology and included community partners across the state of Montana.

Seed grant recipients report using the funds to leverage other external resources; to launch a program and demonstrate a successful track record that leads to more funding; and to build new collaborations with a seed grant partner. Recipients have expressed overwhelming support for the program, with one faculty member saying, "This program launched my research career at MSU."

Other comments include:

"Thank you for the funding! We have several ideas to expand our program and if we will be able to collect pilot data, we hope to be competitive for a major stand-alone grant in the future."

"I would not have been able to complete the project with only the O&E budget, but it gave me a way to get started and then seek additional funding."

"We cannot express how grateful we are to have had the opportunity to launch this program. We would not have been able to get started without the seed funds."

In Fall 201 the Council hosted MSU's first-ever celebration of Outreach & Engagement, which featured the faculty, students and community partners who had received seed grants. 200 people viewed poster presentations and learned more about the projects.

Engaged Scholarship

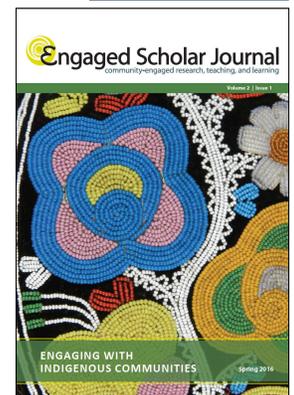
Many seed grant recipients are sharing their research on engaged scholarship with peers around the nation. As just one example, faculty from the Piikani Digital Storywork project (Round 1, Spring 2015) published an article in the *Engaged Scholar Journal* along with two book chapters. Additional book chapters and articles are in development.



Boardroom Bobcats
MSU Leadership Institute



Small Shelters Project
School of Architecture



The MSU seed grant supported development of an article published in the Engaged Scholar Journal along with two book chapters

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Advice from a seed grant recipient to MSU colleagues interested in collaborating with a community partner:

“Meet with community leaders and potential partners with a completely open mind. Too often, university professionals and faculty have a pre-established “agenda” in mind, even if we don’t realize it. Truly collaborative and respectful community engagement depends on genuinely hearing the needs and interests of communities, then applying our efforts and expertise to address those needs.”

First Round Awards

The **Piikani Digital Storywork** project collects digital stories from the Blackfeet tribal community. MSU instructors from Education and Film & Photography collaborate with Blackfeet Community College and Blackfeet Academy high school to practice culturally responsive, community-centered filmmaking and education.

Intensive Research for Undergraduate Tribal College Students brings students from Aaniiih Nakoda Tribal College in Harlem, Chief Dull Knife Tribal College in Lame Deer and MSU together as student-teachers for an intensive research practices course for undergraduates. Tribal college and MSU students share their skills with fellow students and learn about each others’ cultures.

Second Round Awards

Through the **World Language Culture and Exposure Program**, MSU modern languages students teach Mandarin Chinese to K-5 students at Bozeman’s Irving, Hyalite and Whittier elementary schools and expose them to Chinese language and culture.

Boardroom Bobcats places upper-level undergraduate and graduate MSU students as non-voting members of regional nonprofit boards. Funds support training on mentoring, governance, marketing, networking and other topics.

Creating Community Partnerships to Preserve Fort Ellis is a partnership between MSU’s Proj-

Study for the Effectiveness of Support Services for Families of Children with Disabilities is a collaboration with Montana’s Department of Health and Human Services that provides in-depth feedback from families who are using services designed for children with disabilities. MSU students are trained to conduct interviews with families in rural communities in order to provide critical data to early childhood professionals.

Mobile MAIA Science Lab is a collaboration between the Museum of the Rockies, the Carter County Museum and a Carter County High School mathematics teacher to develop a collaborative education program that compares the bones of cattle, chicken and the dinosaur *Maiaisaura*.

ect Archaeology and Gallatin History Museum to educate the public about historic Fort Ellis. MSU faculty and staff work with the museum to host a site stewardship training and recruit volunteers to analyze surface artifacts unearthed after spring plowing.

The Fort Peck Buffalo Connections Project will provide freestanding story poles to honor the buffalo recently reintroduced to Fort Peck Reservation. MSU Architecture students will work with community stakeholders to choose prototype materials, paints, carving and other methods for recording symbolic stories.

Third Round Awards

Bounty of the Bridgers is a food pantry on the MSU campus that strives to educate about food insecurity at MSU while working toward a “pop-up” campus food pantry that offers shelf-stable food in a non-permanent location.

Prairie Communities in Action engages MSU students, faculty and Montana citizens in conducting a community resilience assessment in central Montana. The assessment is designed to help enhance the quality of life and strengthen rural economies in six counties surrounding the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge.

Small Shelters for the Homeless supports construction of a small shelter on the MSU campus that will help students test its viability for a larger-scale project that provides transitional housing to chronically homeless residents of Bozeman.

Through MSU Extension agents, **Montana Annie’s Project** strengthens women’s roles in modern agricultural enterprises by fostering problem solving, record keeping and decision-making skills in support of the large and diverse population of farm and ranch women in Montana.



Preserving Fort Ellis
Project Archaeology