



SCHOOL OF
MUSIC, THEATRE & DANCE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

A photograph of a jazz band performing on a stage. From left to right, there is a trumpeter, a vocalist with a microphone, a drummer, and a double bass player. The stage is lit with several spotlights in red, green, and yellow, creating a vibrant atmosphere. A large white screen is visible in the background.

EXCEL 2018

EXCELLENCE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP,
CAREER EMPOWERMENT & LEADERSHIP

Embedded within the Department of Entrepreneurship and Leadership, the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance's Excellence in Entrepreneurship, Career Empowerment & Leadership (**EXCEL**) Lab is uniquely situated to provide entrepreneurship training and career services for all U-M students engaged in the performing arts. We strive to help each student forge a viable career path by exploring, developing and leveraging their talents, training, skills, and ambitions.

Thanks to the transformative support of the **Meta Weiser EXCEL Fund**, this year we embarked upon some ambitious programming focused around immersive experiences. In May 2018, EXCEL took 25 students on a three-day immersion behind the scenes of Broadway, including opportunities to sit alongside pit orchestra musicians and receive mentorship from top New York City freelancers. A concurrent arts administration track allowed students to engage with arts leaders from organizations like Concert Artists Guild, Pomegranate Arts, Abraham.In.Motion and the Metropolitan Opera. Students also went behind the scenes of National Sawdust and Carnegie Hall, meeting with SMTD alumni who now work there. Based on this trip's resounding success, we look forward to facilitating more immersions alongside all of our other core activities.

As you will see in the following pages, while our programming continues to grow and evolve, we are ever-focused on amplifying the artistry of our students and connecting them directly with the professionals who have the power to unlock exciting career possibilities.



"The EXCEL NYC Immersion was an amazing experience, one that is an absolute necessity for every student in SMTD. It provided not only perspective and insight into the greater arts industry, but also contacts and proof that the Michigan alumni network is a force to be reckoned with."

Martin McGuire (BFA '19, directing)



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. (p. 14)

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

EXCEL Prizes of \$10,000 have been awarded to outstanding student entrepreneurs whose young but established ventures demonstrate significant social impact. (p. 11)

\$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 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**.

Growing Partnerships

EXCEL has established partnerships with The Metropolitan Opera, National Sawdust, the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, and University Musical Society, which will provide exclusive hands-on learning opportunities for SMTD students in cities across the country. (p. 16 & p. 19)

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. (p. 21-22)

New York City Immersion

In May 2018, EXCEL took 25 students to New York City for three days of intensive activities. Selected students participated in performance or arts administration events. Over the course of the weekend the group attended a Broadway show, connected with SMTD Alums working in the arts in New York, and visited cultural organizations like Carnegie Hall and National Sawdust. (p. 1)



"Thanks to the support, encouragement, and resources that EXCEL has generously provided us, we are proud to say that we are taking SHEL on a three-city workshop tour from New York City, to Calgary, to Charlotte, and then back to NYC under the direction of a Tony-nominated Broadway director...we couldn't be more grateful for all EXCEL has enabled us to do with this beautiful show thus far."

Thomas Laub (BFA '19, musical theatre)
Shel: A Historically Fictionalized Musical (p. 20)



EXCEL

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

"The funding I received has propelled the growth of my NYC-based dance company by providing an opportunity to develop guided movement workshops focusing on empathy and kinesthetic awareness. The relationships I have built and progress I have made through EXCEL are also positively impacting my summer research pursuits and setting me up for a successful thesis year at the University of Michigan."

Megan Bascom (MFA '19, dance)
Megan Bascom & Dancers (p. 20)



FUNDING STRUCTURE

EXCEL funding is split into three categories

EXCEL PRIZE
\$10,000

EXCELERATOR FELLOWS
\$25,000

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





"Our EXCEL Enterprise Fund grant enabled us to transform our passionate conversations about contemporary music for children's choirs into a comprehensive online and print resource. Developing Voices now includes information, examples, and references for composers and educators to support the creation of new choral music."

