



SCHOOL OF
MUSIC, THEATRE & DANCE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

EXCEL

EXCELLENCE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP,
CAREER EMPOWERMENT & LEADERSHIP

The Excellence in Entrepreneurship, Career Empowerment & Leadership (**EXCEL**) Lab at the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance (SMTD) provides entrepreneurship training and career services for all U-M students engaged in the performing arts. Our mandate is to enable all of our students to forge a viable career in the arts by exploring, developing, and leveraging their talents, training, skills, and ambitions.

As the only program in the United States embedded in both a top 10 performing arts school and a top 10 university entrepreneurship ecosystem, over the last two years we have carved out a new national model for performing arts professional development. Thanks to collaborative support from throughout SMTD and beyond, we foster success for U-M students and alumni via multiple points of entry, ranging from courses to weekly co-curricular workshops, extensive ongoing mentoring, and \$100,000 in annually-available student project, venture, and internship funding.

What began as a wide-ranging initiative driven by a lean startup mentality has now evolved into the Department of Entrepreneurship & Leadership, which will offer an even more robust and sustainable platform for catalyzing student success.

EXCELLENCE

INTO

A



ACTION

FOUNDING

EXCEL was founded in Fall 2015 with initial funding support from the **Transforming Learning for a Third-Century Initiative**, and grew out of the identified goals of enhancing SMTD's student and alumni career development resources.

Coursework

EXCEL's coursework piloted as three one-credit mini courses and has since grown into an offering of over 20 rotating courses. These classes allow students to learn new skills and strategies to amplify their artistry, taught by a variety of experts from the U-M community.

EXCEL'S

First Student Funding (EXCEerator 1.0)

The first cohort of 12 EXCEerator Fellow projects represented a diverse palette of entrepreneurial activity. In just a few months, they created prototypes, launched an arts festival, were selected for the optiMize social innovation challenge bootcamp and the Ann Arbor SPARK bootcamp.

EXCEL Prize 1.0

EXCEL awarded the first \$10,000 EXCEL Prize to Melissa Coppola for her organization **Girls Rock Detroit**, a community organization dedicated to empowering young women, trans, and gender non-conforming youth through music education and performance.

\$100,000 in funding for year 2

In our second year, EXCEL was given expanded support for student initiatives including projects, ventures, and internships.

EXCEL Prize 2.0

Threads, an All Arts Festival led by a diverse team of PAT, Jazz, Dance, & LSA Students, won the second \$10,000 Prize for Excellence in Entrepreneurship.

EXCEL as a Department

EXCEL was approved as a department in 2017, which supports a new SMTD Graduate Certificate in Performing Arts Management and Entrepreneurship, and an expanded minor in Performing Arts Management and Entrepreneurship under the supervision of **Greg Poggi**.

STORY

Enterprise Fund/ EXCEerator 2.0

63 unique projects and **15** internships were funded during 2016-17 and **5** new EXCEerator teams each received intensive mentoring and \$5,000 to support early-stage arts ventures.

Meta Weiser EXCEL Fund

Retired Ambassador and U-M Regent **Ronald N. Weiser** (BBA '66) and **Eileen Weiser** (MM '75) designated a \$1 million gift to establish the Meta Weiser EXCEL Fund in honor of Ronald Weiser's mother. This transformative gift supports workshops, guest residencies, and wide-ranging funding for student projects, ventures, internships, and other experiential learning opportunities.

New Faculty

EXCEL welcomes former president of UMS **Ken Fischer** for a course on Arts Leadership, while **Aaron Dworkin** has launched two new courses, Creative Entrepreneurship and Arts Leadership Forum.



*"EXCEL has been a way to pursue entrepreneurial ideas and concepts in the arts. In addition to the classes offered, I was able to have industry professionals assist in mentorship, networking and support. This helps set up a positive environment for your creative endeavors to prosper and flourish. Having **Mark Clague** and **Jonathan Kuuskoski** take the time to share their experience and expertise has been an amazing opportunity."*

Carlos Funn

Moving 24fps (p.20)
(MFA '17, screen dance)

EXCEL

amplifies our students' artistry by providing more than \$100,000 annually in direct student project, venture, and internship funding.

