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Wind energy, global engagement among latest Third Century projects

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Using the arts to increase understanding of issues surrounding wind energy, and helping meet student interest in hands-on learning when global travel may be out of reach are two of the most recent Third Century Initiative projects to receive funding.

The Office of the Provost has announced 13 projects that will receive Quick Wins funding through the Transforming Learning for a Third Century phase of the \$50 million initiative.

Next proposal deadline

Proposals for the next round of Quick Wins and for Discovery projects are due to the committee Jan. 17.

Discovery grants provide up to \$50,000 for projects where a general hypothesis regarding teaching and learning can be questioned, explored and planned or piloted.

[Submit proposals through the TCI website.](#)

This is the fourth round of Quick Wins, which are small-scale, easily ready courses or programs that promise to transform learning. They are eligible for funding up to \$25,000.

Jessica Fogel, professor of dance in the School of Music, Theatre & Dance, said the TLTC funding would allow her students and collaborators from across the state to tackle an issue that has fans and foes alike.

As an increasing number of wind turbines dot Michigan's landscape, people either have embraced them for the energy they harness or oppose what they see as eyesores.

Fogel's multidisciplinary project, "Into the Wind," will engage students and faculty from dance and music, urban and regional planning, natural resources and environment, and literature, to explore what wind means as an energy source.

In addition to several U-M collaborators, the project also involves the director of dance at Grand Valley State University, who is an SMTD alumnus, and individuals from the sustainability community.

"For the past several years I've led students, faculty and community partners in site dance performance projects that address ways the arts can provide stewardship for the environment," Fogel said.

"As a choreographer, I'm keenly interested in performance projects that investigate the stories embedded in our rural and urban landscapes. The idea of being able to engage with institutions and business people at the grass roots level is exciting."

"It will be interesting to explore the landscape and learn what we perceive as beautiful or not. It's such a natural topic in terms of the synergy with music and dance."

Fogel says the students not only will be engaged in creating a work for an August 2014 public performance in Muskegon but will learn about the environment, public policy and all of the issues surrounding sustainability and wind.

Like Fogel, Lesli Hoey, assistant professor of urban planning at the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, said the funding will allow her to innovatively tackle a problem she first encountered as a graduate student: the inability to travel abroad to get desired hands-on experience in urban planning for developing countries "because of timing, funding and other barriers."

She and collaborators will work with international planning practitioners from government, nongovernmental organizations and international aid organizations, who will serve as consultants to develop case studies that draw from their own work.

The team will create learning modules that will allow students to work through actual scenarios and political, social, economic, environmental and ethical challenges encountered by professionals.

"The idea is to develop cases that link theory to practice, and that demonstrate the kind of reflective practice we want to encourage among our students," Hoey said.

"Since few planning programs can offer regularly scheduled, affordable abroad opportunities, we hope using these types of cases will bring to life the reality of planning on-the-ground for students — perhaps in ways that even traveling abroad may not.

"Of course, we would hope, too, that students would see these courses as better preparation for

eventually going abroad, either by pursuing internships individually or for the occasional trips we can offer as part of our planning programs.”

Tags: Third Century Initiative

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