Gala Flagello (MM '19, composition)
Our Developing Voices (p. 20)

ENTERPRISE FUND

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

INTERNSHIP FUND

provides student grant awards of up to \$1,000 to cover living and travel expenses related to summer internships. Over \$35,000 has been awarded to date for internships across the U.S. and abroad.

"Without the support and funding from EXCEL, we would not have been able to fully realize our artistic goals. EXCEL has widened our lens on how we can contribute to the community and engage with a broad range of disciplines."

Annie Jeng (DMA '19, piano performance & pedagogy)
Back Pocket Duo (p. 20)



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.

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**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.

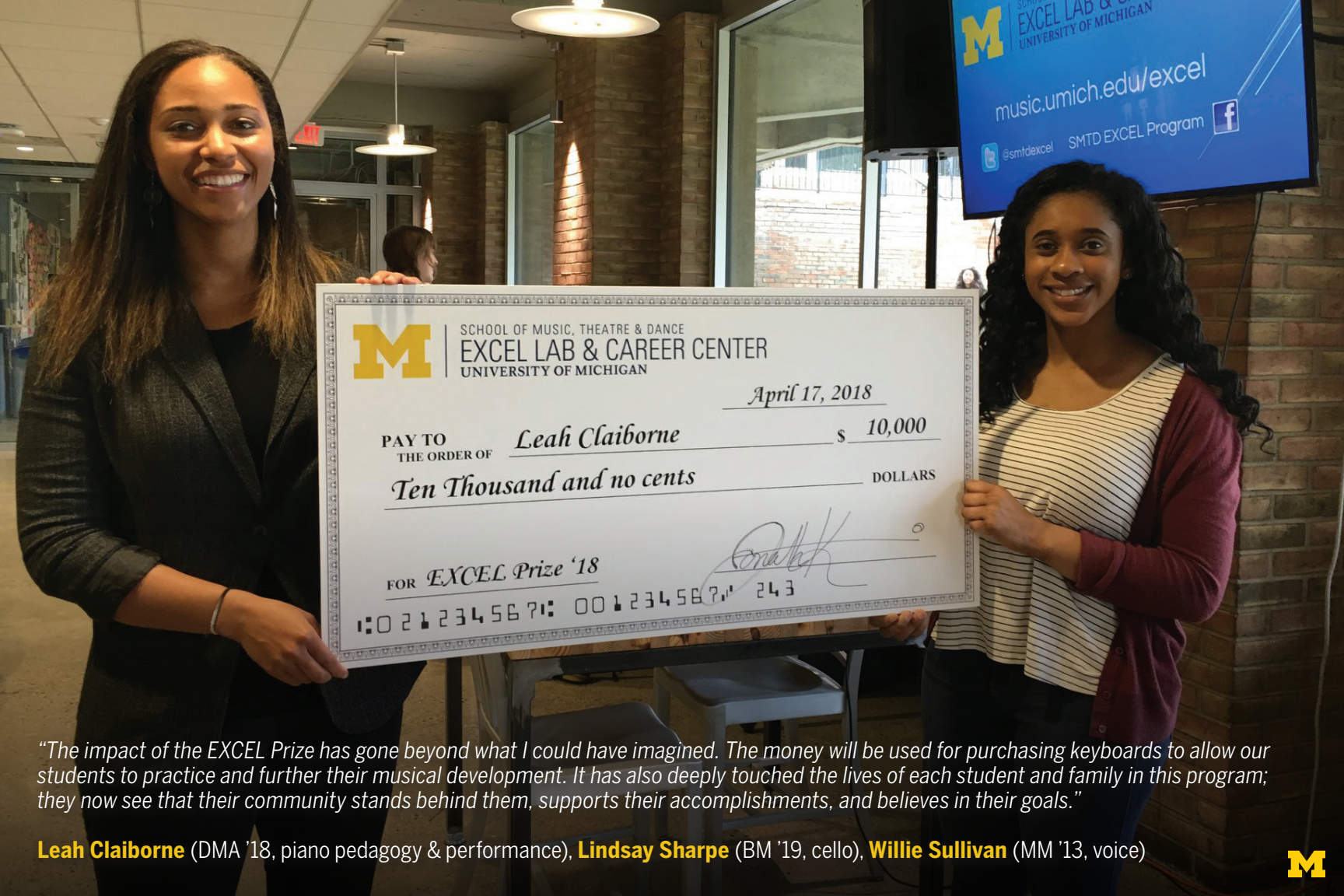
2018 EXCEL PRIZE WINNER:

Our Own Thing Piano Partnership Program is a community engagement program that provides free weekly piano lessons to Ypsilanti students at the School of Music, Theatre, & Dance. The program was created to address the lack of diversity and representation in the field of classical piano music and, in their weekly group lessons, students learn about the significant impact that composers of color have contributed to the field of classical piano music. The EXCEL Prize will allow the program to supply students with keyboards for practice, give additional training for instructors, and support guest artist workshops and performances.

PREVIOUS EXCEL PRIZE WINNERS:

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. The EXCEL Prize allowed the team to expand the festival to two stages over three days, increase attendance, and add elements like interactive installations.

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 them to expand their programming and start an instrument loan program during the school year.



"The impact of the EXCEL Prize has gone beyond what I could have imagined. The money will be used for purchasing keyboards to allow our students to practice and further their musical development. It has also deeply touched the lives of each student and family in this program; they now see that their community stands behind them, supports their accomplishments, and believes in their goals."

Leah Claiborne (DMA '18, piano pedagogy & performance), **Lindsay Sharpe** (BM '19, cello), **Willie Sullivan** (MM '13, voice)



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 revised minor and new 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, associate dean for academic & student affairs

Aaron Dworkin, professor of music, entrepreneurship and leadership

Jonathan Kuuskoski, 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

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

Your Career in the Arts: Taught by Jonathan Kuuskoski. Develop an individualized plan for your arts career through a variety of lean startup tools like the Business Model Canvas.

Running Your Own Ensemble, Theatre Troupe, or Dance Company: Taught by Kari Landry. Learn how to design your own arts organization, connect with communities, and jumpstart an entrepreneurial career path under the tutelage of an Akropolis Reed Quintet co-founder.

Media Technology Careers: Taught by Jay LeBoeuf. Explore how today's leading technology companies bring products to market and how artists, musicians, composers, engineers, business and computer science students might become part of these companies.

Creating Social Value through the Arts: Taught by Tiffany Ng. Explore the social power of the arts and how your artistry can make meaningful community impact.

Arts Leadership: Taught by Ken Fischer. Explore the theory and practice of leadership in the non-profit arts sector and learn directly from one of the industry's legends.

"Hubbard Street is an amazing place for young artists to learn and grow. The energy in the building is positive, open, welcoming and contagious. Hubbard Street is a dance community that is about lifting each other up, even on the hard days. I feel so fortunate to have been able to work, learn, and grow here this summer."

Johanna Kepler (BFA '20, dance)
UMS 21st Century Intern



HANDS

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

Immersions provide valuable opportunities to cultivate professional relationships and go behind the scenes of established arts organizations. EXCEL's inaugural immersion took 10 students to **Michigan Opera Theatre** for a day-long visit that included an extensive tour of their impressive facilities, and an afternoon panel discussion and interactive breakout sessions where students worked hands-on with MOT staff on real organization projects.

Our second immersion took 25 students to **New York City** for three days of intensive activities. Half of the students participated in a performance track, where they sat in a Broadway pit orchestra, and learned from seasoned freelancers under the oversight of **SMTD Alums Connie Barron** and **John Miller** about the realities of playing on **Broadway**. The other half of our student cohort explored arts management through behind-the-scenes visits to **National Sawdust** and **Carnegie Hall**, as well as an engaging panel featuring representatives from **Concert Artists Guild**, the **Metropolitan Opera**, **Abraham.In.Motion**, and **Pomegranate Arts**.