"EXCEL provides a global support structure for the aspiring artist entrepreneur."

Joe Broom

Chamber Unique (p.20)
(BM '19, euphonium)



"The level of inspiration and brotherhood that I experienced this summer can be experienced every time the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra hits the stage. They are a truly magical ensemble and organization."

Teagan Faran

UMS 21st Century intern
Jazz at Lincoln Center
(BFA '18, jazz & contemporary
improvisation; BM '18, violin)



FUNDING STRUCTURE

EXCEL funding is split into three primary categories

EXCEL PRIZE
\$10,000

EXCELERATOR
\$25,000

**ENTERPRISE &
INTERNSHIP FUNDS**
\$65,000



EXCEL ENTERPRISE FUND

offers micro grants of up to \$1,500 for student projects that deliver significant professional development and community impact.

EXCEL INTERNSHIP FUND

provides student grant awards of up to \$1,000 to cover living and travel expenses related to summer internships. Over \$18,000 has been awarded to date for internships across the U.S. and abroad.



"Having the support of EXCEL was an important element of the support received from other departments at SMTD.

I am deeply grateful to EXCEL for shaping and helping me prepare a proposal that would be realistic and organized while remaining ambitious and innovative."

César Cañón

En Español: Sounds from the Hispanosphere (p.20)
(DMA '18, piano)





"EXCEL has been integral to the forward trajectory of our project, assuring that it sees not only completion, but success."

Zoey Bond

Y-ACT (p.20)
(BFA '17, acting)

THE PERFORMING ARTS EXCELERATOR

is an entrepreneurial fellowship and incubator program that supports performing arts ventures with seed funding and mentorship to foster impactful growth. Fellows are chosen by application during the Fall semester, and then receive rigorous mentorship during the Winter semester as they pilot, assess, and launch their ventures.

**17 TEAMS HAVE BEEN
SUPPORTED BY EXCEL
WITH PROJECTS RANGING
FROM PERFORMING
ENSEMBLES TO EDUCATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS**

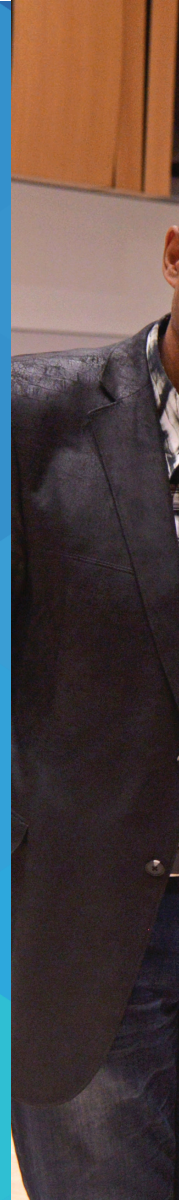
EXCEL PRIZE

awards \$10,000 annually to a School of Music, Theatre & Dance student or team in recognition of excellence in performing arts entrepreneurship, leadership, and social impact.

EXCEL PRIZE WINNERS:

Girls Rock Detroit (EXCEL Prize '16) promotes creative expression, positive self-esteem, and community awareness in girls, ages 8-15, through a week-long summer camp focused on music education and performance. The EXCEL Prize allowed founders Melissa Coppola, Rosalind Hartigan, and Willa Rae Adamo to expand their second year of programming, in addition to piloting an instrument loan program during the school year.

