Training Programs

Ethiopia-Michigan Platform for Advancing Collaborative Engagement (EM-PACE)

Thirty-two University of Michigan students participated in Summer 2014 research experiences as part of the EM-PACE project, 26 of them traveling to Ethiopia. EM-PACE is supported by a Global Challenges for Third Century grant from the UM Office of the Provost and seeks to address some of the most pressing problems identified by country leadership and stakeholders in Ethiopia. The one-year grant of nearly $300k was approved in November 2013 and is supplemented with an additional $250,000 in cost-shared funds from the home units of the eight primary investigators. The major goal of EM-PACE is to help create a sustainable model of collaboration by piloting these interdisciplinary projects and build on existing health-related initiatives pertaining to the environment and science education.

Participating students came from schools and departments across the University, including the Medical School, the College of Engineering, the School of Natural Resources and Environment, the Program in Biomedical Sciences, the Stephen Ross School of Business, the School of Public Health, and the School of Public Policy. Students worked on four different research teams under the mentorship of the investigators, focusing on water/environmental science and engineering, science teaching, encouraging private sector engagement in public health care provision, and maternal health technology.

Team members were selected in late February after a formal application process and met weekly with their project mentors before leaving for Ethiopia in May. Teams stayed between 4-10 weeks and their mentors joined them for part of their on-the-ground experience. Each student received a stipend to cover their living and travel expenses.

Project Investigators and Team Mentors include (in alphabetical order):

Allen Burton, PhD, School of Natural Resources and Environment
Senait Fisseha, MD, JD, Medical School
John Godfrey, PhD, Rackham School of Graduate Studies
Lori Isom, PhD, Medical School
Joseph Kolars, MD, Medical School
Nancy Love, PhD, PE, BCEE, College of Engineering
Kathleen Sienko, PhD, SM, College of Engineering
John Williams, PhD, Medical School
Prashant Yadav, PhD, William Davidson Institute

In a pre-departure session, Dr. Joseph Kolars discusses the goals of the EM-PACE grant with students who participated in the 2014 projects

M1 student, Darci Foote, shown with a new friend during her EM-PACE project
EM-PACE students (left to right) Graham Billey, Joe Labuz, Kevin Fries, and Annie Wang are shown outside Bete Giyorgis in Lalibela. Bete Giyorgis is one of 11 monolithic stone churches built by King Lalibela in the early 1200s. It is carved out of the ground from one unbroken piece of stone, and shaped from the inside out with its roof forming the shape of a Greek cross. Cut 40 ft down, it connects to the other sunken stone churches through a series of elaborate tunnels. Lalibela is considered one of the holiest places in Ethiopia and is a center for pilgrimages by Ethiopian Christians.

Christina Vallianatos, PhD in Human Genetics, is shown teaching Biochemistry to first-year medical students in Debre Markos, Ethiopia.