LEADING SUSTAINABILITY
FOR SOCIETY, THE ENVIRONMENT,
AND THE ECONOMY
“I would highly recommend the Dow Fellows Program because it’s a great opportunity to get real-world experience and work with an interdisciplinary team. We can study things in school, but until you go to facilitate a project in a community and come in as an outsider, you don’t understand what that experience is going to be like.”
— Melissa Robinson
2018 Dow Fellow

High Impact Broad Reach

Dow Fellows Program | University of Michigan

Made possible by Dow, the Dow Sustainability Fellows Program prepares graduate-level sustainability leaders on campus to become lifelong sustainability champions who will make a positive difference in organizations worldwide. Dow Fellows are committed to finding interdisciplinary, actionable, impactful sustainability solutions on local-to-global scales.

From tackling public health issues to exploring new career resources, Dow Sustainability Fellows learn to apply innovative, solutions-driven approaches to a host of challenges. To support their studies, each 34-member cohort receives a total of $680,000 in funding over the course of the year. Dow Fellows teams also receive funds to support impactful sustainability projects.

In 2019, Dow Sustainability Fellows Program participants (graduate students, consultants, advisors, and partners) contributed more than 5,350 hours to produce high-quality deliverables based on specific client needs. Ninety percent of clients continue to use those deliverables after the project has ended.

Number of Dow Fellows Participating by Schools and Colleges (2019-2020)

- 11 School of Medicine
- 6 Ford School of Public Policy
- 3 School of Information
- 4 Law School
- 3 School of Education
- 7 College of Engineering
- 15 School for Environment and Sustainability
- 18 Ross School of Business
- 10 Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning
- 11 School of Dentistry
- 11 School of Nursing
- 3 School of Public Health
- 7 Architecture

In 2020, the Dow Fellows Welcome and Retreat event (photo above) included team-building activities and extended discussions to facilitate interaction among the cohort.
Selling Sequestered Carbon Could Be a Win-Win for Michigan | Michigan (2019)

Michigan’s Department of Natural Resources manages the largest state-owned forest system in the U.S., with roughly four million acres of forest land between the upper and lower peninsulas. This Dow Fellows team explored the possibility of selling the carbon sequestered by these forests and reinvesting the profits in the future of Michigan’s environmental health. Selling carbon offsets generated from its forests could be a win-win for the state, encouraging better forest management while providing the revenue to fund related projects that reduce both Michigan’s emissions and its dependence on fossil fuels.

Why sell carbon offsets?

“Selling sequestered carbon from Michigan forests can help Michigan meet its environmental goals. With the money generated, we’d like the Department of Natural Resources to invest in environmental projects across the Board—so you’re lowering emissions and dependence on fossil fuel across the state, and it’s benefiting the whole population of Michigan.”

—Clare Cutler

TEAM
Amanda Willis | MBA/MS ’20
Clare Cutler | MS ’20
Kanchan Swaroop | MSEE/MS ’20
Marc Jaruzel | MPP ’20

ADVISORS
Prof. Michael Moore | School for Environment and Sustainability
Michael Kay | U-M alumnus, former Dow Fellows Program Liaison

CLIENT
The Nature Conservancy, Michigan Chapter


Low population density in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula escalates the cost of energy transmission and makes electricity rates among the highest in the nation. In Baraga, leaders wanted to consider community solar to mitigate the high energy costs and move the region toward energy independence. This Dow Fellows team developed user-friendly interactive dashboards to help community leaders gauge the feasibility of proposed solar development projects and to help community members understand the impact of their participation on their households—including estimated costs and returns. The dashboards can easily be adapted for use in other communities.

How did you work with the community?

“We met with key stakeholders and met regularly with members of the organizations. Within the Village of Baraga, where 62% of the population are members of the Keweenaw Bay Indian community, we met with Tribal representatives to learn more about their energy needs.”

—Kevin Dunn

TEAM
Kevin Dunn | MSE ’18
Kutarth Jhaver | MSEE/MS ’19
Lauryn Lin | MPH ’18
Julie Michalski | JD ’19
Benjamin Rego | MPH/MS ’19

ADVISOR
Prof. Margaret Wooldridge | College of Engineering

CLIENT
Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region

This project addresses the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

This project addresses the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

— transdisciplinary collaboration

By working together across multiple disciplines, Dow Fellows project teams leverage their collective expertise, broaden their individual perspectives, and enhance their problem-solving abilities. The knowledge breadth across Dow Fellows, U-M advisors, and consultants ensures that teams have the skills and resources needed to advance key sustainability initiatives for their clients and communities.