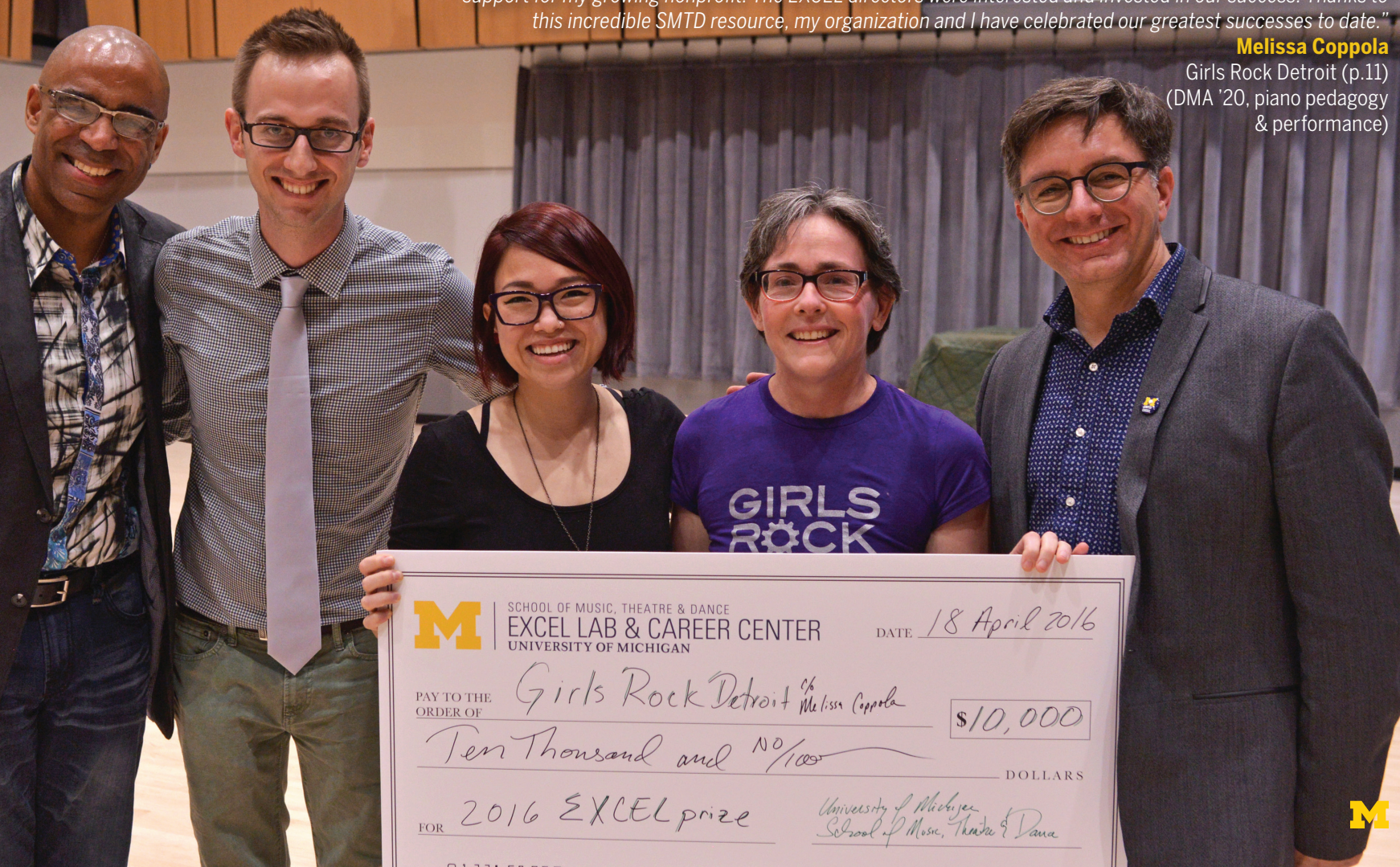
Threads All Arts Festival (EXCEL Prize '17) began as an EXCEerator team, working to bring together and showcase artists of various disciplines while galvanizing Ann Arbor's varied arts audiences. Over the course of two days in April 2016, the inaugural Threads community grew from 6 to 617. The EXCEL Prize allowed the team to expand to two stages over three days, while also adding skill-share workshops, panel discussions with artists, interactive installations, and a garden based on permaculture design.



"EXCEL helped me develop as an entrepreneur, empowering me with invaluable mentorship and financial support for my growing nonprofit. The EXCEL directors were interested and invested in our success. Thanks to this incredible SMTD resource, my organization and I have celebrated our greatest successes to date."

Melissa Coppola

Girls Rock Detroit (p.11)
(DMA '20, piano pedagogy
& performance)



COURSEWORK

EXCEL offers a comprehensive yet flexible curriculum to give Michigan students a competitive edge as they transition into professional life. These can be taken individually or as part of either the **Performing Arts Management and Entrepreneurship Minor** or the **Graduate Certificate in Arts Entrepreneurship & Leadership**. Select courses also count as electives for the cross-campus **Entrepreneurship Minor**.

