

## THE DETROIT INITIATIVE

Established in 1995 to provide opportunities for students and faculty in psychology to engage in further education, scholarship, and service in the Detroit area. The Detroit Initiative works toward fulfilling this mission in several ways. Currently, three psychology classes are offered through the Detroit Initiative: ***Practicum in the Multi-cultural Community, Empowering Families and Communities, and Community Based Research.***

Each class contains an internship component, where students spend 2-4 hours each week working in a community-based organization. Current sites include a community based organizations Latino Family Services, Inc. and People's Community Services. At these sites, students participate in such activities as community outreach, summer programs and/or working as assistants in after-school or community education projects. Internships are supervised by staff, as well as by a staff person at the community-based organization. Transportation is provided.

The Detroit Initiative is not just for those students interested in psychology, but for any student that wants to make a difference in someone's life. The Detroit Initiative often opens student's eyes to new ideas and opportunities. It is an excellent way for students to gain practical, hands-on, community based experience and experience working with children or elderly populations.

## The Detroit Initiative:

### **Mission:**

The mission of the Detroit Initiative is to provide opportunities for students and faculty in psychology to engage in further education, scholarship, and service in the Detroit area.

### **Goals:**

- \* To create courses that involve students in educational activities in collaboration with community based organizations in Detroit with the purpose of applying a theoretical perspective to understand the conditions of multi-ethnic urban settings.
- \* To create educational opportunities for students and faculty to develop skills in collaborative community based research with the purpose of applying psychological knowledge to development of multi-ethnic urban communities.
- \* To enhance our knowledge of the coping and resiliency factors existing in multi-ethnic urban communities through collaborative community based research.
- \* To enhance our knowledge of community intervention methods: empowerment, coalition building, education - which can positively impact the conditions of multi-ethnic urban communities.
- \* To work in partnership with community based organizations to assist them in meeting their goals.

## **Courses**

### **Psychology 317: Community Based Research (4 credits):**

This course will cover research methodologies that are useful in understanding how communities function. These include community needs assessment, analysis of census and other statistical information on communities, evaluation of programs offered by community organizations, and surveys of community residents. Through readings, lectures, and discussion, the class will consider what is involved in each of these methods and when each is appropriate for studies of communities. Students will use one of these methodologies to carry out a research project in collaboration with a community organization in Detroit. Results from the research project will be communicated through a paper and poster session. Requirements include readings, lectures, and research project.

### **Psychology 319: Empowering Families and communities (4 credits):**

This course introduces students to the principles and practices of community psychology by focusing on the themes of empowerment and prevention. The influences of social context racism culture and inequality in shaping behavior and attitudes in community settings are emphasized. Through readings, lectures, and simulations students will deepen their understanding of how families and communities function and how communities can be involved in community-based program development and delivery.

The course meets one time/week. Each class section will involve both lecture and discussion. students will complete a journal, an in-class mid-term exam, and a group paper Students will present their paper in a poster session. This course is designed for 3rd and 4th year students in Psychology and other social sciences.

### **Psych 325: Practicum in the Multi-Cultural Community (4 Credits):**

This course is an experiential field course requiring two visits per week to Detroit. Students will be assigned to work with community-based organizations on projects to improve the well-being of children and families. Projects involve such activities as community outreach, assisting in child care settings or summer programs, and/or working in community education projects. Internships are supervised by the instructor and program staff, as well as by a staff person at the community-based organization. Transportation is provided. Students meet once a week to integrate theory with practice. Assignments include a paper, poster presentation, and a journal. This class is only offered Spring and Summer terms.

## **Responsibilities of Sites:**

### **Timesheets:**

Sites will keep track of student attendance to site. Students placed at each the site should sign-in and sign-out for the day. The sign-in/sign-out sheet will be provided for you by the assigned agency. This allows the Detroit Initiative to keep track of student attendance and then subsequently, address any attendance problems that might arise during the semester.

### **Student Progress Reports:**

Sites are asked to keep track of student performance, citing any problems that are occurring with students, the program, or things that are working well that future students should know, etc. Progress reports may be verbally shared with class Field Placement Coordinators/Liaisons or instructors during a visit, via email, or faxed to the Detroit Initiative office at 734-647-9440. In turn, this will allow the Detroit Initiative to monitor the performance of students and the overall program, and allow us to make adjustments as needed.

### **Work Environment:**

The placement site should provide an acceptable working environment for interns. This includes the provision of workspace and supplies/materials to the extent that the site is able. The site also must be accessible to students with disabilities. However, given the wide range of disabilities, it is feasible that not every site will be able to accommodate every disability. Every effort is made by the Detroit Initiative to ensure equal access to placement sites.

### **Student Supervision:**

Each site must assign one staff person and one alternate staff person to supervise Detroit Initiative students. It is very important for students to know whom they can ask for help when necessary.

### **Student Orientation:**

Internship sites should plan to provide a brief orientation meeting to Detroit Initiative students during the first week of internship attendance. Orientation should include an overview of the agency/organization and any relevant agency policies and procedures. \*\*\*Please see section on Site Orientation.

### **Feedback:**

Sites should provide feedback to students as soon as problems arise and the student can correct the problem before it is too late. Feedback can also provide a positive learning experience for students at the placement.