PROJECTS

- Reaching 100% Renewable Energy in Traverse City, Michigan (2018), with lead community partner Dan Worth (Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities), advised by Dr. Sarah Mills, Dow Fellows Program alumnus, Graham Sustainability Institute, Ford School of Public Policy
- Accelerating Solar Development on Michigan Brownfields: Challenges and Pathways Forward (2019), with lead community partner Jim Tischler (Michigan Land Bank Authority), advised by Dr. Sarah Mills, Dow Fellows Program alumnus, Graham Sustainability Institute, Ford School of Public Policy
- Carbon Offsets in Michigan State Forests (2019), with lead community partner Richard Bowman (The Nature Conservancy, Michigan Chapter) advised by Prof. Michael Moore, School for Environment and Sustainability, and Michael Kay, U-M alumnus, former Dow Fellows Program Liaison
- Solar Tools: Locally Engaged Modeling of Community Solar Opportunities in the Keweenaw Bay Region of Michigan’s UP (2018), with lead community partner Brad Barnett (Western UP Planning & Development Region), advised by Prof. Margaret Wooldridge, Dow Fellows Program Director, and Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, College of Engineering

— SPOTLIGHT ON CARBON SEQUESTRATION

The Nature Conservancy, Michigan Chapter

SPOTLIGHT ON RENEWABLE ENERGY

DOW FELLOWS FIND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS FOR ENERGY INDEPENDENCE IN RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT MICHIGAN

TRANSDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

Leading Sustainability for Society, the Environment, and the Economy

Photo credit: Science in HD on Unsplash (top left) DTE Energy/Photographic (top right)
A SOLUTIONS-DRIVEN APPROACH
Dow Fellows look for answers to the most challenging sustainability issues of our time: climate protection, circular economy, infrastructure, healthy communities, consumption/efficiency/waste and emissions reduction, transportation, food, and agriculture, and more.

SOUTH EAST MICHIGAN

Edible Perennial Garden Supports a Sustainable Food System at U-M (Ann Arbor, Michigan (2019))

The University of Michigan’s Campus Farm helps create a sustainable food system at U-M by growing produce for dining halls across campus. This Dow Fellows team deepened the Campus Farm’s commitment to indigenous foods by designing and planting an edible landscape of indigenous trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants. The new perennial garden serves as a living land acknowledgment, reflecting contemporary and ancestral ties to the lands and celebrating indigenous contributions to the university. Student farmers will tend and harvest the crops—20 in total—to incorporate indigenous ingredients into Michigan Dining cuisine for all U-M students to enjoy.

Why pre-Columbian plants?
“There’s a complicated history between U-M and Tribal Nations. A burgeoning path to healing is being led by Matthaei Botanical Gardens. We partnered closely with Matthaei staff—who have worked with Tribal Nations representatives for years around seed rematriation—for guidance, cultural sensitivity, and personal contacts. We hope our edible perennial landscape will support the continuation of these relationships well into the future.” — Katharine Shiffer

TEAM
Katharine Asta | MPH ’19, MD ’20
Savannah Boerger | MPH ’20
Brooke Callaghan | MPH ’20
Zoe Fulfem | MS ’20
Katharine Shiffer | MLA ’21
Dany Zemmel | MPH ’20

ADVISORS
Jeremy Mohrtdar | U-M Campus Farm
Shiloh Maples (community consultant) | American Indian Health & Family Services

CLIENT
U-M Campus Farm at Matthaei Botanical Gardens

This project addresses the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Policy and Planning Toolkit Helps Communities Forge a Path to Food Security | Baraga County, Western Upper Peninsula, Michigan (2019)

Michigan’s Upper Peninsula (UP) is a vast rural landscape with significant food insecurity, where only 10% of adults consume the recommended daily allowances of fruits and vegetables. Inspired by an increasing demand for locally grown food and a renaissance of small diversified farms, this Dow Fellows team partnered with the Western Upper Peninsula Food Council to bridge gaps in food access for residents. A ready-to-use policy and planning toolkit, created by the Dow Fellows team, helped jump start the development of a comprehensive food system plan for the region that enables equitable access to healthy foods.