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE & PERFORMING ARTS MANAGEMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP MINOR

The demand for our coursework has evolved into a Minor and Certificate, allowing students within all programs at SMTD to add entrepreneurship training to their portfolio. With a focus on practical application, both programs offer tailored course offerings and require students to complete a **Capstone Project**.

EXCEL draws upon faculty expertise from across SMTD and engages experts in their fields.

SMTD FACULTY

Matt Albert, assistant professor & chair of the Dept. of Chamber Music

Amy Chavasse, associate professor of dance

Mark Clague, interim associate dean for academic & student affairs

Aaron Dworkin, professor of music, entrepreneurship and leadership

Jonathan Kuuskoski, interim chair of the Dept. of EXCEL, director, EXCEL Lab

Christianne Myers, associate professor of theatre (costume design)

Tiffany Ng, assistant professor of music

Greg Poggi, professor of theatre, senior advisor to the dean

Melody Racine, interim dean and associate professor of music

Robert Swedberg, assoc. professor and opera director

Kerianne Tupac, marketing & communications director, University Productions

GUEST FACULTY

Sara Billmann, director of marketing & communications, University Musical Society

Matthew Dear, experimental pop artist and co-founder of Ghostly International

Ken Fischer, president emeritus, University Musical Society

Andrew Kuster, executive editor, Music of the United States of America

Kari Landry, Akropolis Reed Quintet

Jay LeBoeuf, CEO, Real Industry

Jeremy Peters, Quite Scientific Records, formerly of Ghostly International

Carrie Throm, deputy director of development & external relations, UMMA

A SAMPLE OF OUR COURSE OFFERINGS

The Recording Industry: Selling Your Music to the World: Taught by Jeremy Peters.

Your Career as a Teaching Artist: A collaboration between **University Musical Society (UMS)** and the **New York Philharmonic** with instruction from the Philharmonic's resident teaching artists.

DIY Marketing and Social Media: Taught by Sara Billmann.

Grant Writing and Fundraising Basics: Taught by experts including SMTD Professor Greg Poggi and Carrie Throm.

Money Smarts for the Performing Artist: Explores budgeting basics, managing student debt, saving for retirement, and building sustainable income streams.

Creative Entrepreneurship & Arts Leadership Forum: Taught by SMTD Professor Aaron Dworkin, MacArthur Fellow and founder of the Sphinx Organization.

"The most rewarding part of my year as Dean's Liaison was seeing the direct impact of my work on the new Department of Chamber Music."

Annelisa Crabtree
(BM '17, piano)



At the core of EXCEL's mission is the student's ability to explore and develop their skills through hands-on learning. EXCEL partners with nationally recognized organizations to provide our students with unique opportunities for interactive learning, critical thinking, and networking.

IMMERSION

Immersion trips provide valuable opportunities to cultivate professional relationships. EXCEL's inaugural immersion took 10 students to **Michigan Opera Theatre** for a day of engaging activities including a tour, a panel discussion, and breakout sessions that allowed participants to connect directly with MOT staff to brainstorm and develop new marketing, education, and development plans. An upcoming **NYC Broadway** immersion will take place in 2018.

DEAN'S LIAISONS

EXCEL oversees the Dean's Liaisons program, which pairs exceptional SMTD students with a member of the senior administrative team from departments like Youth & Adult Programs, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, the Wellness Initiative, and EXCEL. Liaisons are given paid work experience and the opportunity for one-on-one meetings with the Dean.

INTERNSHIPS

EXCEL has supported more than **15** student internships at organizations across the country, including the **GRAMMY Awards** and **Moogfest**, while maintaining ongoing internship programs with **The Metropolitan Opera** and the **UMS 21st Century Artist Internship Program**, which annually places four SMTD students in leading performing arts companies each summer. EXCEL continues to foster new internship partners throughout the performing arts field.

EXPERIENCE

MENTORSHIP, EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

EXCEL offers a wide array of educational events for inspiration and networking to supplement students' practice, studies, and coursework.

CAREER COUNSELING

Students are able to schedule 1:1 counseling appointments with an EXCEL representative, including guidance on resumes, cover letters, and grant proposals. Appointments are adapted to the needs of each student. They may also explore complex topics like how to conceive and launch projects with minimal resources, or how to develop an action plan around long-term career goals.