**Diversity:**

In order to reinforce the mission and goals of the Detroit Initiative, it is recommended that placement sites provide information and opportunities that assist students in understanding and appreciating social and cultural diversity. Information about direct practice with ethnic minorities and others who have been consistently affected by social and economic oppression is encouraged. As one component of the student's internship experience, it is important that students begin to develop a "framework" by which to analyze and understand social issues that impact multi-ethnic, urban communities as well as the resiliency factors and strengths within these communities.

**End of Semester Final Presentation:**

Each semester, students develop a final presentation which focuses on either the work completed at the site and/or answers a research question posed by the site. The project is then presented during a class session. Representatives from the sites are welcome to attend this event.

## **Responsibilities of Detroit Initiative**

**Student Placement Cycle:**

A group of students will be placed at internship sites 4 times throughout the year. Students will begin attending their internship at the beginning of each semester. Therefore, internship sites will receive students in September, January, May, and the end of June/beginning of July. (This is subject to change, however, depending on the University's academic calendar). The Detroit Initiative will provide each site with information prior to the beginning of each semester regarding when students will begin their internship, how many students are placed at the site, etc.

**Transportation:**

The Detroit Initiative will provide transportation to students by reserving University vehicles for the semester. Students will car-pool to Detroit on their internship day, Detroit Initiative students must follow exact guidelines, which they receive during Driver Orientation. Students are required to drive straight to the placement site and return straight to the University: side trips of any kind are not allowed. Students must also adhere to a strict driving schedule, and therefore, need to leave the placement site on time each week.

**Field Placement Coordinator/ Liaison:**

The Detroit Initiative will provide a Placement Coordinator to serve as a liaison between the program (University) and the placement sites. This person will ensure that the program is functioning smoothly for both students and sites. The Field Placement

Coordinator will contact each site at least once/month to check-in and discuss student's work and progress, as well as any issues or concerns that may arise. A site visit will also take place at your site at least once during the semester. The FPC will also collect student progress information submitted by each site and monitor student's attendance. If problems arise that require the attention of the program, please feel free to contact the FPC at any point during the semester. The FPC is always available to the sites to answer questions, address concerns, provide technical assistance, etc.

### **\*\*\*Site Orientation**

The agency is responsible for agency-based orientation which should occur during the first week of placement. Orientation helps students become acclimated to the site, and informs students where to go for help and/or with problems. In general, the site orientation should consist of acquainting the student with the various programs and services offered at the agency, and describe for the student what is expected of him/her and the types of activities in which the student will partake, as well as whom to ask for help. It is also the responsibility of the placement site to familiarize the student with the community surrounding the site as much as possible.

#### **1. Overview of Organization**

\* mission statement \* history of organization \* relationship with community \* publications (brochures, booklets, annual reports, newspaper cuttings, etc.)

#### **2. Organizational Structure**

\* overview of organizational structure \* programs at the agency and details about specific program they will be involved in

#### **3. Chain of Command**

\* Organizational hierarchy related to their work \* who will be their immediate supervisor other staff persons who can assist them

#### **4. Discipline Policies**

\* how to intervene with youth - organizational policies how to handle difficult situations  
\* limits of discipline who to go to if problem escalates

#### **5. Organizational Expectations**

\* what organization expects from interns types of activities they will be engaged in \* solicit input from interns \* goals/objectives to be achieved by end of semester  
6. Tour of facilities \* tour of building \* introduce interns to organization staff \* security policies (schedule of building, access to keys, etc.) \* use of kitchen facilities (if available) \* telephone policies \* tour of other facilities related to interns' program (if necessary)

Site

## Frequently Asked Questions:

### 1. What is the role of an internship site with the Detroit Initiative?

Internship sites are to engage students into the mission and programming of the organization while providing the opportunity for students to apply psychological knowledge to multi-ethnic communities in a manner that positively impacts the organization and the community.

Specific responsibilities include:

- \* Contact the Detroit Initiative right away with any concerns/problems that are experienced with the program.
- \*Assign a supervisor for the students placed at the site. The supervisor should be readily available to students and/or meet with the students regularly to provide guidance/supervision.
- \*Provide an orientation to the students placed at your site (please see next section for topics which should be covered in the student orientation).
- \*Monitor the work hours and submit time sheets on a monthly basis for students placed at your site.
- \*Complete the midterm report/survey and return to the Detroit Initiative in a timely manner.
- \*Clearly define the tasks which must be completed by students during the semester.

### 2. What type of research will the students be doing? How does research fit into the work of the students at my site?

The Detroit Initiative classes are research classes. Students learn research methods relevant to conducting research in a community based setting. Therefore, sites should have a few ideas regarding research projects that students may complete.

### 3. How many days per week will students visit my site?

During Fall and Winter terms, each student is required to visit their site one (1) time/week, for two (2) hours/week.

During Spring and Summer terms, students are required to visit their site two (1) times/week for a total of four (4) hours/week.

Depending on class size and student's schedules, students will be visiting sites two (2) - five (5) days per week. Schedules will be set at the beginning of each term.

4. What types of activities should students be involved in at my site?

Students must have the opportunity to be involved in direct service. Therefore, administrative-type duties should be limited as much as possible.

5. How much time should I spend supervising the students?

Each site must designate one supervisor and one alternate supervisor to provide supervision to students. Thus, there should be someone available at the site at all times that the student may go to with questions, etc. Supervision can be done with a group of students rather than individually, and can entail simply a 15-20 minute check-in with the students about their activities at the placement. Each site may gauge the level of guidance their students needs and provide supervision accordingly.