Why create a toolkit?
“In the course of creating our project deliverables, we had iterative conversations with our client, going back and forth about what was most relevant and representative of their communities and their needs. By digging deep with the client, the documents we created are an accurate reflection of the communities they represent and can be used verbatim by county administrators for grant applications and other funding opportunities.” — Emily Johnson

TEAM
Adriane Kline | MPH/MS ’21
Emily Johnson | MSEM ’19
Joshua Childs | MSE/MUP ’20
Maxwell Woody | MSEM/MS ’20
Nick Kemp | MS ’20

ADVISORS
Prof. Margaret Wooldridge | College of Engineering

CLIENT
Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region, Western Upper Peninsula Food Council

This project addresses the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
SPOTLIGHT ON GREEN TECHNOLOGY

Using Technology to Engage Communities in Green Infrastructure Planning | Detroit, Michigan (2018)

Working with Eastside Community Network, this Dow Fellows team employed a 3D urban design visualization software program developed at U-M, called Land.info, to engage community members in the planning process for their first neighborhood green space redevelopment project. Through a series of workshops, the team met with Mack Avenue community members and used Land.info to ensure the community’s preferences were reflected in the green space design. “Overall, we loved it,” said a workshop participant. “We are so glad that we were able to have input before decisions about our community were made.”

Why 3D visualization?

“The community saw value in our project and community members appreciated providing input on their infrastructure. Our software allowed them to design their own community spaces—benches and pavement—while understanding the cost. The next goal would be to scale the use of this software for bigger projects, bigger communities, and greater impact.” — Ayush Awadhia

TEAM
Sharnen Syta | MS ’19
Kidus Admasu | MS ’19
Ayush Awadhia | MBA ’19
Cecil Call | MUP ’19
Saiborn (April) Kwon | MSI ’19

ADVISORS
Prof. Mark Lindquist | School for Environment and Sustainability
Prof. Robert Goodspeed | Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning

CLIENT
Eastside Community Network

SPOTLIGHT ON LAND CONSERVATION


Michigan’s expansive network of recreational spaces requires a significant monetary investment, both to operate and to maintain. Currently, the bulk of the Michigan State Park System’s revenue is generated by the Motor Vehicle Recreation Passport, endowment funds, and camping fees. The changing demographics and needs of park-goers are likely to cause these revenue streams to decline in the coming decade. This Dow Fellows team devised creative transactional methods to obtain additional revenue, such as charging for firewood, ice, and dog waste bags. To test their ideas, the team created a cost-benefit analysis tool that the Michigan State Park System can use to evaluate all new revenue-generation ideas.

Why create an electronic tool?

“We had so many ideas for alternative revenue streams, but we wanted to see which would increase incremental net operating income at the lowest cost to the state and its park system.” —Harrison Rogers

TEAM
Charantelle Barretto | MBA/MS ’20
Kevin Bosma | MBA/MS ’20
Olavunmi Oduyebo | MSI ’20
Guy Packard | MUP ’20
Harrison Rogers | MBA/MS ’20

ADVISOR
Michael Kay | U-M alumnus, former Dow Fellows Program Liaison

CLIENT
The Nature Conservancy, Michigan Chapter, on behalf of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources

This project addresses the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
DOW DISTINGUISHED AWARDS FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY SUSTAINABILITY

To foster high-impact collaborations across U-M, the Dow Sustainability Fellows Program includes the Dow Distinguished Awards, a campus-wide competition for applied sustainability projects that cross disciplines and include U-M students at all academic levels.

Projects are student-led, faculty advised, client-serving, and action-oriented. They span the full breadth of sustainability topics—energy, water, communities, food, built environment, transportation, and more.

Dow Distinguished Award teams generate high-value products, services, and activities that protect the environment and enhance the quality of life for present and future generations. These projects are among U-M’s most impactful sustainability work.

The Mission of Catalina Kaiyoorawongs

The Ross grad passed up a corporate job to develop an employee perk that really matters.

by Cynthia Furling Reynolds
From the December 2019 issue

“I would highly recommend the Dow Distinguished Awards competition to anyone who’s ambitious, wants to work outside of class, and wants an open base to create their own learning environment, complete with funding to explore and implement their ideas.”

— Catalina Kaiyoorawongs
MBA/MA Education ’19

Award: $40,000
Designed for college students, Dough helps users understand the impact of educational loans and make better borrowing decisions. This free app is the first end-to-end digital loan advisor, walking borrowers through the journey that begins the moment they start taking loans and continues all the way through choosing the right repayment plan. The app is expected to pilot at Wayne State University and launch at all of Michigan’s 93 colleges and universities in the future.