CONSULTING

Over the first two years, EXCEL team members **Jonathan Kuuskoski** and **Mark Clague** have been engaged as consultants with both the CU-Denver College of Arts and Media and with the New World Symphony, where they evaluated the NWS Connect community engagement initiative, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation.



EXCEL CAREER EXPO

The Expo is a special event that brings together local arts leaders with U-M students for an inspiring day of mentorship, insight, and networking. Students have the opportunity to learn from seasoned professionals and to build relationships with organizations throughout Southeastern Michigan. Past guests have included a2ru, Accent Pontiac, Ann Arbor Summer Festival, ArtOps, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Faber Institute, Ghostly International, Michigan Opera Theatre, Shakespeare in Detroit, the Arts Alliance, Artrain, and Artlab J.

EXCEL TALKS & EXCELCASTS

EXCEL Talks inspire students and provide insight into life as a professional artist. EXCELCasts are a weekly video podcast series featuring interviews with industry professionals on an array of topics including organizational strategy, time management, marketing, development, and more.

Past EXCEL Talk & EXCELCast guests include members of:

The New York Philharmonic
The Berlin Philharmonic
Meredith Monk Vocal Ensemble
American Repertory Theater
The St. Lawrence String Quartet
Royal Shakespeare Company
Third Coast Percussion

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center
International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE)
Bang on a Can All-Stars
Los Angeles Opera
RIOULT Dance NY
PRISM Quartet



"The mentorship Jonathan Kuuskoski provided was incredibly helpful and useful. We're incredibly thankful for the financial support, press support, and all of the mentorship that EXCEL has provided for us."

Peter Littlejohn

Threads All Arts Festival (p.11)
(BFA '18, performing arts technology)

COLLABORATION & ENGAGEMENT

By leveraging relationships at U-M, regional, and national levels, EXCEL bridges the gap between industry professionals and SMTD students.

AT THE UNIVERSITY

EXCEL participates in **Entrepalooza**, which brings together entrepreneurship programs for a day of interactive sessions featuring a prominent entrepreneur keynote address.

Innovate Blue, U-M's central entrepreneurship hub, is a critical partner by supporting our programs and including EXCEL courses as part of the Entrepreneurship minor.

EXCEL collaborated with the **College of Engineering's Center for Entrepreneurship** and Real Industry on the Pandora Challenge, a week-long challenge where students formulated novel go-to market ideas for SMTD voice student and *The Voice* finalist **Daniel Passino**.

EXCEL works with the **University Career Center** to co-host workshops/immersions and share best practices that allow us to optimize our program engagement and assessment.

EXCEL participates in the **Strategic National Arts Alumni Project** survey.

IN THE COMMUNITY

EXCEL-funded, student-led projects have had a wide-ranging impact in our local communities:

Moving24fps is a film-dance festival that brings together dance and film makers to craft new work in a single weekend.

Chamber Unique is a network of dynamic young artists who aim to turn STEM into STEAM by providing educational workshops, presentations, and performances at area schools.

En Español: Sounds from the Hispanosphere was a weeklong music festival including concerts, lectures, and master classes celebrating music and musicians who blend Western classical traditions with those from Hispanic-Latino culture.

Y-Act (Ypsilanti Active Community Thinkers) is an interactive theatre project in collaboration with Estabrook Learning Academy that empowers 7th and 8th graders to address social issues through interactive documentary theatre training.

NATIONALLY

Since 2016 EXCEL has collaborated with **The Metropolitan Opera** on an internship which annually places an SMTD student in the organization's production department over the summer.

In 2017 EXCEL entered a new collaboration with **National Sawdust**, a cutting edge, Brooklyn-based performance venue. This relationship will give showcase and residency opportunities to SMTD's emerging multidisciplinary artists.



"I never pictured myself in Brooklyn interning for Mark Morris Dance Group. Yet there I was, and it was better than a dream. I learned so much and experienced incredible opportunities."

