Sustainable Michigan Endowed Project Scholars Program
Request for Nominations for the Fifth Cohort, 2020-21

A funding and professional development opportunity for incoming Ph.D. students at Michigan State University

Description of the Scholars Program

The Sustainable Michigan Endowed Project (SMEP) was established by an endowment from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in 2003 “to serve as a catalyst and convener of interdisciplinary dialogue and research around existing and emerging sustainability topics.” In 2016 SMEP began a new effort called the SMEP Scholars Program. The Scholars Program seeks to develop the next generation of sustainability scholars at MSU through an intentional, interdisciplinary community of practice including the Scholars and SMEP Executive Committee faculty members.

As members of this community of practice, Scholars will receive the following:

- A one-time allocation of $25,000, disbursed to the student’s major professor, used to support the student’s Ph.D. studies (e.g., tuition, research, or travel costs)
- Professional development in sustainability studies, including time and space to develop sustainability concepts, research, and interventions; networking with peers and leaders in the field; and exposure to community engaged scholarship in Michigan
- Access to discretionary funds for group trainings, trips, or other efforts that can be designed by the Scholars

To receive these benefits, every year of their Ph.D. program Scholars are expected to:

- Participate in and help design the annual SMEP Study Tour in mid-August
- Participate in and help design the monthly SMEP seminar series
- Participate in and help design other SMEP communications and events as they arise

In addition, the faculty member who nominates the student for this program is also expected to participate in the above activities.
Selection Criteria

We are seeking unique, highly competent, and creative individuals looking to lead the next generation of sustainability scholarship. We seek people who look for opportunities, who conduct their work inclusively towards others, and who regularly cross disciplinary boundaries. SMEP Scholars embody the tenacity, humility, and creativity characteristic of the Spartan spirit, and they proactively apply these qualities to the definition and practice of sustainability scholarship.

A subset of the SMEP Executive Committee will serve as the Selection Committee for this Program. They will consider the following criteria in evaluating the student, ranked in order of priority. Evidence for these criteria should come from the student’s proposal and the faculty member’s letter of nomination.

1. Incoming Ph.D. student in Fall 2020
2. Interest and relevance of Ph.D. to scholarship on sustainability.
3. Academic or scholarly excellence
4. Community engagement excellence
5. Faculty sponsor shows commitment to engage in SMEP activities
6. Scholarship and/or engagement is focused in Michigan

Brief biographies of previous cohorts of Scholars can be found at https://www.canr.msu.edu/smep/scholar-program/

How to Nominate Students

Students may not apply to the Program directly. They must be nominated by a faculty member. Each faculty member may only nominate one student per year. SMEP encourages nominations for students with underrepresented backgrounds, including but not limited to considerations of ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, training, disabilities, and parental status.

The faculty nominator should prepare a nomination packet that includes the following items in order in a single PDF:

© A cover sheet including:
   1. Title: “SMEP Scholars Nomination for 2020-21”
   2. The student’s full name
   3. The student’s Ph.D. program title (and other graduate programs, if applicable)
   4. The name of the student’s faculty advisor

© A letter of support from the student’s faculty advisor (maximum 2 pages, single spaced, 1-inch margins). The letter should indicate:
   1. how the student will be supported (grants, fellowships, assistantships) throughout their studies at MSU. SMEP support received should be matched by other sources of funding.
2. A statement on the student's scholarly promise and community engagement potential, and

3. A statement of the faculty advisor's intention to be involved with SMEP by attending seminars and participating in the study tour.

4. A statement on whether SMEP funds are sought as part of a recruitment package, and if so, other elements of the package.

© A statement of scholarly interests written by the student (maximum 2 pages, single spaced, 1-inch margins). This should also include reference to the student's previous research experience or creations/performances, degrees, and community engagement.

The faculty nominator must email the nomination packet to Julie Eckinger jeckinger@anr.msu.edu. Awards that are part of a recruitment package can be made as early as February 1, 2020 (Please give us at least 2 weeks to review nominations). Deadline for all nominations is March 15, 2020.

If you are otherwise interested in getting involved with SMEP, please contact Paul Thompson at thomp649@msu.edu.