This project addresses the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Social Life Cycle Assessment and Health Impacts of Ceramic Water Filters in Uganda | Uganda (2019)
Award: $25,000
Working with SPOUTS of Water, a Uganda-based NGO that creates and distributes affordable ceramic water filters, this team will evaluate how filtration could improve the lives of the 26 million Ugandan citizens lacking access to safe water. Consumer surveys will reveal the true impact of water filter use on human health and livelihoods. Modeling and mapping projects will show the filter’s impact over many dimensions and the entire lifecycle. Community engagement activities, such as donating ceramic water filters to local schools, will complement the team’s quantitative work.

This project addresses the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Using Technology to Engage Communities in Green Infrastructure Planning | Detroit, Michigan (2018)
Award: $35,000
Land.info, a 3D visualization software, is an outgrowth of a Dow Masters Fellows project focused on community engagement in landscape design (see page 7). The software application allows end-users, like local residents, to codeign the shared outdoor spaces they will use. As users adjust the design, the app provides real-time feedback on factors like construction costs, carbon sequestration, and storm water management as the design changes—so residents know what to expect based on the design choices they make.

This project addresses the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Leading Sustainability for Society, the Environment, and the Economy
A just sustainability requires not only the representation of diverse voices, but also the creation of inclusive pathways for authentic participation and power in analysis and decision-making.

— Katharine Shiffler
2019 Dow Fellow

THE SYMPOSIUM

Dow Fellows, clients, and advisors, Dow Distinguished Award teams, and special guests gather on a Saturday morning in Ann Arbor for the annual Dow Sustainability Fellows Program Symposium. The celebratory event is a unique opportunity to highlight the accomplishments of Dow Fellows, their advisors, and their client organizations. It is also an opportunity to choose Dow Distinguished Awards winners from among the teams who are competing for up to $50,000 in project funding.

During the presentations, Dow Fellows teams highlight deliverables, including tools and recommendations for clients to consider in advancing sustainability policies, organizational goals, or new initiatives. Dow Masters Fellows projects are officially complete once teams have presented the results of their year-long project at the Symposium and to their clients. Often, however, the presentations represent just the first phase, rather than the end of a project. Clients may sponsor a continuing project or a new project with a Dow Fellows team in the future.

THE SYMPOSIUM AGENDA

- Dow Masters Fellows Team Presentations, Part One
- Dow Distinguished Award Team Presentations
- Dow Masters Fellows Team Presentations, Part Two
- Lunch and Dow Distinguished Award Announcement of Large Grant Support
- Special recognition: Each member of the Dow Fellows cohort receives a commemorative tile presented by Mary Draves, Dow Vice President and Chief Sustainability Officer, and hand-crafted by Motawi Tileworks.

2018-2019 Dow Distinguished Award Panelists

- 2019: Bart Bartlett, U-M Professor of Chemistry
- 2018 - 2019: Kim Clugston, Vice President, Bank of Ann Arbor
- 2018: Amanda Edmonds, U-M alumna, former Mayor of Ypsilanti and founder of Focus Hope
- 2019: Jim Gawron, U-M & Dow Fellows Alumnus, Investor Relations Manager, Ford Motor Company
- 2018: Bill Mayer, Venture Capitalist, Ann Arbor SPARK
- 2018: Ann Wallen, Dow retiree and former Dow Fellows Program Liaison

MICROSTUDY: Campus Farms and Community Organizations

Dow Fellows projects regularly take diversity, equity, and inclusion into consideration. For example, a recent collaboration with the Farm at St. Joe’s, affiliated with an Ann Arbor hospital, considers the issue of food security. With 40% of college students nationwide experiencing some degree of food insecurity, Dow Fellows explored how campus farms might partner with community-based organizations to tackle the problem together.

“A just sustainability requires not only the representation of diverse voices, but also the creation of inclusive pathways for authentic participation and power in analysis and decision-making.”

— Katharine Shiffler
2019 Dow Fellow

DIVERSITY

In social systems, diversity creates stronger, more resilient human communities that are prepared to thrive despite complex challenges. Biodiversity plays a parallel role in ecology, producing resilient ecosystems that can withstand change and disruption.

But what constitutes diversity—and inclusiveness—in sustainability? Diverse voices must contribute to the conversation. Inclusive pathways to authentic participation must be forged. Power in analysis and decision-making must be distributed.

“In what ways does fostering a diverse and inclusive community affect pathways to sustainability?”

In 2017, this essay question was added to the Dow Fellows application. Since then, hundreds of applicants have had the opportunity to reflect on the intersection of diversity, equity, inclusion, and sustainability through a personal lens.