INTERNSHIPS

EXCEL has already supported more than 30 student internships at organizations across the country, from the GRAMMY's to Moogfest, while maintaining ongoing internship partnerships with the Metropolitan Opera, Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, and UMS' 21st Century Artist Internship program. The latter annually places four SMTD students in leading performing arts companies each summer along with a \$5000 stipend.

-ON 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 provided Threads with resources like marketing assistance, mentorship sessions on event operations and development campaigns, and a generous grant that helped our ideas for the festival develop thoroughly; we more than doubled the amount of artists, audience members, and community partners the project reached this year."

Meri Bobber (BFA '17, dance)
Threads All Arts Festival (p. 11)

EXCEL CAREER EXPO

The Expo is a special, annual event that brings together local arts leaders with U-M students for an inspiring day of mentorship, insight, and networking. In 2018, EXCEL added a Hype Night concert to showcase exciting guest artists and to build community around the Expo weekend. Our featured guest performers were **Gutbucket** and **saajtak**, and SMTD alumnus **Nathaniel Zeisler** (MM '02, DMA '07) gave the keynote address. Past guests have included dozens of arts leaders from important regional organizations including the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Michigan Opera Theatre, University Musical Society, Ann Arbor Summer Festival, and Sphinx Organization.

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
Bang on a Can All-Stars
Los Angeles Opera

RIOULT Dance NY
PRISM Quartet
Imani Winds
Boston Symphony
Askonas Holt
Calidore String Quartet





"The New York City Immersion taught me how to go about growing my network of business contacts and reinforced the idea that networking is about forming relationships. Asking people for informational interviews can be the key to learning more about a business, while helping you form a connection that could possibly lead to a job offer!"

Amy Wensley
(BFA '19, dance)

COLLABORATION & ENGAGEMENT

AT THE UNIVERSITY

Innovate Blue, U-M's central entrepreneurship hub, supports our programs and includes EXCEL courses in the Entrepreneurship minor.

Real Industry and **Pandora** host a music & social impact challenge where students from across campus will leverage technology to raise awareness on a social impact issue, through the lens of the music business.

The **University Career Center** co-hosts workshops and immersions while sharing best practices that allow us to optimize our program engagement and assessment. EXCEL participates in the **Strategic National Arts Alumni Project** survey.

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. The **Khemia Ensemble**, founded by Carolina Heredia (DMA '17, MM '13, composition) and Bret Bohman (DMA '14, composition), made their showcase debut at National Sawdust in May 2018.

IN THE COMMUNITY

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

Back Pocket Duo is committed to delivering engaging and approachable performances in comfortable, intimate environments. As champions of new music, they actively commission new works for their instrumentation, and have already toured throughout Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Megan Bascom & Dancers is a modern dance company that engages a diverse community of dancers, composers, visual artists, videographers, students and workshop guests to realize projects that catalyze social impact through relatable, audience-centric performances. Their most recent project involved the launch of a series of interactive workshops that cultivate and harness kinesthetic empathy to create dialogue on social topics and deepen the audience experience.

Our Developing Voices is a comprehensive resource for composers and educators of elementary and middle school-aged vocalists. Their site provides resources on effectively composing and curating repertoire, along with matchmaking services to champion appropriate and pedagogically-conscious repertoire for young choirs.

SHEL: A Historically Fictionalized Musical is based on the unusual life of poet and artist, Shel Silverstein. Written entirely in Silverstein's iconic style of verse, *SHEL* tells the fascinating tale of an artist whose compulsory need to create transcendent art takes a toll on those he loves most.

"Success can come in all shapes and sizes. If an opportunity doesn't present itself right away, it doesn't mean you should give up. Create your own opportunity."

