

PETER J. SCHMITT ENDOWMENT FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Purpose of the Endowment

The Peter J. Schmitt Endowment for Experiential Learning supports varied learning experiences that enhance awareness, understanding, and knowledge of the interconnectedness of history with the arts and the natural world. Grant recipients might participate in short courses in art or architectural history, in field biology learning experiences, in workshops in historic preservation or traditional crafts, in retreat experiences that emphasize an understanding of the natural world, or in other experiential learning activities that promote personal insight into the interrelationships between people and their environments, especially in historical contexts. When the endowment reaches a sum that will yield \$500 annually, one grant of up to \$500 will be made annually from the Peter J. Schmitt Endowment for Experiential Learning. Should the endowment become large enough to support additional annual grants, the Peter J. Schmitt Endowment Committee may elect to award more than one grant per year. The Committee, may also elect to increase the dollar value of the annual grant, on account of inflation or other economic considerations, funds permitting. All members of the Western Michigan University community, including undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, emeriti, alumni, and staff are eligible to apply for grants.

Examples of Institutions Offering Fundable Experiential Learning Activities—(this may be included in application materials that go to grant applicants)

North House Folk School
Tillers International
University of Michigan Biological Station
Farmers Museum, Cooperstown, New York
Cedar Bend Folk School
Driftless Folk School
John C. Campbell Folk School
Smithsonian Resident Associates Program
School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Outward Bound
And many other institutions and programs

Eligibility

All members of the Western Michigan University community (undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, emeriti, alumni, and staff) are eligible to apply to the Peter J. Schmitt Endowment for Experiential Learning. To be eligible for this grant, undergraduate students must have completed at least thirty hours of course work at Western Michigan University, and have maintained a GPA of 2.50 or higher. Applications from undergraduate and graduate students will be given preference in two out of a three year grant cycle, but if no suitable applications are received, funding may go to faculty and staff.

Application Process

Applicants must submit an application form, a resume, a proposed budget, and a short essay (2-3 pages) that describes the experiential learning activity they wish to attend and explains how that

activity might broaden or deepen their current understanding of the interconnectedness of people and their environments. Published information about the experiential learning program should be included in the application packet. Undergraduate and graduate student applicants should also submit a current transcript. Completed applications must be submitted to the History Department Chair by April 1. A Committee comprised of the Chair of the History Department, a member of the Peter J. Schmitt family or his or her designee, a faculty member, WMU staff member, and a WMU undergraduate or graduate student in History (appointed by the History Department Chair), will assess applications and award the yearly grant. In assessing the grant applications, the Committee will place particular emphasis on the essay and its articulation of the significance of the project for the grant applicant.

Reporting Grant Outcomes

After completing their experiential learning experience, grant recipients shall write a short essay summarizing and evaluating their experience and its impact. This essay, along with photographs documenting their experience, should be turned into the Chair of the History Department within one month of completing the project, and may be used for Department of History news and publicity.