For a few, the essay question is their first engagement with this topic. But for most, coming of age in the 21st century, diversity is both a core value and a necessary precondition to creating a more sustainable future.

“Creating sustainable cities and sustaining our entire planet requires collaboration from everyone and a deeper concern for our fellow citizens. A city’s greatest threat to sustainability is a lack of diversity.”

— Christopher LeFlore
2019 Dow Fellow

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Together, Dow and U-M have dedicated themselves to addressing the challenges of creating a sustainable world by applying natural and social sciences, new decision tools, and dynamic approaches to academics, operations, collaboration, and change-making. The Dow Sustainability Fellows Program is a cornerstone of this relationship.

The Next-Generation Dow Sustainability Fellows Program will build upon past learnings and, in synergy with Dow’s new sustainability vision, focus on two critical challenges: addressing climate protection and advancing a circular economy. This shift will position the Next-Generation Dow Sustainability Fellows to engage for impact. Fellows will be well-informed and prepared to tackle sustainability challenges with significant societal consequences. The refocused program will help advance Dow’s 2025 Sustainability Goals and priorities.

The Graham Sustainability Institute and all of the schools and colleges at U-M highly value the opportunity the Dow Fellows Program provides to U-M graduate students. Many faculty donate time as advisors to Dow Fellows project teams and as reviewers of student applicants. The U-M Ginsberg Center and the Office of State Outreach also partner with the Dow Fellows Program to further sustainability leadership and promote service learning. This broad support across the university helps extend the program’s reach and impact.

We are deeply grateful for Dow’s past support. We look forward to strengthening our partnership and extending our collective impact in the years to come.

“Thanks to the Dow Foundation’s generous new gift, we can continue to provide a transformative learning experience for graduate students across U-M, who tell us every year how much the program means to their careers and personal development. The program’s new focus on climate change and the circular economy ensures that our students’ projects will help find solutions to the most critical issues we face.”

— Jennifer Haverkamp,
Graham Family Director
Graham Sustainability Institute

Special thanks to Jim Fitterling (Dow CEO), Mary Draves (Dow Vice President and Chief Sustainability Officer), Mike Witt (Dow Corporate Director, Plastics Circular Economy and U-M Campus-wide Liaison), Jennifer Princing (Dow Lead Sustainability Manager and Dow Sustainability Fellows Program Liaison), Dow retirees Connie Deford, Mike Kay, and Mike Mazor, and others at Dow for visiting campus, consulting with students, and supporting the Dow Sustainability Fellows Program at U-M.
ABOUT THE DOW SUSTAINABILITY FELLOWS PROGRAM

The Dow Sustainability Fellows Program at the University of Michigan (U-M), made possible by Dow and U-M, supports full-time graduate students at the university who are committed to finding interdisciplinary, actionable, and meaningful sustainability solutions on local-to-global scales. The program aspires to prepare future sustainability leaders to make a positive difference in organizations worldwide.

Program Leadership:
Margaret Wooldridge, Director
Elizabeth LaPorte, Manager
Jennifer Princing, Dow Liaison

sustainability.umich.edu/dow

Like and Follow the Program
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ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

One of the nation’s top public universities, the University of Michigan has been a leader in research, learning, and teaching for more than 200 years. U-M’s alumni body is one of the largest in the world and includes a U.S. president, scientists, actors, astronauts, and inventors. The university, which also boasts a world-renowned intercollegiate athletics program, has been the site of many important events in U.S. history, including JFK’s announcement of the Peace Corps, LBJ’s “Great Society” speech, and the clinical trials of the Salk polio vaccine. The main campus in Ann Arbor comprises 19 schools and colleges, there are also regional campuses in Dearborn and Flint, and a nationally ranked health system, Michigan Medicine. In 2017, U-M celebrated its bicentennial, marking 200 years since its founding in the city of Detroit.

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DOW SUSTAINABILITY FELLOWS PROGRAM DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION STATEMENT

Supporting sustainability scholars, the Dow Sustainability Fellows Program is aligned with the U-M commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Program efforts focus on ensuring that each student thrives. Scholars learn that diversity is key to empowerment and the advancement of sustainability knowledge, learning, and leadership at U-M and worldwide.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY STATEMENT

The University of Michigan, as an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer, complies with all applicable federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination and affirmative action. The University of Michigan is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, disability, religion, height, weight, or veteran status in employment, educational programs and activities, and admissions.

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