

## Humanities

### Vision 1: World Class Faculty and Students

1. At an annual Council of Programs in Technical and Scientific Communication national convention a couple years ago in Menominee, Wisconsin the Provost of the university system gave a welcome to the participants. He began his address by saying, “I was told by the conference organizers that I am to welcome you to this international symposium, and I am happy to do so. However, as I looked at the conference program, it dawned on me that I am really talking to the Michigan Tech homecoming!” This story could be told many times about the impact that the Humanities department has had nationally and internationally because of the reputation of our faculty and graduate students. What the Provost saw in the program was the names of about 20 presenters who were either current faculty here at MTU, or who received their degrees from MTU in Humanities.

Retaining world-class faculty is difficult for many institutions, but in the Humanities Department we are challenged in some unusual ways due to our strong reputation. We were one of the first programs in the country that started a graduated program in rhetoric and technical communication. In this fast-growing field that actually has more jobs than graduates, the number of graduate programs has increased nearly five-fold in the last fifteen years. Thus, our graduates go and build strong programs that end up drawing away our faculty at! In addition, we compete with many of the national flagships for faculty and graduate students. These well-endowed institutions can offer much higher salaries and student funding than we can.

Funding here could allow us to:

- create some endowed positions for faculty
- provide dissertation fellowships for graduate students
- supplement travel and research allowances
- bring noted visiting faculty to campus for extended stays

### Vision 2: Innovative Teaching

2. Teaching across disciplines — that is actually going from one department to another as a teacher — is rarely done. In the Humanities Department, however, we regularly cross these boundaries through the teaching of writing. Currently, we have several faculty and graduate students helping faculty in engineering, business, and forestry to do just this. These efforts are proving to be very successful, but they are funded on a shoestring at the moment with temporary funds. More secure sources of endowment could allow us to continue this practice, thus insuring that MTU students get professional instruction in writing that they so badly need.

Funding here could allow:

- graduate assistantships to continue and promote these activities

- time for faculty to fully immerse themselves in these projects
- electronic equipment to use for providing state-of-the-art instruction
- endowed faculty lines in support of teaching

3. Orienting students to the college experience is no easy task. Most difficult in this endeavor is getting them ready for the academic world they will be living in for several years. To this end, the Department of Humanities has led the way in developing a summer reading initiative for all first-year students. Now entering its third year, this program requires all new students to read a book chosen by a university-wide committee. During Orientation Week, there are sessions held where students take part in facilitated sessions of discussion on the book. These sessions are lead by faculty, administrators and staff from across the entire university. In addition, we invite the author of the book to campus to give an address to the students. The initiative not only leads students into the academic world, but it also helps to create a sense of community among the students, faculty and staff of MTU. In addition, There are more than 200 of these summer reading programs in the U.S., but we are the only technological university to have one. We want to keep this going!

Funding here would allow:

- support for bringing the author to campus
- funding to purchase books for the new students
- support for the many activities associated with the initiative

We are the only technological university in the U.S. with such a program.

### Goal 3: Scholarship

4. Scholarship and time are inextricably linked. That is, the effort of producing a book or conducting scholarly research at remote places takes time and, of course, financial support. In the humanities disciplines there are some national sources to help with such important work, but unfortunately those funds has been severely diminished in recent decades. The result is that many institutions of higher learning are funding such scholarly support internally. In order to support the strong publishing that we have come to be known for in the humanities nationally, MTU must look for ways to help us “stay up the players” across the country.

Funding here could support:

- enhanced sabbatical time
- graduate student research assistantships
- endowed faculty lines in support of scholarship