Claire Crause

UMS 21st Century Intern
(BFA '17, dance)

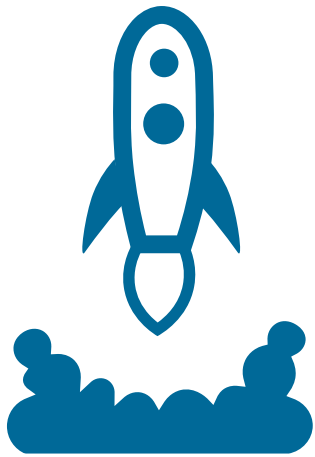


NUMBERS^{AT A} GLANCE

Princeton Review/Entrepreneurship Magazine ranked U-M's Undergraduate Entrepreneurship network, of which EXCEL is a member, as one of the best in the nation (#3 undergraduate; #7 graduate).

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (2016-17)

These student engagement figures represent the number of U-M students who have participated in EXCEL Talks and courses.



31

Community
Collaborations

73

Events
Held

1,087

Unique
Students

1,945

Overall
Attendance



11

Courses

205

Students
Enrolled

23.7

Average
Enrollment

EXCEL
NUMBERS
TO-DATE

*As of November 1, 2017



EXCEL
CASTS

EXCEL
TALKS

65

Episodes
recorded

110

Sessions
hosted

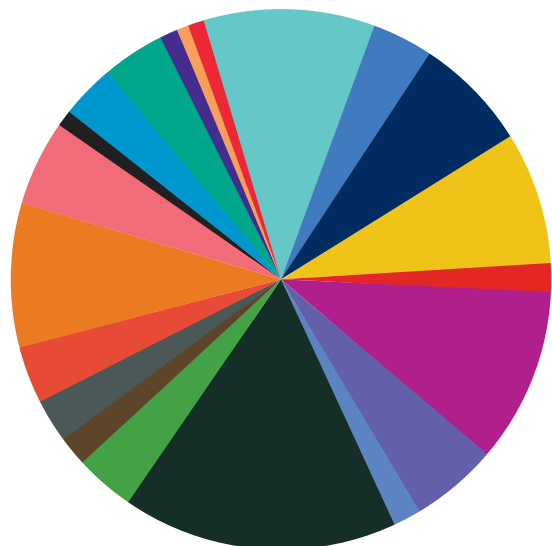
MENTORSHIP



630

Counseling Sessions

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS



Students
Funded

150

Projects
Funded

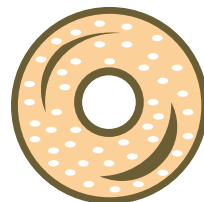
80

Areas
Represented*

21

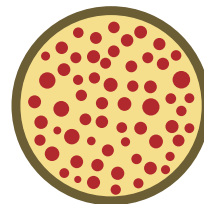
*Winds & Percussion (22), Strings (15), DEI (12), Composition (12), Theatre & Drama (10), Dance (8), Chamber Music (8), Voice (7), PAT (7), Jazz (6), Piano (5), Interarts (4), Conducting (4), Musical Theatre (2), Musicology (2), Opera (2), Early Music (2), Ensembles (1), Theory (1), LSA (1), and Slavic Languages (1)

AT OUR COLLABORATIVE
EVENTS STUDENTS SHARED



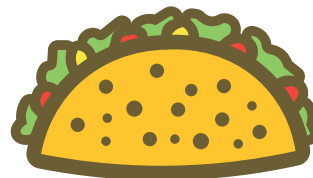
800

Bagels



150

Pizzas



750

Tacos



EXCEL Lab Team (l to r):
Jonathan Kuuskoski, director
Melissa Coppola, program assistant
Caitlin Taylor, coordinator
Mark Clague, interim associate dean for academic & student affairs

The information listed in this brochure is accurate as of November 1, 2017.

Please visit smt.d.umich.edu/excel for the most up-to-date information about the EXCEL Program.

PHOTO CREDITS: Unless otherwise attributed, photographs by Mark Clague and Rachel Francisco. Cover: Theo Schear; p.5 Alexis Weisbrod (Moving 24fps); p.6 Carlos Funn (Teagan Faran); p. 8 Jacen Paige (César Cañón); p.9 Debra Brousseau (Y-Act); p.19 Theo Schear (Peter Littlejohn); p. 20 Levi Stroud (Claire Crause)

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