



FRESHMAN FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Faculty Handbook
2021-22 Cohort





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Freshman Fellowship Contacts

401 Cohodas Hall
Summer Hours: 7:30 A.M. – 4:00 P.M., M-F
Academic Year Hours: 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., M-F
freshmanfellows@nmu.edu
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Welcome and Thank You

On behalf of the College of Graduate Education and Research, thank you for serving as a mentor to a student in the Freshman Fellowship Program. Your work as a mentor and as a researcher provides NMU students with the rare opportunity to get involved in research and scholarship as an undergraduate. As a result, these students are poised to take on greater things each year building upon the experience you give them!

The Freshman Fellowship Program began in 1995 as a pilot program with five fellows. Since then it has provided between 20-40 students each year with the opportunity to earn \$1000 as an assistant to a faculty member in a research project. Program outcomes include high average cumulative GPA, and very high 3rd and 5th semester retention rates.

Since the program's inception, over 100 different NMU faculty members from every department on campus have served as freshman fellowship program mentors. Student research projects have culminated in published works and presentations at national conferences. Additionally, participation in research as a freshman means students have more time to develop valuable skills to contribute to faculty projects.

Your work as a mentor to a freshman fellow counts as service toward promotion and tenure. It also allows you to be eligible for some external awards which require undergraduate researcher participation. The cohort of freshman fellows mentors on campus is broad and if you wish to hear more about the benefits and challenges associated with mentoring a freshman fellow, our office can put you in touch with one of your colleagues who can provide some insight.



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The Data

Cohort	Cohort size	Retention Rate		Average GPA									
		3 rd semester	5 th semester	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Fall 2013	Fall 2014	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	Fall 2017	Fall 2018
2009/10	23	86%	86%	3.59	3.6	3.58	3.42						
2010/11	39	79%	64%		3.44	3.42	3.59	3.53					
2011/12	29	96%	93%			3.61	3.55	3.56	3.6				
2012/13	18	100%	100%				3.8	3.77	3.76	3.76			
2013/14	23	86%	86%					3.74	3.69	3.65	3.64		
2014/15	26	92%	92%						3.84	3.81	3.76	3.77	
2015/16	23	100%	100%							3.8	3.65	3.64	3.67
2016/17	19	100%	100%								3.93	3.89	3.83
2017/18	30	90%										3.7	3.82
2018/19	25												3.8

The table above shows cohort size, 3rd semester retention, 5th semester retention, and average cumulative GPA for the past several years of freshman fellows program cohorts. Undergraduate research is known as a high impact practice in higher education as it has been shown to "...deepen learning, strengthen self-awareness, and broaden perspective-taking abilities" (Brew 2013, Kuh 2008; Johnson et al. 2015). Your commitment to mentoring a student will have long lasting effects for the individual student with whom you work, and effectually the world they go on to interact with after they graduate.

The following pages describe the Freshman Fellowship Program at NMU as it is. How you choose to engage your fellow is open to wide interpretation. Undergraduate research "...includes scientific inquiry, creative activity, and scholarship, with a faculty mentor who



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provides guidance, and initiates the student into the methods of a discipline” (Kinkead 2003, p.6).

Students selected for the fellowship can earn up to \$1000 by logging hours working on a project determined by their faculty mentor. If the full \$1000 is earned, the amount of time dedicated per week amounts to 3-4 hours. Students need not log all hours with their mentor. Some work can be done on their own as determined by the mentor.

How the Program Works

Fellows Selection

The Freshman Fellows Program (FFP) accepts applications from November – March from students who are seniors in high school who have been admitted to NMU, have at least a 3.5 GPA, and demonstrate a set of developable skills for research and scholarly work. Selected fellows are notified by early March of their acceptance, contingent upon their being matched with a faculty mentor. Selected students are asked to notify the FFP of their intentions to attend NMU before faculty matches are made.

Faculty Mentor Matching

NMU faculty are approached by the FFP to mentor students based on matching determined by the FFP director, with input from department heads. Information from the students' application drives these suggested matches. This information includes the students' reported intended major, two areas of research interest, and an essay describing previous experiences and interests. Faculty are approached as potential mentors based on this information.

Faculty interested in mentoring a fellow should contact the FFP director before the end of October each year to provide a research activity statement. Potential fellows can use this information to identify mentors or research projects they are particularly interested in.



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Freshman Fellows Orientation

Matches are typically all made by the end of the winter semester. The FFP contacts fellows to find out when they will be on campus for freshman orientation and to put them in contact with their faculty mentor. It is suggested fellows reach out to their mentors prior to orientation to set up a meeting if possible. New fellows attend an FFP session at orientation to pick up tax and payroll documents and meet program staff.

Beginning the Semester

FFP students are instructed to turn in payroll and tax documents to the FFP office within the first week of the semester. They are also instructed to make contact with their faculty mentor within the first week to set up a regular weekly meeting time. All fellows and mentors will be invited to an informal reception within the first two weeks of the semester to meet each other. You and your mentee can begin meeting immediately, but they must turn in their payroll and tax documents before they can be issued payment.

The Research Project

The project your student works on is determined by you. It is a good idea to meet with your students to learn about their interests and skills before making a final decision. Some faculty mentors allow the student to choose from a few different possible projects they have identified beforehand. Ideally, the project you select for your student should not add a great deal to your workload. Hopefully there is something your mentee can do to help move forward a project already underway. Student projects have ranged from creating digital flashcards for a cell and molecular biology class to creating a short film highlighting the research done in the Upper Michigan Brain Tumor Center along with other more “traditional” research projects. Keep in mind that perhaps the greatest benefit of the fellowship for the student is having the opportunity to interact with you.

Once the project is determined, the fellowship is largely administered by you. The student will have contact with the FFP office through timesheet submission and monthly meetings on professional development activities. The FFP office does not engage the students aside from these activities, although we are available for student questions and concerns at any time. We also welcome feedback from faculty mentors throughout the fellowship.



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Research Presentation

All fellows are encouraged to present their research at NMU's Annual Celebration of Student Scholarship, held on campus in April each year. Students can present a poster, deliver an oral presentation, or submit an essay to share their work. The FFP has resources to pay for poster printing. We also provide instruction to fellows on how to write an abstract, create a poster, and deliver an oral presentation. Your guidance in all these areas is most helpful, however, and students are instructed to defer to your expertise in any cases of conflicting instructions.

Some student projects are accepted for presentations at conferences. The FFP has some funding available for travel in these cases. Please contact the FFP as soon as you have information about travel needs. Additional funding for travel can be requested through the student travel fund, from academic departments, and from College level resources.

Supplies

Some funding is available to reimburse you or your academic department for research supplies used by your mentee. These funds should be requested at the end of the academic year via email to the FFP along with invoices.

Program Evaluation and Documentation

At the conclusion of the year, the FFP is evaluated using the URSSA (Undergraduate Research Student Self-Assessment.) Faculty feedback is collected using a qualtrics survey. All faculty mentors are provided documentation of service with a formal letter.