Danielle Gonzalez (MM '19, percussion)

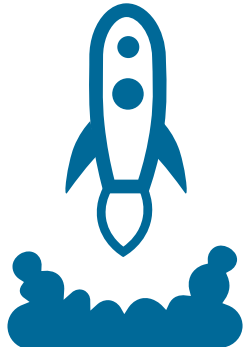


NUMBERS ^{AT A} GLANCE

Princeton Review/Entrepreneurship Magazine ranks the University of Michigan's Undergraduate Entrepreneurship network, of which EXCEL is a member, as one of the best in the nation (**#1** undergraduate; **#8** graduate, as of fall 2018).

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT (2017-18)

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



Events
Held

63

Unique
Students

607

Overall
Attendance

1,354

18
254
14

Courses

Students
Enrolled

Average
Enrollment
(per class)



EXCEL
NUMBERS
TO-DATE

As of September 1, 2018



EXCEL
CASTS

84

Episodes
recorded

EXCEL
TALKS

145

Sessions
hosted

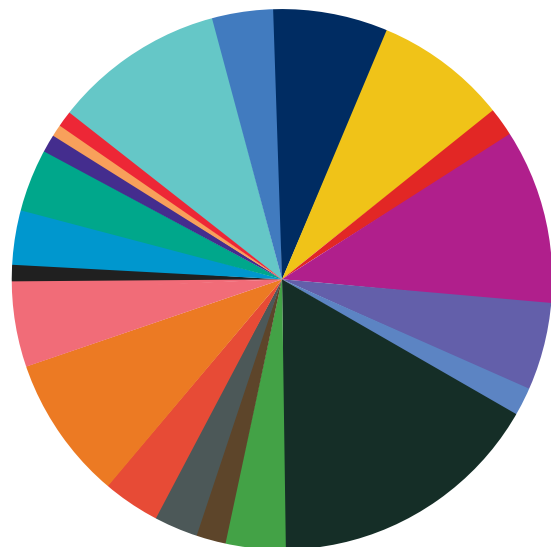
MENTORSHIP



905

Counseling Sessions

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS



Students
Funded

168

Projects
Funded

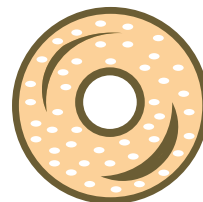
84

Areas
Represented*

22

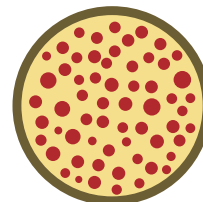
*Winds & Percussion (19), Strings (15), Piano (12), Composition (11), Theatre & Drama (10), Dance (10), Voice (8), Chamber Music (6), PAT (5), Jazz (5), Musical Theatre (4), Musicology (4), Conducting (3), InterArts (2), German (2), Theory (1), Computer Science & Engineering (1), French (1), Screen Arts & Cultures (1), Music/LSA (1), Natural Resources & Environment (1), and Chemical Engineering (1)

AT OUR COLLABORATIVE
EVENTS STUDENTS SHARED



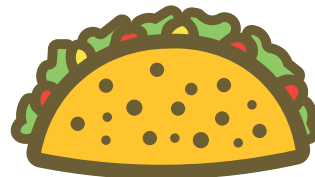
300

Bagels



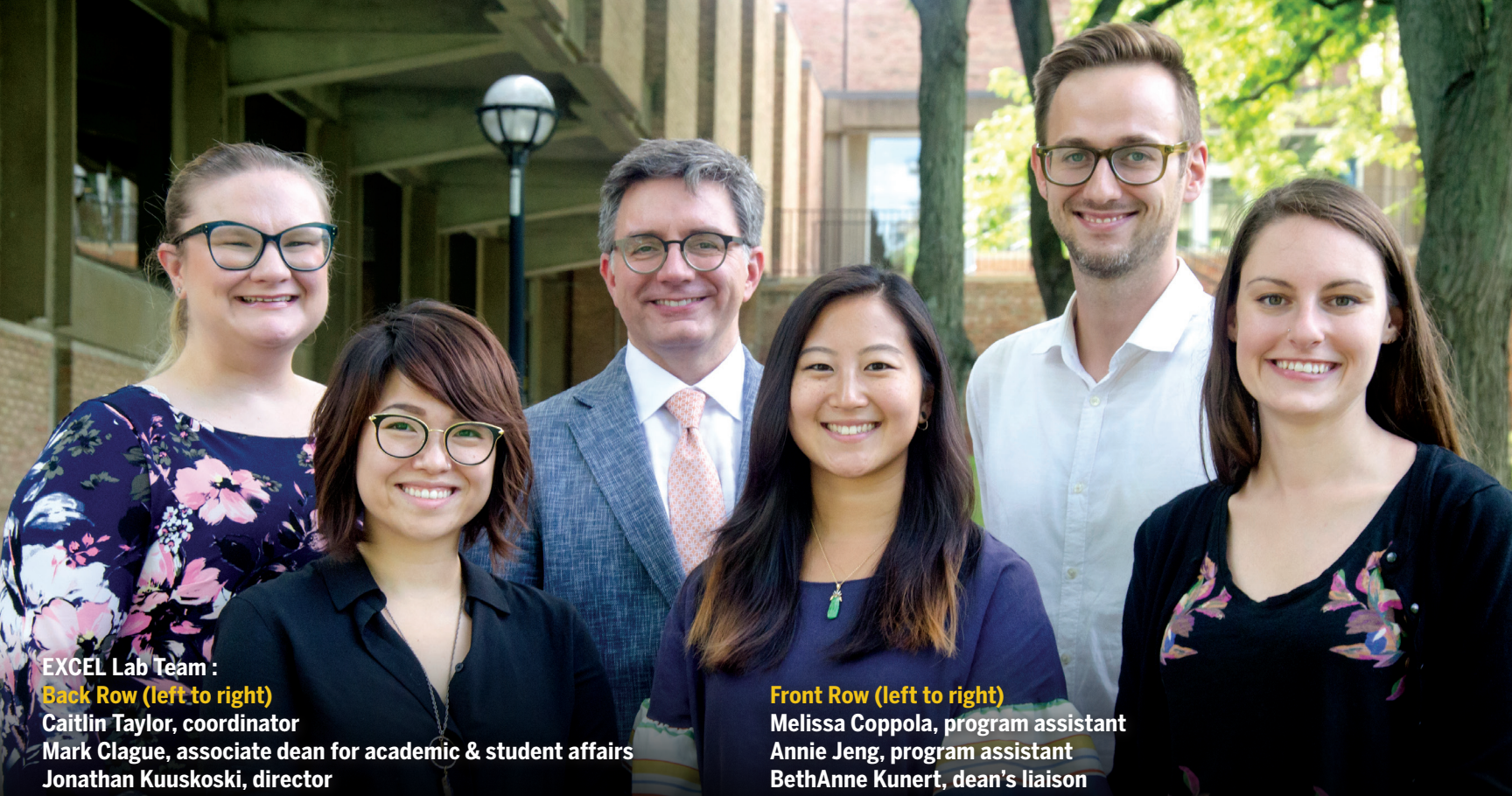
250

Pizzas



750

Tacos



EXCEL Lab Team :

Back Row (left to right)

Caitlin Taylor, coordinator

Mark Clague, associate dean for academic & student affairs

Jonathan Kuuskoski, director

Front Row (left to right)

Melissa Coppola, program assistant

Annie Jeng, program assistant

BethAnne Kunert, dean's liaison

The information listed in this brochure is accurate as of September 1, 2018.

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

PHOTO CREDITS: Unless otherwise attributed, photographs by Mark Clague or Melissa Coppola. Cover & p. 17: Becca Fisher; p. 5 Peter Scattini (SHEL); p. 6 Lydia Bittner-Baird (Megan Bascom); p. 8 Sara Zinn (Gala Flagello); p. 9 Kyla Dorsey (Back Pocket Duo); p. 15 Derek Crandall (Johanna Kepler); Back Cover: Somya Bhagwagar

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